

Meeting of the Environmental Issues in Mine Action Working Group (EIMA)

22 February 2023, 13:00 – 17:00 UK time

Hybrid meeting - Hosted on Zoom and at MAG's Manchester office, UK

Participants in attendance:

On-line: *italics* – present 13:00-14:00

In-person

bold – present 13:00-close

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. <i>Gunnar Rundgren – Guest presenter</i> | 18. Linsey Cottrell, CEOBS - Co-chair) |
| 2. <i>Michael Heiman, APOPO</i> | 19. Rebecca Letven, MAG |
| 3. Christelle Mestre, GICHD | 20. Riccardo Labianco, MAG |
| 4. Camille Wallen, HALO | 21. Kristin Holme Obrestad, NPA - Co-chair |
| 5. <i>Emily Chrystie, HALO</i> | 22. Lucy Pinches, NPA |
| 6. <i>Sera Koulabdara, Legacies of War</i> | 23. Rob White, NPA |
| 7. <i>Kiona Bolt, ICRC</i> | 24. Sarah Njeri, SOAS |
| 8. Martin Jebens, ICRC | |
| 9. Eunice Janssen, ICBLCMC | |
| 10. Anne Akello, MAG | |
| 11. Bach Bui, NPA | |
| 12. <i>Chakreya Bout, NPA</i> | |
| 13. Alex Frost, NPA | |
| 14. <i>Katie Harrison, NPA</i> | |
| 15. <i>Elizabeth Rolen, PM/WRA</i> | |
| 16. <i>Claire Yunker, PTVN</i> | |
| 17. <i>Steinar Essen, UNDP</i> | |

MINUTES

Updates on environmental activities within organisations from attendees

Brief updates were given by:

- **MAR** – Mine Action Review: For each landmine- and/or cluster munition-affected country, MAR will continue to ask respective National Authorities whether there's a National Mine Action Standard (NMAS) on the environment and/or legislation/policies on the environment. MAR will also ask all clearance operators: if they have environmental management system and if it includes environmental policy and env SOP. MAR will also ask how, if at all, the environment is taken into account in planning and tasking for survey and clearance to minimise potential harm, and a more open ended question on other relevant info on efforts to identify and mitigate environmental impact of survey and clearance.
MAR are aiming to expand on the 'Environmental Actions and Policy' subsections, which we introduced to all country reports for the first time last year.

Depending on available capacity and also how the IMAS revision proceeds/when it's finalised, MAR might try to produce a separate short publication, summarising broadly how the Mine Action sector is currently performing/the baseline with respect to the environment (regarding the survey and clearance side of mine action). Progress with the EIMA website ongoing.

- **NPA Vietnam:** NPA are undertaking their total MA survey, which includes the environment. Funded by the PM/WRA. Aiming to map the environmental profiles of each village and climate change impacts. Starting to pilot this and review feedback. In addition, also supporting the production of sand bags made from natural grass (instead of plastic) – aim to pilot by end of 2023.
- **ICRC:** undertaking mapping and developing layers of disaster risk.
- **GICHD:** GICHD's bi-annual innovations conference is due to take place on 14-16 November. It will have 6 sessions, and the EIMA WG can still propose a session on the environment (2-3 hours). Making decisions in early March. GICHD also adopting their revised environmental strategy and rolling out this year. Includes environmental policy on air travel restrictions. GICHD climate study on the resilience of communities to environment is also currently underway.
- **APOPO:** Since 2015, Apopo has had environmental policies in place and has already been delivering carbon off-set projects (tree planting). Mainly focusing on post-clearance and giving back to the community. Three ongoing projects, including in Zimbabwe. Agroforestry initiative - system is based on combination of fruit and vegetables that grow in harmony (using shade from banana trees etc.), and always ensure there's cover. Producing more output/food per m² than traditional farming. Communities are becoming aware of the initiatives and plan to set up two more 'syntrophic' farms during 2023 in Cambodia and Zimbabwe. 2023-25 strategy has been updated, and includes an environment focus. Apopo work in partnership with local NGOs.
- **CEOBS:** CEOBS, NPA and SOAS are jointly writing a paper for the ICRC's publication later this year on *Protecting the environment in armed conflict: the legal and policy framework of the future*. Submitted for consideration and awaiting feedback. As part of the on-going work in Ukraine, mapping for all ecologically sensitive areas is also being collated – which includes ecologically important but not designated areas. Finalisation and permission to share datasets pending. In the meantime, operators can check locations with CEOBS before planning works.
- **PeaceTrees Vietnam (PTVN):** Working with Earth Economics to create overlaid maps – aiming to complete end of April. Use as a tool to understand how prioritisation has changed overtime and how it can change in the future. Reforestation plans also in landslide areas.
- **NPA Head Office:** NPA is mainstreaming environment in all countries, including implementing an environment management system (EMS) in all country offices. Also testing the Environmental Assessment and Management tool for field operations in Vietnam, and integrating this into global operations and into survey 1,2,3. On climate mitigation, establishing a baseline at Head Office and country offices – aiming to have a baseline for 2022 and then targets for 2023.
- **HALO:** Focusing on their sustainability plan over coming months. Lots of enthusiasm for post-clearance, but also need bold targets e.g. carbon neutrality by 20XX. Biggest challenge is

