

Understanding and Implementing Standards

[Mineaction.net](https://mineaction.net): A new and innovative tool



Φ International Mine Action Standards (IMAS)

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. The 45 separate standards promote good practice across mine action; not only safety and efficiency of demining operations but extending to information management and reporting requirements, mainstreaming of gender and diversity, explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), environmental considerations and victim assistance. The IMAS detail the responsibilities of actors at different levels: national mine action authorities (NMAAs); mine action centres (MACs) and mine action operators (MAOs), as well as some individual roles. The normative elements of the standards use the word 'shall' to indicate "requirements, methods or specifications which are to be applied in order to conform to the standard", 'should' to indicate "the preferred requirements, methods or specifications" and 'may' to indicate "a possible method or course of action". National mine action standards (NMAAs) are developed with appropriate adaptations to embrace local contexts and conditions but remain aligned within the global IMAS frame.

Φ Making sense of IMAS compliance

In 'hard copy' the IMAS run to over 1000 pages. They can be difficult to digest and questions of what is meant by 'IMAS compliance' can be difficult to answer. The IMAS are improved over time and adjusted to reflect new knowledge, practice and understanding. Organisational SOPs and country specific NMAAs 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) reflects the importance of this challenge and calls on State Parties to update NMAAs in line with the current IMAS to support the implementation of the AP Mine Ban Convention.

Φ Databasing IMAS

The new online App at mineaction.net is the result of databasing the compliance aspects of the IMAS within a rigorous quality management protocol. It is designed to make it easier to address the challenges of compliance. It allows 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 users have the same understanding of what 'IMAS compliance' means. Mineaction.net was presented to the IMAS Review Board at the UN-NDM in February 2020. It was released into the sector in late April and after 5 months the free online tool had already attracted over 300 professional users spanning UN agencies, NGO and commercial operators, NMAA, regional organisations, militaries, academics, researchers and donors.

Φ Enabling and enhancing opportunities

mineaction.net was originally established to help MAOs establish and declare with confidence 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 NMAAs 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 IMAS can be instantly accessed, sorted and viewed. The tool also offers a high degree of granularity of analytics from passive and active user engagement with mineaction.net to support the improvement and evolution of IMAS.



Φ Current and future activity

Mineaction.net is under constant development to increase functionality and to broaden the content of the database. Most activities are not influenced by COVID restrictions. Current activities and future developments include:

- NMAAs databasing, mapping NMAAs to IMAS, and establishing alerts systems and 'smart updates' to keep NMAAs current – promoting sustainability and ownership of national programmes;
- Development of 'organisational compliance management' functionality, to support the management of compliance arrangements between multiple projects or countries, and enabling the sharing of checklists with headquarters, NMAA or donors;
- Multi-language options that remain current with the English version through assisted translation (IMAS 04:10), machine learning and curated assistance; and
- Databasing other 'standards' and resources such as IATG, MOSAIC, IDDRS and other relevant disarmament and IHL material to allow cross reference functionality.

