

## **GICHD UPDATE – MASG MEETING – 24 OCTOBER 2023**

### **UPDATE ON UKRAINE**

Faced with explosive ordnance contamination on a scale rarely seen, Ukraine's mine action programme needs significant support in several key areas. This has led the GICHD to step up its support and establish a dedicated programme for Ukraine.

Since February 2022, the GICHD has continued to provide technical support in areas such as the development of national standards, information management, the implementation of demining operations and explosive ordnance risk education. The Centre also welcomed members of the Ukrainian authorities to Geneva in order to better coordinate its support for the country. In August 2023, the GICHD also organised a visit to the Lebanon Mine Action Centre (LMAC) for a Ukrainian delegation so that the LMAC could share its experience in setting up such a centre with the Ukrainian authorities. Lastly, the GICHD took part in the International Donors' Conference on Humanitarian Demining in Ukraine, held in Zagreb on 11-12 October.

Another important development for the GICHD concerns the recent establishment of a Centre for Humanitarian Demining (CHD) in Ukraine. The Director of the GICHD, Ambassador Stefano Toscano, has been invited to join the Centre's Advisory Committee. The CHD is a new body which - through the provision of analysis - aims to fill the gaps in the existing mine action architecture in Ukraine as well as ensuring the coordination of the various entities active in this field. In addition, the Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine - Ms Yulia Svyrydenko - has asked the GICHD to support and facilitate Ukraine's national strategic planning process. As a result, the Centre organized a expert strategic planning workshop beginning of October in Kyiv. This workshop resulted in a draft theory of change built off of reflections valuable contributions from all participants - a strong base to the strategy to build upon.

### **GICHD INNOVATION CONFERENCE 2023**

Promoting innovation in explosive ordnance risk reduction is at the heart of the GICHD's strategy. To this end, the Centre has set up a "Research and Innovation" programme to promote this theme in the sector, building on the efforts already made by the GICHD in this area.

In this context, the Innovation Conference organised by the GICHD from 14 to 16 November 2023 in Geneva will represent an important milestone for this programme. This conference builds on previous editions of the GICHD Technology Workshop held every two years. Following its last edition, the Centre decided to change its approach to include broader themes related to innovation. The Conference will bring together around 400 participants from 79 countries, representing national authorities, mine action organisations, universities, academics, equipment manufacturers and donors.

The Innovation Conference will provide a unique platform for discussing current innovation challenges and promoting a collective approach to meeting them. It will be an opportunity to debate the most innovative concepts, methods and tools currently being implemented in the field or under development. This event has also been designed to go beyond the technological aspects of innovation and provide a suitable space for debating all the elements that make up innovation, such as financing, standards or the prioritisation of technologies according to needs. Other subjects will be addressed during the sessions, including remote sensing, artificial intelligence, robotics and the environment.

## **LAUNCH OF IRAQ'S NATIONAL MINE ACTION STRATEGY 2023-2028**

The problem of Iraq's contamination by explosive devices is complex, encompassing all types of explosive devices and extending over the whole country. It was therefore essential for Iraq to have a clear roadmap for tackling this huge challenge.

Following a request for strategic planning support from Iraq's Ministry of Environment, the GICHD has been working closely with the Iraqi government and other national and international stakeholders since early 2021 to support the development of Iraq's Mine Action Strategy 2023-2028. This strategy was officially launched in August 2023.

The development of this strategy has been firmly rooted in an inclusive and participatory approach. The strategy seeks to demonstrate Iraq's commitment to ensuring that mine action continues to play a central role in facilitating safe reconstruction, the safe return of displaced people and the promotion of sustainable development. In addition, the principle of national ownership is a cornerstone of the strategy, with the Iraqi government committing to ensuring that national structures have a clear mandate and sufficient resources and staff to fulfil their mission. This is the first unified national mine action strategy that Iraq has ever had, which offers great opportunities to strengthen collaboration and information sharing between the different parties involved.

## **EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE RISK REDUCTION AND TRIPLE NEXUS**

The eight case studies exploring the sustainable development impacts of mine action, four of them undertaken as part of the Beyond Square Meters Joint Project with UNDP, have now concluded. Future work will endeavour to build on this work through policy research as well as capacity development, utilising the findings of these case studies and generating new guidance regarding the impact of global agendas on the work of EORR. The GICHD will also continue to highlight the sector's broader outcomes and to support our partners to better demonstrate the impact of their work across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus through training and capacity building activities.

Major areas of work in the coming year will include:

- A study on “Mine action in border areas: advancing humanitarian, development, and peace efforts” will explore the extent of EO contamination in border areas across the world and how cooperation in mine action interventions in border areas enhance humanitarian, development, and peace outcomes.
- The Global Study on Impact will build on previous research to shed light on the potential for enhancing the impact of EORR efforts through connections with global agendas. It will map different global agendas and explore how these broader frameworks can provide strategic and operational guidance for the sector, with a view to maximise the sector's effectiveness.
- A self-paced e-learning course will aim to increase understanding and promote linkages between mine action and global agendas and broader approaches. The training is intended to build and develop national capacity in operationalising these linkages and support the sector to work in a more sustainable, inclusive, efficient, and effective manner. The course is still in the design phase but will build on learnings from existing training courses and findings from our research.