



Standard Operating Procedures

9 August 2021

Global Protection Cluster

Mine Action

Area of Responsibility

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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR THE MINE ACTION AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GLOBAL PROTECTION CLUSTER

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A. PURPOSE

1. These Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) outline the responsibilities of the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR) hereafter referred to as the global MA AoR¹. They provide guidance on how to deliver timely support to in-country MA AoR².
2. The SOPs are informed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee³ (IASC) *Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen Humanitarian Response* and build on previous related guidelines, in particular the Terms of Reference for the global MA AoR of January 2018, which they supersede.

¹ Global MA AoR here refers to the lead entity of the group, in this case UNMAS, and participating organizations. Even though the IASC Policy “Protection in Humanitarian Action 2016” refers to “lead agency”, for the purpose of these SOPs, the term “lead entity” is used as the Mine Action Service is part of the Secretariat, in the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions within the Department of Peace Operations of the United Nations.

² For the purpose of these SOPs, “in-country MA AoR” is employed in place of the different terms which are used to denote the existing various in-country coordination mechanisms for mine action, e.g. sub-cluster and working group.

³ The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is the main forum for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance. It brings together a broad range of United Nations and non-United Nations humanitarian, human rights and development actors. It is chaired by the Emergency Relief Coordinator.

3. The SOPs outline a comprehensive approach to reinforce the integration of mine action into humanitarian response, by coherently and efficiently streamlining its protection work. Hence, it contributes to the enhancement of its operational effectiveness and, ultimately reducing the humanitarian impact of explosive hazards.
 4. The vision of the MA AoR is a world in which boys, girls, men and women living in humanitarian emergencies are protected from explosive hazards and where the rights of victims are recognized and respected. “The objective of mine action is to identify and reduce the impact and risk of landmines and explosive hazards to a level where people can live safely.”⁴
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B. RATIONALE

5. The cluster approach was established by the IASC in 2005 within the framework of the Humanitarian Reform Agenda following a decision to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response and prevent gaps.
 6. At the country level, the cluster approach serves to strengthen humanitarian response by enhancing predictability and accountability, clarifying the division of labor, roles and responsibilities of humanitarian organizations, and by providing the Humanitarian Coordinator with a first point of call in all key sectors. At the global level, the aim is to strengthen system-wide preparedness by ensuring that there is predictable leadership and adequate partnerships in place with other humanitarian actors.
 7. The GPC was established to improve protection in humanitarian response with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as its Global Lead Agency. To address the broad range of protection concerns, specialized components – “areas of responsibility” – were tasked with ensuring an effective response within their specific protection sectors in collaboration with other participating agencies.
 8. The global MA AoR therefore takes part alongside the GPC in inter-cluster processes and is also responsible for mainstreaming issues pertaining to its area of activity into the Humanitarian Programme Cycle. Within the GPC, the UNMAS Geneva office is the focal point for the global MA AoR. Since April 2018, the Global MA AoR has been co-led by an INGO on a two-year term rotation basis.
 9. The other global Areas of Responsibility are: Child Protection led by UNICEF, Gender-Based Violence led by UNFPA, and Housing, Land, and Property led by the Norwegian Refugee Council.
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⁴ IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action (2016).

C. SCOPE

10. These SOPs are intended for the global MA AoR. The in-country MA AoR should be familiar with the SOPs. In addition, the global MA AoR should inform partners of these SOPs.
11. The words ‘shall’, ‘should’ and ‘may’ are herein used to indicate the intended degree of compliance. This use is consistent with the language used in the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards and guidelines:
 - (a) ‘shall’ is used to indicate requirements, methods or specifications that are to be applied in order to conform to the standard.
 - (b) ‘should’ is used to indicate the preferred requirements, methods or specifications.
 - (c) ‘may’ is used to indicate a possible method or course of action.

D. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GLOBAL MA AoR

12. The global MA AoR is an in-country oriented coordination mechanism that aims to support a predictable, accountable and effective mine action response in humanitarian and conflict-related emergencies and natural disasters.

