



DRAFT FIRST EDITION OF IMAS RELATING TO LAND RELEASE ARE PUBLISHED

Demining is an expensive and labour intensive operation. In many mine-affected countries the exact location of the contamination is not known, and large areas are often recorded as suspected hazardous areas. Sometimes hazardous areas are being recorded based on fear, not on evidence of mines and ERW. When demining resources are deployed on an imprecise hazardous area, donor money will be spent on clearing non-mined areas. As a result, demining operations will be unnecessarily prolonged in a given county. Additionally, in certain circumstances when deminers have been tasked in the non-mined areas, they get discouraged as they cannot locate any mine or ERW for months during operations. This sometimes led to undesired demining accidents due to negligence and violation of safety procedures as deminers lose interest and all signals from the ground are being treated as non-mine.



In the time of a global financial down turn, and the Convention's obligation for mine-affected states to get rid of their landmines/ERW problems, mine action programmes should not only conduct demining in a safe manner but also in a manner that improves efficiency. Mine action authorities and programme managers should strive to develop more efficient methods of releasing land through non-technical and technical survey in order to focus clearance resources on genuinely mined areas. The development of national policies and standards is important in order to establish a successful land release concept. Policy and standards should encourage the use of more efficient procedures to identify or better define hazardous areas through survey and clearance using an evidence-based and documented approach.

To this end, the GICHD in collaboration with UNMAS and the mine action community represented through the IMAS Review Board, over an extended period, has developed, approved, and published three International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) relating to land release. These IMAS provide guidance on the overall land release process and its sub-components and assist in the development of national policy and standards. They are:

- IMAS 08.20 Land Release
- IMAS 08.21 Non-technical Survey
- IMAS 08.22 Technical Survey

IMAS 08.20 Land Release – provides guidance on the process of land release to enable the development of a national land release policy and outlines broad responsibilities of a national mine action authority and demining organizations.

IMAS 08.21 Non-technical - provides guidance and establishes principles for the conduct of non-technical survey in the land release process and details responsibilities of the mine action organizations involved.

IMAS 08.21 Technical survey – provides guidance and establishes principles for the conduct of technical survey in the land release process and details responsibilities of the mine action organization involved.

The full introduction of these draft IMAS will require changes to other IMAS, some may need small changes for consistency while a few will change substantially. These changes will now be initiated and, when completed, they will simply be exchanged with the current version and will be published accordingly. At that time, the IMAS covering land release will be integrated consistently into the complete IMAS series.

It should be noted that the old IMAS 08.20 (Technical Survey) will be archived because the new IMAS 08.21 and 08.22 completely replace this IMAS.

The existing IMAS 08.10 will remain in the IMAS framework pending the acceptance by the IMAS Review Board of a new draft IMAS, which will be called 05.10 Information Management. For a full-picture of IMAS, please refer to the IMAS Framework (as at June 2009) at following [link](#).

Mine action organizations and authorities can now use the Land Release approach and terminology related to the processes of dealing with the suspicion of hazards and the subsequent actions to remove this suspicion, in the ‘package’ of draft Land Release IMAS.

Pending the full integration of the Land Release IMAS into the IMAS series, care should be taken when encountering inconsistencies or references to General Mine Action Assessment and Technical Survey in other IMAS.

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