



LMAS 07.30

ACCREDITATION OF MINE ACTION ORGANIZATIONS

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Note:

This document is current at the date shown on this page. The Local Mine Action Standards (LMAS) are subject to regular revision, so users should ensure that they are using the latest version of each document in the standards. The most recent versions of LMAS are available with SMACO office of Rabouni.

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Foreword

Critical safety, control and quality elements of the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) have been retained in the Local Mine Action Standards (LMAS), so ensuring that they maintain the principles agreed in IMAS guidelines.

The work of preparing, reviewing and revising LMAS is conducted by a technical committee with the support of international, governmental and non-governmental organisations in Western Sahara, East of Berm (EoB).

In the LMAS, the following words are used to indicate the intended degree of compliance and are to be reflected in Mine Action Organisation Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):

'Shall', 'will' and 'must' are used to indicate requirements, methods or specifications that are to be applied in order to conform to the standard;

'Should' is used to indicate the preferred requirements, methods or specifications.

'May' is used to indicate a possible method or course of action.

In LMAS:

The term "Demining Organisation" refers to any organisation (government, NGO or commercial entity) responsible for implementing demining projects or tasks. Demining Organisations include headquarters and support elements.

The term "Mine Action Organisation" refers to any organisation (government, military, commercial or NGO/civil society) responsible for implementing mine action projects or tasks. The mine action organisation may be a prime contractor, subcontractor, consultant or agent.

For the purpose of the LMAS, the words "Demining Organisation" and "Mine Action Organisation" are interchangeable and used to describe the same body.

1. Introduction

1.1 This standard was initially drafted prior to release of the amended IMAS 07.30 Accreditation of Mine Action Organisations, 3rd Edition (20 January 2016). It is considered that the amendments to IMAS 07.30 have no significant bearing on the LMAS, however in circumstances where there is ambiguity the SMACO shall refer to the current version of IMAS for clarification.

1.2 Before a Mine Action Organisation can apply for Accreditation in Western Sahara, EoB it must be registered to operate in Western Sahara, EoB, with the appropriate status (NGO or commercial). Registration is required for all organisations under Western Sahara authorities (EoB) and falls outside the remit of SMACO. When an organisation has been registered and received the appropriate documentation, that organisation can apply to SMACO for Accreditation in mine action.

1.3 All organisations working in any aspect of mine action, (including Survey, Demining, Mine/ERW Risk Education and Victim Assistance), must have Operational Accreditation from SMACO before they can work in Western Sahara. Operational Accreditation is the second part of Accreditation and a fundamental function of SMACO's Quality Management process because it ensures that a Mine Action Organisation has the ability to conduct specific mine action activities.

