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Quality Management in Demining Organisations

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Recommended Citation
In January 2007, the GICHD unveiled a new look for its Web site and publications. The GICHD implemented these changes to give the organization a modern, fresh appearance, and to increase the utility of the Web site as well as reduce the cost of publications. The redesigned Web site can be seen at www.gichd.org and includes a number of new features such as search cut buttons, an improved search function, an evaluation repository and a training calendar.

One of the first publications to be issued in the new style was the Metal Detectors and PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) Catalogue, published in March 2007. This catalogue features handheld, large-loop and vehicle-mounted detectors, as well as the relatively new multi-sensor systems. In April, the third edition of the Guide to Mine Action and Explosive Remnants of War was published. This edition provides updated information, such as the text of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons' Protocol V on exploitable remnants of war; it also includes new chapters on mine action and landmine action, as well as capacity building and evaluation.

Tenth Annual Meeting of Programme Directors and U.N. Advisers

In March 2007, the GICHD hosted the "Tenth International Meeting of Mine Action Programme Directors and U.N. Advisers" on behalf of the United Nations Mine Action Service. The meeting brought together over 200 people from 55 mine-affected countries, along with representatives from various U.N. agencies, nongovernmental organizations and donor countries involved with mine action. Since the first annual meeting was held, attendance has increased tremendously; in March 1998 only 40 people from seven countries attended. The idea for the meeting came about as there was a growing need for better standardization, coordination and action evaluations, as well as undertake selected evaluations itself. Early in 2007 the GICHD undertook an evaluation of the United Nations Development Programme's capacity-building project in Albania and also completed an independent assessment of the residual threat in Kosovo on behalf of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo. Later in the year, the GICHD will undertake a thematic evaluation in the Caucasus as part of a rolling series of evaluations for the European Commission. See Endnotes, Page 76.

Management Responsibility

Leadership and top management responsibilities are singled out by all the literature reviewed as the most important aspects of any attempt to implement or enhance a quality-management system in an organization, or to even just enhance current quality standards in an organization. Any attempt to introduce quality into an organization that is not wholeheartedly and actively supported by the top management team is bound to be short-lived and doomed to failure. In defining the exact role of top managers and their detailed responsibilities in and to a quality-management system, the ISO 9001:2000 Quality Management System leaves no hiding place for top management, which may explain why so many organizations are hesitant to fully adopt it. How often is it found that nonconformities in the minefield are directly attributable to management? Too often!

The International Mine Action Standards, although not prescribing the ISO 9001:2000 Quality Management System, strongly recommend organizations involved in mine action implement such a system. All but a handful of organizations have done so; for reasons that are as yet unclear, some mine-action organizations haven't adopted the ISO 9001:2000 system.

The requirements of the ISO 9001:2000 system are stated in the Standard: "All requirements of this International Standard are generic and are intended to be applicable to all organizations, regardless of type, size and product provided." Why is it then that organizations are hesitant to utilize ISO as a management tool? If demining organizations are following best practice, then they are automatically practising ISO principles.

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Other masters of quality agree with Crosby on this matter. As noted in Oakland on Quality Management, Deming argues that senior management is responsible for 94 percent of quality problems, whilst Joseph M. Juran is a bit more forgiving in his book, "The Quality Handbook". Crosby further states that the key to success in making quality improvement lies with the top management team but that management is also the biggest cause of the problem. How often is it found that nonconformities in the minefield are directly attributable to management? Too often!

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that this aspect of ISO 9001:2000 Quality Management System alone is enough to gener-
ate vast quality improvements in an organisa-
tion, purely through the discipline and effort caused by genuine management commitment.

Operations people must realize that they are responsible for quality—good or bad. Quality-assurance/quality-control person-
el are only responsible for reporting on the state of quality, not for generating quality.

Product Realisation

The product realisation process is none other than the core business process of manufac-
turing its product(s) or service(s). It is self-evident that the best practise dictates that this process should be properly planned and developed to meet the requirements of the product and of the customer. This statement is further supported by Oakland who found in his research that “identifying,
key-business processes” was one of the best practices found among award-winning companies. In demining, all processes in the minefield are described and guided by stan-
dard operating procedures. However, the stage of the process. It must be measured to ensure that problems do not occur further down the process. Oakland calls these intern-
al customer relationships “quality chains,” and directs them vital in being able to meet customer requirements.

