

Sudan National Mine Action Standards – SNMAS 07.02

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Mine Action Accreditation

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1. Introduction

Mine Action Accreditation is a process of formally assessing and recognizing a mine action organization to be able to plan, manage and operationally conduct mine action activities. The aim of accreditation in Sudan mine action programme is to confirm that a mine action organisation is properly established, staffed, and equipped, and has the required processes, procedures and supporting structures in place, before starting any mine action activities.

Accreditation process results in an agreement of Sudan National Mine Action Centre (NMAC) with a mine action organization on the standards to which mine action activities are to be carried out. This accreditation agreement forms the basis for monitoring of mine action activities that the organization is accredited for.

The important aspects of accreditation are to ensure that the mine action organization is competent and able to carry out mine action activities as per the requirements of Sudan National Mine Action Standards (SNMAS) and the terms of mine action contracts. The competencies required for accreditation include but not limited to technical, financial, administrative and organisational and the availability and skills to use required tools and equipment.

Accreditation of mine action organisations and monitoring of their activities in Sudan mine action programme need to be extended from demining to all activities of mine action, including non-technical survey, mine and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) Risk Education and Victim Assistance. It is important to apply an inclusive regime of accreditation to cover all activities undertaken in mine action, in Sudan.

Accreditation and Monitoring in mine action are parts of Quality Assurance (QA). QA activities are “focused on providing confidence that quality requirements will be fulfilled” (ISO9001:2015). Accreditation is usually completed before mine action work starts. Monitoring, covered in SNMAS 07.03, takes place as work starts and progresses.

Accreditation together with monitoring can ensure the important quality considerations of efficiency and effectiveness in mine action. Both need to ensure that the mine action works have been carried out correctly, based on the requirements of SNMAS, IMAS and terms of the contract, by competent and skilled operators. In addition, as a quality requirement, this is of greater importance for Sudan mine action programme to focus on carrying out the right works in the right place to achieve the overall goals. It is required to focus QA efforts on the relevance, effectiveness, and prioritisation of mine action activities as well. The aim of this standard is to provide a national framework for the accreditation of mine action organisations intend and want to carry out mine action activities in Sudan.

Prior to any mine action organisations conducting mine action operations in Sudan, they shall be accredited by NMAC. The accreditation process is conducted by the NMAC appointed accreditation board. The board shall assess the mine action organisations’ competence and ability to plan, manage and conduct mine action operations and activities safely, effectively and efficiently in compliance to the requirements of Sudan SNMAS. On completion of the accreditation process, the accreditation board shall recommend whether or not the mine action organisation should be issued accreditation to conduct mine action activities in Sudan.

2. Scope

This SNMAS provides requirements, specifications and guidelines for the accreditation of mine action organizations in Sudan and shall be applied to organisations working in any of the components of mine action. Accreditation is not a stand-alone activity but forms part of overall the Quality Management System (QMS) in mine action, in Sudan mine action programme.

3. References

IMAS 07.12, IMAS 07.30 and SNMAS 07.01

4. Terms and Definitions

A mine action organisation is “any organisation including government, military, commercial or NGO or civil society, responsible for implementing mine action projects or tasks.

A ‘sub-unit’ is part of a mine action organisation which is operationally accredited to conduct one or more defined mine action activities, such as Technical and Non-Technical Surveys, Clearance, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and Mine Risk/ERW Education.

An ‘accreditation board’ is a team of suitably qualified mine action experts within the structure of NMAC technically sported by UNMAS, and responsible for the management and implementation of national accreditation process in Sudan mine action programme.

Monitoring is “systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an on-going project, programme or policy with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives, and progress in the use of allocated funds.” IMAS 04.10 based on the OECD/DAC definition. For details on terms and definitions to QMS, refer to SNMAS 07.01 of QMS in Mine Action.

5. Accreditation General Principles

Accreditation is the process by which a mine action organisation is formally recognised as competent and able to plan, manage and operationally conduct and implement mine action activities in Sudan. This competence includes the ability of the organisation to establish, maintain and implement effective internal Quality Management System as per the requirements of SNMAS 07.01. It is a proactive approach of assessing the capability and competencies of mine action organizations to manage and undertake mine action activities and shall therefore; focus on prevention of possible problems to be avoided, and to ensure safety, efficiency and effectiveness of mine action activities, operations and outputs.