2. Accreditation in General

- 2.1** Accreditation is the procedure by which a Mine Action Organisation is formally recognized as competent and able to plan, manage and operationally conduct demining safely, effectively and efficiently.
- 2.2** Accreditation is fundamental to the whole mine action Quality Management process. Having thorough and comprehensive accreditation procedures from the outset ensures that a Mine Action Organisation is established, staffed, equipped, and has the required systems, procedures and support structures in place prior to any work commencing.
- 2.3** Furthermore, the accreditation process checks that the Mine Action Organisation is working in accordance with its documented systems and procedures and capable of achieving required standards. As a result of the accreditation process an accreditation agreement is reached with the Mine Action Organisation on the standards to which demining is to be carried out. This agreement then forms the basis for all follow-on monitoring activities.
- 2.4** Gaining Accreditation can be a time consuming process that uses the resources of SMACO. No application should be made until it has been properly researched and prepared so that there is a high probability that the accreditation requirements will be met.
- 2.5 Note:** At its discretion, SMACO may charge the costs of the Accreditation process to the applicant. Whenever an application is terminated, a subsequent application from that applicant should be charged at rates that cover all SMACO costs.
- 2.6** When a Mine Action Organisation wishes to conduct activities not listed in its Accreditation document, it must apply to SMACO for an extension to its Accreditation before starting to conduct that activity.
- 2.7** Accreditation must be a requirement in the tendering process for mine action contracts, especially when a two stage contractual process is used and Accreditation becomes a major component of the pre-selection process.
- 2.8** After studying a Mine Action Organisation's documentation, Provisional Operational Accreditation may be granted as long as the requirements of SMACO are met in full and there is confidence that the organisation has staff with the necessary experience to conduct the procedures described in their SOPs.
- 2.9** The Accreditation process checks that the Mine Action Organisation's documented procedures do not conflict with Western Sahara's LMAS and, where no LMAS yet exist, do not conflict with the appropriate International Mine Action Standards. When necessary, changes to an organisation's documentation and procedures will be required. When the documents presented by an organisation are in line with the LMAS, Provisional Operational Accreditation may be granted. Provisional Operational Accreditation allows an organisation to prepare, equip and train for work, but not to conduct it. When the Mine Action Organisation is ready to start work, SMACO Quality Assurance staff should inspect the organisation's Operational readiness to confirm that the organisation has prepared appropriately for operational deployment. If this is the case, full Operational Accreditation is granted for the procedures and equipment that have been monitored.
- 2.10 Note:** It is common for a Mine Action Organisation to have full Operational Accreditation for some procedures and processes while still preparing for others.
- 2.11** The responsibility for the Accreditation of all organisations operating in mine action in Western Sahara EoB rests with SMACO. For efficiency, SMACO also has responsibility

for monitoring the work of these organisations to ensure that they maintain the standards required in their Accreditation. Operational Accreditation can be suspended or terminated if a Mine Action Organisation fails to meet the required standards.

3. The Accreditation Process

3.1 Application for Accreditation

The Mine Action Organisation shall submit an initial application for Accreditation in accordance with requirements detailed by the SMACO. The application should include relevant documentation in supporting documentation for review during the Desk (Provisional) Assessment stage.

4. Parts of Accreditation

Accreditation comprises two parts, Organisation Accreditation and Operational Accreditation:

4.1 Organisational Accreditation

The procedure by which a Mine Action Organisation is formally recognised by the SMACO as competent and able to **plan and manage** demining activities safely, effectively and efficiently.

4.2 Operational accreditation

4.2.1 The procedure by which a Mine Action Organisation is formally recognised by the SMACO as competent and **able to carry out** particular mine action activities.

4.2.2 Each Operational Accreditation shall refer to the capabilities required to carry out a particular mine action activity such as survey, manual clearance, battle area clearance, explosive ordnance disposal, mine/ERW risk education, and mechanical demining. The granting of such accreditation assumes that the capability will not change beyond the scope or intention of the original accreditation.

5. Stages of Accreditation

Accreditation is normally awarded in two stages, the **Desk (Provisional) Assessment** and the **On-site Assessment**:

5.1 Desk Assessment

- a. Involves a Desk (Provisional) Assessment by the SMACO or authorised representative based on documentary evidence presented by the demining organisation, such as organisational charts, management qualifications and proven experience. On completion of the Desk (Provisional) Assessment the LMAS may issue the Mine Action Organisation or its sub-units Provisional Operational Accreditation, allowing specific activities to be conducted such as mobilisation of personnel, in-country training, testing of equipment and machines, in preparation for the implementation of mine action.
- b. Mine Action Organisations or sub-units are not authorised to operate in suspect / confirmed hazardous areas until Full Operational Accreditation has been granted
- c. The Desk (Provisional) Assessment should commence prior to the Mine Action Organisation deploying to Western Sahara and may continue on arrival, on acceptance of certain documented evidence of the Mine Action Organisation's ability to operate in Western Sahara, and on evidence that they have registered with the government to work in Western Sahara.

