GICHD



Assessment of Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming in Mine Action in Viet Nam

Final assessment report



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Canada

VNMAC
VIETNAM NATIONAL MINE ACTION CENTRE

UNDP

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Acronyms

CHA	Confirmed Hazardous Area
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
EO	Explosive ordnance
EORE	Explosive Ordnance Risk Education
GDEI	Gender, Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion
GDI	Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
KVPVP	Korea–Viet Nam Peace Village Project
KVMAP	Korea–Viet Nam Mine Action Project
MAG	Mines Advisory Group
MAWG	Mine Action Working Group
NAP	National Action Plan
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
PMC	Provincial Military Command
PSC	Provincial Site Command
PTVN	PeaceTrees Viet Nam
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TCVN	Tiêu chuẩn Việt Nam (Viet Nam National Standards)
QCVN	Quy chuẩn kỹ thuật quốc gia Việt Nam (Viet Nam National Technical Regulations)
QTMAC	Quang Tri Mine Action Centre
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UXO	Unexploded explosive ordnance
VNMAC	Viet Nam National Mine Action Centre
WPS	Women, Peace, and Security

Acknowledgment

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Forward by VNMAC

Addressing the consequences of explosive remnants of war is a humanitarian, developmental, and national defence and security priority of long-term significance for Viet Nam. Over the years, under the leadership of the Party and the State, the direction of National Steering Committee 701 and the Ministry of National Defence, and with the active participation of ministries, sectors, local authorities, and national and international organisations, mine action efforts in Viet Nam have achieved significant results. These efforts have not only helped protect the lives and well-being of affected communities but have also supported livelihood recovery, socio-economic development, and the strengthening of national defence and security.

Alongside sustained efforts in survey and clearance, explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), and victim assistance, Viet Nam has increasingly paid attention to ensuring that all people affected by explosive ordnance have equitable opportunities to participate in, access, and benefit from mine action programmes. This approach is consistent with the Party's orientations and the State's laws and policies on gender equality, the rights of persons with disabilities, and inclusive development. It also contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the implementation of Viet Nam's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

The report "Assessment of Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming in Mine Action in Viet Nam" is the first comprehensive study of its kind to examine the extent to which gender, diversity, equality, and inclusion (GDEI) considerations have been integrated into the policies, management and coordination mechanisms, and operational activities of the mine action sector in Viet Nam. The assessment provides an objective analysis of achievements to date, identifies existing gaps, and highlights opportunities to further strengthen the quality, effectiveness, and inclusiveness of mine action efforts in the years ahead.

VNMAC highly values the contributions of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the research experts, government authorities, local administrations, national and international mine action organisations, as well as the communities and individuals who participated in the study and shared their knowledge, experiences, and perspectives. The findings and recommendations presented in this report will serve as an important reference for VNMAC and its partners in refining policies, standards, and technical guidelines, as well as in developing the National Mine Action Programme for the period 2026-2045.

VNMAC remains committed to strengthening its role as the national coordinating authority, fostering stakeholder engagement, promoting evidence-based decision-making, and progressively integrating the principles of gender, diversity, equality, and inclusion throughout the mine action cycle. We believe that an inclusive, people-centred approach will enhance the effectiveness of mine action programmes, ensure that no one is left behind, and make a meaningful contribution to the sustainable development of Viet Nam.



Executive summary

Purpose and scope

This assessment examines how gender, diversity, equality, and inclusion (GDEI) are reflected in Viet Nam's mine action response across governance, regulation, operations, employment practices, and community-facing activities. The objective is to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities to further align mine action practice with national legislation and policy commitments on equality and non-discrimination, as well as with relevant international standards, while remaining realistic about institutional mandates and operational contexts. This assessment provides a practical roadmap VNMAC can integrate into the 2026–2045 Programme and forthcoming technical guidance, specifying minimum GDEI expectations across planning, tasking, monitoring, and workforce development.

Methodology

The assessment uses a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative sources. It includes a desk review of national legislation, strategies, and standards, alongside international frameworks such as *International Mine Action Standards* (IMAS) and the *United Nations Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines for Mine Action*. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with government institutions, national and international mine action operators, and implementing partners, complemented by an anonymous staff survey on GDEI conducted in December 2025. Available administrative and programme data were also reviewed. While the findings are indicative rather than statistically representative, they provide a triangulated and system-level analysis of current practices and trends.

Summary of key findings

Governance, regulation, and standards

Viet Nam has taken important steps to strengthen national ownership and coherence of mine action through the recent adoption of national mine action standards (Tiêu chuẩn Việt Nam – TCVN) covering the full mine action cycle. These standards are broadly aligned with IMAS and provide a solid foundation for consistent practice. However, the integration of GDEI considerations across the standards is uneven. Victim assistance and information management standards contain clearer provisions related to non-discrimination and data disaggregation, while other standards—particularly those related to accreditation, quality management, and monitoring and evaluation—remain largely focused on technical compliance. This limits the systematic translation of national equality and non-discrimination commitments into mine action governance and oversight.

Viet Nam has established a strong policy foundation for GDEI through its ratification of key international conventions—including Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities—and through comprehensive national legislation guaranteeing equality and non-discrimination. A significant recent development is the adoption of Viet Nam's first National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2024–2030), which explicitly recognizes the need to address the enduring consequences of war, including unexploded ordnance and other remnants of war. The Plan's objectives on women's participation in peace and security decision-making and on gender-responsive relief and recovery create a strong policy entry point for integrating gender equality within mine action governance, operations, and recovery efforts.

The review indicates that the TCVNs demonstrate moderate and progressively strengthening alignment with IMAS on GDEI, with particularly strong integration in programme-oriented areas such as explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), Victim Assistance, and Risk Management. In these areas, requirements often reflect IMAS expectations on non-discrimination, inclusive participation, and disaggregated data, while in technical standards integration is more limited and primarily focused on basic data collection. Overall, the standards provide a solid foundation, with opportunities to further strengthen consistency by translating existing commitments into more systematic operational requirements across all areas of mine action.

The validation workshop further confirmed that the principal challenge is not the absence of policy commitments, but the uneven translation of those commitments into routine implementation. Participants emphasised the need for clearer institutional responsibilities, practical guidance, stronger use of disaggregated data, and greater attention to the experiences of persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, youth, older persons, and women seeking leadership and technical roles.

Information management and data use

Mine action information systems for survey, clearance, EORE, and victim assistance are somewhat established, with regular data collection and reporting from local to national levels in some provinces. In some cases, sex- and age-disaggregated data are collected and used for reporting and operational planning. However, there is limited evidence that such data are consistently analysed to identify differential impacts or patterns of exclusion, or that they are routinely used to inform prioritisation, targeting, or resource allocation.

At the national level, the Vietnam National Mine Action Database Centre, managed by VNMAC, operates a centralized mine action database through which data are collected and shared with relevant authorities. However, the system is not yet publicly accessible online, and external units or organizations must submit formal requests to obtain information for specific geographic areas while data consolidation and user access arrangements are still being finalized.

Operations and community engagement

Across EORE, survey, clearance, and victim assistance, inclusive practices are evident but vary across contexts and activities. EORE delivery reaches large numbers of people, particularly children through schools and communities through local channels, while some population groups—such as out-of-school children, working-age adults, older persons, ethnic minority women, and persons with disabilities—are reached less consistently, reflecting opportunities to further adapt delivery modalities, timing, and approaches to social norms. Participatory and dialogue-based approaches are used in some contexts but are not yet applied systematically. In victim assistance and community support, interventions often demonstrate sensitivity to poverty, geographic isolation, and indirect victims, though the use of disaggregated data to guide prioritisation and adaptive management remains limited.

Employment, training, and institutional capacity

The mine action workforce remains predominantly male, particularly within government institutions and in technical and leadership roles. Representation of ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities is very limited across the sector, especially in operational posts. Recruitment and career progression systems are generally professional and merit-based, but largely neutral in design, which may inadvertently reinforce existing imbalances. Training and capacity-building on GDEI are present across the sector, with scope to strengthen coherence and consistency through shared expectations and clearer articulation of minimum competencies.

Monitoring and accountability

Monitoring systems, including quality assurance, quality control, and technical inspections, are robust in relation to safety and technical standards. There are opportunities to further strengthen these systems by assessing how mine action activities reach and benefit different population groups. The integration of inclusion-related indicators, structured community feedback, and the routine use of disaggregated data would help enhance the assessment of inclusive outcomes and reinforce accountability.

Summary of key recommendations

The assessment identifies a set of cross-cutting priorities that recur across thematic areas. These recommendations focus on strengthening the translation of national commitments on equality and non-discrimination into mine action practice, while reflecting VNMAC's coordination and oversight role. They emphasise better use of existing systems, clearer expectations, and progressive strengthening of practice over time. Recommendations are provided to support both immediate and longer-term action. They are structured according to indicative timeframes—immediate, medium-term, and long-term—to differentiate between measures that can be implemented quickly and those requiring more sustained institutional development.

A central recommendation of the assessment is the development of a national action plan on gender mainstreaming in mine action. Such a plan would provide a structured and time-bound framework to translate existing national and international commitments on gender equality, non-discrimination, and inclusion into practice. It would consolidate the assessment's recommendations into clear priorities, roles, and sequencing, and support coordinated implementation across governance, operations, information management, monitoring, and capacity-building, while remaining within VNMAC's mandate and coordination role. The action plan is intended to serve as the primary vehicle for implementing the recommendations outlined in this report.

Recommendations at a glance

Cross-cutting priority	Core issue addressed	What needs to change	VNMAC's role
Use disaggregated data for decision-making	Data are collected but not consistently analysed or used to identify exclusion or guide prioritisation	Shift from data collection for reporting toward systematic analysis of sex-, age-, disability-, and ethnicity-disaggregated data to inform planning, targeting, monitoring, and resource allocation	Set expectations, coordinate data use, and review how data informs national oversight and reporting
Clarify minimum GDEI expectations across the sector	GDEI integration is uneven across standards, accreditation, and operations	Establish clear baseline expectations on non-discrimination, inclusive participation, and data use across governance, operations, and employment practices	Clarify expectations linked to existing TCVNs and technical oversight processes; convene and align stakeholders
Strengthen inclusive monitoring beyond technical compliance	Monitoring focuses primarily on technical standards, with limited assessment of who benefits	Integrate inclusion and equity considerations into QA/QC and M&E processes to assess reach, access, and outcomes	Strengthen monitoring expectations and oversight focus without creating new regulatory systems
Move from ad hoc to systematic GDEI capacity-building	Training on GDEI is uneven and role-specific	Define minimum gender and diversity competencies and progressively embed them across planning, operations, and leadership	Convene operators to agree competencies; support structured, sector-wide approaches
Advance women's participation across pipelines	Women are underrepresented in leadership and operational roles	Strengthen recruitment, retention, and progression pathways, including operational roles, aligned with WPS commitments	Advocate, coordinate, and integrate gender-responsive approaches within existing recruitment and training pathways
Strengthen participatory approaches in community engagement	Engagement methods do not consistently reach under-served groups	Apply participatory, context-specific approaches to better reach men, women, children, ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities	Promote good practice, learning, and consistency across operators

Introduction

Recognizing the growing imperative to ensure that mine action in Viet Nam is inclusive, equitable, and responsive to the needs of all affected populations, the Government of Canada—through its Military Training and Cooperation Programme (MTCP) - supported a GDEI assessment of Viet Nam's mine action sector. This assessment examines how gender and broader inclusion dimensions are reflected across policy, planning, operations, and community engagement, encompassing both office-based and field activities undertaken by national and international mine action operators.

By identifying institutional gaps, good practices, emerging opportunities, and strategic entry points, the assessment aims to strengthen the sector's capacity to deliver mine action that is more inclusive, equitable, and responsive. Its findings will provide a critical baseline for advancing gender-responsive and inclusive approaches across mine action efforts in Viet Nam.

This report is intended for the Government of Viet Nam, particularly VNMAC, as well as mine action operators and donors. The assessment is designed to inform the development of new initiatives and to support adjustments to existing policies and programmes. Its findings should also be considered in the revision and formulation of future strategies, standards, and operational guidance within the mine action sector.

Grounded in national and international commitments, the assessment sought to

- Examine existing policies, practices, and tools used by mine action stakeholders;
- Understand how GDEI principles are reflected in operational, managerial, and coordination processes; and
- Identify opportunities to strengthen alignment with global standards and national frameworks.

The report is organized to provide a clear and coherent progression from global standards to context-specific analysis and actionable recommendations. It begins with an overview of key international standards and guidelines that frame gender and diversity inclusion in mine action, followed by a description of the assessment's methodology, scope, and limitations. The context section then outlines the broader environment in which mine action operates in Viet Nam, examining the nature of the EO problem, demographic patterns, socio-cultural norms, livelihoods and land use, economic inclusion, access to services, and safety considerations.

Building on this foundation, the findings are presented across six thematic areas: governance; planning and coordination; regulations; operational implementation (explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), victim assistance (VA), survey and clearance); employment and human resources, and institutional capacities and support. The report concludes by identifying potential entry points and leverage opportunities to strengthen GDEI integration across the sector.



Methodology

The assessment was conducted in November and December 2025 by Jean Munro, Gender, Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Advisor with the GICHD, Thanh Van Nguyen, KVPVP Project Component Manager, from UNDP, and Lan Nguyen, Independent Gender Consultant in Viet Nam.

Stakeholders engaged throughout the assessment included VNMAC leadership, technical departments, and provincial representatives; UNDP programme staff; international operators based in Hà Nội; provincial authorities responsible for mine action planning and implementation; clearance, survey, and quality assurance teams; EORE facilitators and community engagement officers; victim assistance actors and local service providers; as well as beneficiaries of EORE and VA, as well as local community leaders. Together, these participants represented a cross-section of Viet Nam's mine action ecosystem, enabling a comprehensive perspective on GDEI practices from policy formulation through to field-level implementation. In total, interviews were conducted with 14 individuals (8 women and 6 men), and 12 focus group discussions were held with 56 participants (32 women and 24 men), including 22 individuals from ethnic minority groups.

The assessment used a mixed-methods approach. Key components included:

- **Literature review** of national policies, mine action strategies, gender mainstreaming resources, and operational documents.
- **Interviews and focus group discussions** with government institutions, UN agencies, donors, international operators, and programme coordinating bodies.
- **Human resource questionnaire and staff survey** of government institutions, operators, and programme coordinating bodies.
- **Field visits** to Quảng Trị and Huế to discuss operational practices and engage with frontline staff and community-focused teams and beneficiaries.
- **Comparative analysis** against international standards and guidelines to identify gaps, strengths, and alignment opportunities.
- **Validation** of the initial findings and recommendations with key mine action stakeholders.