The output of the accreditation process is an accreditation agreement between NMAC and the mine action organisation as a certificate of authorization to the mine action organization to plan, manage and operationally conduct mine action activities in Sudan. It shall specify which activities can be carried out by mine action organization, and based on relevant SNMAS, quality requirements and SOPs. The agreement forms the basis for monitoring activities to be carried out by NMAC.

Accreditation shall be processed by accreditation board which shall be comprised of suitably qualified mine action experts within the structure of NMAC and with technical support of UNMAS Sudan. The accreditation board shall process accreditation; considering integrity, impartiality, fairness and professionalism, without any personal interest and or personal conflicts.

6. Steps in Mine Action Accreditation

Accreditation of mine action organizations encompasses the following steps:

6.1. Organisational Accreditation

The NMAC accreditation board assesses and evaluates the organizational capacity of mine action organisations which includes but not limited to organizational structure, administrative, financial, logistical, management, quality, and occupational health, technical SOPs, and legal aspects. The office setting up and facility may also be assessed in this step, however, the accreditation can be granted on the basis of documents, documented procedures and policies provided by the organisation. The organisational accreditation confirms that the mine action organisation and its staff are competent and able to **plan and manage** mine action activities in Sudan.

Organizational accreditation requires compliance with SNMAS, policies, regulations, and quality requirements issued and ascertained by NMAC with technical support of UNMAS. Following a successful assessment by NMAC accreditation board, an organizational accreditation should be issued to the organisation to allow it **to bid for mine action contracts** and prepare for operational accreditation and implementation of mine action activities in Sudan. Accreditation is granted on the basis that the organisation will maintain the stated capacity for the duration of the accreditation. The duration of organizational accreditation is one year and is renewable based on the request of mine action organization and evidence of maintenance of accreditation agreement.

6.2. Operational Accreditation

The mine action organisation demonstrates that it has mine action contract(s) and the practical and operational ability and competence to undertake the specified mine action activities in Sudan. The proposed implementation is evaluated on the basis of documents supplied and practical aspects.

On successful assessment and completion of this step the organization is subject to on-site assessment and practical demonstration to the accreditation board members or NMAC regional office in related region; in order to ensure that the subunits and operational staff of the mine action organization have the required competencies and abilities to implement mine action activities in the field, on completion of successful on-site assessment, the organization shall be issued with operational accreditation for the duration of the mine action contract; if there are more than one contract, the longer contract should be considered for the duration of operational accreditation. Operational accreditation authorizes mine action organization to **plan, manage and operationally conduct** mine action activities in Sudan.

A copy of accreditation certificate shall be provided to NMAC related departments and UNMAS for planning and undertaking of follow-on monitoring of mine action activities during the implementation period; the results of which provide evidence to decide on extension of organizational accreditation.

6.2.1 On-Site Assessment

As per the completion of documentation review as part of the operational accreditation and when the organisation is ready to start mine action activities; the on-site assessment shall be conducted by NMAC accreditation board members or QM officers in related regional office on behalf of accreditation board. The on-site assessment is crucial part of operational accreditation and aims to confirm that the field staff and supervisors of the organization are competent and skilful to manage

and undertake mine action tasks, develop and implement site operations plan, establish and set up a worksite, deploy the team, utilize the equipment, maintain communication, manage supporting elements including medical, transportation and logistics, and security and liaison with community, elders and local authority.

7. Accreditation Requirements

7.1. Basic Considerations

To obtain mine action accreditation a mine action organisation shall demonstrate competence to apply the Sudan National Mine Action Standards, and any specific provisions of the NMAC, including national laws and regulations, financial and insurance requirements. The organisation shall also demonstrate the ability to implement the agreed standards and other provisions in practice.

7.2. Accreditation Process

7.4.1 Length of Accreditation Period

Accreditation should be for a fixed period; organizational accreditation for one year and operational accreditation should be linked to the length of the contract.