Membership

13. The global MA AoR shall bring together United Nations entities, national and international organizations, NGOs, donors, academic institutions, and other relevant mine action actors in line with the Principles of Partnership endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform.
14. Participation in the global MA AoR shall be guided by the following principles:
 - 14.1. The lead entity shall represent its members fairly and provide continuous feedback on the activities of the global MA AoR, shall consult its members on the guidance and direction of the AoR work, and shall strive for consensus;
 - 14.2. Membership shall be on a voluntary basis;
 - 14.3. Membership and participation may take different forms, from close coordination and joint programming to looser associations based on the need to avoid duplication and enhance complementarity;
 - 14.4. The work of the global MA AoR shall be informed by the GPC Strategic Framework (2020 – 2025) and the GPC MA AoR Strategy (2022 – 2024).
 - 14.5. The global MA AoR shall function with due respect to the different roles, responsibilities and mandates of its participating organizations, and in line with humanitarian principles;

- 14.6. The global MA AoR meets with key stakeholders on a continuous basis including with donors twice a year, with its partners every other month and with the MA AoR in-country coordinators (currently, 17) every other month.
- 14.7. The global MA AoR takes measures to scale up mine action responses in existing humanitarian emergencies when needed and to take part in the GPC Rapid Response Team where relevant
- 14.8. The global MA AoR engages actively with the Global Protection Cluster including with its Strategic Advisory Group, Task Teams and Operations Cell. It promotes the sharing of data on mine action with GPC partners to improve analysis and protection strategies. It provides advice on relevant resources and develops methodologies to identify people in need based on severity ranking.

Functions

15. The global MA AoR shall have three main functions: a) coordination; b) support to in-country MA AoR; and c) advocacy.
16. The lead entity of the global MA AoR shall convene an annual retreat of the participating organizations to discuss and agree on the priorities of the global MA AoR. A workplan with a clear division of labor shall be developed based on the resources that participating organizations can make available.
17. The workplan as well as other documents of relevance to the MA AoR shall be made available on the GPC website under the theme of mine action.

(a) Coordination

18. The global MA AoR shall act as a first point of call for the GPC and relevant subsidiary bodies of the IASC on mine action-related issues.
19. The global MA AoR shall manage the coordination of its Area of Responsibility and shall create and update on a regular basis a relevant strategy, SOPs and workplans. It should participate in outreach to Member States and donors to secure support for the MA AoR.
20. The MA AoR should contribute to the development of joined-up strategies and a workplan by the GPC, and participate in the outreach to Member States and donors to secure support for a coordinated protection approach.
21. The Protection Cluster coordinator should be fully enabled to represent all protection issues, therefore the MA AoR should support the protection cluster coordinator as necessary.
22. The global MA AoR should participate in the work of other clusters and inter-cluster coordination mechanisms as relevant. These may comprise without being limited to the

Emergency Directors Group, the Global Cluster Coordinators Group, and the relevant IASC thematic bodies.

23. The global MA AoR should organize joint meetings or workshops, as necessary, with other relevant clusters and GPC AoRs on themes of common interest.
24. The global MA AoR should support and strengthen thematic mine action working groups such as the Risk Education Advisory Group, and more.

(b) Support for In-Country MA AoR Activities

(i) Coordination capacity of in-country MA AoRs

25. Support to in-country MA AoRs should include without being limited to:
 - 25.1. Providing or supporting relevant training and other capacity- building, enhancement and transfer efforts related to humanitarian mine action coordination within the cluster approach;
 - 25.2. Conducting context-specific support missions to assist in strengthening in-country MA AoR and coordination mechanisms;
 - 25.3. Providing guidance on the cluster activation and deactivation process⁵;
 - 25.4. Supporting the development of guiding tools and ToRs for in-country MA AoRs;
 - 25.5. Coordinating the response to GPC requests for technical and policy advice on mine action issues;
 - 25.6. Promoting the integration of cross-cutting issues (e.g. age, gender, human rights, and the environment) in initiatives of in-country MA AoR;
 - 25.7. Informing in-country MA AoR coordinators of developments in mine action and wider humanitarian discussions.
26. The modalities for inter-cluster coordination should be flexible. In the case of the protection cluster, the AoRs may need to liaise directly with other clusters and to engage directly in inter-cluster coordination alongside the protection cluster, and arrangements for doing so should be agreed at country level in consultation with the protection cluster lead agency.⁶
27. Activation of the protection cluster means activation of all aspects of protection, and this may or may not require the activation of the area of responsibility. The activation of the protection cluster cannot be a partial activation, i.e., when the protection cluster is activated, no single protection issue can be excluded.
28. The Global MA AoR shall encourage the national protection cluster lead agency (and co-lead agency if there is one) to seek the endorsement of the Humanitarian

⁵ The decision to activate an MA AoR is based on a request by the Resident Coordinator / Humanitarian Coordinator, in consultation with the Humanitarian Country Team.

⁶ IASC Guidance Cluster Coordination at Country Level July 2015.

Coordinator to activate⁷ an in-country MA AoR, as necessary, and propose an entity to lead it.