National and international standards, guidelines, and commitments on gender and diversity inclusion in mine action

This assessment is based on an analysis of the Viet Nam mine action response against the relevant international standards and guidelines and national commitments. In particular, it assesses alignment with the *United Nations Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes*[i], the *Gender and Priority-Setting in Mine Action Policy Brief*[ii], the *International Mine Action Standards (IMAS)*[iii] and relevant GDEI related national commitments. These frameworks provide the benchmark for evaluating the extent to which GDEI principles and actions are integrated into policy, planning, coordination, and operational practice within the mine action sector.

Scope

The assessment examined the following aspects of mine action response from a GDEI perspective:

Governance	• Convention obligations • Policy commitments • National legislation • Institutional mandates, roles, and responsibilities
Planning and coordination	• Strategic planning • Priority-setting • Coordination
Regulation	• Information management • National standards • Certification of mine action processes • Monitoring mine action processes
Implementation	• Explosive ordnance risk education • Survey and clearance • Victim assistance
Human Resources and Employment	• Policies • Recruitment • Career development • Employment conditions and benefits
Institutional capacities and support	• Leadership commitment • Systems, roles and responsibilities

Limitations

The assessment methodology was subject to several limitations. The assessment team was unable to meet with Viet Nam's military engineering force, which represent the largest provider of survey and clearance capacity in the country. In addition, it was not possible to meet with the Ministry of Health, which holds responsibility for victim assistance, nor with the Committee on the Advancement of Women within the Ministry of Defence. The desk review was also constrained, as only selected background materials from a limited number of operating partners were available for analysis. Not all operators completed the human resource questionnaire. In addition, access to national-level mine action data systems was not granted; the review of data systems was therefore limited to information from Quang Tri province only. Field research was conducted in two provinces and did not extend to all contaminated provinces in Viet Nam, meaning that operational findings may not fully reflect variations across different geographic, institutional, and socio-cultural contexts.

These limitations mean that the assessment provides an indicative rather than exhaustive picture of GDEI integration across Viet Nam's mine action sector. The absence of consultations with key national institutions and incomplete operator participation may have constrained the breadth of perspectives captured, while restricted access to national data systems and field research limited to two provinces reduce the generalisability of findings across all contaminated areas. As such, conclusions should be interpreted as highlighting emerging trends, systemic issues, and priority gaps, and may benefit from further validation through expanded stakeholder engagement and access to national-level data

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Context

Explosive ordnance contamination and affected populations

Viet Nam's explosive ordnance (EO) contamination is a legacy of intensive aerial bombardment during the 1960s and 1970s, which affected large areas of the country, particularly in the central provinces. National surveys estimate that approximately nineteen per cent of Viet Nam's land area remains affected by explosive remnants of war, with contamination concentrated in provinces such as Quảng Trị and Thừa Thiên Huế.[iv]

EO risk and its impacts are not evenly distributed. Studies from Quảng Trị indicate that accidents are most commonly associated with farming, herding, and scrap-metal collection, and disproportionately affect ethnic minorities, low-income households, and people living in mountainous areas. While national EO casualty data are available, systematic disaggregation by sex, age, disability, ethnicity, or occupation remains limited, constraining analysis of differential impacts.[v] Available evidence nevertheless suggests that gender, poverty, ethnicity, and disability strongly shape both exposure to EO risk and access to assistance and recovery.

Demographic and socio-economic context

VViet Nam has achieved substantial human development gains, yet inequalities persist. Women and men both participate widely in the labour force, but employment remains strongly gender-segregated. Women are over-represented in informal, low-paid, and vulnerable work and carry a disproportionate burden of unpaid care responsibilities.[vi] These patterns are particularly pronounced in rural and EO-affected communities where women often combine subsistence farming with domestic and caregiving work, limiting mobility and participation in training, mine-risk education, and community decision-making.

Ethnic minorities account for a disproportionate share of Viet Nam's remaining poor and are concentrated in upland and remote areas that overlap with EO contamination.[vii] Language barriers, lower literacy rates, and geographic isolation, particularly among women, constrain access to information, services, and participation in mine action processes. Persons with disabilities, including EO survivors, face additional barriers related to mobility, cost of care, and limited availability of rehabilitation and psychosocial services, particularly in rural and mountainous districts.[viii]

Gender norms, power, and community participation

Social and cultural norms in Viet Nam shape gender roles and expectations in everyday life and community decision-making. While legal frameworks guarantee gender equality, persistent informal norms - rooted in historical Confucian[ix] and familial traditions that privilege male authority and assign caregiving and domestic responsibilities to women - continue to influence participation in public, economic, and community spheres.[x] These norms influence access to public life and shape who participates in decision-making processes in EO-affected communities.

In provinces such as Quảng Trị and Huế, commune meetings, land-use consultations, and clearance-prioritisation processes are typically dominated by male officials and elders. Women's participation is often mediated through mass organisations such as the Viet Nam Women's Union, rather than through direct representation in decision-making spaces. Evidence from community engagement initiatives shows that when gender-responsive participatory approaches are used–such as separate consultations for women and men–women tend to prioritise safety, water access, health, and livelihoods, while men emphasise infrastructure and agricultural expansion, highlighting the operational value of inclusive engagement.[xi]

Livelihoods, land, and recovery

Livelihood opportunities and access to land are central to recovery in explosive ordnance-affected areas and are shaped by intersecting social identities. Viet Nam's labour market continues to be characterised by a high prevalence of informal and vulnerable employment, with women participating at lower rates in formal wage employment and more likely to be engaged in precarious informal work. Persons with disabilities face substantially lower employment rates and are disproportionately represented in lower productivity and informal sectors, reflecting structural barriers to decent work and labour market inclusion. Ethnic minority groups, particularly in rural and mountainous regions, similarly experience higher rates of underemployment and limited access to formal employment and productive resources.[xii] These layered disadvantages – by gender, disability, ethnicity, and place – constrain livelihood recovery in affected communities and can limit the extent to which women, persons with disabilities, and ethnic minorities benefit equitably from land release and post-clearance economic opportunities.

Although Viet Nam's legal framework provides formal guarantees of equality in land ownership and inheritance, implementation remains uneven. Customary norms and administrative practices often result in land-use rights being registered in men's names, even where women or disabled family members are primary land users.[xiii] In EO-affected communes, this can limit women's and survivors' ability to influence clearance priorities, claim compensation, or benefit from post-clearance land use and development initiatives..

Access to services, safety, and protection

Access to health care, rehabilitation, water, sanitation, and social protection has improved nationally, but significant geographic and social disparities remain. In central Viet Nam, distance to services, cost, and limited specialist provision constrain access for ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and EO survivors.[xiv]

Gender-based violence and harassment remain widespread in Viet Nam, disproportionately affecting women and girls, particularly those from ethnic minorities, rural areas, or with disabilities.[xv] . In EO-affected communities, women's participation in EORE or community safety activities may be constrained by gender norms, stigma, or lack of institutional support. These protection risks underscore the importance of integrating gender-and diversity-responsive approaches across mine action operations and institutions..

Implications for gender and diversity in mine action

Taken together, this analysis highlights that gender, ethnicity, disability, poverty, and geography intersect to shape exposure to EO risk, participation in mine action, and access to recovery and development benefits in Viet Nam. While national policies and legal frameworks support equality, social norms, structural barriers, and uneven service delivery continue to constrain meaningful inclusion in practice. As risks and access differ across population groups, priority setting and tasking informed by disaggregated data are more likely to deliver equitable and effective outcomes. Addressing these dynamics is essential to ensuring that mine action in Viet Nam is inclusive, responsive, and aligned with national gender equality and Women, Peace and Security commitments.



Findings and recommendations

This section presents the findings from the desk review, staff survey, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. It begins with an overview of governance, planning, and coordination frameworks, followed by analysis of regulations; operational areas including EORE, victim assistance, and survey and clearance; employment and human resources; and institutional capacities and support. Recommendations are framed at a strategic level and are intended to support system-level strengthening, with primary relevance for VNMAC and applicability for line ministries, operators, and other stakeholders across the mine action sector. Several recommendations address the same underlying issues from different entry points within the mine action system. This reflects the interconnected nature of governance, operations, and workforce practices, rather than duplication. Recommendations are provided to support both immediate and longer-term action. They are structured according to indicative timeframes—immediate-term (IT), medium-term (MT), and long-term (LT) —to differentiate between measures that can be implemented quickly and those requiring more sustained institutional development.

Governance

This section examines the governance framework shaping mine action in Viet Nam, including the country's international convention obligations, national legislation and policy commitments on GDEI, and the institutional mandates and roles of key government actors responsible for implementation and oversight.

Convention obligations

Viet Nam's commitments to GDEI are grounded in a comprehensive set of international conventions and treaties ratified over several decades. The country ratified the:

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1982,
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990, and the
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2014

Viet Nam is also a State Party to the

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), ratified in 1982, which reinforces national obligations on equality and respect for diversity.

Parallel to these UN instruments, Viet Nam has ratified several core ILO conventions relevant to equality and inclusion. These include ILO Convention No. 100 on Equal Remuneration and ILO Convention No. 111 on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation, both ratified in 1997. Collectively, these instruments set enforceable standards on fairness in employment, prevention of discrimination, and protection of vulnerable groups.

These conventions impose clear legal obligations on the State. Under CEDAW, Viet Nam must adopt legislative and policy measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in political, economic, social, cultural, and civil life. Similarly, the CRPD obliges Viet Nam to guarantee full and equal enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities, prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability, and ensure accessibility across public services, infrastructure, education, employment, and justice. A recurrent theme across these conventions is the obligation to ensure meaningful participation and representation of women, children, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups.

Viet Nam has acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). These treaties commit States Parties to preventing the development, production, and stockpiling of prohibited weapons and to fulfilling related transparency and reporting obligations. While Viet Nam has not ratified the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) or the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), it has consistently participated as an observer in Meetings of States Parties and Review Conferences. This engagement provides opportunities to exchange experience, remain informed of evolving international mine action policy and practice, and engage in dialogue on issues including gender equality, diversity, and inclusion.

National legislation

Viet Nam's national legal and policy framework broadly reflects its international obligations on GDEI. The 2013 Constitution guarantees equality before the law and affirms the primacy of ratified international treaties over conflicting domestic legislation. Core legislation—including the Law on Gender Equality (2006), Labour Code (2019), Law on Persons with Disabilities (2010), Law on Children (2016), Law on the Elderly (2009), and the revised Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control (2022)—contains explicit non-discrimination and equality provisions.[xvi]

The core legal instrument, Decree No. 18/2019/NĐ-CP on the management and implementation of post-war bomb and mine remediation, establishes overall principles, scope of application and institutional responsibilities for all domestic and foreign actors engaged in mine-action activities. It requires that post-war bomb- and mine-remediation be implemented in a "synchronous and effective manner" nationwide and be consistent with Vietnamese law and relevant international commitments, but it does not explicitly reference national legislation, CEDAW, the CRPD, the WPS agenda or the SDGs, nor does it contain stand-alone clauses on gender equality or non-discrimination.[xvii]

The draft *National Action Programme to Address Post-War Landmine Consequences, Phase 2026–2045, Vision to 2065,* (hereafter called Programme) is the central strategic and policy framework guiding Viet Nam's long-term response to explosive remnants of war, setting out national objectives, priorities, implementation principles, and institutional responsibilities across all mine-action pillars. It provides the authoritative basis for mobilising and coordinating domestic and international resources, integrating mine action with socio-economic development, national defence, and humanitarian objectives, and ensuring a coherent, nationwide approach to clearance, explosive ordnance risk education, and victim assistance over the next four decades. The assessment of how well it has integrated GDEI commitments is addressed in the section on planning and coordination.

Policy commitments

Viet Nam's national policy commitments demonstrate a significant degree of alignment with its international obligations on GDEI, creating an enabling environment for gender-responsive and inclusive mine-action programming. The *National Socio-Economic Development Strategy (2021–2030)*[xviii] and the *National Action Plan for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*[xix] integrate core principles of equality, social protection, and multidimensional poverty reduction. These policy frameworks operationalize Sustainable Development Goal commitments—particularly SDGs 5, 10, and 16—by mandating that development initiatives prioritise equitable access, human security, and the protection of vulnerable populations. As noted in the *CEDAW Ninth Periodic Report*, Viet Nam's shift to multidimensional poverty criteria and its focus on vulnerable groups, including women, ethnic minorities, children, and persons with disabilities, demonstrate a rights-based development orientation that is highly relevant to mine-action contexts where humanitarian needs intersect with long-term socio-economic recovery.[xx]

Women, peace, and security agenda and national action plan

Viet Nam's first National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) for 2024–2030 was adopted in January 2024, marking a significant milestone in the country's long-standing commitment to gender equality, peace, and human security.[xxi] Led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the NAP was developed through an extensive, consultative process involving central and local government institutions, mass organizations, and international partners, and is firmly grounded in Viet Nam's constitutional commitments on gender equality and its international obligations under UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent WPS resolutions. The Plan aligns with the four pillars of the global WPS agenda—Participation, Prevention, Relief and Recovery, and Partnership—while reflecting Viet Nam's specific context as a post-conflict country that continues to address the enduring consequences of war.

While the NAP does not explicitly use the term "mine action," Objectives 1 and 3 are directly and substantively connected to mine action through their focus on addressing the consequences of war, which includes unexploded ordnance and other remnants of war. Objective 1 prioritizes increasing women's participation, leadership, and voice in peace and security decision-making, including in relief, recovery—areas highly relevant to

mine action governance, operations, and coordination. It lays out the following targets for increased number of women in recruitment, planning, and appointment to leadership and management positions in state management agencies and local governments:

- "By 2025, 60% of state management agencies and local governments at all levels to have key female leaders. By 2030, this target is set to increase to 75%. For sectors and fields where the female workforce is currently below 30%, these targets may be adjusted to reflect practical conditions;
- By 2025, the proportion of women in the pool for management and leadership positions at all levels should reach at least 40%, with a target of 50% by 2030"[xxii].

Objective 3 focuses on gender mainstreaming in relief and recovery, including post-war recovery, with explicit references to addressing war impacts, risk management, livelihood recovery, and support to affected communities, all of which are core elements of mine action.[xxiii] Together, these objectives present a strong and timely opportunity for the mine action sector to align with and operationalize the WPS NAP, positioning mine action as a concrete delivery mechanism for advancing women's participation, gender-responsive recovery, and inclusive peacebuilding in Viet Nam.

