

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

3 August 2022

Hosted on Zoom

Participants in attendance:

1. Linsey Cottrell (CEOBS) - Chair
2. Nathalie Doswald - Presenter
3. Ayub Alavi
4. Andrew Scanlon (HALO Trust)
5. Juliet Taylor (HALO Trust)
6. Kiona Bolt (ICRC)
7. Sera Koulabdara (Legacies of War)
8. Chakreya Bout (NPA)
9. Katie Harrison (NPA)
10. Kristin Holme Obrestad (NPA)
11. Rob White (NPA)
12. Carlie Stowe (PeaceTrees)
13. Souksaveuy Keotiamchanh (Zero Waste Laos)

MINUTES

Updates on environmental activities within organisations from attendees

Brief updates were given by:

- **Chair** – A joint side event between CEOBS, NPA, Mine Action Review and UNIDIR was held at the 25 National Director's Meeting (NDM) covering conflict pollution and highlighting some of the environmental initiatives of the EIMA working group members. Rooms allocated for side events were very small and all experienced technical problems with the streamlining of events. Not certain whether any recordings of the side events will be made [available](#), but if you missed it, a summary and reflection of the side event is here: <https://ceobs.org/integrating-conflict-pollution-data-collection-into-mine-action/>.
Some positives from the NDM, including plenary remarks by Karen Chandler, PM/WRA Operations Director on the links between mine action, food security, climate change and the need for environmental protection.
Completion of the EIMA website is still in progress and an update will follow.
Other notes : useful article posted in the EIMA [Linkedin](#) group on the [role of women in environmental and conservation project](#) and relevant crossover given mine action, gender and the environment.
Reminder of the good news that the **UN Resolution** was passed in July on the [right to a health environment](#)
- **ICRC** – An update on ICRC's planned workshop with ARMAC on environmental management and mine action in SE Asia which was mentioned at the last meeting. Primarily focused towards national authorities wanting to set up their own NMAS on environmental management. To demonstrate good practice, the plan is to invite practitioners who are already undertaking initiatives in the regions and to share knowledge.
The workshop will be 18-19 October 2022, in Siem Reap, Cambodia [**Post meeting update – dates now 24-25 October**].

Also would like to include a field trip to show good practice and initiatives close to Siem Reap. This could include other environmental initiatives – such as good sustainable land use practices – which used to demonstrate the link mine action and post clearance land use. Priority is to get mine action authorities to start considering environmental management and climate change adaptation.

Please contact Kiona Bolt if you'd like to be involved - kbolt@icrc.org

- **The HALO Trust** – Work underway on professionalising their environmental management systems, integrating climate, land, biodiversity, chemical and waste. HALO now have their first nation environmental staff member– Juliet Taylor - in Cambodia. HALO have been speaking with CMAA on environmental management and how to improve upstream deliver. Updates to IMAS 07.13 are very welcome, and note the need to consider workshop course material and phasing, in light of future any planned 07.13 revisions. Highlighted that there has been interest from donors, including within philanthropy, in 'Life after Mine Action', meaning capacity within mine action teams and future work in the environment sector after leaving mine action, plus interest in land use incorporating, for example, nature-based solutions.
- **NPA** – update from Rob White regarding IMAS 07.13 and the Review Board's decision to approve it's review. Current 07.13 (dated 2017) is very prescriptive – has more 'shalls' than any other IMAS. There has been concern that 07.13 is not being widely used or mainstreamed, and there is a requirement to get more national authorities using it. Some elements in IMAS 07.13 are also not being addressed at all, such as climate change. NPA put forward the proposal to review, which was accepted. Now work is progressing on forming and taking forward the Technical Working Group (TWG)- with support from NPA's Kristin Holme Obrestad. This includes developing the TWG's Terms of Reference (ToR). Early discussions with HALO, FSD and others on joining the TWG, including non-mine action environmental technical experts, where possible. The ToR must reflect the mandate signed off by the Review Board, but there is an opportunity to make sure that ToR is as productive as possible. As well as word amendment and adding further sections on climate change, this could include development of a Technical Note or Annexes to give more detail or guidance. An example is IMAS 07.14 Risk Management, which includes a useful Annex on threat assessment and Technical Note on residual risk management. Several options are available, with scope to make the updated 07.13 a more comprehensive set of documents. Timeframes - the TWG will be set up during August, followed by developing the ToR. Once the ToR agreed has been signed off by the Review Board, then activities of TWG and any sub-groups will begin. Any new or revised terminology will also be incorporated into IMAS 1.10 Glossary. The timeline set must be achievable but not too distant. Likey around 12 months to complete updates and get approval.

Nature-based Solutions in the context of land release for mine action organisations -

[Nathalie Doswald](#)

Presentation slides are available [here](#)

- The basics – the first thing to understand about nature-based solutions (NbS) is the ecosystems services which the environment provides. The most obvious is **provisioning services** (water, food, medicine, raw materials) which are often over-exploited by humans. Then - **supporting**

(soil, biodiversity, habitat, photosynthesis), **cultural** (aesthetics, spiritual, recreation, education) and **regulating services** (flood prevention, pollination, cleaning water/air, climate regulation).