Slater refers to measurement activities as “the feedback loop” and further states that without it, any system that seeks to ad-
dress process control will fail. People need to know how well they are achieving in or-
to progress. An organisation needs to know the same in order for it to survive and indeed prosper.

Oakland states that “a good quality man-
agement system will not function without adequate audits and reviews.” A further ad-
vantage of audits is that they automatically focus processes and systems and are there-
fore useful for continual improvement.

The Standard requires organisations to continually improve these processes through a range of activities from reviewing noncon-
formities to reviewing corrective action. This should be taken further in that organisations should identify potential nonconformities and their causes in order to take preven-
tive action. Oakland supports this view and expands it to include a focus on prevention rather than cure. Quality is about preven-
tion—you cannot “inspect” quality into a product. It has to happen before the inspec-
tion process.

Conclusion

The ISO 9001:2000 Quality Management System requirements are an extremely useful set of tools that cover the full spectrum of management best practice as evidenced cur-
tently. The Standard is even more useful for demining organisations in developing coun-
tries, as it can be a framework to direct the organisation’s activities without having to pur-
chase management expertise from developed countries.

Charles Loxton was born in South Africa in 1940 and served in the South
African Army for more than 15 years. Building on his strong military and manage-
ment background as Lieutenant Colonel, he served in the Army, he
started a new career in mine action. Between 1990 and 1995, he
worked for commercial demining companies in South Africa before
joining UNMAG and the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan in 2004 as

The Standard is a clear way to guide such organisations to world-class status. There
is, however, a prerequisite to all these state-
ments, and that is management commit-
ment—if the top management team is not
to be totally committed and accept re-
sponsibility for quality improvement, efforts will be short-lived.

Oakland® contends that any organisation, in essence, competes based on its reputation for quality, reliability and price. Of the three, quality is the most important. It is practically impossible to change a reputation from bad to good, but very easy to go from good to bad.

The Standard provides transparent to customers that an organisation is serious about its business and takes the customers’ requirements seriously. In a donor-driven en-
vironment, transparency and effectiveness of organisations are the basis on which donors choose to get involved. Organisations wishing to obtain sustainable, long-term donors will be those that comply with the Standard. The Standard will provide donors with confidence and will-

ingness to engage in lasting partnerships.

Management best practise as evidenced cur-
tently. The Standard is even more useful for demining organisa-
tions in developing countries, as it can be a framework to direct the organisation’s activities without having to pur-
chase management expertise from developed countries.

The ISO 9001:2000 System is fully
compatible with and supported by interna-
tional best practice. Any demining organisa-
tion that seeks to improve its standards and achieve world-class recognition should seri-
ously consider taking a strategic step forward and adopting the quality management system based on ISO 9001:2000 standard. The

The assessment identified a number of subgroups that are at risk and helped bring into focus the typ-
ology of contributing factors that influence behaviour. It highlighted the differences in the ways the mine-action “experts” and “laypeople” analyse risk, make decisions, and structure and solve problems in order to determine an appropriate response. The findings suggest that in a country such as the Lao PDR, where communities have lived with unexploded ordinance infestation for over 25 years, more traditional mine-risk education may not be tailored to the needs of the people. What may be needed alongside tra-
ditional message-based interventions is a more holistic and pragmatic risk-minimisation approach, which may also require a collective paradigm shift in the way dif-
ferent stakeholders view UXO risk. Such methodology would help bridge the current gap between experts’ and laypeople’s opinions and result in more effective MRE. Alongside this risk-minimisation approach, a more com-
plete, integrated strategy of CBO action and development will help address some of the underlying vulnerabilities of at-risk populations. The assessment also pointed to possible new directions for reaching women and chil-
dren including integrating MRE into a broader life-
skills approach and parenting guides.

Background to the Assessment

Lao PDR has the distinction of being, per capita, the most heavily bombed nation in the world.1 As a result of intense ground explosions and extensive bombing during the Indochina War,2 especially during the years 1964–