- d. Mine Action Organisations may find it convenient to submit documentation covering a range of equipment and procedures including some that will not be conducted until later. These may then gain a Provisional Accreditation that can be held in abeyance until the organisation is ready to implement them.
- e. The SMACO shall inform the Mine Action Organisations of the minimum documentation required which may vary between organisations depending on their proposed Mine Action activities and experience.

Note: All documents submitted in support of an application for Operational Accreditation should be submitted in both in Arabic and in English.

5.2 On-site Assessment

Involves an **On-site Assessment** to confirm that people, equipment, materials and procedures are being used as intended, and that mine action activities are being conducted in a safe, effective and efficient manner. A full accreditation should be issued after the second stage.

6. Desk (Provisional) Assessment of the application

- On receipt of the application and accompanying documentation from the Mine Action Organisation, the SMACO shall confirm receipt of the application, and if necessary shall request the applicant to provide further information.
- The Desk (Provisional) Assessment shall be carried out by the SMACO or authorized representative and the documentation should be separated in two parts for Organisational Accreditation and Operational Accreditation.

6.1 Organisational Accreditation

This assessment should consider the applicant's:

- a. Organisational structure and proposed representation in-country, including arrangements to use sub-contractors and joint ventures. Recognition should be given to other existing accreditations held by the organisation, such as ISO 9001:2008.
- b. Formal qualifications and practical experience of its management team gained on previous mine action programmes. Recognition should be given to the membership of relevant, recognised professional institutes or bodies.
- c. Financial situation.
- d. Freedom from any outstanding or pending legal action, or any pending disputes with the contracting authority.
- e. Planning and project management capabilities.
- f. Logistic planning procedures, including equipment procurement, MDD administration, evaluation, maintenance and repair.
- g. Financial planning and control procedures.
- h. Information management systems and mapping.
- i. Management training schemes and employee skills development programmes.

- j. Safety and occupational health (S&OH) policy.
- k. Community liaison experience and capabilities, or access to teaming partners with relevant experience.
- l. Insurance cover, both staff medical insurance and third party liability.
- m. Quality Management (QM) systems.
- n. Participation in other accreditation schemes such as ISO 9000, which demonstrate the effectiveness of its quality management system.

6.2 Operational Accreditation

This assessment should consider the applicant's:

- a. Sub-unit(s)'s organisational structure, including its logistic and re-supply system.
- b. Human skills (formal qualifications and experience of its operational and support staff);
- c. Equipment capabilities (equipment performance and supportability).
- d. Operational procedures (SOPs).
- e. Operational test results for Mine Detection Dogs (MDD) and handlers.
- f. Worksite S&OH procedures and practices.
- g. Previous accreditation obtained by the sub-unit which demonstrate the effectiveness of its operational capabilities.
- h. Any additional requirements of the SMACO (such as the use of sub-contractors and local labour).

6.3 If the SMACO is not satisfied that all the requirements for Accreditation have been met, the Mine Action Organisation should be informed as soon as possible, and reasons given for its unsuccessful application. Whenever possible, the applicant should be given the opportunity to take corrective action.

6.4 If the Mine Action Organisation is unable to satisfy the requirements for Accreditation and is unable to take corrective action within a reasonable time, then the application should be terminated and the Mine Action Organisation shall be informed.

6.5 The Provisional (Desk) Assessment will consider whether the Mine Action Organisation has presented appropriate LMAS compliant SOPs. This involves determining whether:

- The SOPs are compliant with the humanitarian imperatives expressed in the LMAS, especially the quality of cleared ground, the safety of the public, and the safety of the mine action staff.
- Whether the proposed equipment is available and the organisation has the means to support that equipment logistically.

- Whether there is evidence that the organisation possesses the experience and skills necessary to carry out the procedures and/or to train others to do so.
- Any previous accreditation that has been granted for the procedures detailed in the SOPs.

6.6 If SMACO is not satisfied that the mine action organisation operating procedures meet the requirements, the application will be suspended without further consideration.