understanding the baseline. Should look at sharing knowledge – carbon calculates, interesting information on suppliers commonly used across sector etc. Share lessons learned on how to reduce GHG emissions and where we can't.

- **NPA IMAS 07.13 updates:** The sub-editing team is rewriting and editing the new IMAS.1st draft mid-March, for Review Board review. A decision will need to be taken on whether to have a Technical Note (TN) or annexes in order to implement.

There were some concerns that the current IMAS on the Environment isn't being used. Have reached out to National Authorities in Cambodia, Tajikistan, BiH, and Lebanon and waiting to hear back from others (plus Colombia is on the TWG). National Authorities will comment on draft IMAS and what they need to implement it.

The IMAS itself is prescriptive and doesn't contain much detail. The TN will include the what, where, when on how to implement. Annex C and D in current IMAS = how things could be done. Aiming to launch the new IMAS and TNMA in November.

APOPO: commented that rather than just focusing on organisations, should also focus on locals themselves, including skills for deminers following demobilisation. Need to be thinking about the stage after demining. Good agricultural practices. Include chapters on things people can take home with them.

ICRC: IMAS is used by humanitarian organisations, but also others, including the military. Need to be strategic about audience of IMAS.

Sustainable /organic agriculture in developing countries

Presentation by Gunnar Rundgren, Food and agricultural consultant, Sweden. Presentation slides available [here](#).

A summary of the key points below:

1. Low food prices do not include the full true cost of producing food
2. Constant overproduction of food, floods markets and drives down prices. This makes it very difficult to generate an income
3. Transformational change is needed of the agricultural system - mainly about economic and social innovation.
4. Measures need to be adapted to local conditions and include new relationships between producers and consumers, payment for environmental services, and public procurement of local and organic produce
5. Much traditional farming techniques have been lost
6. Organic products enjoy an average 50% market-value premium – farmers benefit
7. Also reduced cost and environmental impact from use of pesticides and fertilisers
8. Lessons from Export Promotion of Organic Products from Africa (EPOPA) - farmers and/or exporters are opportunistic and not always reliable business partners, few competent exporters, consultants from development circles are often not so business-minded, limited success in pro-active organic management and biodiversity conservation

Reflections on 2022 – previous meetings and topics covered

Regular meetings every 2 months have been maintained throughout 2022, with a guest speakers invited each time. Overall, topics covered to date have included:

- NATO environmental management practices in munitions disposal
- Environmental mainstreaming in other humanitarian orgs
- Sustainability and mine action in Afghanistan
- 2020: environmental sustainability in mine action survey
- Bioremediation of ammunition disposal sites
- Zero Waste Lao and NPA partnership
- MuniRem presentation: chemical agent alternative OBOD
- Climate change USAID tools
- Introduction to Nature-based solutions
- Earth observations for mine action
- Soil health and mine action

Comments and reflections:

- Useful to have ‘lessons learnt and best practices’ sessions within the sector, although may be too soon yet to understand what hasn’t worked as well.
- Useful to have a ‘pool of experts’ who can be referred to for support, if required.
- Agreed that external presentations very helpful and simulate discussion.