29. The Global MA AoR should coordinate its positions and representation in the GCCG and other IASC fora with the GPC and other AoRs.
30. The different protection efforts should be framed on an overarching protection analysis, thereby sharing expertise, achieving efficiencies, dividing labor or getting a more complete protection response.

(ii) Policy Guidance

31. The global MA AoR should provide guidance to in-country MA AoR coordinators on:
 - 31.1. The roles and responsibilities of the ‘Provider of Last Resort’⁸ (particularly during a Level 3 crisis⁹);
 - 31.2. New thematic areas of work outside current humanitarian mine action activities and their impact on protection and how to integrate them in overall humanitarian response;
 - 31.3. Translating protection objectives into mine action initiatives using relevant guidance documents, such as the IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action (2016), the IASC Centrality of Protection statement (2013), and the United Nations Secretary-General Human Rights up Front (2012) which have significantly contributed to promoting protection;
 - 31.4. Cooperation with national authorities and local actors including NGOs within the cluster approach;
 - 31.5. Working within integrated Missions and balancing, at times, conflicting priorities (e.g. humanitarian, stabilization and peace operations objectives).

(iii) Integration in Humanitarian Programme Cycles

32. Throughout Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) processes, the global MA AoR should represent the positions of in-country MA AoRs.
33. The global MA AoR shall advise in-country MA AoRs on access to funding mechanisms and opportunities, especially the humanitarian pooled funds managed by the United Nations and in particular OCHA and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). To that end, the global MA AoR may:

⁷ The HC may also highlight the need to activate the MA AoR in the letter to the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) on cluster activation.

⁸ In addition to supporting the six core functions of the cluster/AoR, the designated lead entity (UNMAS, of the UN Secretariat, in the case of mine action) is the Provider of Last Resort (PoLR). This means that, where necessary, and depending on access, security and availability of funding, it should be ready to provide necessary services required to fulfil critical gaps identified by the cluster/AoR and reflected in the HC-led Humanitarian Response Plans.

⁹ The IASC classification for the most severe, large-scale humanitarian crisis.

- 33.1. Develop guidance on humanitarian financing;
- 33.2. Support the integration of mine action into global humanitarian planning tools such as the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), as well as the annual and mid-term Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO);
- 33.3. Explore mechanisms of strategic interest, as well as available databases and platforms such as the Grants Management System and the Financial Tracking Service (FTS), which may be used in advocacy efforts as a tool to not only monitor the funding status of an emergency, but also to understand the funding trends of donors to better target fundraising efforts;
- 33.4. Explore new partnerships and map emerging and innovative funds as a way to increase and diversify sources of funding.

(c) **Advocacy**

- 34. The global MA AoR shall undertake efforts to mainstream mine action across relevant humanitarian action and response. Such efforts should include:
 - 34.1. Undertaking advocacy in various fora to raise awareness of mine action as an indispensable component of a humanitarian response, and as a lifesaving intervention in crisis situations, countries and territories where mines and/or explosive remnants of war contamination are suspected or confirmed;
 - 34.2. Advocating for the inclusion of mine action in pertinent planning and advocacy documents, and taking part in relevant studies commissioned, *inter alia*, by the GPC or the IASC;
 - 34.3. Advocating to donors for funding of humanitarian mine action;
 - 34.4. Including adequate humanitarian mine action information in GPC learning, development and capacity-building modules;
 - 34.5. Highlighting mine action as an important cross-cutting protection issue.
- 35. Further to the World Humanitarian Summit and subsequent initiatives related to financing and pooled funding across humanitarian and development operations, as well as other efforts to develop tools and knowledge products to strengthen humanitarian effectiveness, the global MA AoR should monitor relevant developments in order to assess the best ways to engage with them. Such an approach should be centered on the humanitarian sector but be cognizant of possible linkages to peace and development actors.

E. ACCOUNTABILITY

- 36. These SOPs are issued by the global MA AoR.

F. REFERENCES

1. *Mine Action Area of Responsibility Strategy 2022-2024: The Primacy of Protection*, 2021.
 2. *Inter-Agency Standing Committee Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action*, 2016.
 3. *IASC Introduction to Humanitarian Action: a Brief Guide for Resident Coordinators*, 2015.
 4. *IASC Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level 2015*.
 5. *Generic Terms of Reference for Sector/Cluster at the Country Level*, 2013.
 6. *The Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action, Statement by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principals*, 2013.
 7. *Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Operational Guidance on the Concept of 'Provider of Last Resort'*, 2008.
 8. *Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen Humanitarian Response*, 2006.
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G. REVIEW

These SOPs shall be kept up-to-date and reviewed biennially to take into account the results of future “lessons learnt” exercises and evaluations.

H. CONTACT

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