7. On-site Assessment

7.1 The purpose of the on-site assessment is to confirm that the management practices and operational procedures proposed by the Mine Action Organisation in its application are being applied in a safe, effective and efficient manner.

7.2 The on-site assessment shall be carried out by the LMAS or its authorised representative.

7.3 The assessment shall be conducted before the Mine Action Organisation works in any suspected / confirmed hazardous area or other operational workplace. It is generally conducted as soon as training and preparations are completed and the procedures are observed in a training area. Note: The SMACO may authorise the assessment to be conducted in a safe area near to the worksite.

7.4 The assessment should include:

- Visits to all management, logistic and administrative offices or facilities including explosive storage areas, medical facilities and equipment maintenance areas.
- Visits to all sub-unit locations including worksites and supporting workplaces.
- Observing sub-units in their final phase of training.
- Observing the field testing and evaluation of equipment, and training and operational testing of MDD.
- Observing demining activities.
- Observing community involvement throughout the project life.

7.5 During the on-site assessment, samples of documentation and records shall be selected randomly. Samples shall be representative of all products, documented procedures and SOPs for which accreditation is sought.

7.6 The assessment must also confirm that only the approved procedures and equipment will be used. If this is not the case, Operational Accreditation for unapproved procedures or equipment will be denied. Details of them must be sent to SMACO as part of an application for an extension of Accreditation.

7.7 Generally, the SMACO staff conducting the assessment should be shown a management system in operational readiness, staff qualified and trained for their respective roles, and a training exercise in which the procedures to be used are practised. Equipment, staff, logistical support and management systems must all be ready for operations before full Operational Accreditation for an activity is granted.