A remaining gap is that the WPS NAP does not explicitly reference the *National Action Programme to Address Post-War Landmine Consequences*, and, conversely, the *National Action Programme to Address Post-War Landmine Consequences* does not reference or align with the WPS NAP, indicating a missed opportunity for formal policy coherence and mutual reinforcement between the two national frameworks. However, it is understood that the Committee on the Advancement of Women in the Ministry of Defence is designing a WPS implementation plan for the Ministry of Defence which has the opportunity to clarify roles, responsibilities, and concrete actions for VNMAC to increase the participation of women—particularly in leadership and decision-making roles—across the mine action sector.[xxiv]

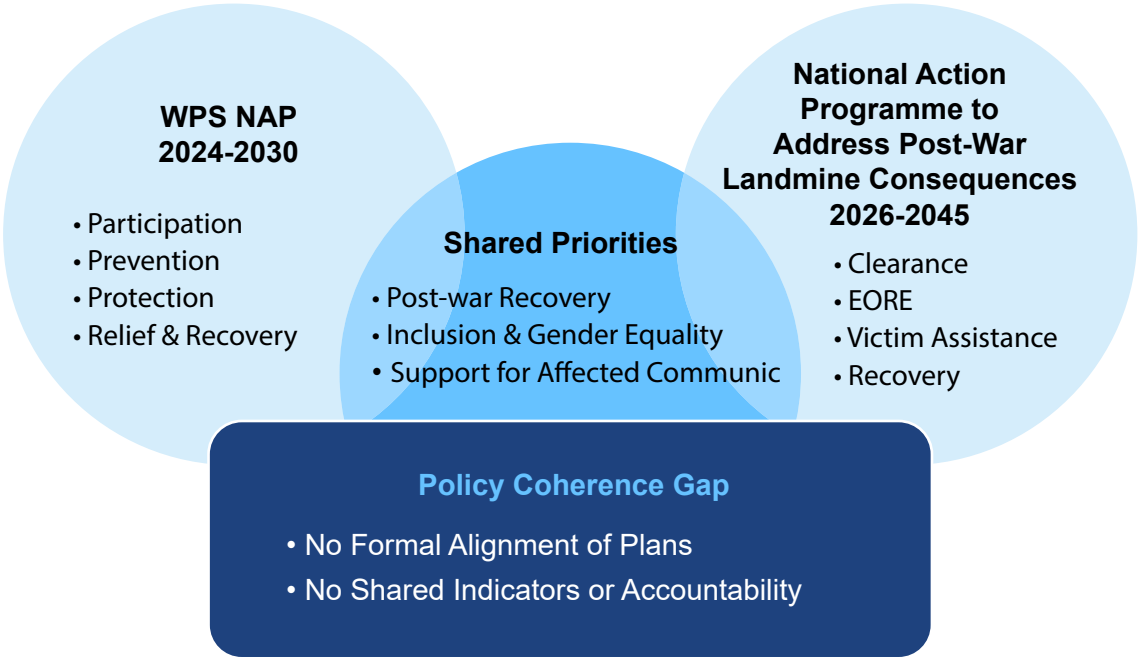


Figure 1 - WPS and Mine Action: Shared Priorities, Limited Operational Integration

National gender-equality and social-inclusion strategies

National gender-equality and social-inclusion strategies further reinforce these commitments across sectors relevant to mine action. The *National Strategy on Gender Equality (2021–2030)* mandates gender mainstreaming in all socio-economic programmes and requires that ministries, provinces, and agencies adopt measures to address gender gaps in participation, leadership, employment, and access to services.[xxv]

Policies aimed at inclusive development in high-risk or disadvantaged regions also strongly intersect with mine action. The *National Target Programme for Socio-Economic Development in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas (2021–2030)* addresses structural inequalities in areas historically affected by explosive remnants of war.[xxvi] By prioritising infrastructure, accessibility, livelihoods, and essential services for ethnic-minority communities, the programme aligns closely with mine-action objectives of safe land access, risk-education outreach, and targeted victim support.

Institutional mandates and roles

In terms of institutional responsibilities for GDEI, Decree 18/2019 and its implementing Circular No. 195/2019/TT-BQP clearly assign overall coordination to the National Steering Committee 701 and VNMAC and specify the roles of the Ministry of National Defence, other line ministries, and provincial authorities in planning, quality management, inaformation systems and resource mobilisation. They do not, however, create dedicated gender-equality or inclusion focal points within mine-action structures, nor do they spell out

GDEI-specific mandates (such as ensuring sex- and age-disaggregated data, women's participation in survey and clearance teams, or accessibility for persons with disabilities). In practice, responsibilities for advancing gender equality, disability inclusion and support to vulnerable groups in EO contaminated areas are operationalised through coordination with ministries that hold cross-cutting mandates (e.g. the Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs (MOLISA) and now after restructuring, Ministry of Health for social protection and disability policy, mass organisations such as the Viet Nam Women's Union) and through the application of TCVN 10299 standards and broader national strategies on gender equality.

While leadership commitment to GDEI was widely recognised during consultations, translating commitment into operational practice requires clearer accountability arrangements. This includes assigning responsibilities, integrating expectations into annual planning and reporting, and using coordination forums to review progress and address implementation barriers.

Recommendations - Governance

Strengthen policy coherence between mine action and national equality, inclusion, and peace frameworks

VNMAC should strengthen alignment between mine action policies and relevant national frameworks, particularly the *Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan (WPS NAP), the National Strategy on Gender Equality, and the National Target Programme for Socio-Economic Development in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas*. This should include clarifying how mine action contributes to Objectives 1 and 3 of the WPS NAP. (MT)

Operationalise GDEI commitments within the National Action Programme to Address Post-War Landmine Consequences

The final *National Action Programme to Address Post-War Landmine Consequences (2026–2045)* should explicitly reflect and operationalise these commitments through clear objectives, indicators, targets, and monitoring arrangements that are aligned, where relevant, with existing national frameworks. Proposed objectives, indicators, and targets to support implementation of GDEI commitments are included in Annex A. (IT)

Embed GDEI principles in the forthcoming Mine Action Ordinance

VNMAC should advocate for the integration of GDEI principles within the forthcoming Mine Action Ordinance, ensuring that gender equality, non-discrimination, and inclusion are embedded within the legal framework governing mine action. Progress on these efforts should be reported to the Ministry of Defence and National Steering Committee 701 to support oversight and sustained policy coherence. (MT)

Clarify institutional responsibilities for GDEI within mine action governance

Although national policies provide a strong foundation for GDEI, institutional responsibilities for implementing these commitments within mine action structures remain unclear. Clarifying roles and expectations will strengthen accountability and ensure consistent

implementation across national and provincial levels. Building on Decree No. 18/2019/NĐ-CP and its implementing circulars, VNMAC should clarify how responsibilities for GDEI are operationalised within mine action structures, including expectations for coordination with relevant line ministries and mass organisations, and minimum requirements related to participation, accessibility, and data disaggregation across mine action pillars. (IT)

Develop a WPS implementation action plan for mine action within the Ministry of Defence

The Committee on the Advancement of Women in the Ministry of Defence, in coordination with VNMAC, should develop a dedicated WPS implementation action plan for the mine action sector. The plan should define clear roles and responsibilities, time-bound targets, measurable indicators, and reporting requirements to operationalise WPS commitments—particularly on women's participation, leadership, and gender-responsive relief and recovery—across mine action governance, operations, and coordination mechanisms. (IT)

Planning and coordination

This section addresses the extent to which national objectives and priorities for GDEI in mine action are clearly articulated and in line with broader international and national GDEI commitments and standards.

Strategic planning

A review of the draft *National Action Programme to Address Post-War Landmine Consequences, Phase 2026–2045*, Vision to 2065 finds the alignment with national and international commitments on GDEI is limited and remains at a high-level statement of intent rather than being clearly put into practice. The Programme states that mine action will be implemented while "ensuring human rights and gender equality"[xxvii] and commits to compliance with Vietnamese law and international treaties[xxviii], including a reference to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.[xxix] However, the Programme does not refer to national gender equality or ethnic minority laws and policies, does not define diversity or inclusion objectives, and does not set out specific actions, targets, indicators, or responsibilities related to women, ethnic minorities, veterans, or persons with disabilities, or alignment with national targets articulated in other national gender equality inclusion strategies. The accountability mechanisms described—such as transparency in the use of resources[xxx], inspection, monitoring, and evaluation systems , and periodic reporting by ministries to the Prime Minister[xxxii]—apply to the overall Programme and are not linked to GDEI outcomes or participation.

While the Programme includes a general principle to mobilise "the participation of the entire society"[xxxiii], n" , it provides no evidence that women, ethnic minorities, veterans, persons with disabilities, or other affected groups were involved in developing the Programme, nor does it describe how they will be involved in implementation or review; there is no description of consultations or participatory processes, and these groups are not named as stakeholders anywhere in the document.[xxxiv] There was no evidence that internal coordination structures such as the Ministry of Defence Committee on the Advancement of Women or the MAWG Internal Gender Diverisity and Inclusion (GDI) Task Force were systematically consulted on the design of the Programme.[xxxv]

The draft *National EORE Strategy to 2065* demonstrates an emerging but still partial application of a gender and diversity lens. Positively, the Strategy explicitly prioritises high-risk groups, remote areas, and ethnic minority communities, commits to reaching women through capacity targets (e.g. women comprising at least 50 per cent of trained officials), and emphasises tailoring education materials to different target groups, cultural contexts, and community needs. These elements align in principle with Viet Nam's commitments to inclusive development and recognise differentiated exposure to explosive ordnance risks.

However, when assessed against the Law on Gender Equality and the broader constitutional, sectoral, and policy framework governing gender equality and ethnic minority inclusion, the Strategy remains largely gender-neutral in practice: it does not systematically analyse gendered risk, behaviour, access to information, communication preferences,

or decision-making roles, nor does it define specific gender equality or ethnic minority outcomes, indicators, or accountability mechanisms. References to ethnic minority communities focus primarily on geographic targeting rather than on rights-based inclusion, participation, or language and cultural accessibility obligations embedded in national laws and programmes. Overall, while the Strategy acknowledges diversity at the level of who is reached, it stops short of fully operationalising legal commitments to gender equality and ethnic minority inclusion through explicit objectives, disaggregated data requirements, participatory mechanisms, and enforceable responsibilities.[xxxvi] At minimum, legal alignment would require the Strategy to move from general population coverage toward enforceable equality objectives, mandatory gender and ethnicity analysis, disaggregated data, participatory mechanisms, and culturally accessible delivery.

Coordination bodies and mechanisms

Within the Ministry of Defence, there are formal coordinating bodies relevant to GDEI, notably the Women's Union and the Committee for the Advancement of Women. These bodies provide institutional channels for addressing women's participation, welfare, and advancement and benefit from senior-level political backing.[xxxvii] Interviews suggest that their mandate, however, is primarily social and representational, rather than technical or operational, and it is unclear if they have a role in coordinating GDEI integration across the mine action cycle. [xxxviii]

At sector level, there is a Mine Action Working Group (MAWG) sub-task force on gender which was established in 2022 and renamed the Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion (GDI) Task Force in December 2023 to emphasise the focus on inclusivity.[xxxix] Members of the task force include VNMAC, UNDP, MAG, NPA, PTVN, Golden West, PeaceTrees and the current chair is UNDP. The group meets quarterly and the main objective is to inform all members of all related implementation of GDEI related activities, challenges, and approaches to address challenges. In addition, the task force has organized a workshop in 2024 on Mainstreaming of Gender in Mine Action. The updates are consolidated and then shared at the Mine Action Working Group. Both the sub-task force as well as the MAWG are excellent examples of mechanisms that enable information sharing.

Overall, the mine action sector in Viet Nam has foundational systems and bodies that enable attention to GDEI, including strategic alignment, women-focused committees, consultation mechanisms, and strong operator-led organisational systems. However, these arrangements remain fragmented and unevenly institutionalised, with limited clarity of roles, weak linkage between coordination and accountability, and an absence of national-level systems that consolidate learning, set minimum expectations, or systematically reinforce inclusive practice across the sector.

Priority setting

The *National Action Programme to Address Post-War Landmine Consequences,* Phase 2026–2045, Vision to 2065, sets out a prioritisation system for clearance and EORE that is largely technical and centrally managed, and this is consistent with how prioritisation is described in interviews with government and operators. The Programme indicates that

priorities are informed by survey and clearance data, national mine action databases, and alignment with national socio-economic development, defence, and security plans.[xi] It does not specify detailed prioritisation criteria beyond these considerations, nor does it require the use of sex-, age-, disability-, ethnicity-, or income-disaggregated data.

Although the Programme includes a general commitment to human rights and gender equalit,[xli] gender and socio-economic vulnerability factors—such as poverty, displacement, veteran status, household composition, or disability—are not identified as factors shaping clearance or EORE priorities.[xlii] Interviews with stakeholders confirm this approach, describing prioritisation as primarily based on contamination levels, accident history, land use, and links to approved provincial or national development plans, with limited reference to broader social or vulnerability data.[xliii]

Both literature review and interview evidence show that priority-setting authority sits mainly with central ministries and provincial authorities, with coordination and oversight led through government structures.[xliv] The Programme does not describe formal mechanisms for community participation in setting priorities, and women, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, people with low incomes, veterans, or displaced populations are not identified as actors in prioritisation processes; aside from a general statement on mobilising "the participation of the entire society[xlv] no participatory arrangements are defined.

Interviewees noted that prioritisation for conducting EO contamination survey is not always clearly articulated. Limited clarity was observed regarding how areas are selected within confirmed hazardous areas (CHA), and the prioritisation matrix currently in use was described as relatively broad, with many tasks classified as high priority. Operators further noted that, once areas are assigned, the sequencing of survey and clearance activities is often influenced by practical and seasonal considerations—such as annual work plans, agricultural cycles, and flooding or rainy seasons—alongside risk considerations. One interviewee suggested that the transparency and perceived fairness of prioritisation could be strengthened through the introduction of village-level criteria that explicitly consider land used by vulnerable populations.[xlvi]

Communities are commonly engaged during survey and EORE delivery, particularly to validate information, facilitate access, and support implementation. However, evidence from consultations suggests community perspectives—especially those of women, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and poorer households—are not yet systematically used to influence geographic prioritisation or sequencing decisions. Interviewees explained that EORE priority areas are mainly selected where operators are already working and where EORE can be linked to clearance, allowing multiple activities to be delivered in the same communities for greater impact. EORE providers and local leaders consistently identified farmers—both women and men—and children, particularly boys, as the groups most at risk due to their daily activities and curiosity.

