

Mine Action Innovation Hub

Innovation Technical Group (ITG) - Workplan 2026

Version: v2-01Apr2026

This workplan outlines the objectives, scope, and coordinated activities in 2026. The plan serves as a guiding framework for implementation, monitoring progress, and maintaining accountability while allowing flexibility to adapt to evolving technical requirements and stakeholder needs.

The workplan draws on observations from the activities during the previous year, concretely the following:

- Length and periodicity of meetings: shorter and more frequent proved beneficial
- Subject: targeted thematic sessions instead of multiple subjects
- Focus: establishment of voluntary functional subgroups to advance development of concrete deliverables/achievement of specific objectives
- In person meetings: dedicated instead of back-to-back with innovation events to allow time to advance on specific objectives

1. Main events/activities

Innovation Session: Mine action in Urban Areas (28Sep–02Oct26), Geneva, Switzerland

This year's Innovation Session is about the challenges of mine action in urban areas, in response to the increasing scale and complexity of explosive ordnance contamination in densely populated and conflict-affected urban areas.

The purpose is to bring together mine action practitioners, national authorities, recovery and debris management stakeholders, researchers, and technology experts to collaboratively develop project ideas/concepts that address priority operational challenges in urban environments, with a strong emphasis on being actionable, innovative, and high impact. The format of the Innovation Session is tailored for ideation, being dynamic, participatory and require an active voice from all participants. Tentative agenda, webpage and opening of applications for attendance expected by 20Apr.

A technical subgroup will support setting the agenda and execution of the Innovation Session.

Innovation Award 2026: Open Innovation

In 2026 the award was launched in March in an open innovation format, with selected awards given within 3 different categories: Breakthrough, Readiness and Frugal. More information can be found here in the [webpage](#).

A technical subgroup will constitute the Evaluation Committee for the Award and review applications.

2. ITG meetings

In 2026, the following meetings are planned:

- Five (5) online short thematic ITG meetings
- One (1) in-person meeting ITG meetings, in Belgrade, Serbia (hosted by SMAC)

Additional ad-hoc meetings may be proposed as needed. Technical subgroups will meet as deemed necessary.

The table below summarizes the themes and dates of the planned meetings.

No.	Topic	Modality	Objectives	Lead	Date
1	Workplan 2026 and technical subgroups	Online	Review Workplan 2026 and priorities and establishment of technical subgroups. Sharing of information on Training for UAV applications in NTS and Demin Ukraine.	GICHD	17Mar
2	Explosive tracing and detection technologies	Online	Overview of ongoing trials on explosive tracing, technical readiness levels (TRL) and potential applications and challenges. <i>Presentations on existing technologies, trials of emerging technologies, and challenges</i>	GICHD + ITG members	28May
3	Need-finding and case studies development	In Person (Belgrade, Serbia)	Case studies presented by National Mine Action Authorities and mine action organizations on key challenges facing their programs. Building on the Research Agenda.	SMAC + GICHD Support by subgroup	8-9 Sept
4	Technical survey and reduction challenges	Online	Applications and approaches to improving land reduction through technical survey. Discussions on reduction criteria in various contexts <i>Case studies and lessons learned</i>	GICHD + NMAA+ Operators Support by subgroup	Sept26 (date TBD)
5	Innovation Awards	Online	Discussions on ideas and proposals from the innovation award and their potential applications	ITG members Support by subgroup	Oct26 (date TBD)
6	T&E and accreditation innovative tools and methods	Online	Presentations from the sub-working group on T&E and accreditation of innovative tools and methods	GICH + ITG members Support by subgroup	Nov/Dec26 (date TBD)

3. Technical subgroups

ITG in person meeting: Need-finding and case studies development (8 – 9- Sept 26, Belgrade, Republic of Serbia)

Building on the ITG's need-finding work for the Land Release Research Agenda, this in-person session will present and refine specific, context-driven case studies that require innovative approaches. The goal is to create a library of case studies for researchers and academics to address. The session is primarily targeted at NMAA and MAO, and researchers and technologists are also welcome.

This technical subgroup will support SMAC in setting the format and agenda for this meeting.