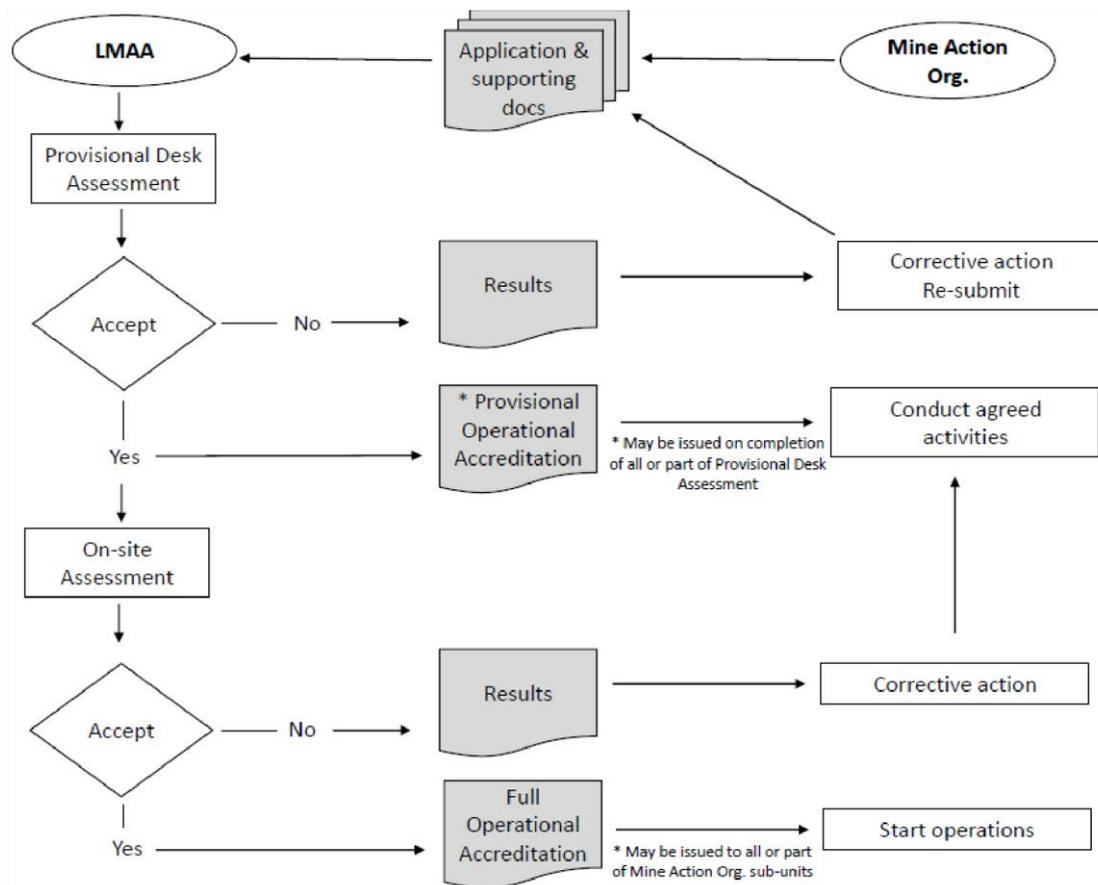


Figure 1: Example of the Accreditation Process

8. Suspension or Termination of an Application for Accreditation

- 8.1** If the SMACO is not satisfied that all the requirements for accreditation have been met, the Mine Action Organisation should be informed as soon as possible. The problems should be identified and the required action discussed and agreed between the SMACO and the Mine Action Organisation. The Mine Action Organisation must then present the corrections to SMACO and demonstrate that full compliance with the stated requirements has been achieved.
- 8.2** The Mine Action Organisation will then have to present its corrected management or operational procedures to the SMACO, and demonstrate that full compliance with the stated requirements has been achieved
- 8.3** If the Mine Action Organisation is unable to satisfy the requirements for Accreditation and is unable to take corrective action within two calendar months of the date of notification, the application process should be terminated and the organisation should be informed.
- 8.4** When an application for Accreditation is suspended during the assessment of documentation, the Mine Action Organisation must be informed and reasons given for its unsuccessful application. The organisation should be given the opportunity to take corrective action and supply "corrective" documents without formally restarting the application.
- 8.5** If the Mine Action Organisation is unable to satisfy the requirements for Operational Accreditation and is unable to take corrective action within two calendar months of the date of notification, the application process will be terminated and the organisation informed.

9. Full Operational Accreditation

- 9.1** Full Operational Accreditation shall be granted to the Mine Action Organisation on satisfactory completion of the Desk (Provisional) and On-site Assessment.
- 9.2** This permits the Mine Action Organisation to conduct the listed activities and procedures in suspected / confirmed hazardous areas or other proposed workplaces.
- 9.3** Full Operational Accreditation documentation should detail individual's roles for which they were assessed, and the type, purpose and capability of equipment and machines.

10. Maintaining Operational Accreditation

- 10.1** An organisation's Operational Accreditation is generally issued for a period of **two years** and may be renewed indefinitely. Throughout the Accreditation period, the organisation and its work is subject to quality monitoring to ensure that the requirements continue to be met.
- 10.2** Failure to maintain the required quality can lead to the suspension or termination of Operational Accreditation for all or part of the Mine Action Organisation's activities.

11. External Monitoring

- 11.1** Using its Quality Assurance officers, SMACO will monitor Mine Action Organisation to confirm that the management systems and operational procedures are consistent with the terms of their Operational Accreditation. This monitoring should be random, nonintrusive and should not interfere with the conduct of the activities being monitored. The frequency of monitoring will be dependent on the task and the previous performance of the mine action organisation.
- 11.2** SMACO may appoint another organisation to carry out the monitoring on its behalf.
- 11.3** SMACO monitoring is the Quality Assurance team's observation, inspection or assessment of worksites, facilities, equipment, activities, procedures and documentation to confirm that a demining organisation is working in accordance with the documents that it submitted for Operational Accreditation, and that it is working to LMAS.
- 11.4** Quality Assurance monitoring is generally conducted by SMACO at times and places convenient to SMACO. The Mine Action Organisation may or may not be told that a Quality Assurance monitoring team will visit their worksites and work related premises. The Mine Action Organisation must always be informed of the results of QA monitoring.