Suggestions for future topics:

- Management of contaminated areas (e.g. from heavy metals): how you manage cattle and grazing in contaminated areas - farming techniques and land management practices. LC has already approached ADAS in the UK – positive response and to finalise date.
- Gender and the environment (gendered impact of environment issues in mine action programming)
- Climate mitigation and best practice - EMS, greening offices and operations, donor requirements
- Carbon footprinting / accounting – tools and lessons
- Implementation of Nature-based solutions
- Environmental training for deminers and opportunities after demobilization (e.g. Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka)
- Hazardous components database / contaminants
- More on post-clearance land use/climate resilient land use/agricultural practices
- International environmental law and relevance to mine action [although may prefer to focus on more practical/field topic areas]
- Presentation of ‘concrete’ projects/sharing from the organisations on work and strategies.

Changes to format and structure

Key questions:

1. Frequency of meetings - every two months seems to work well
2. Online meetings – format about right
3. Physical meetings – an annual meeting at the NDM would be good
4. Do we need to change the Terms of reference – no changes planned
5. Who the membership of the group and do we have the people that we need - mapping exercise to assess

6. Do we want to encourage national authorities to join - yes

Areas of focus and outputs for 2023

Suggestions include:

- Soil testing: how can this be expanded and costs reduced. Useful to check with
- Evaluation of OD against OB – which is more environmentally acceptable
- Stockpile destruction and unplanned explosions
- Delivery/drafting of statements – suggested that since an informal group, better to draft independently and then use WG to circulate and get support from other organisations
- Consider making Joint Statements with other environmental organisations
- Partnerships – risk of excluding national operators. NB: HALO have a MoU with TNC in Angola
- Localise – understand what is being done on a nationally and locally
- External/academic partnerships – package of works and idea for future research
- Engagement at the intersessionals – joint statements etc..
- Extended meetings/presentations for specific topics of interest – 1.5 hours
- Capacity building for donors needed too and better understanding of the cost implications. Some donors already asking for environmental policies and management to be in place – ECHO, SIDA, FCDO (CRP/Sustainability Policy)
- CCM and further follow-up on the Lausanne Action Plan implementation
- ICRC meeting opportunities?

Key focus agreed to use 2023 to prepare for the Review Conference 2024, to ensure that the environment and climate is included in the updated Action Plan. Fits well with IMAS revisions.

Outline ideas for next EIMA meetings:

- April: IMAS
- June: management of contaminated sites
- August: GICHD climate Study outputs - or CEOBS hopefully have volunteers contributing to climate mapping
- Oct: Preparations for Oslo Rev-Con, focus on MBT
- Dec: Possible topics: National capita accounting - how to value the environment, feasibility study for carbon credits - Angola (Halo might be doing some case studies on that)

Future consultations and surveys

- EIMA useful platform for future consultations and surveys. Had a survey last year on impact assessment and could be used again to understand missing gaps around post clearance and mitigation measures needed.
- SOAS may also be able to offer some research assistance. Open to ideas.

Outreach opportunities and links with other groups

- Explore other options like networks such as EHAN, GNDR and PEDRR. Propose to undertake mapping and how best for EIMA to engage.
- NPA - Norwegian network: Save the Children, Norwegian Refugee Council etc...
- HALO – links with ICCF <https://www.internationalconservation.org/>

Events and points of interest

- 22-23 March – Environment and Emergencies Forum (EEF), UNEP/OCHA
- 17-28 April - Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Weeks (HNPW)

Agreed actions

- Draft proposal for GICHD Innovation week: Action: CEOBS/LC
- Map out who should be at the EIMA WG. Action: NPA/KO & HALO/CW
- Map out networks to join and planned EIMA WG representation. Action: CEOBS/LC
- EIMA website – aiming for Easter. Action: MAR/LP
- NDM/Intersessionals request for plenary session – initial approaches to UNMAS/Germany
- Survey or research ideas. Action: SN

Any other business

- Should an email list be circulated to share events and information. Suggest encourage use of the LinkedIn group for this.

Date of next meeting

- Wed 26 April, 12:00-13:00 CET, online

[A draft agenda is [here](#)].

Please add any further suggestions/comments or send them to linsey@ceobs.org

Useful links

Reminder to check the [LinkedIn group](#), where other updates posted and a link to the [Google Drive](#) for other EIMA resources.