7.4.2 Application for Accreditation

The NMAC shall provide accreditation requirements in writing to the mine action organisation. The requirements shall include a list of the documents to be supplied, the mine action organisation should submit an application in accordance with the accreditation requirements.

7.4.3 Organisational Accreditation

The purpose of organisational accreditation is to confirm that the organisation has competence and ability to operate as a mine action organisation, and to ensure the organization is established, staffed, settled and have the required policies, procedures and processes to plan and manage mine action activities in Sudan.

NMAC shall confirm receipt of the application and supporting documents, after an initial review, NMAC accreditation board may, if necessary, ask the applicant to provide supplementary documents as needed by accreditation requirement list. NMAC shall provide a deadline in writing for the receipt of such documentation from the organization. Documents from the following list should be included in the assessment as appropriate, together with any further national requirements agreed by NMAC:

- 1) Organisational structure and proposed representation in Sudan;
- 2) Formal qualifications and relevant practical experience of the management team;
- 3) Financial planning and control procedures;
- 4) Recruitment, training and promotion procedures with provision of gender and diversity considerations;
- 5) Arrangements to use sub-contractors, and joint ventures, if any. Including the use of non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive procedures by sub-contractors;
- 6) A statement of freedom from any outstanding or pending legal action, or any pending disputes with the contracting authority;
- 7) Insurance cover, both staff medical insurance and third-party liability;
- 8) Planning capacity, including logistic planning procedures;

- 9) Technical mine action procedures;
- 10) Capacity to prioritise mine action works and select tasks based on humanitarian and development outcomes and standard criteria that are part of SNMAS and Sudan national development plans and requirements;
- 11) The internal quality management system including procedures corrective and preventive actions, for continual improvement;
- 12) Information management systems, GIS competence and capacity, and mapping;
- 13) Employee training and skills development programmes, management training schemes;
- 14) Intended staff composition (functions and gender);
- 15) Quality policy, gender and diversity policy, environmental protection policy;
- 16) Safety and occupational health policy and procedures; and
- 17) Any additional NMAC and legal requirements.

In assessing the mine action organisation, recognition should be given to other existing accreditations held by the organisation, such as current ISO 9001 or ISO14001 compliance, or accreditation for similar activities in other countries.

If NMAC accreditation board is not satisfied that the relevant requirements for accreditation have been met, the mine action organisation shall be informed in writing as soon as possible. Whenever possible, the applicant should be given the opportunity to provide required documentation and documented information within a deadline agreed by NMAC. The accreditation board shall then start processing organizational accreditation. If the mine action organisation is unable to satisfy the accreditation requirements within the agreed deadline then the application shall be terminated and the mine action organisation informed of the decision in writing.

When the accreditation requirements of the first stage desk assessment have been achieved, the mine action organisation shall be informed in writing. The accreditation board shall convene the board meeting and if the board agreed issue organizational accreditation to the organization to make them able to bid for mine action contracts.

When an organisation is applying for renewal of existing accreditation, the results of monitoring during the current and previous mine action activities and the contracts should be taken into account. If the results show that the organisation is consistently reaching a good quality standard and there are no substantial changes to the accreditation agreement and SNMAS, then NMAC should consider a simplified accreditation process and renewal.

In assessing the mine action organisation, recognition should be given to other existing accreditations held by the organisation, such as current ISO 9001 and ISO14001 compliance, or accreditation for mine action in other countries.

7.4.4 Operational Accreditation

The result of operational accreditation is an accreditation certificate that specifies implementation in detail, which forms the basis for future monitoring of the mine action organisation's operations.