12. Post-demining Inspection

- 12.1** Post-demining inspection is conducted on land that has been subjected to one or more demining procedures. The inspection is conducted by comparing a sample of land that has been processed with the task requirements. Although this does not guarantee compliance, it can provide additional confidence that the requirements have been met.
- 12.2** Post-demining inspections will be conducted at the discretion of SMACO, and should be conducted at all demining tasks that have been conducted using procedures that have only recently been accredited.
- 12.3** As organisations become known and their work is subjected to Quality Assurance monitoring, SMACO may decide not to conduct post-demining inspections because confidence in the quality of the work is already high.

13. Extending Operational Accreditation

13.1 Modifications to the Management System

13.1.1 If the management of the Mine Action Organisation intends to make significant changes to its management structure which could affect its management capability, SMACO may require the organisation to apply for an extension or revision to its Operational Accreditation.

13.1.2 The accredited organisation must tell SMACO of any intended changes to its management systems that may affect compliance with its accreditation. SMACO will then decide whether the announced changes require the organisation to apply for an extension or revision to its Accreditation.

13.2 Modifications to Operating Procedures

13.2.1 Before implementing changes, the accredited organisation must inform SMACO of any significant changes to the operating procedures it uses during work, or of the introduction of new or modified equipment. SMACO must decide whether the announced changes require the organisation to apply for an extension or revision to its Operational Accreditation.

13.2.2 If the changes are minor, supported by SOP documents and are consistent with LMAS, no further action may be necessary and an extension may be granted in writing.

13.2.3 If the changes are significant, then SMACO should consider conducting Quality Assurance monitoring appraisal of the proposed changes (demonstrated in a training area) before deciding whether to grant an extension.

13.2.5 If the changes are substantial and mean that the original Operational Accreditation cannot be applied, SMACO will require the demining organisation to submit a new application for Operational Accreditation.

14. Suspension and Termination of Operational Accreditation

14.1 The monitoring conducted by SMACO's Quality Assurance team (or similar) is intended to ensure continued compliance with the Operational Accreditation requirements. When an organisation is in breach of these requirements, SMACO may suspend or terminate part or all of that organisation's Provisional or Full Operational Accreditation without notice.

14.2 When the Operational Accreditation for an activity or procedure is suspended or terminated, the mine action organisation can no longer conduct that activity or procedure.

14.3 Similarly, depending on the circumstances, the Operational Accreditation may be suspended or terminated for the Mine Action Organisations, units (teams), individuals, machines, equipment and dogs.

15. Suspension of Operational Accreditation

15.1 The SMACO may suspend a Mine Action Organisation's Operational Accreditation, or its Accreditation to conduct one or more activity or procedure. This may be necessary when:

- Monitoring shows non-compliance with the requirements of the Accreditation agreement but the non-compliance is not a safety concern and is not serious enough to warrant cancellation of the Accreditation; or
- There is evidence of the improper use of the Accreditation agreement; or

- There has been a failure to disclose major and significant management or operational changes.

15.2 Suspension may be imposed without notice. Reasons for the suspension will be given in writing at the time of the suspension.

15.3 If the Mine Action Organisation is unable to take corrective action within two calendar months of the date of notification, the suspension may become a termination, at the discretion of SMACO.

16. Termination of Operational Accreditation

16.1 The SMACO may terminate a mine action organisation's Operational Accreditation in the following circumstances:

- If the accredited organisation goes out of business; or
- If the accredited organisation does not want to prolong the Operational Accreditation agreement; or
- If the requirements or provisions of LMAS are changed and the accredited organisation cannot or will not comply with the new requirements or provisions; or
- If monitoring reveals serious non-compliance with the Accreditation agreement, such as repeated violations of the provisions for the safety of end-users of the land and for Mine Action Organisation staff; or
- If adequate corrective measures are not taken after the suspension of Operational Accreditation.