- NbS typically covers '**regulating**' services – there are many different types and not just carbon sequestration. Includes e.g. water balance, heat and moisture regulation (global and micro), cleaning water and air, disaster risk reduction (such as flood prevention), reducing soil erosion through the presence of vegetation and forests and pollination of crops and other plant species.
- Ecosystem services are key to underpinning NbS.
- Environmental degradation means that ecosystem services are also degraded, which can then contribute to climate change, result in extreme events, increase the risk of disasters, cause conflict/social tensions, food security, water shortages, biodiversity loss and health risks, including the risk of zoonotic diseases.
- Where environmental degradation caused by human activity can be reversed, this will lead to a host of environmental benefits and is the basis of NbS.
- NbS can be **any action** to protect, sustainably manage or restore ecosystems that addresses a societal challenge (such as climate change, disaster risk reduction, economic and social development, human health, food security, water security, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss) which simultaneously provide human well being and environmental benefits.
- NbS are not the 'silver bullet' to societal challenge but **can support** these challenges, depending on how they are implemented.
- NbS not restricted to just climate and carbon storage – a host of other important solutions.
- **3 key questions** when considering NbS:
 - What is the ecosystem?*
 - Forest, wetland, former agricultural?
 - What does it provide or what could it provide in terms of ecosystems?*
 - What societal challenge could this ecosystem address?*
 - Perhaps a mountainous area, with frequent landslides and increased vegetation could alleviate this or it an important agricultural area?
- Once these **questions** have been considered, could be looking at a suite of NbS options such as landscape restoration, wetland restoration or climate-smart agriculture/agroforestry
- Other terms used – such as Ecosystem-based approaches etc.. Other environmental management techniques may also be used as part of a NbS.
- Other important considerations – use native species (non-native invasive species can be a big problem) and ensure biodiverse restoration. For example, using a single tree-species to re-vegetate a slope may not be appropriate since it could be prone to disease and may not be the right species given the water/moisture conditions. Likewise selecting the right species in a wetland environment also critical.
- Do not consider the landscape in isolation – look at how it fit into the wider environment. For example, think about the water catchment and could there be downgradient or downstream impacts.
- A participatory approach is needed, working with communities and perhaps supporting other initiatives (such as solar cookers to reduce charcoal demands).
- Challenges to undertaking NbS – include environmental, social and economic and governance. For example in terms of benefits, how do distributional impacts on land release get passed to different community members?
- Response must be inclusive and for NbS, capacity building is also important.

- Sustainable Drylands Management in Sudan (food security and disaster resilience) – which began in 2013 – given as an example of NbS application in a challenging setting. Looked at reducing community vulnerability due to the conflict and unsustainable land use practices.
- Sudan project looked at NbS and grey-infrastructure (such as water retention structures). NbS included women-led community nurseries, community reforestation and pasture land re-seeding.
- Key building blocks included: building community partnerships and community engagement; governance; capacity building; and field interventions.

If you want to learn more, recommend the online course which runs until the end of 2022 only and take 3 to 6 hours - <https://pedrr.org/mooc>

Q&A session:

- Key advice on avoiding 'getting it wrong' is to ensure an environmental assessment is done, plus seeking advice and working with specialists with an understanding of the local area, ideally a local ecologist. Situation will be area specific – the where and why – but trialling interventions and learning from these is OK. It may not be right first time. Working with communities is key and means that corrective action can be taken.
- A key stumbling block may be identifying these local environmental partners – especially from Mine Action Authorities. Best way to identify local environmental actors? One option is the [GNDR](#).
- It can be challenging to convince other actors of the long term vision and benefits of NbS, especially where final outcome has primarily been to return land to agricultural use or for development. One approach when working with people is to make sure they are asked about the problems faced and develop solutions on how the land can be used to solve these issues (such as flooding or drought etc...).
- Can be challenges here since mine clearance is counted in square metres, whereas even small-scale ecological disaster risk reduction is typically 20+ hectares. However, this depends on location. In some cases, the area may be critical e.g. for water storage and may fit into the wider landscape. Small-scale schemes however can be useful to demonstrate viability and what could be later implemented on a wider scale.
- Another challenge will be demonstrating the ecological benefits since the timeframes are long-term.

Events and training

- **10th MSP Convention on Cluster Munitions Side Event**

We do plan to submit a proposal for a side event at the CCM MSP, 30 Aug - 2 Sept. The call is open until 15 Aug. The outline idea is to highlight the requirements of the Lausanne Action Plan in terms of environment protection and provide examples of initiatives already underway to address these and the aims of the EIMA to support this.

Contact linsey@ceobs.org if you would like to get involved.

- **Training / webinars**

As part of the RemTech Europe conference in Sept, the US Army Corps of Engineers have a webinar on Phytoremediation – [19 September](#).

A niche area of interest, but links to an earlier topic covered by the EIMA working group on the remediation of soil impacted by the open burning and open detonation of munitions.

Any Other Business

None to report.

Standing list of suggestions for forthcoming topics include:

- biodiversity enhancement measures;
- response to natural disasters and HMA planning;
- looking at failed environmental initiatives and lessons learnt for previous approaches;
- environmental degradation of explosives caused by the environment and how this may be affected by climate change (e.g. work by Colin King) – increasing speed of degradation or rendering explosives safer, in some cases. Parallels here to contaminated land and climate risk guidance currently under development in the UK.

Date of next meeting

Next meeting **Wed 5th October 2022, 12pm CET.**

Registration link here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZErd6uqjkg9IGkxowZVL2u5A0uXyDM5ud>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

[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
- Link to the [Google Drive](#) for other EIMA resources