Operational accreditation is a document based and practical assessment process, the mine action organization shall be able to satisfy the accreditation board members on their ability to operationally conduct and actively implement mine action activities based on the requirements of SNMAS, SOPs, Terms of Contracts and the Statement of Work. The operational accreditation process shall be undertaken by accreditation board through assessing the following aspects:

- 1) Mine action contract's requirements or terms of contract; that is awarded to the mine action organization;
- 2) Organizational accreditation; to ensure that organization is accredited for those activities that are required by mine action contract;
- 3) Training plan and the mine action training management packages;
- 4) The training capacity including trainers' competencies, their CVs and certificates;
- 5) The field staff structure including the CVs and certificates of key staff;
- 6) Internal QMS aspects of the organization and as part of contracted activities including maintenance of records in the field level and in the head office;
- 7) Internal operational review plan for continual improvement;
- 8) Occupational health and safety procedures and incident prevention plan;
- 9) Emergency and medical evacuation plan and procedures;
- 10) Details of tools and equipment to be used, their suitability for use as part of contracted activities, including their maintenance and supply of spare parts, and any relevant test reports;
- 11) Mine action operational plan based on the terms of contract, SNMAS and national priority and prioritization criteria;
- 12) Land release procedures to meet national land release policy;
- 13) Field risk assessment procedure and related format;
- 14) The IMSMA reporting forms and organization's reporting procedures;
- 15) Test and licensing of specialized tools, if required as part of the contract; including MDD and Mechanical units;
- 16) Insurance coverage of the staff, medical and third-party liability; and
- 17) Logistical support including supply to the field office and the sub-units.

All above listed requirements shall make part of accreditation procedures to be applied by NMAC accreditation board. The requirements should also be uploaded to NMAC website to be publicly available for the mine action organizations intend to get accreditation from NMAC and work in Sudan mine action programme.

When an organisation is applying for extension or modification of existing operational accreditation; the results of monitoring during the current and previous mine action activities should be taken into account. In addition, any changes in management and procedures shall be assessed properly by the accreditation board and then the required actions should be taken to extend or modify the operational accreditation.

If the accreditation board assumes that the requirements for accreditation and the documentation are not enough, the organization shall be notified to provide required documentation and documented evidence within a specific deadline agreed by NMAC and organization. As per the completion of required documentation; NMAC shall then start processing operational accreditation.

When the requirements of the operational accreditation have been achieved, the mine action organisation shall be informed in writing to move forward with practical steps of on-site demonstration which is the assessment of the organization's ability in implementation of SNMAS, SOPs and terms of the contract. However, this shall also include monitoring and assessment of the training programs and evaluation thereof. NMAC should not delay the start of operations of the mine action organisation by delaying the proposed date for an on-site assessment.

7.4.5 Test and Licensing of Mine Detection Dogs and Demining Machines

Test and licensing of specialize demining tools include accreditation of Mine Detection Dogs (MDD) and Demining Machines. See Annexes D and E for the operational accreditation of MDD and DM respectively.

7.4.6 Assessment of On-Site Demonstration

The purpose of assessing on-site demonstration is to confirm that the proposed activities are carried out and managed in accordance with NMAC approved and documented procedures (SOPs), SNMAS and the Terms of Contracts. NMAC accreditation board members or QM staff on behalf of the accreditation board shall assess the on-site demonstration, the accreditation board shall clearly communicate the required fields to be monitored and assessed during the demonstration of the activities, and any other special issues to be taken into account. The demonstration should include all mine action activities that the organization has applied for. In case of risk education, victim assistance and NTS, the actual activity shall be monitored and accepted as on-site demonstration.

The assessment of on-site demonstration shall include:

- 1) Monitoring of the training program and the trainees evaluation results;
- 2) Inspection of all relevant parts of the site, including offices and support areas, to verify that they are in accordance with the organizational accreditation agreement and requirements of SNMAS and SOPs;
- 3) Establishment of worksite in accordance with the requirements of SNMAS and SOPs;
- 4) Admin area, parking area, equipment area, explosive storage point, debris pit, waste pits and other necessary aspects;
- 5) Baseline in accordance with site operational plan;
- 6) Personal Protective Equipment as part of occupational health and safety;
- 7) Medical support and emergency evacuation plan in the site;
- 8) Deployment of the team to the working site, supervisory elements and control point;
- 9) Control markers and temporary marking in the site;
- 10) Communication within the team and with organization HQ;
- 11) Demonstration of the activities including use of technical tools and demining drills;
- 12) Detectors test practices including establishing test box and balance boxes;
- 13) Field Risk Assessment practices and communication of the risks and mitigation measures to the team members;
- 14) Confirmation that staff composition is the same as presented for operational accreditation;
- 15) Confirmation that the SOPs, the organization instructions and guidelines, and relevant quality management processes, have been disseminated, are understood by team leaders, and are the same as presented for the organisational and operational accreditation.