A baseline survey conducted in 2023 under the KVPVP in Thua Thien Hue, Quang Ngai, and Binh Dinh provinces provides a strong example of prioritizing farmers and children based on their exposure to risk.[xlviii] The survey also deliberately included EO victims and people with disabilities and ensured substantial representation of ethnic minority commu-

nities in upland areas. However, priority groups were identified based on exposure and location rather than a systematic assessment of vulnerability, meaning that other less visible or intersecting vulnerabilities were not explicitly assessed or used to inform EORE prioritisation. While some operators reported adapting EORE messaging to women, children, or ethnic minority communities, these adjustments occur after priorities are set, and no interviewees provided examples where the expressed needs of women, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, or poorer households directly changed clearance tasking or geographic EORE priorities.[xlviii]

Recommendations – planning and coordination

Strategic alignment

Operationalise GDEI commitments through practical guidance

VNMAC should translate the Programme's high-level commitments to human rights and gender equality into national standards that clarifies how GDEI should be reflected in mine action planning and implementation, in line with IMAS and relevant national frameworks. (LT)

Coordination and institutional coherence

Consolidate and operationalise GDEI commitments within national mine action frameworks

VNMAC should develop an action plan to mainstream GDEI across mine action programming, setting out clear priorities, roles, and indicative timelines to guide implementation across all pillars and to support consistent application by operators and provincial authorities. (MT)

Strengthen existing coordination mechanisms for GDEI governance and oversight

VNMAC should leverage existing coordination platforms, including the National Steering Committee 701 and the MAWG and the GDI Task Force to promote shared understanding of GDEI-related governance responsibilities, support consistent interpretation of policy commitments, and strengthen oversight of how inclusion objectives are reflected across planning, implementation, and monitoring processes. VNMAC should also play a stronger leadership and coordination role in the MAWG and the GDI Task Force. (MT)

Use coordination platforms to capture and share good practices

VNMAC should use existing national coordination platforms to capture and share practical lessons on GDEI implementation, clarify minimum expectations for inclusive practice, and reinforce accountability through peer learning and exchange. (MT)

Prioritisation and planning

Strengthen inclusive, evidence-informed prioritisation of clearance and EORE

VNMAC should encourage provincial authorities and operators to complement technical prioritisation criteria with basic social and vulnerability considerations—such as gender, age, disability, ethnicity, livelihood dependence, and poverty—when sequencing clearance and targeting EORE, consistent with IMAS principles on needs-based and people-centred mine action. (MT)

Strengthen inclusive validation of priority clearance and EORE targeting

VNMAC should require that the identification and validation of priority clearance and EORE areas be carried out through participatory consultations that ensure meaningful representation of women, persons with disabilities, and ethnic minority communities, in line with national legal commitments on equality and inclusion. (MT)

Data and participation

Improve the use of disaggregated data and community input in priority-setting

VNMAC should progressively promote the use of sex and age disaggregated data and structured community input—particularly from women, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and low-income households—to better inform prioritisation decisions at provincial level. This should be regulated through national standards and alignment with national legislation on protection and privacy. (MT)

Regulations

Regulation plays a central role in shaping how mine action is planned, implemented, monitored, and held accountable, providing the framework through which standards, information systems, certification processes, and oversight mechanisms are applied in practice.

Information management

Government authorities and mine action operators depend on accurate information to guide both strategic and operational decisions aimed at reducing risks for communities affected by explosive ordnance. Understanding which population groups are affected, and in what ways, is critical for evidence-based decision-making that not only mitigates risk but also strengthens community resilience. Disaggregated data plays a central role in revealing differences in exposure to explosive ordnance, access to EORE, use and control of released land, enjoyment of rights, and access to services among both direct and indirect victims.

Interviews with government officials indicate that EO data management systems for survey, clearance, EORE, and victim assistance are generally well established and functioning, with regular data collection, reporting, and consolidation from provincial to national level in line with standard operating procedures. Sex- and disability-disaggregated data are collected and primarily used for operational planning, progress reporting, and compliance purposes.[xlix] However, it is unclear whether GDEI-related data are systematically analysed to assess differential impacts or patterns of exclusion across gender, age, ethnicity, and disability, or whether this data is used to inform prioritisation, targeting, or resource allocation. The central issue is therefore not only whether data are collected, but whether they are routinely converted into management insight. This includes using data to identify under-served groups, compare participation patterns, track progress over time, and inform planning, targeting, and resource allocation decisions.

At sub-national level, the QTMAC maintains a publicly accessible and regularly updated information system, which some operators reported using; however, it was not apparent whether this system is used to assess or communicate how inclusive mine action activities are. At national level, there is currently no publicly available central mine action data system , and while VNMAC is preparing to transition to IMSMA Core, it remains unclear whether this system will be publicly accessible or how it will support analysis of inclusion and gender responsiveness.

Standards

Tiêu chuẩn Việt Nam (TCVNs) function as voluntary technical standards yet they play a critical operational role, as they shape day-to-day practice by national and international operators. Viet Nam has recently released 15 TCVNs covering the full mine action cycle, including survey, clearance, quality management, monitoring and evaluation, information management, EORE, and victim assistance, with an additional standard under development

on environmental protection.[li] Collectively, the TCVNs are broadly aligned with IMAS and provide the main national reference point for operationalising international good practice within the Vietnamese context.

Alignment of TCVN standards with IMAS Requirements on GDEI

The review of selected TCVN indicates uneven alignment with the normative requirements of the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) regarding GDEI. Overall, the standards demonstrate moderate integration, with stronger alignment in programme-oriented areas and weaker integration in technical operational standards. In several standards—particularly EORE, Victim Assistance, and Risk Management—GDEI considerations are well integrated and in some cases reflect IMAS "shall" requirements, including non-discrimination principles, inclusive participation, and the collection and use of sex- and age-disaggregated data. For example, the EORE and Victim Assistance standards explicitly require non-discriminatory programming, inclusive consultation, and disaggregated monitoring indicators, demonstrating strong alignment with IMAS expectations.

In contrast, operational standards such as Non-Technical Survey and Incident Investigation show lower levels of integration, primarily limited to the recording of demographic data such as gender and age. While these provisions partially align with IMAS "should" recommendations on disaggregated data collection, they do not fully reflect IMAS "shall" requirements related to inclusive consultation, identification of all relevant information sources, and systematic analysis of differential risks and impacts across population groups. Similarly, Information Management and Quality Management standards show moderate alignment, incorporating disaggregated data collection and stakeholder participation principles, but often using language consistent with IMAS "should" provisions rather than mandatory operational requirements.

Overall, the TCVN standards demonstrate strong conceptual recognition of gender and diversity, particularly in community-focused programming areas, but there remain gaps in translating these principles into consistent "shall"-level operational requirements across technical standards. Strengthening alignment with IMAS would therefore require expanding GDEI provisions within survey, investigation, and operational procedures, and ensuring that inclusive consultation, disaggregated data collection, and analysis of diverse needs are systematically required across all relevant standards. See Annex B for an analysis of the TCVN.

Some operators noted that their internal policies and SOPs often apply more explicit and systematic GDEI requirements than those currently articulated in the national standards.[lii]

Accreditation of mine action operators

Interviews indicate that Viet Nam does not operate a single, consolidated accreditation system for mine action operators. Instead, operator accreditation is achieved through a combination of legal licensing, technical approvals, and coordination permissions at national and provincial levels. Within this framework, VNMAC's role is primarily focused on technical oversight and compliance with national standards and IMAS, while organisational

licensing and administrative approvals are managed by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Provincial People's Committees and Provincial Military Commands.[liii]

While the recently adopted TCVN standards represent an important step in strengthening national ownership and standardisation of mine action practice, they do not currently establish explicit accreditation requirements related to GDEI. Across interviews, there was no evidence that GDEI criteria are systematically assessed as part of operator approval, renewal, or compliance processes.[liv] Where GDEI considerations are applied in practice, these are largely driven by international operators' internal policies or donor requirements, resulting in variable levels of implementation across the sector. As a result, the application of national legislation on equality, non-discrimination, and occupational health and safety within mine action accreditation remains inconsistent. To promote coherence and accountability across the sector, the inclusion of GDEI-related accreditation requirements within national standards is therefore needed.

Monitoring of mine action processes

Monitoring of mine action processes is a critical, ongoing function that must extend beyond initial certification and post-clearance inspections to ensure the consistent application of quality management procedures throughout operations. Effective monitoring requires oversight at multiple stages of the mine action cycle to verify compliance with established standards, identify deviations early, and enable timely corrective action. Robust monitoring mechanisms are therefore essential to maintaining safety, operational effectiveness, and accountability, while reinforcing confidence among affected communities and stakeholders.

From a GDEI perspective, interviews indicate that existing monitoring systems—primarily quality assurance and quality control processes—are well established and continue to focus strongly on technical compliance. At the same time, the extent to which government monitoring of operators systematically assesses inclusive participation, the use of disaggregated data, and equitable access to services appears more limited. This reflects, in part, the current level of integration of GDEI considerations within the TCVN standards. Where GDEI are monitored, this is most evident in EORE and, to a lesser extent, victim assistance, while survey, clearance, and quality management processes tend to remain more gender-neutral in their monitoring approach. As a result, the routine use of disaggregated data, community feedback, and inclusion-focused analysis within monitoring frameworks remains an area for further strengthening, particularly to assess whether mine action processes consistently reach and benefit women, men, children, persons with disabilities, and ethnic minorities across operational contexts. VNMAC and UNDP's planned post-clearance impact survey under the KVPVP project provides a valuable opportunity to strengthen the systematic use of disaggregated data. There is also scope to further integrate community and beneficiary feedback into quarterly verification missions and the broader monitoring and evaluation system.

Recommendations – Regulations

Data, systems, and monitoring

Strengthen the use of disaggregated data for analysis and decision-making.

VNMAC should strengthen expectations for the systematic analysis and use of sex-, age-, disability-, and ethnicity-disaggregated data within mine action information systems, moving beyond collection for reporting and compliance toward informing prioritisation, targeting, and resource allocation. This should be aligned with national data protection legislation. It can be advanced through coordination with operators and data managers and through routine review of how disaggregated data is reflected in planning and reporting processes. (MT)

Use IMSMA Core to strengthen GDEI analytics and oversight

As VNMAC transitions to IMSMA Core, it should work with system administrators and operators to ensure the platform supports analysis of GDEI considerations across the mine action cycle, including the ability to examine differential reach and outcomes. VNMAC should also clarify how relevant disaggregated data will be used for national oversight and reporting. (MT)

Develop a core national GDEI indicator framework for mine action

VNMAC should develop a practical set of national GDEI indicators to strengthen monitoring of inclusive outcomes across mine action. Indicators may include participation and leadership diversity in the workforce, equitable access to services, and evidence that mine action activities are reaching affected and under-served groups. These indicators should be progressively integrated into reporting and monitoring systems. (MT)

Strengthen monitoring to assess inclusive outcomes alongside technical compliance

VNMAC should progressively strengthen monitoring expectations so that quality assurance, quality control, and monitoring and evaluation processes assess not only technical compliance but also whether mine action activities are equitably reaching and benefiting different population groups. This should include routine review of disaggregated data and evidence of inclusive community engagement, particularly in survey, clearance, EORE, and as part of operator quality management processes. (MT)

Standards, guidance, and compliance

Use existing standards and guidance to operationalise equality commitments.

VNMAC should continue to use TCVN standards, SOPs, and technical guidance as key instruments for operationalising Viet Nam's obligations on gender equality, non-discrimination, and inclusion, ensuring that mine action policies and practices uphold the rights of all affected populations. Attention should be given to governance-relevant areas such as accreditation, quality management, and monitoring and evaluation. (MT)

Develop practical guidance where standards require clearer interpretation

VNMAC should develop practical guidance, informed by IMAS and national labour law, on priority GDEI issues such as inclusive recruitment, safe working conditions, community engagement, and victim assistance. This should support more consistent interpretation and implementation by operators. (LT)

Clarify minimum GDEI expectations within accreditation and compliance processes

Within its technical oversight role, VNMAC should clarify minimum GDEI-related expectations linked to relevant TCVNs—particularly those related to information management, quality management, EORE, and victim assistance— with a focus on non-discrimination, inclusive participation, and the use of disaggregated data. (IT)

Prepare future revisions of standards to strengthen GDEI integration

VNMAC should, in consultation with relevant ministries and mine action operators, document lessons learned and emerging good practice on GDEI in mine action implementation, with a view to informing the next revision cycle of the TCVNs. This preparatory work would support more systematic integration of GDEI considerations into national standards over time, consistent with national legislation and commitments. (LT)

These recommendations complement those in the Planning and Coordination and Employment and Human Resources sections, particularly on disaggregated data and minimum GDEI expectations across the sector.

Operational implementation

This section evaluates how GDEI are integrated in EORE, survey and clearance operations, and victim assistance services. Across operational pillars, the assessment found that inclusion is more visible in some areas than others. GDEI considerations are more explicit in selected EORE, victim assistance, and information management practices, while they are less systematically embedded in tasking, handover processes, quality management, and learning systems. This suggests progress is occurring, but unevenly across the mine action cycle.

Explosive ordnance risk education

EORE delivery

Interviewees stated that EORE is delivered in practice via two approaches. The first is targeted at children and is delivered through schools by teachers. It is both in the formal curriculum delivered through courses such as geography and history as well as in extracurricular curriculum and delivered through programmes such as the Pioneer programme. Children are exposed to EORE messaging starting in primary school (age 6) up to high school. The children receive the messages during morning assembly as well as during classes. The EORE providers did not state that they had a differentiated approach to reach boys and girls, nor was there a specific approach to reach children with disabilities.

Although the curriculum is taught in Vietnamese, many of the teachers were ethnic minority and spoke the local language. Although the EORE messaging was part of the curriculum, teachers did share that it was difficult to cover all the material due to an already heavy teaching load. They noted a lack of supporting materials—particularly visual aids and illustrative images—which limits their ability to deliver sessions in an interactive and engaging way. To strengthen delivery, they proposed inviting or partnering with technical experts, such as deminers, to share practical experience and real-life examples with students. Examples of EORE delivery in extracurricular activities include holding drawing competitions and having quizzes with teams competing against each other. Interviewees reported that some of these methods may have encouraged children to discuss at home with parents and grandparents what to do if they encountered explosive ordnance, based on observations and information shared with them.

The second approach is through dedicated EORE sessions delivered by local commune leaders (in the case of A Luoi) and by international operators including clearance personnel (in the case of Quang Tri). Examples of delivery methods include inclusion within village meetings, using the loud speaker, and incorporating messages in local celebrations. Some beneficiaries of EORE sessions spoke of leaflets explaining risks however the use of leaflets does not seem common. A number of operators stated that EORE sessions were delivered in the local language by ethnic minority officers. They stated that this was important to build trust with the community and also to facilitate communication.[lv]

Who is currently not reached

Several population groups remain difficult to reach through current EORE approaches. These include older women and men, who are less likely to attend village meetings or use social media; young children, particularly those under six; and out-of-school children, who fall outside school-based EORE activities. In the Central Highlands, school completion rates decline significantly beyond primary level, particularly among boys, children in rural areas, and those from the poorest households.[lvi] This suggests that a subset of children—especially boys from low-income rural households—may not be consistently reached through existing EORE delivery channels. Working-age adults, particularly male farmers, are also frequently absent from meetings due to livelihood demands. Ethnic minority communities, especially women, face additional barriers to participation related to language, confidence, and social norms.

