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ITEP Test and Evaluation of Humanitarian Demining Equipment, 2006

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The ITEP Work Plan 2006 compiles all test and evaluation activities that will be carried out during 2006 by the ITEP member countries, either as single-country activities or as ITEP collaborative efforts. The following summary provides an update on collaborative test activities initiated during 2005 and continuing in 2006, including some of the new test and evaluation efforts envisaged.

by Franciska Borry | International Test and Evaluation Program for Humanitarian Demining Secretariat

The International Test and Evaluation Program for Humanitarian Demining has conducted trials all throughout the world, testing and evaluating detectors that will help in the area of humanitarian demining. ITEP has partnered with different organizations to follow through with these various trials. Current activities include the testing and evaluating of various metal detectors and metal detector arrays described below.

Test and Evaluation Activities

Systematic test and evaluation of metal detectors (ITEP Project 2.1.2.4).

The first two of the three originally planned regional field trials (Africa, Southeast Asia and Europe) to evaluate the current fleet of available metal detectors were carried out during 2005 by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission in cooperation with several ITEP partners. The corresponding final reports are available at the ITEP reports website. The third and last regional trial was originally proposed by the JRC/EC and then cancelled. The Bundesanstalt für Materialprüfung und -forschung took on the responsibility of running the remaining STMD trial during October 2006. They were assisted by participants from Belgium, the Netherlands and the Croatian Centre for Testing Development and Training. This last STMD trial was combined with another trial (ITEP Project 2.1.2.8), evaluating two additional dual-sensor systems for humanitarian demining.

Evaluation of metal-detector arrays for humanitarian demining (ITEP Project 2.2.5.2 and 2.1.2.4*).

Two metal-detector arrays and training have been in the works since the beginning of 2006. The first project (ITEP Project 2.1.2.5), which started at the beginning of the year, is still ongoing, and the remaining tests will happen whenever the equipment becomes available. This project is carried out by Canada in collaboration with the Netherlands and Germany. It consists of an evaluation of several vehicle-mounted metal-detector arrays (Elbinger, Minelab, Schiebel, Vallon) in a controlled environment based on the Gräfelfing European of Normalization (CEN) Workshop Agreement on Test and Evaluation of Metal Detectors, and the procedures developed by the International Pilot Project for Technology Co-operation. The second project (ITEP Project 2.1.2.6), to be led by the Netherlands (partners still to be defined), aims at continuing this testing in less controlled conditions (different soil types) and in mine-affected countries. The latter project will probably start in mid-2007.

HSTAMIDS operational field trials and demonstrations project (ITEP Project 2.2.6.2).

The three planned field trials that started at the end of 2004 have been finalized. The main objective of the trials, to evaluate the performance and suitability of the Handheld Stand-Off Mine Detection System (HSTAMIDS) dual-sensor detector in multiple humanitarian-demining environments, was fully accomplished. Trials were carried out in Thailand, Namibia and Afghanistan. A final trial report was expected to be released at the end of 2006. In the course of 2006, Long-term Operational Evaluations of the HSTAMIDS took place in Cambodia (started in April 2006), Afghanistan (started in July 2006) and Thailand (started in September 2006). During these trials, the system was operationally employed as a primary and sole detector for extended periods (up to 1 year) by local deminers in minefields in a variety of environments and with varying levels of threat. Local demining entities collect data on system and operator performance and will provide periodic status reports.

Test and evaluation of available dual-sensor systems for humanitarian demining (ITEP Project 2.4.1.8), Germany, in collaboration with other ITEP participants (partners still to be defined), plans to conduct the testing and evaluation of available dual-sensor systems to be used in humanitarian demining. The objective of the tests is to include all available dual-sensor detectors that may be employed in humanitarian demining and it should allow for comparison of a “state of the art” report. The project has been conceived in two stages. The first stage started in fall 2006 with the preparation of an optimal reliability test design for dual-sensor detectors. The first draft of the designed test protocol will be presented and discussed at the Bundesanstalt für Materialprüfung und -forschung/IITP Workshop on Reliability Testing of the dual-sensor detector system. The second stage, which will probably start in mid-2007, will be performed in real minefields with only those detectors that passed the Stage 1 reliability trial.

Test and evaluation of the Bozena-5 medium flail (ITEP Project 3.2.3.3)* and the MineWolf-eiller (ITEP Project 3.2.3.4)*.

The MV-10 flail + viller (ITEP Project 3.2.3.5)* and the MV-20 flail + viller (ITEP Project 3.2.3.6)*. A set of mechanical-demining equipment, mainly flail and combined flail/viller equipment, was tested during winter and spring 2006 by Canada, in collaboration with Sweden. The trials were run in Croatia using the Croatian Centre for Testing Development and Training (HCR-CTR) Crotex test site with assistance from Croatian test engineers of the HCR-CTR. Next to completing the data set on baseline CWA 15044 machine performance and survivability characteristics, the tests were also intended to further evaluate the CWA 15044 test protocol in order to formulate an update of this protocol at the beginning of 2007. The MV-20 trial had to be suspended because of test site layout logistics, but might be carried out in the future by the HCR-CTR.

In-country trial of the MV-4 and Bozena-4 mini-flails (ITEP Project 3.2.4.2)*.

Canada, in close collaboration with Sweden and Afghanistan, has organized an in-country trial of the MV-4 and Bozena-4 mini-flails on 2–14 October 2006, at the International Mine Action Training Centre in K Herat (Nairobi). The main trial aims were to evaluate the in-country performance of the MV-4 and Bozena-4 and to quantitatively assess the effect of hammer wear on the flail performance. The CEN Workshop on a test methodology for personal protective equipment for use in humanitarian mine action (ITEP Project 5.1.2)* and the CEN Workshop 26 held its first meeting at the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining on 5–6 September 2006. The second and third meetings will be held in December 2006 and March 2007 respectively. The responsibility for the workshop is equally carried by the Standardsbüro Geves and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.


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