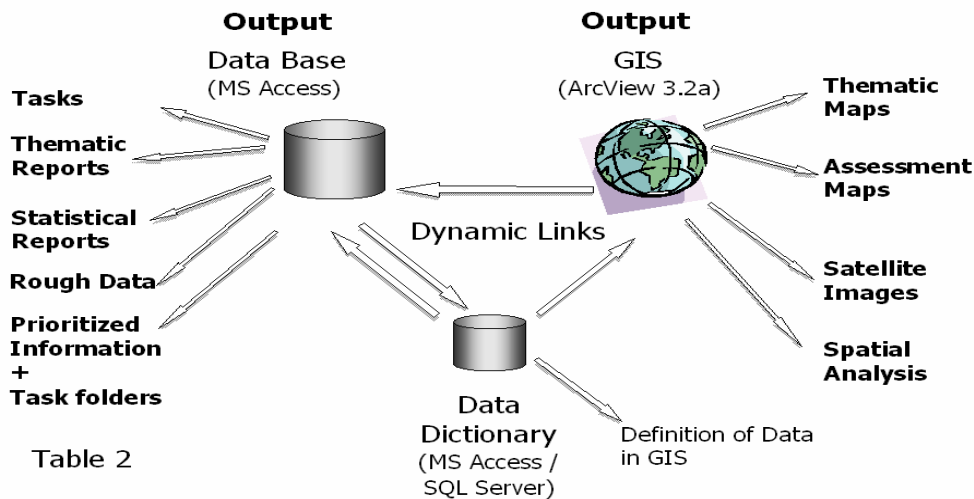


IMSMA for Operations: An Overview

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As we have already heard, IMSMA is not just a tool for the information technology cell within a mine action centre. IMSMA is primarily designed to be used by and to assist operations with their daily tasks. The primary component of the system is its database, which is designed to record and display data collected in the field. The database is supported by a sophisticated set of mapping functions in the form of a geographic information system (GIS). Based on standard commercial software, the system provides an easy-to-use set of functionalities geared to operational support.



In general, IMSMA supports operations by providing a way to record, display and analyze the results of field operations. It also allows operations to define and record the ongoing status of specific processes and hazards. Below are some of the themes/functionalities that are implemented in IMSMA:

Dangerous areas – hazardous areas

This function allows for the recording of areas that are suspected of being or known to be contaminated with landmines or unexploded ordnance (UXO). The function allows for the recording of a point, an area or a perimeter.

Impact Survey – Level 1 Survey

These surveys are normally conducted on a national basis and provide an assessment of the socio-economic impact of mines and UXO on the communities surveyed. The data is linked to the impact parameter function within the database. It is key to note that the benefits associated with measuring impact are contingent on the allocation of relevant values to the impact parameter listings.

Technical Survey – Level 2 Survey

Technical Surveys are carried out to define/evaluate the boundaries of minefields and to gather key information that will be of assistance in methodological and logistic decisions related to demining.

Completion Survey – Level 3 Survey

The Completion Survey/Report is the document that provides information concerning areas that have been demined and/or where UXO has been removed. It can serve as a way of making the demining agency responsible for the areas it hands over to local authorities.

Accidents

The IMSMA system can document both demining and mine accidents. The former term refers to accidents involving mine action staff; the latter relates to the civilian population. This type of information can, in the case of demining staff, provide key information pertaining to the use of Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs), the reliability of protective equipment, etc. In the case of the civilian population, the information can assist in the assessment of a problem and can increase the ability to respond to the immediate needs of a population.

Minefields

The minefield record can be the product of a technical survey. It outlines the perimeter of a suspected area, as well as recording its geographic and topographic characteristics. Progress reports on a clearance process conducted on a minefield can be directly linked to the minefield form, allowing us to evaluate the speed of progress and document devices found.

Clearances

Clearance records correspond to the actual process of conducting a demining activity on an area that has been identified as a minefield. As is the case with minefields, clearances can be linked to progress reports that will again assist in assessing the speed of the process and the findings made.

Mine risk education (MRE)

The MRE function allows for the recording of MRE activities conducted in relation to a place and an activity class. This function can also be tasked and can record instances where MRE is linked to other mine action activities.

Tasking tool

The system contains a comprehensive tasking tool that allows managers and/or operations staff to create task folders controlling either an area or an organization. These task folders can assist in the long-term monitoring of progress and thereby assist in the evaluation and redesign of operational plans.

IMSMA outputs

It is key to recognize that IMSMA can provide a variety of outputs. These include data-entry forms, single reports, summary reports and maps.

Overall, IMSMA can be a helpful operational tool, assisting with operational tasks such as planning, monitoring and evaluating the conduct of work. Clearly, the extent of the database's usefulness remains contingent on a variety of factors, including (but not limited to) the knowledge that operations staff have regarding the existence of the data and its potential usefulness, and the quality and reliability of the data itself.