The reasons these groups are under-reached are closely linked to prevailing delivery modalities. School-based EORE does not reach children who are not enrolled or who drop out early, while village meetings tend to attract a limited and often gender-skewed audience. Working-age men are frequently unavailable during standard meeting times, and ethnic minority women may be less likely to engage in public forums, interact with external actors, or speak up during discussions. Interviewees also noted that prevailing gender norms can limit intra-household information transfer, as women who attend meetings may not feel able to instruct or correct male household members, reducing the effectiveness of relying on indirect messaging to reach men.

Delivering EORE sessions is further constrained by operational challenges. Implementers highlighted difficult terrain, poor road access to remote locations, and misalignment between organisational working hours and community members' availability.[lvii] To mitigate these challenges, organisations have increasingly trained local residents to deliver EORE messages during village meetings. However, this approach assumes that information shared with household representatives will be passed on to others. In practice, interviewees observed that women are most often the ones attending meetings, while men's participation remains limited due to both availability and perceived lack of interest, reinforcing existing gaps in reach.

Beneficiaries and community members suggested several ways to improve EORE reach to those most at risk.[lviii] These included greater use of Zalo (soclal media platform) to disseminate EORE messages—particularly through commune-managed groups where adult usage is reportedly high—although access varies to social media across locations. Other suggestions included using commune loudspeakers, integrating EORE messaging into survey and clearance activities when teams are present in communities, and introducing practical simulations on how to respond when encountering explosive ordnance, similar to fire-safety drills. Community members also noted the absence of signs indicating contaminated land in their areas, limiting the effectiveness of passive or visual risk communication.

While the draft EORE Strategy promotes a wider range of communication channels and closer integration with clearance activities, its approach remains largely channel-focused and does not clearly specify how delivery modalities will be adapted to reach under-served groups. Without clear operational guidance, targeting criteria, and monitoring indicators focused on these populations, there is a risk that existing gaps in EORE coverage will persist unless implementation deliberately applies more targeted and context-specific outreach approaches.

Traditional EORE models versus social and behaviour change models

EORE delivery in Viet Nam is largely characterised by one-way communication, with information primarily transmitted from providers to communities, rather than through sustained, interactive social and behaviour change approaches. With the exception of some child-focused activities that include interactive elements, most EORE interventions emphasise awareness-raising rather than engaging communities in reflection, dialogue, and problem-solving around risk. The expected behaviour change is narrowly defined as *not touching explosive ordnance and reporting it when found*, with limited evidence of messaging that supports broader risk-reduction decisions, such as avoiding cultivation in known or suspected contaminated areas.

As a result, current EORE practice aligns more closely with traditional risk education than with comprehensive social and behaviour change communication that addresses underlying drivers of unsafe behaviour. This may not be a critical limitation in the current context, as accident rates are very low, suggesting that existing approaches have been effective in reducing immediate harm. However, when there is residual contamination

management and if new EORE materials and approaches are designed, it is best to use a social behaviour change approach. Therefore, as accident rates are low, sustained one way EORE can be complemented with proportionate social behaviour change initiatives in high risk pockets and after flood periods.

Training of EORE personnel

EORE implementers, including teachers, shared that they received training and the importance of developing targeted messages for most at risk populations. A review of a limited sample of EORE training plans found the following.[lix] Overall, the training plans reviewed are technically strong in terms of risk knowledge, messaging content, and basic communication techniques, and they introduce important concepts such as vulnerable populations and the need for clear, simple, and actionable messages, especially "do not touch," "stay away," and "report to authorities," with repetition intended to reinforce safer behaviour. However, they do not yet fully operationalise targeted, data-informed, and inclusive EORE delivery. Strengthening future training to more explicitly link risk data, access barriers, gender and social norms, and communication channel selection would significantly improve EORE providers' ability to reach populations that are most at risk and currently least reached.

Data collection, evaluation, use to shape programming

Some teachers reported documenting participation in extra-curricular EORE sessions by grade level, but not by gender and this information was not systematically shared with provincial authorities.[lx] More broadly, in Hue province there appears to be no centralised or coordinated information system for consolidating and analysing EORE data across actors. While implementing organisations do collect basic representation data—such as the proportion of women and men, girls and boys reached—this information is mainly used for reporting and checking overall representation. In line with IMAS guidance, stronger documentation and integration of EORE data into a shared system would enable more consistent analysis, comparison across locations, and evidence-based adaptation of EORE approaches.

In Quang Tri, QTMAC plays a coordinating role by collecting and providing daily updates on EORE tasks completed and annual data on the number of EORE recipients, compiled from both international operators and government actors. Recipient data is disaggregated by age and gender, providing a solid foundation for evidence-based programming and accountability.[lxi] However, ethnicity and other vulnerability markers are not yet captured. As data collection practices continue to improve, the next step—consistent with IMAS best practice—is to fully integrate and analyse available data through a coordinated system, applying an intersectional lens to better identify and address at-risk groups. Upcoming EORE training provides an opportunity to strengthen capacities to use disaggregated data more effectively to design targeted and responsive EORE activities.

Recommendations - EORE

Strategy and alignment

VNMAC should strengthen the operationalisation of GDEI within EORE by explicitly integrating GDEI into the *Draft National Strategy on EORE*, and ensuring that inclusion objectives, responsibilities, and monitoring indicators are clearly defined and monitored during implementation. This will align EORE practice with national legislation on equality and non-discrimination, as well as commitments related to ethnic minority inclusion, particularly on participation, accessibility, and accountability

Reach and targeting

EORE approaches should not rely on assumptions of intra-household information sharing, as power dynamics can limit how information is transferred, particularly to adult men. VNMAC and operators should develop targeted approaches to identify, prioritise and reach under-served groups, including out-of-school children, men not engaged in community activities, people with disabilities, people living in extreme poverty, older persons, and ethnic minority women, using delivery methods and timing suited to each group. (MT)

EORE activities should be implemented alongside key events in local schools and communities, such as traditional festivals and regular meetings of existing community groups, including the Women's Union, Youth Union, Elderly Associations, and Associations of Persons with Disabilities. Integrating EORE into these established events and forums would help increase participation, relevance, and outreach. (MT)

Methods and messaging

EORE messaging should be adapted to reflect changing risk contexts, including an eventual transition to a residual contamination context, and including increased EO risks following flooding and other natural disasters, with systematic dissemination in newly affected or previously cleared areas. Delivery methods should increasingly prioritise participatory, dialogue-based approaches that enable reflection and problem-solving, rather than relying solely on one-way information provision. This approach is particularly relevant in high risk areas and after flood periods. In addition, a national standardised EORE communication and training package should be developed and applied consistently across operators to ensure coherence in messaging, quality of materials, and alignment with national standards. (MT)

Data collection, analysis, and use

As VNMAC advances the use of IMSMA Core, EORE data should be more consistently documented, consolidated, and analysed across operators, in line with IMAS guidance. Building on existing age- and gender-disaggregated reporting, data collection should progressively incorporate additional vulnerability markers where feasible and be analysed using an intersectional lens to inform prioritisation and programme adaptation. In addition, a national standardised tool and protocol for EORE data collection, analysis, and information management should be developed and applied across all mine action stakeholders to ensure consistency, comparability, and improved evidence-based decision-making. (MT)

Training of EORE personnel

EORE training should place greater emphasis on using disaggregated data to design, adapt, and evaluate targeted interventions, enabling implementers to translate evidence into practical decisions on outreach, messaging, and prioritisation. EORE training packages should be updated to explicitly link risk data, access barriers, gender and social norms, and communication channel selection to improve EORE providers' ability to reach populations that are most at risk and currently least reached. (MT).

EORE teams and community engagement

VNMAC and operators should continue to deploy diverse EORE teams—including women and ethnic minority staff—that better reflect affected communities to strengthen trust, communication, and meaningful two-way engagement. Recruitment, training, and workforce development should include clear measures to increase women's and ethnic minority participation, supported by appropriate incentives and retention mechanisms for community-based EORE personnel, particularly women staff and facilitators, to sustain long-term outreach and engagement. (IT)

These recommendations should be read alongside the Regulation and Information Management recommendations, which address system-wide data, monitoring, and standards issues that also shape EORE effectiveness and inclusion.

Survey and clearance

Tasking of survey and clearance

Interviewees state that GDEI are not considered in mine action tasking processes. Although some operators stated they have policies guiding inclusive approaches, at the national level, there are not specific operational requirements for inclusive community engagement. Nor is there a standardized mechanism to verify that GDEI elements are reflected in tasking orders or implementation plans.

Explosive Ordnance Contamination Survey

Interviewees shared that when individuals are interviewed as part of EO contamination surveys, the identity details collected include gender, ethnic minority, and age, owner/co-owner of land.[lxii] A review of the new TCVN on Explosive Ordnance Contamination Survey finds that it includes some explicit but limited measures to support GDEI, mainly through how information is collected. The standard requires interviews with both women and men who have relevant local knowledge, and its survey forms record sex, age, and ethnicity, allowing for disaggregated data. This provides a basic basis for understanding different experiences of explosive ordnance risk. However, the standard does not set out broader objectives on GDEI, nor does it give guidance on inclusive participation beyond data collection, such as in decision-making, validation, or prioritisation. As a result, while the EO Contamination Survey supports the collection of some diversity-related information, it does not fully reflect an inclusive or rights-based approach in line with international good practice.[lxiii]

Survey and clearance personnel

International studies on good practices in survey and clearance indicate that mixed gender teams conducting survey and clearance is effective and efficient.[lxiv] In discussions with members of survey and clearance teams, they shared that they believed there was no formal regulation stating women cannot be hired for survey and clearance but that it was due to gender norms that government did not hire women.[lxv] International operators have hired and trained women clearance team members for many years and have significantly increased the percentage of women at all levels and particularly women holding senior positions in operations.[lxvi] However, women in military led survey and clearance teams are few. A recent training had only one woman out of 430 trainees in pre-deployment training for survey and clearance.[lxvii]

This is discussed in more detail in the section below on Employment.

There is a potential opportunity for the Ministry of Defence to address the employment gap while aligning its approach with Viet Nam's gender equality law and strategy. Interviewees reported that the draft Programme sets out a target to expand clearance teams from 480 to 600 by 2030 to meet clearance commitments.[lxviii] This is an opportunity to hire more women and to be more effective in conducting survey and clearance.

Handover

Post-clearance inspections are carried out by government authorities and operators to confirm that cleared land is safe and usable, which helps build confidence in the land release process. However, interviewees indicated that the handover process does not include a structured community feedback mechanism to assess community understanding or acceptance of clearance outcomes.[lxixlxx] The absence of such a mechanism may represent a gap, as community validation can strengthen trust in, and accountability of, the handover process.

Interviewees described a formal handover ceremony, during which clearance teams meet with local authorities and verify the cleared area. A household representative is invited to attend, and the local authority prepares a letter describing the area cleared and the date of clearance, which the representative signs to confirm understanding. Interviewees noted that this representative is most often the husband, reflecting prevailing gender norms.[lxxi] This practice may limit women's direct access to information and involvement in decision-making related to land release, despite their roles in land use and household livelihoods. As a result, women's perspectives and understanding of residual risk may not be fully captured within the handover process.

Recommendations – Survey and clearance

Survey and clearance are core components of the mine action response and central to delivering equitable social and economic benefits. The assessment found that GDEI considerations are not yet systematically integrated into prioritisation, tasking, and land release processes. Strengthening transparency, participation, and the use of social and vulnerability data can improve fairness, trust, and development impact without undermining operational efficiency.

The following recommendations focus on system-level expectations, guidance, and oversight, consistent with VNMAC's coordination and oversight role. They also respond to stakeholder priorities to strengthen women's participation in operations and integrate GDEI expectations into tasking processes.

Inclusive survey and clearance teams.

Strengthen inclusive recruitment and retention in survey and clearance teams

The Ministry of Defence, supported by VNMAC, should strengthen the recruitment, retention, and progression of women in survey and clearance teams through clear and measurable targets aligned with national gender equality commitments. To support women as well as ethnic minority field personnel, enabling conditions should be progressively strengthened, including appropriate benefits (such as maternity provisions and flexible working arrangements where feasible), targeted technical training, and access to equipment that supports safety, efficiency, and operational suitability. (IT)

Use workforce expansion to diversify future survey and clearance capacity

As survey and clearance capacity expands to meet national clearance targets, the Ministry of Defence and VNMAC should use new recruitment and training opportunities to increase the participation of women and ethnic minority personnel in operational roles. Priority should be given to technical training and field-readiness so that workforce growth strengthens representation, community engagement, data quality, and operational effectiveness, particularly in ethnically diverse and remote areas. (MT)

Inclusive tasking and operational planning

Integrate GDEI expectations into national tasking and operational guidance

VNMAC should integrate GDEI considerations into national tasking guidance by setting minimum expectations for inclusive community engagement, worksite safety, and equitable access, and by promoting simple mechanisms to verify that these elements are reflected in task implementation plans. These expectations should include clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and performance indicators for operators, and may be supported by appropriate incentives to encourage consistent application of inclusive practices across operations. (IT)

Promote participatory inputs at appropriate stages

VNMAC should clarify expectations for structured, proportionate community input during survey and planning processes, ensuring that the perspectives of women, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and other affected groups can inform prioritisation decisions where feasible. (MT)

Use EO contamination survey data to strengthen inclusive planning

VNMAC should encourage more systematic use of identity and socio-economic information collected during EO contamination survey—such as gender, age, ethnicity, and land use—to help identify potential exclusion and inform planning and sequencing decisions. (IT)

Inclusive handover, community participation, and accountability in land release processes.

