

Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Environmental Issues and Mine Action (EIMA) 2023

1. Background

There is growing attention to the need to mainstream environmental protection into the mine action and humanitarian disarmament sector. Demining and disarmament operations protect communities from the risks posed by landmines and conventional weapons, as well as environmental hazards associated with their polluting, toxic and destructive materials. However, these clearance operations can also affect the local environment in potentially negative ways. Particular practices such as mechanical demining can damage agricultural areas or the natural environment, while stockpile destruction and clearance operations themselves carry with them a footprint that could be minimised through improved waste reduction and resource management policies. Moreover, shifting environmental patterns are creating a new host of challenges for affected communities and mine action actors alike. To address these impacts, the introduction of the International Mine Action Standard (IMAS) 07.13 in 2017 was a major step towards setting environmental standards for the mine action and humanitarian disarmament group.

At the 2020 National Mine Directors meeting - which had the headline theme of “Mine Action for People and Planet: Solutions, Commitments and Action” - the Conflict and Environment Observatory, the HALO Trust and the Norwegian People’s Aid facilitated a side event on ‘Environmental Impact and Climate Change Adaptation’. Participants at this event recognised the need for a sector working group to push forward environmental mainstreaming.

2. Rules of Participation

Participation within the working group is administered by the following general rules:

- Meetings will have two co-chairs, which will rotate every six months.
- Outline minutes will be taken and circulated to attendees; virtual meeting will be recorded to aid the taking of minutes but will not be retained long term (i.e. no more than 30 days)
- Any discussion in meetings and views expressed or implied are without prejudice to, and shall not limit, the discretion of the working group
- Participants should endeavour to commit time and resources to support the objectives of the working group
- Views expressed by participants during meetings will not be treated as the formal position of the organisation they represent
- Any outputs published by the working group shall be agreed by its members

3. Membership

This Working Group is open to organisations involved in stockpile destruction and mine clearance operations. This includes humanitarian mine action organisations, national mine action authorities, donors and commercial contractors.

4. Scope of Activities and Deliverables

The working group will pursue:

- Awareness raising about environmental mainstreaming in mine action and humanitarian disarmament
- Knowledge and best practice sharing
- Joint advocacy
- Highlighting and promoting existing guidance and best practice
- Identify gaps in guidance including what needs to be developed and by whom
- Identify research and/or funding needs
- Develop links with other non-mine action organisations who can support environmental initiatives in-country
- Open source and access for all on working group outputs
- Encourage engagement from across the sector

It is not the working groups' intention to pursue:

- Drafting standards, standard operating procedures or best practice guidance
- Promotion of individual organisations
- Naming or shaming/whistleblowing of bad practice
- Promotion or endorsement of commercial organisations

5. Meetings

This working group will meet formally every two months to achieve the objectives listed above. This will be on-line to enable greater participation, reduce costs and minimise travel. The group may meet additionally to pursue shared interests as desired throughout the year.

We will also arrange an annual meeting at an international event such as the National Directors Meeting which will also be open to others who have not attended previous meetings.

6. Review of Terms

The working group, to ensure it remains current and appropriate to the requirements of the group, may review and modify the Terms of Reference at any time. Modifications to the document must be agreed to by the majority of group members.

Reviewed: 22 February 2023
NEXT REVIEW DUE: January 2024