



## Digital Innovation in Mine Action

[mineaction.net](http://mineaction.net)

### Understanding and Implementing Best Practice through Standards - Update (May 2021)

#### Φ Compliance Checking Made Simple

Created as an independent initiative by Fenix Insight Ltd, [mineaction.net](http://mineaction.net) was launched in 2020 as a freely available innovative tool that supports understanding and application of International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) to advance significant agendas in the mine action sector, including the Oslo Action Plan. As of May 2021, the mineaction.net IMAS tool has over 400 users, and is widely used by individuals, institutions, operators and authorities within the mine action community.



#### Φ International and National Mine Action Standards (IMAS and NMAS)

The mine action sector benefits from a widely respected and comprehensive set of standards that have been developed over 20 years by a range of stakeholders organised under the leadership of UNMAS and supported by the GICHD. However, the IMAS can be difficult to digest, and determining what is meant by 'IMAS compliance' can present its own set of challenges. Furthermore, the IMAS are improved over time and adjusted to reflect new knowledge, practice and understanding. Organisational Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and country specific NMAS often find it difficult to keep up to date and may not be aligned to reflect those improvements. Action #5 of the Oslo Action Plan (2020-2024) (OAP) and Action #6 of the Lausanne Action Plan (LAP) reflect the importance of addressing this challenge and calls on State Parties to update NMAS in line with the current IMAS to support implementation of the AP Mine Ban Convention and Cluster Munition Convention.

#### Φ Databasing of IMAS & development of mineaction.net

[Mineaction.net](http://mineaction.net) is the result of databasing the compliance aspects of the IMAS according to a rigorous quality management protocol. It is designed to make it easier to address the challenges of compliance by allowing users to easily query, search and filter the entire body of the compliance text from a thematic, activity-based or standard-specific perspective and to generate focused compliance checklists. Importantly, it ensures that different stakeholders have the same understanding of what 'IMAS compliance' means.

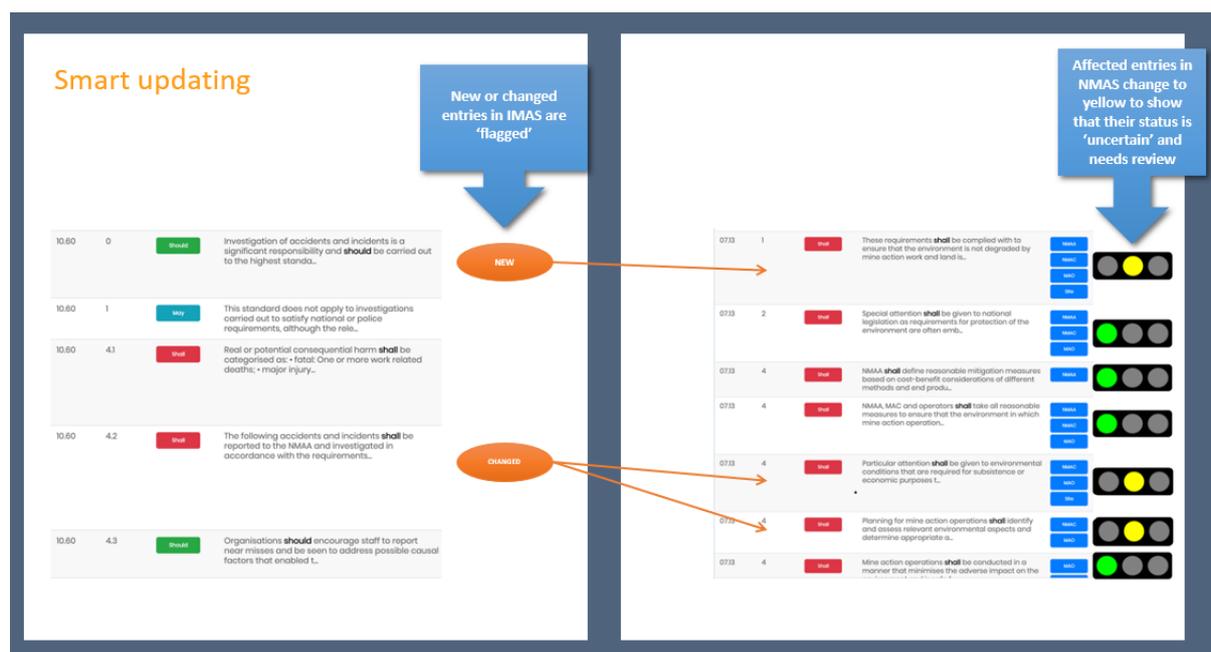
#### Φ Databasing NMAS



March 2021 saw the significant step of the decision by UNMAS/Afghanistan working with UNOPS to support the Department of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC) with the databasing of the Afghan national standards (AMAS), linking them digitally to the IMAS database and providing a 'smart' updating arrangement to support their operations, address OAP#5 and LAP#6 and promote long term national ownership and sustainability. The AMAS have now been fully databased and final user interface work is on-going. By the time of the MASG meeting, the databasing phase of the project will have been completed and DMAC will possess a fully functioning NMAS tool for the Afghan programme. This will be the very first time that an NMAS will have been incorporated into the system. Doing so offers all the existing benefits available for IMAS to mine action organisations working in Afghanistan. Several other countries are engaged in discussions concerning proposals to obtain support to implement similar projects. In Q2 2021 at least one additional project concerning the databasing of NMAS in another national programme is expected to be endorsed.

