

DESA UK-K9 CT Search

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**DESA General Independent
TNA/IQA/EQA & Monitoring Services**

ADVICE NOTICE

IMAS/VOC's (Explosives Search Dogs)



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H.O. DESA National Training Solutions
Reg Company Number 11036496

UK-K9

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Independent TNA/IQA/EQA & Monitoring Services

This document has been written to provide clients and interested parties background information on DESA Quality Assurance and Quality Monitoring Services for Counter Threat (CT) Explosives Search and Mine Action topics.

The intended audience is anyone who is interested in Self Checking of their own Quality or their mandated Quality Audits and service levels. Usually against, National or International Minimum standards of Safety and Mine Action, or your own self-imposed standards of operational fitness.

For further questions or queries please direct them to:

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Author and **DESA Lead IQA**

Jim Vernon (Snr) visiting GICHD authors of the IMAS K9 MDD Publications (Ian McLean 2004/5)

www.desasearch.com

We can of course **project manage the complete process** from sourcing to delivering/training and maintaining complete Dog sections, animals and staff.

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WHAT IS MONITORING?

Monitoring is the observation of activities and procedures conducted by an organisation. Monitoring and accreditation form the two integral parts for the control of activities usually carried out under contract to host nations or International Organisations such as the U.N. and substructures such as IMAS/UNMAS.GICHD etc for the predominantly De-Mining activities. The Explosives Remnants of War (ERW) and other aligned activities.

We focus on the actual High risk or Counter Threat (CT) **search roles** rather than the disposal or render safe activities. The process of monitoring covers a broad range of activities, dependant on the type of operations conducted, in particular the Canine (Dog) teams and trainings but more each day these overlap into the complete package and integration of both the physical/rummage and technical equipment's use in the CT Search Industry.

Monitoring ensures that the Companies/Individuals/Organisations are applying their management processes and operational procedures that will result in safe, effective and effective search/interdiction operations.

Of course many by contractual terms and conditions if not their own desire to carry out their duties and services safely and effectively have their own in built QMS and IQA activities. These in our experience vary widely in their practices and capability unless strictly contractually defined.

But in its simplest form no matter how dedicated it is extremely difficult to self-police or claim selfish monitoring is effective. Especially when the QA officers are paid and their employment depends on the very same management and could involve perhaps potentially damaging reportage and can mean millions of Pounds/Dollars in penalties or re-qualifying ground supposedly cleared.

It makes sense and demonstrates real determination to the agencies monitoring for Governments or clients issuing these contracts, to not only carry out their minimum QA activities but in turn to task totally independent overseeing of their own systems and policies. This makes for an extremely Robust and determined management of Risk. Of course external and independent quality/monitoring is another moderate expense, but it can effectively and so often does **actually save money** and improve **safety** and efficiency, resulting in actual cost savings.

It can start from our/your initial training needs analysis (TNA) which is a *preventative action* through to your on-going assessment and sometimes licensing processes. Which are in turn Internally Quality assured by your staff (or should be!)...Strangely that Internal QA can actually be carried out externally and independently by DESA staff as another layer of **preventative assurance measures** that are actually themselves independent and by staff trained and properly qualified in QA activities. Not by members of staff just given the task because they know how it's normally performed, or have read up on the, for example IMAS or other similar requirements or SOP's.

A key factor seems to be that human nature dictates no one likes to be found to be failing. Or not to have performed at their best. So things can get buried or hidden or dealt with out of sight.

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The whole thing about parachuting in external staff to report back to your senior management is that the process is totally confidential and if used properly is in two stages. One is preventative and corrective (CAPA)...the other is usually *retrospective*, but gives you time to carry out the necessary actions to assure they will indeed meet the final signing off of skills criteria or clearance services.

Similarly the end user or contract organisation, will actually applaud and be assured that any tender submitted... demonstrating the use of such as our DESA Independent QA Services. Was secured to report back to your own senior management and will do so effectively, albeit confidentially if required. It is a given and part of the QA contract terms we undertake, that we will NOT under any circumstances hide faults or requirements or adjustments needed even as part of your own QMS it will use such as CAPA notices... these are designed to be preventative and corrective. So prop up the safety and productivity process. Prevention is ALWAYS less costly in the end. In essence it's more a Monitoring and Reporting role with fresh eyes.

When we are tasked by your contracting organisation we are differently in a 'seek and find' mode. Our duties and reporting chain are normally direct with them. But these reports or findings are designed NOT to be punitive but **helpful** and a necessary safety requirement and yes measure of quality for the contract issuing authority and yourselves.

It's the old adage "Who is watching the watchers".

A successful QA project requires complete and open communication amongst all parties. A large part of DESA's success can be attributed to effective communication with our clients their staff and other project stakeholders, and regulatory agencies.