The accreditation board should also address the following issues:

- 1) The quality of data gathering and record keeping;
- 2) The degree to which the following are understood and actively implemented by the field operations staff:
 - a) Safety and occupational health;
 - b) Standard Operating Procedures;
 - c) Logistics management;
 - d) The quality management system in the field;
 - e) The information management system.

Any shortfalls shall be immediately communicated to the organization; the organization shall take required and agreed corrective and preventive actions and demonstrate evidence to NMAC accreditation board that actions are implemented. A further partial or full on-site demonstration may be necessary, according to the scope and category of nonconformity identified. The on-site demonstration should then be accepted by the accreditation board and the issuance of operational accreditation is recommended.

7.3. Extending or Modifying Accreditation

a) Modification or changes in the management system:

Proposed changes to the mine action organisation's management structure, which could impact on its management capability, may require an extension or revision of the accreditation by NMAC. The accredited mine action organisation shall inform NMAC of any such changes. NMAC shall determine whether the changes require re-assessment of the accreditation, either desk or on-site.

b) Modification or changes to operational procedures:

The accredited organisation shall inform NMAC of any intended modification to the operational procedures including the introduction of new or modified equipment or techniques. NMAC shall determine if the proposed changes require a re-assessment. If the changes are minor and are consistent with SNMAS, then no further action should be necessary.

If the changes are significant, then NMAC should conduct an operational accreditation process as appropriate, and amend the accreditation certificate.

c) Increasing the number of sub-units using the same SOPs:

If the additional sub units will use the same equipment, techniques and operational procedures then no further action is necessary, provided that the existing management and administrative structures have sufficient capacity to manage the larger operation. This applies to all types of mine action activities.

7.4. Suspension and Termination of Accreditation

7.4.1 Suspension

The NMAC may suspend the accreditation of a mine action organisation or one of its sub-units for a limited period in the following cases:

- a) If monitoring shows non-compliance with the requirements of SNMAS and SOPs; which is of a nature that would not warrant termination of the accreditation; or
- b) In the case of improper use of the accreditation agreement; or
- c) If monitoring shows that non-critical non-conformities, which have been previously notified, have not subsequently been properly addressed in a timely manner;
- d) If there is a failure to disclose major and significant management or operational changes.

7.4.2 Termination

NMAC may terminate accreditation in the following cases:

- a) If the accredited organisation stops mine action business in Sudan or closes down;

- b) At the written request of the accredited organisation; or
- c) If the requirements or provisions of SNMAS or laws are changed, and the accredited organisation cannot or will not ensure compliance with the new requirements or provisions within a reasonable period; or
- d) If monitoring and or investigation reveals that noncompliance with the accreditation agreement and or terms of contract is of a serious nature, and corrective action has not been made in a timely manner; or
- e) If adequate measures are not taken in a reasonable time following the suspension of accreditation.

Examples of serious noncompliance include:

- a) Repeated failure to apply accredited management systems or operational procedures;
- b) Refusal to allow monitoring or inspection to take place;
- c) Interference with monitoring or inspections;
- d) The application of processes known to place staff or the local population at unacceptable risk including missed hazardous ordnance;
- e) Falsification of data and records.

8. NMAC's Obligations as Accreditation Body

8.1. General

The NMAC shall establish an accreditation board with written description of its responsibilities, the methods to be used in the accreditation process, and the technical scope of its activities. The accreditation board members shall be suitably qualified mine action experts and trained in accreditation process.

8.2. Independence, Impartiality and Integrity

The NMAC accreditation board members shall be free from political, commercial, financial and other pressures that might affect their judgement. Policies and procedures shall be implemented to ensure that persons or organisations external to NMAC cannot influence accreditation board members.

