

GICHD UPDATE - MASG Meeting, 23 October 2017

Non-Technical Survey Project

Non-Technical Survey (NTS) is the first step in the land release process, when evidence of contamination is gathered so that subsequent technical survey and/or clearance assets can more effectively and efficiently reduce and clear land. Improving NTS implementation remains a key activity within the mine action sector. The GICHD will continue to develop quality and accuracy of global NTS activities through several initiatives:

- Conducting NTS case studies at a national level to draw out common operational challenges and opportunities;
- Releasing a standardised training package of common global NTS skills. This training package can subsequently be adapted by operators to specific countries, environments and contexts;
- Improving the content of its NTS Global Course to ensure training objectives remain relevant to prevailing challenges in the field. The target audiences for the course are operators and supervisors of NTS operations.

The next NTS Global Course will take place in April 2018 in Germany. There are two NTS Courses specific to contamination stemming from recent conflicts planned for 2018.

Mine Action and the SDGs

On 9 June 2017, the GICHD and the UNDP launched the publication “Leaving no one Behind: Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals”. This joint study explores the links between mine action and the 2030 Agenda and reflects upon the current understanding of the contribution and impact that mine action is having on achieving the SDGs in countries affected by landmines, cluster munitions and other ERW. Showcasing country practice and exploring new pathways, the report provides entry points for policymakers, mine action organisations, UN agencies and donor partners to tighten the coherence of their work, both within the mine action sector and the broader peace and development communities.

A presentation of the publication took place on 12 October 2017 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York during an event co-hosted by the Permanent Missions of Italy, Lao PDR and Switzerland. This presentation was part of an event to talk about how the results of mine action have strategic importance in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

A follow-up project by the GICHD and UNDP is currently in preparation for 2018 to support countries in aligning their mine action programme to the SDGs.

GICHD's Strategic Planning Support

The development, implementation, monitoring and review of national mine action strategies present affected countries with opportunities to strengthen national ownership and improve coordination and management of their national mine action programmes. Inclusive and participatory processes bring relevant stakeholders together to elaborate and agree on visions, missions, goals, objectives and targets, whereas stakeholder workshops provide useful platforms for frank and transparent discussions.

The GICHD, as a neutral, external stakeholder, plays an important role in facilitating these discussions, wherein stakeholders are encouraged to have honest, constructive conversations and agree on appropriate and realistic solutions. These processes can strengthen collaboration and information sharing and facilitate IMAS-compliant approaches and operations, ensure that mine action is integrated into broader development agendas and that the important issue of managing residual contamination with sustainable, national means is discussed and appropriately reflected. As more affected countries approach the completion stage of clearing all known mines/ERW, appropriate and context-specific national strategies will be increasingly central to promoting effective and efficient operations that facilitate timely completion.

Strategic planning has been a principal focus of GICHD's support to affected countries for several years, including in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Sudan, Sri Lanka and Tajikistan. More recently, in 2016, GICHD started supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina and Zimbabwe in their efforts to develop new national strategies. In 2017, Zimbabwe's first ever national mine action strategy has been formally approved and will be launched in Harare on 24 November 2017.

IMSMA Core deployment

The GICHD has established itself as a pivotal provider of information management (IM) capacity development to the mine action community. The Centre's main objective is to ensure that mine action actors are enabled to leverage information effectively towards evidence-based operational and strategic decision making. One of the cornerstones of the IM services provided by the GICHD is the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA).

A strategic partnership between GICHD and Esri signed in 2016 ensures that the mine action community will enjoy full and affordable access to Esri's state-of-the-art GIS technology – tools that are ideally suited to support the geographic nature of mine action. A GIS-based IMSMA Core will ensure that the challenges posed by explosive ordnance contamination are appropriately placed in the context of other humanitarian, development and socio-economic interests. It will also enable the seamless sharing of data from the field to headquarters as well as between mine action programmes and external partners.

IMSMA Core will be officially launched in February 2018, but pilot deployments are ongoing. The feedback received is extremely positive and promising, and it confirms that IMSMA Core is ready for broader deployment. For these reasons, the GICHD is in discussion with a selected group of national partners about transitioning their IM System to IMSMA Core.