CEN Workshop Agreements for Test and Evaluation of Humanitarian Demining Equipment

Franciska Borry

*International Test and Evaluation Program for Humanitarian Demining (ITEP)*

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The increase of humanitarian-demining activities in the late 1990s awakened the need for a standardised assessment of the equipment used in these activities. Although trials of the capabilities of available demining equipment were already taking place, the lack of testing standardisation made it difficult to compare test results to determine which equipment was best suited to any particular need. Therefore, test results were frequently of limited use to the end-user community. It was within this context that the European Commission mandated in 2000 that the Comité Européen de Normalisation establish standard methodologies for humanitarian demining. In order to fulfil this mandate, the CEN Technical Committee created Technical Working Group 126 (CEN TWG126) to ensure coordination and generate specific standardisation initiatives.

The CEN Workshop Approach

CEN has introduced the CEN Workshop, a mechanism and approach to standardisation. It is intended to be a process in which clients can bring their standardisation and technical specification requirements, and have the opportunity to find a solution in an environment "tailor made" for their needs. The workshop concept provides an opportunity for any party faced with a technical challenge to find others in a similar situation and develop a result by consensus, validated in an open arena.

The procedures for setting up and operating CEN Workshops are deliberately kept to a minimum and have the opportunity to find a solution in an environment "tailor made" for their needs. Therefore, test results were frequently of limited use to the end-user community. It was within this context that the European Commission mandated in 2000 that the Comité Européen de Normalisation establish standard methodologies for humanitarian demining. In order to fulfil this mandate, the CEN Technical Committee created Technical Working Group 126 (CEN TWG126) to ensure coordination and generate specific standardisation initiatives.

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Burmese Separatist Group Signs Statement Against Landmines

The National Democratic Front of Burma signed a statement against landmine use at its January 2007 Central Executive Committee meeting. The statement directs various member organisations, which claimed landmines were an effective self-defense tactic, to find ways to minimize mine use.

The NDF also directed members to apply strict usage rules, regulate/supervise mine activity and performance-degradation testing. A series of mechanical equipment trials executed by ITEP during 2006 using the CWA 15044 test protocol has further produced some useful experiences which will be taken into account when the CWA 15044 is updated, probably in 2008.

Four Working Groups, each tasked with drafting different parts of the document, were established at the kick-off meeting. The first technical meeting was held 3 May 2007.11

Points of Contact

The contracts listed below are available to provide advice on the planning and conduct of an evaluation according to the described CEN Workshop Agreements. Please do not hesitate to contact them when considering a trial of demining equipment or demining methods.

- ITEP Secretariat: secretariat@ipnp.w.s
- ITEP Working Group on Test and Evaluation of Mechanical Assistance Clearance Equipment: Geoff Cole, geoff.cole@dr-ddrd.ca, or Chris Weickert, chris.weickert@dr-drd.ca
- ITEP Working Group on Test and Evaluation of Dual (Multi) Sensors: David Lewis, dlewes@qinetiq.com
- GICHD: Erik Tollefsen, e.tollefsen@itep.ws

The IMAS in Spanish

The International Mine Action Standards are a Review Board of the IMAS that is responsible for overseeing the review and revision processes. The IMAS are reviewed every two years, and the standards can be adapted as national standards where the United Nations, or another international body, temporarily assumes the responsibility of a mine-action authority. IMAS can also provide the framework for legal contracts between donors and implementing organisations.

There are currently a number of IMAS covering a wide range of issues from establishing to evaluating mine-action programmes. They include not only general guidelines for mine action but also standards for specific field activities such as clearance requirements or marking of hazards in demining operations. The IMAS are produced periodically based on requirements realized either in the field or at the management levels in mine action. The existing IMAS are reviewed every three years and amended or replaced with a new edition as needed.

UNMAS has the mandated responsibility for development and maintenance of the IMAS. The work of preparing, reviewing and revising the IMAS is conducted by technical committees, with the support of international, governmental and non-governmental organisations. The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining coordinates this process at the request of the United Nations. There is a Review Board of the IMAS that is responsible for overseeing the review and