Strengthen inclusive participation and coordination in planning and land release

VNMAC should use existing national and provincial coordination mechanisms to capture lessons from inclusive survey, clearance, and land release practices and reinforce shared expectations across operators. It should also strengthen or establish an inclusive coordination platform that brings together government, operators, community representatives, and social organisations so that diverse perspectives inform planning, decision-making, and learning. (IT)

Strengthen community confidence and accountability in handover processes

VNMAC should promote the introduction of proportionate community feedback mechanisms within handover processes to assess community understanding, confidence, and acceptance of clearance outcomes, reinforcing trust and accountability. (MT)

Promote women's meaningful participation and inclusive representation in handover processes

Guidance on land release and handover should promote the direct participation of both women and men from affected households, recognising women's roles in land use, livelihoods, and decision-making, and reducing the risk that critical information on residual risk is accessed only indirectly. Handover processes should also engage a broader range of socio-political organisations and community groups beyond the Women's Union to ensure more inclusive representation in validation and decision-making. In parallel, the Women's Union should support regular outreach and briefings with women on the significance of land release, their rights and opportunities in post-clearance land use, and the importance of their meaningful participation in handover processes. (MT)

Learning and evidence

Improve evidence on distribution of benefits

VNMAC should support targeted analysis, potentially through existing programmes such as KVPVP, to better understand who benefits from land release linked to economic and social development projects, with attention to GDEI, and the distribution of benefits among different population groups. Analysis should consider gender, ethnicity, disability, and socio-economic status to inform more equitable prioritisation and planning. (LT)

Victim Assistance

According to the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor 2022, Viet Nam recorded 105,086 mine/ERW casualties between 2002 and 2019, including 38,982 fatalities and 66,102 injured.[lxxii] The number of new victims in recent years has declined significantly, with approximately 50 victims per year compared to 400 per year reported in 2010[lxxiii]. reflecting the combined impact of EORE, clearance, and broader prevention efforts. However, the scale of historical contamination means that impacts continue to be experienced long after land is cleared, making long-term, inclusive, and responsive victim assistance a critical pillar of mine action.

Strategy and regulations

At strategic level, victim assistance is framed within the draft *National Programme to Address Post War Landmine Consequences*, which includes the objective that "100% of mine victims have access to livelihood support services and sustainable development." The Programme also refers, at a general level, to integration with human rights assurance and gender equality, signalling an overarching commitment to inclusion.[lxxiv]

However, the victim assistance component of the Programme remains limited in scope and specificity. It focuses primarily on database development, programme planning, and sustainability, while rehabilitation, orthopaedic services, and vocational support are addressed largely through an annexed project description rather than as core strategic commitments.[lxxv] The Programme does not clearly articulate principles or operational requirements related to non-discrimination, accessibility and reasonable accommodation, meaningful participation of survivors and organisations of persons with disabilities, or targeted responses to vulnerability linked to gender, age, disability, ethnicity, remoteness, or poverty.

The newly approved *National Standard on Support for victims of explosive ordnance* demonstrates strong alignment with international good practice on victim assistance, including the principles set out in IMAS, by clearly establishing victim assistance as a core pillar of mine action and embedding non-discrimination, inclusivity, and rights-based support throughout the standard. It describes the beneficiaries of VA to include individuals, families, and communities affected by explosive ordnance accidents. The TCVN requires differentiated analysis of needs based on sex, age, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and other contextual factors, and promotes the integration of victim assistance within national disability, social protection, health, education, and livelihood systems, supporting sustainable and inclusive outcomes.[lxxvi] While inclusion and diversity principles are well embedded in practice, the standard would benefit from more explicit articulation of gender equality, intersectionality, and the meaningful participation of victims—particularly women and persons with disabilities—in decision-making and leadership roles, to fully reflect evolving IMAS good practice and strengthen impact.

Implementation and coordination

Responsibility for assistance to EO victims lies with the Ministry of Health, following the recent transfer of this mandate from the Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs.[lxxvii] Due to the absence of interviews with the Ministry of Health, this assessment was not able to analyse how GDEI are mainstreamed within state-provided victim assistance services, representing a significant evidence gap.

Victim assistance implementation is therefore assessed primarily through the practices of international actors that complement state systems, including PeaceTrees Viet Nam, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and KVPVP, alongside VNMAC's facilitative role.

Interview findings indicate that victim assistance and community support initiatives within the mine action sector often extend beyond direct survivor assistance to include broader community-based interventions, particularly in remote and socio-economically vulnerable areas. These approaches demonstrate sensitivity to geographic isolation, poverty, and the needs of indirect victims, including families and communities affected by explosive ordnance. Support commonly combines access to services, rehabilitation, education, and livelihoods, and is informed by dignity- and rights-based principles, with attention to cultural and linguistic accessibility, especially in ethnic minority contexts.[lxxviii]

At the same time, while these initiatives reflect a strong qualitative understanding of vulnerability and exclusion, this is not yet consistently underpinned by systematic use of sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data to guide prioritisation, targeting, or adaptive management. Disaggregated victim assistance data are also not currently available through a public information management system, which limits the ability to assess differential impacts across survivor groups and ensure that assistance is consistently aligned with diverse needs.

Nevertheless, some operators are beginning to demonstrate good practice in this area. One organisation reported using an information management system that enables monitoring of equitable access and outcomes for women, men, girls, and boys, while prioritising survivors facing intersecting vulnerabilities, including women and girls, ethnic minorities, recent accident survivors, and poor or near-poor households. Another example highlighted the engagement of a person with a disability in designing victim assistance services, including housing and rehabilitation support, to ensure full accessibility.[lxxix]

Perspectives from EO victims interviewed underscore both the value and the limitations of current assistance. Survivors reported receiving state financial support for livelihood activities, such as livestock and loans for acacia cultivation, as well as additional support from operators. However, they also noted that these measures did not consistently result in long-term financial stability. Survivors identified additional needs, including start-up capital for small businesses, vocational training, and targeted support for children with disabilities. They also reported barriers to participation in community consultations due to their disabilities, with limited accommodations provided to enable their active engagement.[lxxx]

Recommendations – victim assistance

Overall, victim assistance in Viet Nam demonstrates emerging inclusivity and responsiveness at project level, particularly where data systems, needs assessments, and capacity-building are deliberately integrated, as in the KVPVP model. However, inclusivity and data-driven decision-making remain uneven and actor-dependent, with limited visibility into government provided services, coordination mechanisms, and accountability. Strengthening alignment between strategic intent, regulatory frameworks, and inclusive implementation across all providers will be essential to ensure that victim assistance systematically responds to the diverse needs and priorities of all affected populations.

As the *National Action Programme to Address Post-War Landmine Consequences* advances its next phase—focusing on legal frameworks, data systems, and integrated programmes—the following recommendations are proposed.

Complete and strengthen the legal and policy framework for victim assistance in line with international standards

Embed a rights-based and inclusive approach

Through national standards and capacity building programmes, the Government should integrate a clear "leave no one behind" approach within victim assistance policy and planning, grounded in non-discrimination, accessibility, and reasonable accommodation, and requiring attention to barriers related to gender, age, disability, ethnicity, geography, and socio-economic status. (MT)

Promote meaningful survivor participation

The victim assistance framework should explicitly promote the meaningful participation of survivors and organisations of persons with disabilities in the design, implementation, and monitoring of victim assistance policies and programmes. (MT)

Standards, Data, and Quality Assurance:

Strengthen consistent implementation of national victim assistance standards

VNMAC, in coordination with the Ministry of Health, should focus on ensuring the consistent application of TCVN 10299-15 across providers and provinces, in line with IMAS 13.10, particularly with respect to non-discrimination, accessibility, survivor participation, and data-informed planning. (MT)

Promote systematic data collection, sharing, and use to strengthen evidence-based decision-making on victim assistance

Responsible authorities should progressively strengthen the systematic collection and use of sex-, age-, disability-, and ethnicity-disaggregated data to support more equitable targeting, prioritisation, and assessment of victim assistance outcomes. Particular attention should be given to strengthening provincial data systems, as many provinces currently lack complete and up-to-date information on victims. Improved data collection, sharing, and consolidation across programmes will enable more evidence-based decision-making and more effective targeting of services. (IT)

Support quality and sustainability of assistance

The Government should strengthen quality assurance and follow-up mechanisms within victim assistance systems, including proportionate monitoring and accessible consultation processes, to support sustainable health, rehabilitation, and livelihood outcomes for survivors and their families, particularly in remote and underserved areas. Local authorities and local community groups should play a stronger role in supporting livelihood assistance and social support programmes based on the identified needs of victims. Clear criteria should be developed to assess the quality and sustainability of assistance, and these criteria should be integrated into programme indicators and monitoring frameworks. (MT)

Coordination and Accountability

Strengthen coordination and consistency among stakeholders through improved reporting, shared standards, and inclusive planning mechanisms

VNMAC should use existing coordination platforms to support information-sharing, alignment with national standards, and mutual accountability among victim assistance actors, reinforcing inclusive practice without introducing additional compliance burdens. Coordination mechanisms should also promote greater consistency among stakeholders in objectives, planning, and reporting. Periodic reporting aligned with TCVN standards and project cycles should be encouraged to strengthen transparency, learning, and accountability across victim assistance programmes. (IT)



Employment and human resources

This section synthesises findings from interviews and from the anonymous Staff Survey on GDEI in Mine Action (December 2025). These sources provide complementary qualitative and quantitative insights into employment practices, workplace culture, and staff perceptions across the sector. The analysis focuses on how employment systems support fairness, inclusion, and equal opportunity in practice.

Diverse representation in the mine action workforce

Consolidated table: gender composition of mine action organisations[lxxxi]

(MA operators and national institutions)

Organisation	Total staff	Women staff	Total managerial / supervisory staff	Women in managerial / supervisory roles	Total operational staff	Women in operational roles
MAG	755	228 (30%)	80	15 (19%)	706	207 (29%)
NPA (NGO data, 2024)	395	127 (32%)	14	8 (57%)	318	91 (29%)
PTVN	314	79 (25%)	16	6 (38%)	270	60 (22%)
NGO operators – total	1.464	434 (30%)	110	29 (26%)	1.294	358 (28%)
VNMAC	108	17 (16%)	18	0 (0%)	–	–
QTMAC (Quảng Trị)	21	5 (24%)	4	0 (0%)	–	–
KVPVP / Huế field command	9	2 (22%)	12*	0 (0%)	–	–

** Managerial figures for the Huế/KVPVP field command reflect supervisory roles within the command structure and may not be directly comparable to NGO management definitions.*

As part of the assessment, a human resources questionnaire was circulated to operators and government institutions within the mine action sector. Responses were not received from all operators. As a result, the data presented in the table above combines information drawn from the Mine Action Review (2025) with data collected through the human resources questionnaire. Given that these data sources refer to different reference periods, the table does not present a precise snapshot of the current workforce. It is, however, sufficient to illustrate key patterns and structural trends in gender representation across the sector.

The data presented in the table above show that the mine action workforce surveyed remains predominantly male[1]. This contrasts with women's high participation in the overall workforce in Viet Nam, where women accounted for 48.61 per cent of the labour force in 2024. Women's representation within government-related mine action institutions is also below international benchmarks, where women comprise approximately 30 per cent of the mine action workforce globally.[lxxxiii] This pattern stands in contrast to *Viet Nam's National Strategy on Gender Equality* (2021–2030) and *Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan*, which set concrete targets to increase women's representation in leadership and decision-making roles within state institutions, including the defence and security sectors.

Data from the human resource questionnaire and interviews indicate that the mine action workforce is largely homogeneous in terms of ethnicity, with no or very limited representation of ethnic minorities across the sector. Representation of persons with disabilities is similarly minimal, particularly in operational roles. Within government institutions, women remain unrepresented in senior technical and leadership positions. This differs from operators where we see high representation of women in leadership positions.

Where ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities are present, they are more commonly employed in administrative or support functions rather than in technical, operational, or decision-making roles. Few organisations reported targeted outreach, accessibility measures, or tailored support mechanisms to enable the recruitment, retention, or progression of staff from these groups. This suggests that inclusion is not yet systematically addressed within workforce policies and practices, and that existing employment systems may not be fully accessible to all potential candidates.

Interview findings suggest that while diversity is widely recognised as beneficial for operational effectiveness and community engagement, representation outcomes are shaped more by informal practices and local recruitment pools than by explicit diversity objectives or workforce planning. Few interviewees stated that their offices' systematically review workforce composition to assess trends or identify gaps.

Recruitment

Before 2025, women's participation in the armed forces was voluntary and selective, shaped by unit-specific needs and annual Ministry of National Defence guidance; this approach was formalised and expanded by Guidance 4705/HD-BQP (October 2024), which sets out

[1] Reminder that one of the limitations of the assessment is that the research team did not have access to the Ministry of Defence military engineering forces. Publicly available data do not provide a confirmed total number of deminers (nor gender breakdown) within Vietnam's military engineering forces. However, available sources indicate that the majority of state survey and clearance capacity is provided through military engineering units operating nationwide.

detailed eligibility, consent, age, height, and marital requirements for women volunteers in the 2025 intake.[lxxxv] These provisions apply specifically to voluntary recruitment of women, rather than to compulsory military service, and introduce criteria that differ significantly from those applied to men.

In the context of mine action, these recruitment criteria are not aligned with operational requirements. IMAS and operational guidance emphasise functional fitness, technical competence, adherence to safety procedures, and team coordination, rather than height-specific physical attributes.[lxxxvi] Evidence from international operators demonstrates that women and men of varying heights routinely perform effectively in clearance roles. As such, height thresholds function more as institutional screening criteria than as operational necessities for clearance work.

As VNMAC seeks to address acknowledged shortages of qualified clearance personnel and expand its workforce—particularly through planned recruitment and training of personnel from engineering brigades—there is an opportunity to reassess how military entry criteria interact with mine action needs. Aligning recruitment pathways more closely with operational requirements would help ensure that capable candidates, including women, are not unnecessarily excluded from clearance roles.

This misalignment between institutional recruitment criteria and operational requirements also highlights an opportunity for learning from existing mine action practice. Operators' recruitment processes are generally structured around publicly advertised vacancies and assessment against defined technical and operational criteria. Recruitment is typically framed as merit-based, with selection decisions linked to qualifications, experience, and demonstrated competence. Results from the staff survey indicate a high degree of professionalism and procedural consistency in recruitment practices.[lxxxviii]

At the same time, recruitment approaches among operators tend to be neutral rather than proactively inclusive. Limited targeted outreach to underrepresented groups may inadvertently reinforce existing gender and social imbalances within the workforce. Broad or undefined physical and availability requirements for field roles may further narrow the pool of potential candidates. In addition, monitoring of recruitment outcomes by gender, disability, or other diversity characteristics is not systematic, limiting organisational visibility on whether equal opportunity objectives are being realised in practice. [lxxxix]

Employment policies

Most organisations have established human resources policies, including codes of conduct, provisions on harassment and misconduct, and policies governing leave and benefits, aligned with national labour law and internal organisational standards.[xc]

Awareness of reporting procedures for discrimination, harassment, or misconduct is high across all staff.[xci] However, the survey results indicate that women and those working in office (as opposed to field positions) feel less confident in submitting a complaint. Overall, this suggests perceived uncertainties in the use of reporting mechanisms, rather than lack of information.

