SWP 02.02

Second Edition
July 2020

STANDARD WORKING PROCEDURES

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND QUALITY CONTROL PROCESS

Contents

1 Introduction

The aim of Quality Management (QM) in Mine Action is to provide confidence to the communities, donors, the mine action contractor(s) and national authority that mine action quality requirements have been met and that cleared and released ground is indeed safe for use. QM comprises three complementary components, namely accreditation, monitoring and post-clearance inspection.

"QM = Quality Assurance (Accreditation + Monitoring) + Quality Control (Inspection/Sampling)"

Achieving quality requirements of mine action services is the main responsibility of implementing mine action organizations, however, as mine action coordination centre, it is also the responsibility of DMAC to make sure that the quality requirements of mine action activities and services have been met, quality mine action services are delivered to the explosive ordnance (EO) affected communities and stakeholders, and their requirements are fulfilled.

Quality Assurance in mine action encompasses accreditation of mine action organizations and their teams, and monitoring of their management system, mine action operations and activities in the field. QA includes comprehensive assessment and appraisal of management processes and procedures established by the mine action organizations, leading to address the failures in their origin and in the first place, including prevention of recurrence of the failure. QA monitoring plays a crucial role in continual improvement of the management processes and their outputs.

Accreditation, planning and operations management, proposal review, test and licensing of demining tools and equipment are covered in related DMAC SWPs, monitoring and post-clearance inspection are described in this SWP.

2 Aim

The aim of this Standard Working Procedure (SWP) is to detail the process of external monitoring and post-clearance inspection by the DMAC and or assigned external monitoring body.

3 Scope

Monitoring is the process of observing and looking at the capability and management system of mine action organizations including their human resources, operating procedures, tools and equipment and considering how this capability is being applied. External monitoring complements the internal monitoring system and verifies that the QA procedures and QC inspections of all mine action organizations working in Afghanistan are appropriate and being applied effectively.

4 Monitoring Procedures

External monitoring should be mainly focusing on the management system and operational procedures within mine action organizations including internal QA/QC and should complement the internal QA and QC processes and procedures. Monitoring of mine action activities shall be conducted in the following ways:

Each mine action project shall be monitored within one month of its commencement in the field.

Each mine action project shall be monitored at least twice a quarter, but if a critical failure has been found this duration should be reduced and re-audit should be conducted as per the deadline agreed with organization to make sure that the required corrective and preventive actions have been taken and implemented.

Unless otherwise agreed by the DMAC with other assigned external monitoring bodies, the DMAC external monitoring should be conducted in below phases:

a. Planning phase: Monitoring plan should be prepared for each quarter by the DMAC QM department in consultation with plans department to make sure all mine action projects have been monitored and each newly started project is planned to be monitored within one month of its start. DMAC regional offices shall also prepare their quarterly monitoring plan and share with the DMAC QM department in order to make sure that all the projects are monitored in an equitable manner. There may be situations where some projects are planned for joint QA monitoring by HQ and regional offices.

b. Execution phase: Based on the approved QA monitoring plan, assigned personnel from the DMAC HQ and operations personnel from the regional offices should conduct monitoring of mine action projects and activities using the QA completion form (Annex A to this SWP) and submit the completed form to the Area Manager of related region for further follow up if required and the area manager should submit all the reports to QM department on monthly basis for further analysis and entry to IMSMA database.

c. Follow Up phase: Based on the findings of QA monitoring and as per the requirements of QA completion form, the completed completion form should be handed over to the Area Manager of related region; he should send the report to related organizations asking them for corrective and preventive actions. The corrective and preventive actions should be assessed in area level for appropriateness with the problem/issue raised. Area Manager should then decide to close the report based on agreed corrective and preventive actions or send the report back to organization if the proposed corrective and preventive actions are not appropriate to the nature of the problem.

   Regional office should again ask the organization for appropriate course of actions and then decide to close the report or conduct re-audit to make sure all the proposed and agreed actions are taken and implemented. There may be situations where the follow up of DMAC supported by UNMAS is required with the HQ of involved organization, in this case related department should contact with contact with higher authority of the organization for their immediate action or may suspend the operations of organization based on the scope of the problem. QM department should then follow the issue up for the implementation of actions agreed with the HQ of organization.

d. Reporting phase: At the end of each month, the DMAC regional offices shall prepare the QA/QC monthly summary sheets and send them to the DMAC QM department. This report should be within 5 days of next month. QM department should check and verify all the reports and send them to Management Information System section for entry to the IMSMA database. The critical Non-Conformances shall be reported immediately to DMAC QM department for urgent follow up with involved organization (if it is of a critical nature and could not be solved in area level).

On-site external monitoring should include but not restrict to:

a. Monitor project management system of the mine action organizations at the HQ or project or site office level, this should include approved organization structure at the field level, internal QA/QC system, operations methodologies, reporting, recording and communications, staff and assets, tools and equipments and facilities provided. Explosive storage area, medical support, equipment maintenance, safety and occupational health at the field level should also be monitored.

b. Visits to sub-unit locations including worksites and supporting workplaces;

c. Observing mine action activities, including internal QA and QC procedures, and destruction of mines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW). This is particularly important if the mines and ERW are being destroyed in bulk away from the worksite;

d. Observing the level of community involvement within the community liaison function and its applicability to the mine action activities in process;

e. Observing the risk assessment procedures and organization's preparation for mitigating the risk; and

f. If appropriate, observing the field training of MDD assets.

5 Quality Control - Sampling

Sampling of cleared areas may be conducted during the monitoring visit of a demining worksite depending upon the level of confidence perceived by the visitors on a demining team. The sampling should be executed through progressive, targeted and post-clearance sampling, where an already cleared part of the minefield/battlefield is sampled while the teams are still continuing normal demining operations in other part of the same tasks, considering safety distance between deminers and inspectors. As described below in ***level of confidence,*** if the level of confidence is determined to be medium or low, then sampling of a portion of already cleared area should be carried out by the monitoring officer/QC inspector where the results should be reflected in related section of the QA/QC Completion form. For pass fail criteria please see AMAS 03.01, part two.

6 Level of Confidence

Confidence can be subjective and objective. Objective confidence refers to the mathematical probability of achieving the required level of clearance. Subjective confidence involves human factors such as perception, judgment and opinion. Subjective confidence may be:

a) HIGH: Management systems & operational procedures in place are fully compliant with AMAS & the terms of the contract and there is a strong perception that the cleared area will be safe for use;

b) MEDIUM: There is still a need for the organization to improve its management systems & operational procedures in accordance with AMAS & the terms of the contract to ensure that they will remove and/or destroy all mine/ERW hazards from the area;

c) LOW: There are serious concerns about the organization's ability to carry out the task in accordance with AMAS & the terms of the contract and remove and/or destroy all mine/ERW hazards from the area.

Each monitoring visit shall be allocated a unique confidence level by ticking the appropriate box in the QA completion form. The confidence level may also determine the level of external quality control (sampling).

Annexes:

Annex A QA Completion Form