NMAC and its staff shall not engage in any activities that may conflict with the independence of their activities. In particular they shall not become directly involved in organisations that carry out any mine action activities, or that design, manufacture, supply, install, use or maintain services or equipment for organisations operating in the mine action sector in Sudan.

8.3. Confidentiality

NMAC accreditation board shall ensure confidentiality of information obtained in the course of its activities. Proprietary rights shall be protected; the procedures, policies and other documentation of a mine action organization shall not be copied and or used by other organizations.

8.4. Organisation

The NMAC accreditation board shall have a technical manager, however named, who is qualified and experienced in the operation of the accreditation process and who has overall responsibility for ensuring that the accreditation activities are carried out in accordance with SNMAS and IMAS. UNMAS should provide technical support throughout the accreditation process. The technical manager should if possible be a permanent employee.

8.5. Management System

NMAC shall develop and maintain documented procedures and shall implement an internal quality management system, preferably based on a recognised system such as current ISO 9001. The management of NMAC shall designate a person who, irrespective of other duties, shall have defined authority and responsibility for quality management system within NMAC. This person shall have direct access to the most senior executive of the NMAC for quality related issues. For more details refer to SNMAS 07.01.

8.6. Personnel

NMAC shall have a sufficient number of permanent qualified personnel with the range and level of expertise required to carry out its normal functions. NMAC shall have access to technical expertise of UNMAS.

8.7. Accreditation Methods and Procedures

NMAC shall establish and maintain mapped process and written procedures for accreditation and make it available to all mine action organizations and mine action stakeholders.

8.8. Records

NMAC shall prepare and maintain records of all assessments and inspections as part of accreditation process. All records shall be safely stored for a period of at least five years, held secure and in confidence to the applicant.

8.9. Appeals

The NMAC shall establish a fair and impartial process to enable mine action organisations to appeal against decisions of NMAC accreditation board that the organisation considers unfair, or when new evidence comes to light. The appeals should include the use of independent arbitration from the other mine action organizations present in Sudan and that is acceptable to both parties.

9. Responsibilities

9.1. National Mine Action Centre (NMAC) Sudan

The NMAC shall:

- a) Establish process and procedures for the accreditation of mine action organisations and operations;
- b) Specify SNMAS and provide written guidelines for the accreditation of mine action organisations and operations;
- c) Monitor the work of accreditation board, ensure that the accreditation process is being applied in a fair, equitable, non-discriminatory, gender and diversity sensitive manner;
- d) Ensure that accreditation does not unnecessarily interrupt or delay mine action projects; and
- e) Ensure appropriate follow-up action is taken on accreditation board's recommendations.
- f) Conduct internal audit on accreditation process to ensure it is working in accordance with the requirements of SNMAS and accreditation approved procedure.

9.2. Accreditation Board

As part of NMAC structure, the accreditation board shall:

- a) Accredite mine action organisations, including their sub-units;
- b) Process accreditation applications promptly so that delays do not impact on the operational effectiveness and efficiency of the applicants;
- c) Work with mine action organisations to resolve any issues arising during the accreditation process;
- d) Establish and maintain an effective and documented Terms of Reference (TOR) for accreditation board; and
- e) Publish current accreditation requirements and make them available to all interested parties.

9.3. Mine Action Organisations

All mine action organization undertaking mine action activities in Sudan, shall:

- a) Apply management practices, and quality management and operational procedures which lead to mine action activities that meet or exceed the requirements of SNMAS, the mine action contracts and accreditation agreement;
- b) Maintain and make available documentation including SOPs and other written procedures, reports, records including internal monitoring and quality reports to NMAC;
- c) Provide NMAC with access to all sites, buildings and other facilities, which need to be visited as part of the accreditation requirement.

9.4. Donors

When a contract or other formal agreement has been written by a donor organisation, the donor organisation shall be responsible for including a requirement that the implementing partner(s) will comply with the national accreditation requirements established by the NMAC and that the applying organizations at minimum have organization accreditation obtained from NMAC.

Annex A – Accreditation Application Form

Annex B – Organizational Accreditation Certificate

Annex C – Operational Accreditation Certificate

Annex D – MDD Accreditation

Annex E – Mechanical Accreditation