PRINCIPLES

The QA monitoring process is designed to provide confidence in the product/service that is produced or provided for the end user. It is applied to all mine action and CT Search activities in varying ways; however the main principles apply to all:

1. Independent observation of activities
2. Independent verification of products and procedures
3. Honest assessment
4. Integrity of your own monitors to the highest standards
5. Compliance with National Standards, Laws and Regulations
6. Confidentiality where required



HOW IS MONITORING CARRIED OUT?

Planning is an important part of the **monitoring** of any process or internal QA roles. It prepares the monitors for the tasks that they must conduct, giving them the best background knowledge, and forms a method of approach to the monitoring process. **Quality Assurance** is slightly different but involves monitoring and gathering and analysing information, then measuring that product or performance finding against set parameters and standards. But they are interlocked with each other.

Training activities that can be monitored by us include:

- Lesson plan and technical content
- Training aids
- Course programs
- Theory and practical lesson conduct
- Testing and evaluation procedures
- Recording and reporting
- Instructor and course management

Clearance roles or CT Search Activities can be covered in the following manner:

- Clearance Site/Search venue Visits – announced or unannounced
- Visits to offices/Kennels/Training establishments/ field clearance sites
- Observation of procedures/ Checking of accurate recording processes
- Safety inspections of equipment and procedures
- Explosive transport, handling, storage, usage and accounting
- Accounting and recording of cleared areas, item found and destroyed etc...
- Casualty evacuation drills
- Briefings
- Actual operations
- Community liaison activities

Mine risk education activities that can be monitored include:

- Project design and target audience projections
- Project implementation

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- Education curriculum
- Educators qualifications
- Lesson / session conduct
- Community liaison activities

The lists above are not exhaustive, and there are many other activities that can be monitored.

Internal quality management procedures are important to monitor. They provide an indication as to the corrective, review and investigation procedures conducted by the organisation. So the QMS policy and in particular an effective CAPA process are vital for senior managers to make informed evidence based decisions.

MONITORS RESPONSIBILITIES

The monitoring body has to have the required experienced and skilled staff to cover the areas that they are monitoring. They must have the required equipment and documentation to perform their tasks. It should be clear before they start what are the limitations of their task, their scope of works, their responsibilities. If De-mining for example, the NMAA and the mine action organisation and for CT-Search (and particularly K9 Ct Search) that can actually involve working with, or under control of in country local law enforcement and only thereafter to an NGO...all parties must be clear in all respects of their duties. **Don't sit and wait for an audit visit and hope! Call us first and fix it in advance or far better prevent things before they go wrong.** (Priceless surely).

Copies of blank assessment forms should ideally be supplied to the appropriate organisation prior to any monitoring program for approval. Not always necessary for K9 CT Search, as these can be simple one off daily or weekly tasking orders rather than a prolonged on-going direct relationship with one main overarching organisation. Copies of completed forms should at the end of any monitoring session be complete and adequate... in line with the quality audit requirements stipulated.



DESA Arriving in Baghdad on Russian Transporter 2005

DESA:

Monitors have to maintain the highest possible standards of honesty and integrity, and be free from any political, commercial, financial or other pressure which might affect their judgment.

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The monitoring body DESA also monitors its own processes, to ensure that the reports that they are writing are of the highest standards. They must also be accredited by the National Organisation for their role in some disciplines, such as mine action organisations or National Transport Agencies or Civil Aviation Authority etc. To ensure that they have the required personnel, management and organisation to be able to fulfil their required Independent Q.A. duties.

To assist you with fair and accurate reporting, a rotation of monitors, covering similar or different aspects of the organisations activities should be utilised. This gives a broader range of perspectives and observations. Fresh eyes are always useful even for us.

REPORTING

Normally monitors report directly to the client or organisations they are monitoring. Copies of reports are submitted and a reference copy is kept by client or main monitoring organisation. Progress and other reports usually supplied to the local/area/national or senior managements as required. The senior management can or may use these reports for future results to help their evidence based decisions or consideration on accreditation or other issues as required.

One thing that DESA decided day one when moving to offer our expertise to others was **to keep things simple**. De-mining/UN/IMAS and most or any governmental departments demand sometimes understandably huge amounts of reports and complicated record keeping.

This is an extremely difficult mind-set to change being almost institutionally demanded. DESA disagree that quantity equals quality but so many current documents are often just repeats of data or existing data captured in other documents sometimes several times.

Quantity and complexity of records kept do not necessarily equal Quality of document or **content**.

We will always seek to **minimise the amount of documents and mangers time** spent producing reports or keeping records often, drastically. Our services will include therefore checking documents and records are fit for purpose but do not duplicate or carry reams of needless information's that contribute nothing to the process or recording and capturing important data.

Sadly some organisation insist you use their documents and contractually. Here again DESA Independent staff can help.

We can slim down your own manager's requirements and leave them free to manage and spend more time hands on. We can take over the data capture requirements of the NGO or National Agency for you.



**DESA INDEPENDENT
WORLD CLASS
K-9 QUALITY ASSURANCE
Project Management for
purchase/supply &
training (with guarantees)**