Capacity building on GDEI

VNMAC shared that training on gender equality and gender-responsive mine action remains limited in scope and largely ad hoc, with no dedicated curriculum or systematic training programme for all staff. Exposure to gender-related content has often been short in duration and targeted mainly at those holding gender-related responsibilities, rather than embedded across technical, operational, and leadership training pathways. As a result, while awareness of GDEI has improved, training has not yet been fully conducted. .

Operators reported a more systematic and operationalised approach to training on GDEI mainstreaming. They described integrating GDEI into staff induction, operational training, and standard operating procedures, often linked to organisational gender policies. Training commonly covers gender- and age-sensitive community engagement, inclusive EORE delivery, survivor-centred victim assistance, safeguarding, and the collection and use of sex- and disability-disaggregated data. When asked whether they had adequate training to mainstream gender and diversity in their work, 67 per cent of international operators and 82 per cent of government staff responded affirmatively.[xcii]

Career progression

VNMAC describes women's career progression as increasingly supported through institutional commitment to gender equality. Women participate across a range of functions, including policy and strategy development, survey, EORE, victim assistance, information management, and programme coordination, and are increasingly assigned substantive roles within projects and national initiatives. Leadership has expressed a positive stance toward expanding women's participation, including through targeted training opportunities and the nomination of women staff to national and international courses, with recent deployment of women in field-based survey activities viewed as a foundation for further progress.

At the same time, persistent constraints continue to limit women's advancement into leadership roles and operational roles, particularly in clearance. These include gender stereotypes that frame clearance as men's work, limited access to specialised clearance training, the remote and hazardous nature of field deployments, and the disproportionate burden of family and care responsibilities. As a result, career progression for women remains more evident in areas such as policy development, coordination, and support functions rather than in operational roles.

Operators reported clearer but still uneven career progression pathways, often linked to project structures, technical certification, and demonstrated performance. Advancement into supervisory or management roles is commonly tied to completion of accredited training, operational experience, and the availability of project-funded positions. Several operators described efforts to support women's progression through targeted recruitment, mentoring, and assignment to technical and coordination roles that can lead to leadership positions. However, progression pathways are not always formally articulated, and opportunities for mentorship, leadership development, and inclusive supervision remain inconsistent. As a result, while some women advance into senior and managerial roles, progression is often

shaped by project cycles rather than by systematic, organisation-wide career development frameworks

Working conditions

Based on the staff survey, working conditions are generally described as safe and professional, particularly in relation to operational safety standards. Staff report respectful working environments, and there is strong normative rejection of bullying and harassment across organisations.[xciii]

Support and workplace adjustments for staff with specific needs—such as family responsibilities, health conditions, or disabilities—are typically provided on a case-by-case basis and depend on managerial discretion. While informal flexibility is often valued, the absence of clear guidance contributes to uncertainty about what support can be requested and how such requests may be perceived.[xciv]

International operators shared that they did not supply different PPE for women and men. However, one organization did provide small amounts of funds for women clearance staff to make required alterations to their uniforms when they were pregnant.[xcv]

Recommendations – employment and human resources

Strengthen sector-wide expectations on inclusive employment practices

VNMAC should clarify institutional accountability for gender mainstreaming within employment and human resource systems, including defined roles, responsibilities, and minimum expectations for managers, consistent with the UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action. (LT)

Advance women's meaningful participation and leadership in mine action

Consistent with the Women, Peace and Security agenda, VNMAC should work with relevant departments of the Ministry of Defence and mine action stakeholders to expand women's recruitment, retention, progression, and leadership across operational, technical, and decision-making roles in the mine action sector. This should include strengthening recruitment, onboarding, career development, and promotion pathways for women in survey, clearance, and management positions; setting measurable participation targets (in line with the WPS NAP); and monitoring progress across the sector.

VNMAC should also promote visible leadership models by documenting and sharing examples of women leaders from mine action, peacekeeping, military medicine, and related sectors, and by supporting mentorship, leadership development, and cross-institutional learning initiatives. These measures should be framed not only as advancing equality, but also as strengthening operational effectiveness, safety, innovation, and community engagement. (MT)

Review recruitment criteria for unintended gender bias

VNMAC should periodically review employment and recruitment practices within the mine action sector to assess their gendered impacts, including whether criteria or procedures unintentionally exclude qualified women from technical and operational roles. This review should be prioritised as an early action and may include internal policy reviews or gender audits within institutions responsible for mine action operations. (IT)

Strengthen inclusion of ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities within employment systems

VNMAC and operators should take incremental steps to improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of employment practices for ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities. This may include reviewing recruitment processes and job criteria for unintended barriers, improving accessibility of workplaces and training opportunities, and strengthening the collection and use of workforce data to better understand participation and progression trends. These actions should be proportionate, context-specific, and aligned with national labour law and inclusion frameworks. (MT)

Improve clarity and predictability of career development pathways

VNMAC and operators should encourage clearer articulation of career progression pathways, including transparent criteria for advancement and access to training. Incremental strengthening of mentorship, coaching, and leadership development opportunities would support more equitable progression into senior and technical roles. (IT)

Reinforce trust in reporting and safeguarding mechanisms

Operators should continue to reinforce staff confidence in reporting systems through regular communication, practical briefings, and visible follow-up, with particular attention to confidentiality and non-retaliation. VNMAC may support this by clarifying minimum expectations for reporting and response mechanisms across the sector, in line with national legislation. (IT)

Promote consistent approaches to workplace accommodation and support

Organisations should move toward clearer guidance on flexible working arrangements and reasonable accommodation, reducing reliance on ad hoc decision-making and supporting more predictable and equitable support for staff with diverse needs. (MT)

Establish minimum GDEI competencies through a joint, sector-wide approach

VNMAC should work with operators to define minimum gender and diversity competencies for mine action staff and support the development of a structured, sector-wide training approach aligned with the UN Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines for Mine Action, replacing ad hoc training with a more consistent and sustainable model. (IT).

This recommendation aligns with findings and recommendations in the Governance and Regulation sections, which emphasise the need for consistent sector-wide expectations and systematic approaches to GDEI capacity-building.

Institutional capacities and support

Strong leadership, adequate and sustained funding, and appropriate systems and technical capacity are critical to ensuring that gender equality and support to vulnerable groups are effectively integrated into mine action, rather than remaining only as policy intentions. These elements play a central role in shaping institutional responsibilities, mobilising and allocating resources, and strengthening the capacities of national and provincial actors to implement mine action in line with the Law on Gender Equality, policies on persons with disabilities, and national commitments to equitable and inclusive development. Progress on mainstreaming GDEI depends not only on policy intent, but on whether institutions have sufficient staffing, time, budget, technical support, and practical tools to implement commitments consistently. Where these enabling conditions are weak, implementation may remain ad hoc or dependent on individual initiative.

Leadership commitment

VNMAC leadership commitment, positioning, and public visibility

The VNMAC leadership articulated a commitment to GDEI at the level of policy alignment and stated intent. Leadership situates its role within national and international frameworks—including the WPS agenda, national gender equality strategies, disability policies, and the Sustainable Development Goals—presenting GDEI as an integral principle guiding mine action rather than a parallel agenda. This framing positions inclusion as a normative expectation of national mine action governance and signals institutional awareness of differentiated risks, impacts, and benefits for women, men, children, ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities.[xcvi]

However, a review of publicly accessible sources—including VNMAC's official website and selected Vietnamese mainstream media—found limited evidence of overt leadership messaging that positions GDEI as a strategic priority of VNMAC. While VNMAC is visibly active in mine action cooperation, training, clearance oversight, and victim assistance, these activities are generally communicated using technical, operational, or development-focused narratives rather than through an explicit GDEI lens. Public-facing communications rarely reference gender equality, ethnic diversity, disability inclusion, or differentiated outcomes, and GDEI is not articulated as a distinct leadership narrative in VNMAC's own institutional messaging.[xcvii]

In contrast, expressions of commitment to diversity and inclusion are more visible in communications led by international partners and operators. These include the promotion of all-female demining teams, the visibility of women in operational and supervisory roles, and the inclusion of ethnic minority women and survivors in victim-assistance narratives. VNMAC is frequently present in these initiatives through joint field visits, coordination meetings, and shared events, indicating institutional support and alignment. However, VNMAC's own platforms continue to prioritise technical outputs and operational milestones over diversity-related outcomes, workforce composition, or personal narratives that demonstrate inclusive impact.[xcviii]

VNMAC inclusive practices and operational focus

At the operational level, VNMAC leadership described a range of inclusive practices, including the use of sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data; gender-responsive risk education; victim-centred assistance; and efforts to promote women's participation across technical, managerial, and community-facing roles. Concrete examples are most clearly articulated in relation to education and community engagement activities, where women and girls are described as active participants in delivery and monitoring. These examples indicate that inclusive approaches are present in practice, particularly where activities are project-based and supported through cooperation with international partners.[xcix]

Limits to institutionalisation and accountability

However, leadership commitment is expressed primarily through endorsement rather than through institutionalised accountability mechanisms. While VNMAC has designated gender-related roles and supports some women's participation in training and policy processes, there is limited evidence of systematic integration of GDEI into core organisational systems such as budgeting, performance management, accreditation, quality assurance, or information management. This gap is explicitly acknowledged by VNMAC leadership, particularly in relation to the absence of clear budgetary allocation for GDEI objectives, indicating that commitment has not yet been fully translated into enforceable organisational requirements.[c]

VNMAC leadership shows awareness of key barriers to women's participation in mine action, including gender norms, provincial capacity constraints, and data gaps. While this reflects strong policy alignment, there is limited evidence of time-bound, resourced leadership actions to address these challenges at scale. VNMAC's approach is therefore best characterised as transitioning from stated commitment toward more fully institutionalised and accountable practice.

Operator leadership in practice

Among international mine action operators, leadership on GDEI is most evident where commitments are translated into concrete systems, resourcing decisions, and operational behaviours, rather than framed as standalone policy statements. Across interviews, operators consistently described leadership as embedded within organisational culture and day-to-day decision-making—particularly in recruitment, staff support, community engagement, and data use—rather than as a separate compliance requirement.[ci] This reflects a deliberate effort by senior management to normalise inclusion as part of routine mine action practice and to address exclusion linked not only to gender, but also to age, ethnicity, disability, language, and social norms.

Evidence-based and adaptive leadership

A defining feature of operator leadership is the intentional use of evidence and adaptive management to identify and correct exclusionary patterns. Operators described efforts to review sex- and age-disaggregated data from risk education, survey, and assessment

activities; identifying systematic bias (such as the over-representation of men in consultations); and adjusting field practices and staff guidance accordingly. In one case, leadership explicitly coached teams to move beyond passive "open calls" for participation and instead actively engage women and other less visible groups, resulting in more balanced participation over time. These practices were supported through investment in internal learning processes, and regular data reviews that linked inclusion directly to programme quality and effectiveness rather than donor compliance alone.[cii]

Workforce and organisational culture measures

Operator leadership is further demonstrated through deliberate workforce and organisational culture measures aimed at enabling women and under-represented groups to enter, remain, and progress within mine action roles. Good practice examples include the establishment of women-only clearance teams to challenge entrenched gender norms around technical work (NPA); the creation of visible promotion pathways into team leader and supervisory roles (PeaceTrees); and practical workplace adjustments such as pregnancy accommodations, flexible leave related to caregiving and sustained internal dialogue to address resistance or misconceptions about gender equality measures (MAG). These measures were described as pragmatic leadership choices designed to retain talent, shift attitudes, and build internal and community credibility. [cii]

Limits of operator leadership within the national system

At the same time, operator leadership is occurring within an enabling environment that remains uneven. Operators consistently noted that national-level quality assurance, accreditation, and information management systems prioritise technical compliance, with limited attention to GDEI, safeguarding risks, or the systematic uptake of inclusion-related data and learning.[civ] As a result, leadership on GDEI is largely exercised within individual organisations rather than reinforced through national standards or coordination mechanisms. This reinforces a core conclusion of the assessment: while operators are demonstrating meaningful and practical leadership on GDEI, sustained sector-wide impact will require stronger national frameworks that recognise, request, and reward inclusive practice.

Systems, roles and responsibilities to support GDEI

This assessment identified a set of organisational systems, roles, and coordinating bodies that collectively shape how GDEI are currently supported within Viet Nam's mine action sector. These arrangements are unevenly developed across national and operational levels and function primarily as enabling or facilitative mechanisms rather than as fully institutionalised accountability systems.

Roles and responsibilities

Within VNMAC, responsibility for GDEI is distributed across existing functions rather than assigned to a dedicated, formally mandated role. Gender-related responsibilities are carried

by staff involved in planning, coordination, and policy processes, alongside structures such as the Women's Union and the Committee for the Advancement of Women.[cv] This distributed model supports shared ownership but limits clarity of accountability, continuity, and technical leadership, as no single role holds a defined mandate for mainstreaming GDEI across systems such as quality assurance, accreditation, or budgeting.[cvi]

By contrast, operators demonstrate clearer role definition at organisational level. Several organisations embed GDEI responsibilities within management and monitoring, evaluation, and learning roles, supported by dedicated staff capacity to analyse disaggregated data and guide programme adjustments.[cvii] Leadership responsibility is exercised through line management, internal coaching, and decision-making authority rather than through standalone gender focal point positions.[cviii]

Recommendations – institutional capacities and support

Recommendations for VNMAC

Strengthen visible leadership and learning on GDEI

VNMAC could reinforce its leadership role by:

- issuing periodic Vietnamese-language messages or guidance on GDEI priorities;
- continue to participate in side events and plenaries on the margins of international meetings, for example at CCW meetings to showcase Viet Nam's commitments to GDEI in MA;
- promoting learning from implementation challenges as well as successes; and
- strengthening internal capacity through targeted training rather than broad, generic courses.
- Practical examples of inclusive leadership demonstrated by operators—such as women-led teams, inclusive recruitment pathways, and adaptive community engagement—should be selectively documented and shared through national platforms (including the MAWG and its GDI Task Force) to support peer learning and normalise inclusive leadership as a marker of quality and effectiveness. (IT)

Progressively integrate gender considerations into planning and budgeting

VNMAC should, over time, explore how GDEI priorities can be reflected within mine action planning and budgeting processes—such as through budget tagging, justification notes, or minimum allocation guidance—without requiring standalone gender budgets. GDEI considerations should also be reflected during regular revisions of the *National Action Programme to Address Post-War Landmine Consequences* and relevant technical standards (QCVN/TCVN), ensuring that inclusive practices are progressively institutionalised. (LT)

Recommendations for International Mine Action Operators

International operators should continue investing in workforce and organisational culture measures that enable women and under-represented groups to enter, remain, and progress in technical and leadership roles; and translate organisational learning into concise, practice-oriented lessons that can be shared with VNMAC to support national-level learning and institutionalisation. (MT)

Recommendations for State Mine Action Operators

Recognising the specific institutional and operational context of the Engineering Corps and other state operators, the following practical steps are recommended:

- Conduct internal reviews or gender audits of recruitment policies, workplace practices, and operational procedures to identify barriers to inclusive participation.
- Assign GDEI focal points or establish small internal working groups to support coordination and implementation of inclusion-related actions.
- Integrate GDEI actions and indicators within annual operational planning and reporting processes.
- Provide targeted GDEI awareness training or workshops for senior leadership within the Ministry of Defense, Engineering Command, and related institutions.