### Φ Linking IMAS and NMAS and 'Smart Updating'

The project in Afghanistan provides the first opportunity to establish direct links between NMAS and IMAS entries. Doing so means that the National Authority will be able to see which specific parts of the NMAS are affected whenever there are changes in IMAS; something that is central to the task of staying aligned with IMAS and the associated OAP and LAP actions. The linking process also allows for 'gap analysis' further enhancing confirmation of IMAS alignment within NMAS. Linked entries benefit from the 'smart' updating feature. This will notify users when standards are amended, allowing them to determine which entries relevant to their own standards have been affected and make any necessary adjustments and amendments in order to maintain compliance with IMAS. Linking IMAS and NMAS, combined with 'smart updating' makes implementation of the actions in the Oslo and Lausanne Action Plans easier and more sustainable.

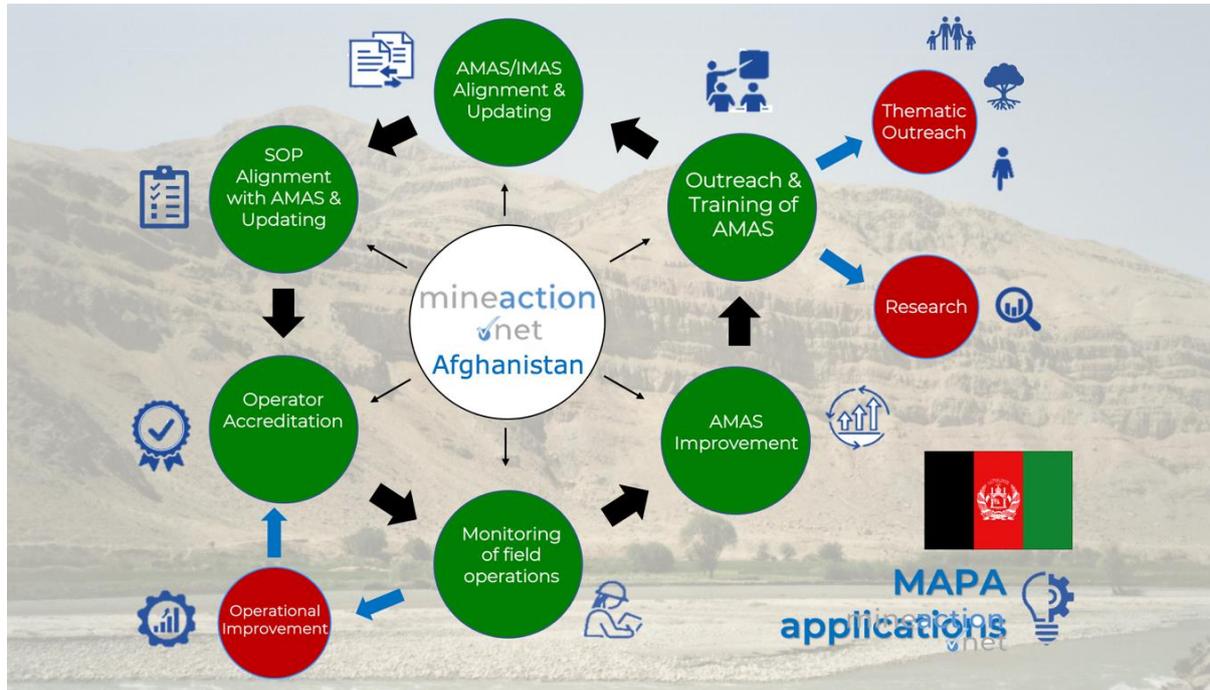


### Φ Future improvements and multi-language options

Since its inception, mineaction.net has been under constant development to increase functionality and to broaden the content of the database. Recent updates have improved the speed and utility of the tool to address requests and increasing demands. Other work is underway to use machine learning (ML) techniques to accelerate and expand the data processes that underpin mineaction.net and the associated NMAS sites. Mineaction.net can be made available in multiple languages. Discussions are already under way to make a limited number of IMAS available in at least one non-English language as well as incorporation of an entire set of NMAS in a language other than English. Apart from the benefits of making standards content available to people in their first languages, the 'smart updating' functionality also makes it easier to support the often-challenging process of keeping non-English versions of standards aligned with the English versions.

**Φ Enabling and enhancing opportunities in the Mine Action Sector**

Mineaction.net was originally established to help MAOs establish and declare, with confidence and specificity, compliance with relevant elements of IMAS, as a means of confidence-building within operating organisations, and for authorities and contracting agencies to use during prequalification, tendering, accrediting and monitoring processes. But the tool does much more: It provides frameworks for training and research. It allows NMAS to be readily assessed against IMAS. It allows users to access the IMAS from a thematic or subject- specific perspective, based on more than 100 topic tags including Gender & Diversity, Environment and IED; themes that cut across multiple standards and guidelines can be instantly accessed, sorted and viewed.



**Φ The importance of standards databasing within the mine action sector**

In 2020, the mineaction.net tool was recognised in the *Innovation Section* of the Mine Action Review concerning both the ‘Clearing the Mines’ and ‘Clearing the Cluster Munition Remnant’ publications and has been the subject of side events and discussions in forums such as the UN National Directors Meeting and the Intersessional and MSP meetings of the APMBC and CCM as well as the Mine Action Support Group (MASG).

**Φ Other standards and guidelines**

In Q4 2020 a successful pilot project funded by NPA for databasing 8 key International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) was completed. This was presented and well received by UNODA and AMAT in Q1 2021 and funds are being sought to database the entire guidelines to support the release of the new version (version 3) of the IATG. Conversations with UNIDIR and the UN DDR unit concerning collaboration on the development of Apps for the small arms standards (MOSAIC) and the Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS) have been fruitful and are on-going.