16.2 Examples that may count as serious non-compliance include: serious safety infringements; the repeated failure to apply accredited management systems or operational procedures; the refusal to allow monitoring or inspection to take place; interference with monitoring or inspections; and the premature release of land.

16.3 **Note:** Generally, termination should follow the issue of a warning and temporary suspension. However, in cases of severe or repeated safety infringements, termination of Operational Accreditation can be immediate and without notice.

16.4 When termination of Operational Accreditation results from LMAS infringements that make it possible that land has been inappropriately processed for release to the general public, that land must be processed again. The Mine Action Organisation that failed to work as required in their contract should bear all the costs of re-processing that land.

17. Managing Operational Accreditation

17.1 The SMACO will maintain records of all Operational Accreditation applications, assessments and Quality Assurance inspections for a period of at least **five years**, held in confidence unless otherwise required by Western Sahara authorities, EoB..

18. Independence, Impartiality and Integrity

18.1 SMACO staff conducting Operational Accreditation tasks must be free from any political, commercial, financial and other pressures which might affect their judgement. Any attempt to affect the outcome of an application for Operational Accreditation by applying pressure to SMACO staff will lead to the automatic rejection of the application and may lead to criminal proceedings being taken against the offending organisation under Western Sahara authorities, EoB

18.2 To ensure impartiality, SMACO and its staff must not have any financial involvement with other mine action organisations, or organisations that design, manufacture, supply, install, use or maintain services or equipment for organisations operating in the mine action sector.

19. Confidentiality

19.1 The SMACO guarantees the confidentiality of business information obtained in the course of the Operational Accreditation procedure. In the interests of transparency, operating procedures should be made available for inspection by interested parties at the SMACO offices.

19.2 The documentation of the Operational Accreditation procedure will not be made public, although reasons for rejecting an application should be made known to applicants.

20. Appealing against an Operational Accreditation decision

20.1 When an applicant disagrees with an Operational Accreditation decision made by SMACO, the applicant has the right to lodge an appeal against that decision with the office of the SMACO director within **two weeks** of being notified of the decision.

20.2 The SMACO director must appoint an appeal tribunal, including at least one independent member from the international mine action community, to hear the appeal as soon as possible. Generally, appeals should be heard with **21 days** of being lodged.

20.3 The appeals tribunal has the authority to overturn an Operational Accreditation decision or to issue a Provisional Accreditation conditional on corrective measures being undertaken.

20.4 **Note:** Costs associated with appeals may be recovered whenever an appeal is unsuccessful.

21. Responsibilities

21.1 **Sahrawi Mine Action Coordination Office (SMACO)** The SMACO must:

- Carry out Operational Accreditation procedures in a timely manner;
- Ensure that the Operational Accreditation system is applied fairly, and that the Accreditation procedure does not unnecessarily delay mine action projects;
- Ensure that Mine Action Organisations take appropriate follow-up action to meet any monitoring recommendations that may affect their Operational Accreditation; and
- Conduct internal Quality Assurance checks to ensure the correct application of Operational Accreditation procedures within LMAS.

21.2 **Mine Action Organisations** The Mine Action Organisation must:

- Apply management practices and operational procedures which comply with the requirements of their Operational Accreditation;
- Maintain and make available documentation, reports, records and other data on mine action activities as required by SMACO; and
- Provide SMACO'S monitoring staff with access to all sites, buildings and other facilities which need to be visited as part of the monitoring requirement.

21.3 **Donors and Commercial Funders**

When a contract or other formal agreement has been written by a donor or commercial funding organisation, that organisation shall be responsible for including a requirement that the implementing partner(s) will comply with the LMAS accreditation requirements established by the SMACO or other appropriate body acting in its behalf.

22. General References

- a. International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), in particular, 07.30 Accreditation of Demining Organizations and Operations.
- b. LMAS 07.40, Quality Management.