PoC: Miodrag Milenkovic (miodrag.milenkovic@czrs.gov.rs) and Boris Ohanyan (b.ohanyan@gichd.org)

Non-explosive disposal and blast and fragmentation protective technologies

The scale and complexity of explosive ordnance contamination in densely populated and conflict-affected urban areas have been identified as important challenges to mine action operations. Disposal of explosive ordnance needs to be carried out in contexts of limited access and permissions to use high explosives and demanding requirements for mitigating the potential impacts of blast, fragmentation and ground shock resulting from high-order disposal. We are researching available technologies and methods for non-explosive disposal and for mitigation of the impacts of the blast and fragmentation effects of high-order detonation.

This technical subgroup will engage in the review of the research as it develops, support identification of new tools and technologies and respective test and evaluation.

PoC: Georgina Darlow (g.darlow@gichd.org) and Boris Ohanyan (b.ohanyan@gichd.org)
Please indicate your interest in the subject of non-explosive disposal and/or blast and fragmentation mitigation.

Test and Evaluation (T&E) protocols for UAV-mounted remote sensing technologies

Remote sensing technologies are increasingly adopted across mine action programmes. While these technologies provide significant opportunities to improve safety and operational effectiveness, the sector faces persistent challenges including limited comparability of trials, uneven documentation of test conditions, variable data management practices, and insufficient harmonisation of performance assessment.

This technical subgroup will contribute to the development of initial drafts for T&E protocols, and preparatory work for standardization proposals.

PoC: Matthew Abercrombie (matthew.abercrombie@halotrust.org), Alain Nellen (a.nellen@gichd.org) and Boris Ohanyan (b.ohanyan@gichd.org)

Technical Survey

The GICHD is reviewing its Guide to Land Release: Technical Methods (from 2011). Over the intervening 15 years, the sector has undergone significant evolution, marked by new contamination challenges, including cluster munition remnants and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), the emergence of novel technologies and survey approaches, and the accumulation of operational experience from programs worldwide. The updated guide will synthesize these developments to provide National Mine Action Authorities (NMAAs) and operations managers with contemporary, practical, and evidence-based guidance for TS.

This technical subgroup will engage in the review of the research as it develops, ensuring the research reflects the impact of innovative tools and technologies deployed in the field.

PoC: Radwa Rabie (r.rabie@gichd.org) and Boris Ohanyan (b.ohanyan@gichd.org)

Land Release Research Agenda: Peer-review

This research agenda provides a framework outlining key global challenges affecting the efficiency, effectiveness, and safety of land release operations. It aims to prioritize the areas with the greatest impact in the mine action sector and promote alignment between researchers, academics and technology providers and field practitioners. In doing so, it's ambition is to enable research and innovation efforts grounded in concrete needs.

This technical subgroup will peer-review the final draft of Land Release Research Agenda, building on the inputs provided during the workshop session of Sep25 and ITG meeting of Oct25.

PoC: Radwa Rabie (r.rabie@gichd.org) and Boris Ohanyan (b.ohanyan@gichd.org)

Innovation Session 2026: Mine Action in Urban Areas (29 Sep – 1 Oct 26, Geneva, Switzerland)

PoC: Alain Nellen (a.nellen@gichd.org) and Boris Ohanyan (b.ohanyan@gichd.org)

Innovation Award 2026

PoC: Boris Ohanyan (b.ohanyan@gichd.org) and Alain Nellen (a.nellen@gichd.org)

4. Other activities

UNDP Underwater Innovation Challenge

[UNDP Call Seeks Innovative Ways to Make Communities Safer from Hidden Underwater Explosives | United Nations Development Programme](#)

UNDP asked the ITG for expressions of interest to support the evaluation of the proposals of the challenge. 10 members offered to support. More information to be shared once evaluation is completed.

Minesight Technologies Challenge - Excavation

<https://lnkd.in/dz2D7kh4>

Launched in 30Mar by a member of the ITG, with a focus on Ukraine. The subject of Excavation was covered at the ITG meeting of Mar25. All relevant ITG members are invited to submit proposals.

Publishing articles through Innovation Hub platform

The Innovation Hub could serve as a platform to publish research and innovation related articles. It would entail:

- Publishing on the Innovation Hub website (which is expected by Jun26).
- Peer review by qualified voluntary ITG members.

This would be done on a free flow basis, as requested, without adding resources to go after articles and publications or producing issues.

A short concept paper will be drafted by GICHD to describe the initiative more concretely, incorporating the feedback received from ITG. An [MS Form](#) questionnaire was distributed to the ITG to collect further inputs and validate support for the initiative.