



IMSMA COMMUNITY – 2011 END OF YEAR REPORT

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As 2011 ends, I would like to summarise the most productive year for the information management section to date. You will see some of the key developments which have taken place within the GICHD IM team – but not all. This has been an exceptionally busy, interesting year and we cannot contain all of our activity in this document. Some of our projects will continue into next year before concluding and, as always, our pursuit of progress continues across a number of less-visible areas.

AWARD-WINNING

The most rewarding and exciting event of 2011 was the announcement that we had won the 2011 Esri “**Making a difference award**”, awarded in front of an 15,000-strong audience at the international Esri user conference in San Diego, Californiaⁱ. We see this award as recognition of our strategy during the last three years to focus on capacity development in broader information management and the consolidation of IMSMA^{NG}. IMSMA is now installed in more than 60 countries and we will **reach 1’200 installations** by end-2011. After the most recent release of IMSMA^{NG}, the **hardware key is no longer necessary** to install or run IMSMA^{NG}.

TRANSITIONING

A few countries still use the Legacy IMSMA version. In 2011, Cambodia completed their migration to IMSMA^{NG} and several others are close to completion. We hope, and expect, to **have all countries using the same version of IMSMA by end-2012**.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Field feed-backⁱⁱ and requests prompted releases of IMSMA^{NG} **5.07 and 5.08** in 2011. These releases improved built-in GIS capacity and overall performance. The use of **IMSMA Remote Entry (RE)**, a minimized version of IMSMA^{NG}, took off in 2011. Several countries are now using IMSMA^{RE} in regional offices. With IMSMA RE user can fill in and submit forms via email or file to a headquarters, where information can be analysed and approved for import to the main IMSMA^{NG} installation. In 2012, maintenance of IMSMA^{NG} will consist of an infrastructure upgrade of incorporated software elements “under the hood”. Examples are a new MySQL engine, a new ArcGIS Engine and an upgrade of the iReport tool.

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH AND TRAINING

Our joint research projects with the University of Geneva are paying off. Release of two extensions to **ArcGIS Desktop** will occur in early 2012:

- *Simplified Toolbar for Accelerating Repeated Tasks* (START)
- *Multicriteria Analysis SCOring Tool* (MASCOT)ⁱⁱ.

The common goal of both tools is to make it easier for mine action programmes to use advanced GIS tools for data analysis. We have also developed an **online e-learning course for GIS analysis** in mine action, available for free on the “Virtual Campus” website of Esriⁱⁱⁱ. These skills are included in the A2 level information management training. We will work closely with UNITAR in 2012 to increase accessibility to GIS courses for mine action programmes.

The ***Mine action Information management Qualification schema*** (MIQ) is in use in our IM training. Our courses are more efficient as a result and it has enabled us to better support MA programmes. The MIQ was updated at the end of the year to reflect changes to the A3 and E levels^{iv}. The Expert level is no longer a certification or a course. It is now an annual coordination meeting of the IM representatives of organisations active in providing support in mine action. This meeting will be held in the first quarter every year, over three days, in Geneva.

In 2012, apart from this Expert meeting, the emphasis will be on **delivering courses regionally**. Exact dates, places, and course levels will be posted on the GICHD website in January. Two courses will be held in Europe, one in Sweden, hosted by the MSB at their Sando training facility, and one in Switzerland at a similar training facility. Our policy of decentralising courses is based on reducing costs, on creating regional collaboration between countries and tailoring courses to regional needs.

ACCESSIBILITY

We have recently collaborated with *Google.org* to make Google applications more accessible to mine action and results are already apparent. For a small annual fee^v, MA programmes with Internet access will be **able to display satellite imagery from Google Earth inside IMSMA^{NG}**. This will be very useful for programmes with limited access to topographic maps or satellite imagery. We are also developing functionality to better integrate Google Earth with IMSMA^{NG}, as well as joint technologies for *crowd sourcing*^{vi} to collect information from the public in emergency situations, using cell phones.

THE YEAR AHEAD

2012 will have many interesting new developments. A **new staff member** will join us in mid January as the *Information Services Coordinator*, **Olivier Cottray**, currently of iMMAP. He will ensure that our support is efficiently managed and that we can invest more effort working with partners, inside and out of MA.

In research, we are looking forward to the delivery of the feasibility study first phase in we are supporting the European Space Agency. Many of you are involved as partners with one of the three competing consortiums of this study. We hope the feasibility studies will uncover potential **new uses of space technology in mine action**. Some intriguing ideas are emerging from this project, such as improved use of satellite imagery and navigation technology tailored for MA.

Research projects that will continue next year include the trial and adaptation of **IMSMA^{NG} for use in Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM)** – the safe handling of ammunition storages and destruction of stockpiles. Tests are already being conducted in Albania for this application. We are

also looking at tailored adaptations of IMSMA for explosive violence reduction, small arms/light weapons management, counter-IED operations, and disability health information management.

Meanwhile, our GIS department has several interesting projects:

- a project with multiple partners (including UNITAR and UNOSAT) to evaluate the use of **mini aerial photography planes (MAPP)**. They cost less than 10'000USD and have been tested in agriculture for over a decade. They are rugged and fit in a carry-on bag^{vi}. Their output imagery is better than very high resolution satellite imagery. The 2012 GICHD Technology workshop will feature several producers of such systems and we will present our evaluation results.
- evaluating the use and accuracy of **geodetic measurement devices** (compass, GPS, dGPS and triangulation) in MA, which will result in a handbook on measuring and improving the accuracy of measurements in MA.

Although we are clearly doing a lot of research, it is important to note that our policy is to put support and training to the community first and that **research should be a secondary activity**. We hope that you found this quick update useful and we invite you to contact us for further information or to discuss topics on the IMSMA forum.

There are exciting challenges and opportunities waiting for us and our partners in 2012. All of us in the GICHD IM team wish you all a very Happy New Year.

Daniel, Anne-Li, Aurora, Halil, Inna, Jean-Paul, Olivier and Pierre

ⁱ A video of the award ceremony is here: <http://tinyurl.com/imsmaesri>

ⁱⁱ Special thanks to iMMAP and Bekim Kajtazi for their input.

ⁱⁱⁱ The course is on this website <http://tinyurl.com/imsmacourse>

^{iv} See the current MIQ here <http://tinyurl.com/imsmamig>

^v The approximate cost is an annual fee of 450USD. The company, Arc2Earth, does not sell this software to users in all countries.

^{vi} Special thanks to MAG for their contribution to this idea. It is important to note that we are still at the feasibility stage. There are clear risks with having the public reporting on suspected hazards and it is hence not certain that this technology will be something that we recommend.

^{vii} See a video of one of the models here: <http://tinyurl.com/imsmauav>