Conclusion

This assessment finds that Viet Nam's mine action programme is underpinned by strong national ownership, well-established technical systems, and growing alignment with international standards. Recent advances, including the adoption of comprehensive national standards and the strengthening of information management and coordination mechanisms, provide a solid foundation for further progress. At the same time, the analysis highlights that the integration of GDEI across mine action governance and operations remains uneven, with inclusive practices often dependent on individual initiatives, operator-level policies, or donor requirements rather than systematically embedded within national frameworks. The March 2026 validation workshop broadly confirmed the direction and credibility of these findings. Stakeholder feedback did not substantially challenge the assessment's conclusions, but reinforced the need for clearer operational framing, stronger accountability pathways, and more visible treatment of inclusion in practice.

Across governance, information management, operations, employment practices, and monitoring, the assessment identifies common patterns. Sex- and age-disaggregated data are collected but not consistently analysed or used to inform prioritisation, targeting, or assessment of equitable outcomes. National standards and oversight mechanisms vary in the extent to which they translate commitments on equality and non-discrimination into operational expectations. Monitoring systems are robust in relation to technical compliance and safety but rarely assess who benefits from mine action activities or whether certain groups are systematically under-reached. Capacity-building on GDEI exists across the sector, with scope to strengthen coherence and shared expectations to support more consistent application in practice.

Taken together, these findings point to the need for a more structured and coordinated approach to gender mainstreaming in mine action—one that consolidates existing good practice, clarifies expectations, and supports gradual, realistic strengthening over time. Central to this approach is the development of a national action plan on gender mainstreaming in mine action, which would provide a practical and time-bound framework to translate existing national legislation, policy commitments, and international standards into concrete steps for implementation. Such a plan would bring together the assessment's recommendations into a coherent set of priorities, clarify roles and responsibilities across institutions and operators, and support sequencing and monitoring of progress, while remaining within VNMAC's mandate and coordination role.

This approach is closely aligned with Viet Nam's Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan, which sets out commitments to increase women's participation, leadership, and protection across peace, security, and recovery processes. Given the central role of the defence and security sector in mine action, the development of a Ministry of National Defense WPS implementation plan would be an important enabling measure. A MOND

plan would help operationalise WPS commitments within defence-led functions, including mine action, by clarifying institutional responsibilities, strengthening coherence between civilian and military actors, and supporting the systematic integration of gender perspectives across planning, operations, training, and oversight.

By serving as complementary and mutually reinforcing frameworks, a national action plan on gender mainstreaming in mine action and a MoND WPS implementation plan would enable VNMAC and its partners to move from ad hoc or uneven application of GDEI principles toward more systematic and accountable practice. Together, they would provide a structured basis for learning, adaptation, and preparation for future revisions of national standards, strengthening the effectiveness, equity, and sustainability of mine action outcomes. In doing so, they would support Viet Nam's national development objectives and fulfil its commitments under the Women, Peace and Security agenda and broader international obligations, while ensuring that mine action continues to respond effectively to the needs of all people affected by explosive ordnance

Annex

Annex A: Proposed objectives and indicators for GDEI to include in the draft National Action Programme to Address Post-War Landmine Consequences

Objective	Key Indicators	Target
1. Strengthen use of disaggregated data for decision-making	% of datasets disaggregated by sex, age, disability, and (where appropriate) ethnicity; # of provinces with complete victim data including disability status; IMSMA Core configured for inclusive analysis (yes/no); Evidence of data used in planning	100% datasets disaggregated; national system operational
2.Strengthen institutional coordination and accountability	GDEI roles defined (yes/no); # of coordination meetings including GDEI; # of institutions with focal points; % of operators reporting on GDEI indicators	GDEI integrated into coordination mechanisms at all levels
3. Operationalise inclusive mine action through guidance and tools	# of SOPs revised to include gender, disability, and ethnic considerations; Inclusive toolkit developed (yes/no); % of operators applying tools; QA/QC includes inclusion criteria (yes/no)	Inclusion embedded in operational tools
4. Increase participation and leadership of women, persons with disabilities, and ethnic minorities	% of workforce disaggregated by sex, disability, and ethnicity (where appropriate); % of women and underrepresented groups in leadership; # of targeted training opportunities; Recruitment policies reviewed for bias (yes/no); women leadership models[2] implemented (yes/no)	Progressive increase in diversity across roles (e.g. +10–20%)[3]
5. Strengthen inclusive community engagement	% of consultations including women, men, persons with disabilities, and ethnic groups; # of EORE activities adapted for disability and local languages; % of handovers with diverse participation; Feedback mechanisms accessible to all (yes/no)	Inclusive consultation standard practice
6. Strengthen inclusive and equitable victim assistance systems	% of provinces with complete victim data including disability; # of victims supported (disaggregated); # of services accessible to persons with disabilities; VA linked to social protection systems (yes/no)	Inclusive and coordinated VA system
7. Strengthen institutional capacity and leadership	# of trainings including gender, disability, and inclusion; # of senior leaders engaged; Budget allocated to inclusion; # of institutions conducting gender/disability reviews	Inclusion embedded in institutional practice
8. Integrate gender, disability, and ethnic inclusion into national policy frameworks (mine action ordinance, MA M&E framework, WPS MoD plan)	Inclusion (gender, diversity, ethnicity) reflected in Mine Action Ordinance (yes/no); National mine action M&E framework includes inclusion indicators (yes/no); WPS Ministry of Defense action plan includes mine action objectives and indicators (yes/no)	Full policy alignment achieved

[2] Similar to the successful models established in peace keeping and military medicines forces

[3] Recommend to align with the WPS NAP targets - “By 2025, 60% of state management agencies and local governments at all levels to have key female leaders. By 2030, this target is set to increase to 75%. For sectors and fields where the women workforce is currently below 30%, these targets may be adjusted to reflect practical conditions; By 2025, the proportion of women in the pool for management and leadership positions at all levels should reach at least 40%, with a target of 50% by 2030”

Annex B: Assessment of GDEI integration in TCVN

TCVN	GDEI level of integration	Key Articles/Sections Indicating GDEI	Alignment with IMAS
TCVN 10299-4: Non-Technical Survey	Low	- Annex A (Survey form 02): Collection of witness data including sex, age, ethinicity but lack information of disability or poverty status. - Annex A (Survey Form 04): Requires collection of victim data including sex, age, ethinicity, education, marriage status but lack data on disability and level of poverty	IMAS for NTS generally require (shall) consultation with affected populations and collection of relevant information sources. The TCVN: ✔ Collect sex, age, ethnicity data ✔ Collect victim demographic information However: ✔ Missing disability and socio-economic data ✔ No explicit requirement for inclusive consultation ✔ No explicit requirement to identify all community information sources **Implication** The standard partially addresses IMAS "should" expectations, but does not fully operationalise "shall" requirements related to inclusive community consultation.
TCVN10299-10: EO Incident Investigation	Low	- Section 5.2.1.7 on Casuality Details: Mandates recording victim details (Both serious and minor injuries) including sex/ gender, age, and occupation, level of injury for inclusive incident reporting and analysis.	The standard includes demographic recording of victims. ✔ Records gender and age ✔ Supports basic inclusive reporting However: ✔ No analysis of risk patterns by gender/diversity ✔ No link between incident analysis and prevention measures ✔ No reference to inclusion in investigation procedures **Implication** This standard minimally aligns with IMAS expectations and mostly addresses data documentation rather than gender-responsive analysis.

TCVN	GDEI level of integration	Key Articles/Sections Indicating GDEI	Alignment with IMAS
TCVN 10299-11: Information Management	Moderate	- Section 6.3.4 on data collection require to collect data disaggregation by gender, age, and other diversity factors for equitable information systems (6.3.4.2). - Annex A on the minimum data requirements Includes fields like gender, age, level of injuries and disability of victims to support inclusion in databases.	✔ Requires sex- and age-disaggregated data ✔ Includes disability data ✔ Specifies minimum datasets These align well with IMAS expectations for evidence-based decision making. Remaining gaps: ✗ Limited reference to socio-economic vulnerability ✗ No clear requirement for analysis of participation gaps **Implication** The TCVN generally comply with IMAS "should" provisions for disaggregated data, and partially with "shall" expectations on information systems.
TCVN 10299-12: Quality Management	Moderate	Section 4 on Fundamental Principle in Quality insurance Section 4.3- Stakeholder participation: The quality management system must be designed and operated with active participation from workers, beneficiaries, investors/project owners, authorities, and other stakeholders to build collective ownership and trust. Implementers must clearly understand their roles and have adequate skills and knowledge, and their practical experience should inform key processes and quality objectives. Section 4.4- Gender and diversity: requires any mine/EO remediation programme or project should reflect as fully as possible the context, needs, and differing gender- and diversity-related requirements of the community, compliance with the law on gender equality must be ensured in all activities; the views of women, girls, and local community groups must be collected and fully respected as requirements of the investor/project owner and other stakeholders.	The standard introduces important principles: ✔ Stakeholder participation ✔ Gender and diversity considerations ✔ Compliance with gender equality law However: The wording is largely normative but not operational. For example: "should reflect as fully as possible the context, needs and requirements…" This reflects IMAS "should" language, rather than clear "shall" operational requirements. Implication The standard aligns conceptually with IMAS, but implementation requirements are not fully specified.

TCVN	GDEI level of integration	Key Articles/Sections Indicating GDEI	Alignment with IMAS
TCVN 10299-13: Risk Management	High	Included one section on Gender and diversity Section 4.8 Gender and diversity 4.8.1 The risk management system should recognise and take into account differences in gender, age, and diversity when identifying, analysing, assessing, and treating risks. Sex- and age-disaggregated data need to be collected and used to support effective risk identification, assessment, analysis, and treatment. (recommend to include more on disability, ethnicity and economic status) 4.8.2 The risk management system must ensure that women, girls, boys, and men are included in consultation and participation processes and procedures within the risk management system for post-war explosive ordnance (EO) remediation. (recommend to include more on disability, ethnicity and economic status)	This standard is one of the strongest: ✔ Requires sex- and age-disaggregated data ✔ Requires inclusive consultation in risk management ✔ Integrates gender/diversity in risk analysis The clause: “the system must ensure that women, girls, boys and men are included in consultation” This directly reflects IMAS “shall” level requirements. Remaining gap: ✔ Limited reference to disability and socio-economic vulnerability. Implication This standard demonstrates strong alignment with IMAS normative requirements.

TCVN	GDEI level of integration	Key Articles/Sections Indicating GDEI	Alignment with IMAS
TCVN 10299-14: Explosive Ordnance Risk Education	High	Section 4.3 Principles of EORE 4.3.2 Non-discrimination Activities on explosive ordnance (EO) accident prevention education must not discriminate on the grounds of sex/gender, ethnicity, geographical area, language, economic conditions, or educational level of the target groups. Grouping of target audiences is only for the purpose of developing messages and methods that are appropriate to actual needs, thereby improving effectiveness. 4.3.3 Do no harm Safety messages in EO accident prevention education must not contradict safety requirements set out in other standards and technical regulations in this field, and must not cause harm or offend ethical norms, lifestyles, or customs and traditions; they must not incite hatred or violence within the community. 4.3.4 Participation and inclusion Programmes, projects, activities, messages, and communication methods for EO accident prevention education should incorporate community and stakeholder input and evaluation. 4.3.6 Ensuring gender equality and diversity EO accident prevention education activities should be designed and adapted to the needs and real-life circumstances of different target groups. To support effective planning of programmes and projects, data should be analysed on EO contamination levels and status, EO victim data, and—disaggregated by sex/gender, age, socio-economic conditions, access to communication and education, and cultural and linguistic characteristics—in order to clearly define objectives, measures, and an appropriate allocation of resources. - Section 4.4.3: Involves Women's Union, Youth Union and other associations/ unions in EORE coordination. - Section 8.2.4: The monitoring system for explosive ordnance (EO) accident prevention education activities must meet the following specific requirements: Identify performance indicators for the activities, including relevant sex/gender- and age-related data, focusing on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, and be capable of establishing systems to collect information related to these indicators.	The standard integrates multiple strong elements: ✔ Non-discrimination principles ✔ Participation and inclusion ✔ Gender and diversity analysis ✔ Disaggregated monitoring indicators The requirement that monitoring must include sex- and age-disaggregated data is strongly aligned with IMAS. Implication EORE demonstrates very strong alignment with IMAS, especially in the SHALL and SHOULD categories.

TCVN	GDEI level of integration	Key Articles/Sections Indicating GDEI	Alignment with IMAS
TCVN 10299-15: Victim Assistance	High	- Section 4.2: These target groups for VA can be classified by geographical area, sex/ gender, age, occupation, ethnicity, culture, circumstances, and living conditions. - Section 4.3 Victim assistance principles: implementers must ensure non-discrimination (no exclusion based on gender, ethnicity, location, language, economic status, or education), and ensure activities do not offend or harm ethical norms, lifestyles, or local customs and traditions. - Section 5.1.3 and 5.2.2: Requires data collection and analysis by gender, age, and disability forms. Socio-economic status, level of injuries - Section 6 sets out a comprehensive victim-assistance package for explosive ordnance survivors, covering emergency and long-term healthcare and rehabilitation (including assistive devices), psychosocial support, education, employment/livelihoods, and direct financial assistance. It also emphasises life-skills development, community reintegration through coordinated case management and referrals, rights and accessibility awareness, inclusive/non-stigmatising approaches, resource mobilisation, and stronger national capacity to lead victim support.	This standard reflects a comprehensive inclusion framework: ✔ Non-discrimination ✔ Data disaggregation ✔ Disability inclusion ✔ Socio-economic considerations ✔ Comprehensive service packages It aligns closely with IMAS victim assistance principles and human rights frameworks. Implication This is the strongest alignment with IMAS normative expectations.
TCVN 10299-2 (Accreditation), TCVN 10299-3 (Monitoring and Evaluation), TCVN 10299-5 (Technical survey), TCVN 10299-6 (EO Clearance), TCVN 10299-7 (EO disposal), TCVN 10299-8 (Safety for NTS, TS and clearance), TCVN 10299-9 (Medical insurance for deminers)	Low or no explicit	TCVN 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 show low/no explicit integration, focusing on technical processes without direct references to gender or inclusion.	

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