



EUDEM2

The EU in Humanitarian Demining- State of the Art on HD Technologies, Products, Services and Practices in Europe

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Support Tasks Final Report D17 WP5 Support Tasks

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Executive Summary

This Deliverable summarizes the activities within WP5 “Support Tasks”, namely the “Information Desk” (WP510), “Reference Material” (WP520), “Cluster Organization” (WP530), and “EC-RTD Projects Representation” (WP540). The detailed specifications of the EUDEM2 concept were established early on in the project; they are reported in *D8-Requirements and Concepts* and only the most important elements are recalled in the following.

The different WPs are analysed in turn and the corresponding achievements highlighted.

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1 Introduction

The objectives of WP5 “Support Tasks” can be summarised as follows:

- Provide direct support and reference material on topics of recurrent and general interest to R&D on humanitarian demining through the information desk service.
- Support the ongoing projects and interested parties within the EU.
- Assist and support DG-INFSO to foster clustering activities.

The detailed specifications of the EUDEM2 concept, including those of WP5, and the way in which this concept was going to be implemented were defined early on in the project. They are detailed in *D8-Requirements and Concepts*, of which only the most important elements will be recalled in the following. D8 integrates all the discussions which have taken place during Milestone 3 “EUDEM2 Concept Meeting with the Advisory Panel”, as well as the first meeting with the Advisory Panel at the start of project (month 1) and the many discussions held within the consortium.

WP5 is composed of four individual work packages, which are detailed in the following.

2 Information Desk (WP510)

The requirements for the “**Information Desk**” (**InfoDesk**) task were to provide a service to individuals/organizations looking for specific technical information or knowledge, with as a priority the support to ongoing EC funded projects, and to EU R&D policy makers. This activity was also meant to increase the EC’s visibility in this field.

The *InfoDesk* tasks started from the early stage of the project.

2.1 Support to Individuals/Organizations

In order for such a service to be effective we aimed at providing in 75% (minimum) of cases a useful reply within 48 hours (2 working days), or at least acknowledge receipt within 2 working days in the case of more complex queries or when a reply is otherwise not possible. We also aimed at treating complex cases within a maximum of a week’s time. The targeted level of response was of about 5-10 requests per month after 6 to 12 months.

2.1.1 Initial Discussions and Decisions

The InfoDesk service was discussed in detail at the first AP meeting, where the opinion was raised that the project should be careful in “managing people’s expectations”, and that a clear “mission statement” was necessary (definition of the “Information Desk” focus). It was therefore decided to reply directly whenever necessary, and otherwise to direct people to where questions can be answered (persons/Web pages/studies/reports), instead of trying to find all information and respond to all questions.

2.1.2 Actual Task Execution

The InfoDesk was managed as an extension of an already running (unofficial) activity, and has therefore been officially activated very early in the project. It mostly consisted of replies to mail enquiries, phone contacts and meetings. Confirming past experience, most replies were by E-mail, with about 15-20% of the cases requiring a personalised support, in the form of either telephone contacts or a meeting with the person seeking information. In addition to this a number of contacts, which are difficult to quantify but which do also represent a form of support, took place in a “natural” way during meetings, conferences, etc.

The InfoDesk service was advertised on the EUDEM2 Website and in the project presentation in the following way:

“The Information Desk will link you to the EUDEM2 team for well-defined questions related to HD technologies”.

All the replies provided within the context of the InfoDesk activities were logged and a brief summary provided in the following form (subdivided per month):

- **Date** of receipt (of the information request, mostly in E-mail form), of acknowledgment (if any), and of reply.
- Number of **working days** it took to reply.
- **Origin** of mail: country and organisation type, e.g. Industrial Company, Educational establishment, etc. (when possible).
- Brief description of **subject**.
- **Level of complexity** assessment: 1: easy (<10 min), 2: average (10<to<30 min), 3: complex (> 30min).
- **Feedback** received: Yes/No, and if positive.
- **Number of replies** (in case of subsequent mail exchanges).
- **Additional** phone contacts or direct meetings.

2.1.3 Results

Initial experience did show that the service notification on the EUDEM2 pages and the visibility which the project partners already enjoyed was largely sufficient to meet the planned objective of about 5-10 requests per month after 6 to 12 months. Additional measures to publicize the service were therefore not necessary. The InfoDesk activities continued in the 2nd and 3rd year of the service at a level of support comparable to the one of the first year.

OVERALL STATISTICS:

- *Jan. to Dec. 2002: Mails: 7, 12, 6, 9, 14, 6; 6, 4, 5, 8, 12, 6. Telephone contacts: 8, meetings: 7.*
- *Jan. to Dec. 2003: Mails: 14, 7, 13, 8, 9, 10, 5, 9, 8, 7, 5, 5. Telephone contacts: 12, Meetings: 7.*
- *Jan. to Sept. 2004: Mails: 5, 5, 7, 5, 8, 1+, 6, 9, 6. Telephone contacts: 8, Meetings: 3.*

This log file was used to assess the response efficiency, which was of around 80-85% for replies within 2 days, and the usefulness of the information provided, in particular by looking at the feedback information. Past and initial experience showed that around 40-50% of those asking for information via E-mail return a message, and in nearly all these cases appreciation for the answer is expressed. This was confirmed during the rest of the project.

The number of users not active in R&D related to humanitarian demining does represent around 20% of all E-mail contacts, as can be estimated by looking at the profile of the queries (origin and subject). This audience is less keen to provide feedback than our target audience. The fraction of "satisfied users" belonging to our target audience is therefore estimated to be somewhat larger than what indicated by the previous figures, and is probably as much as can be expected from this kind of free E-mail based service. The fraction of satisfied users with whom we had telephone contacts or meetings is much larger and close to 100%.

2.1.4 Most Relevant Tasks ("Success Stories")

In a number of cases the support provided turned out to be of particular interest or relevance. Some of these can be described as genuine "success stories". Examples are provided below:

- Support to the *Canadian Centre for Mine Action Technologies* (CCMAT) in finding an end user willing to collaborate in the execution of *flights over Mozambique* with CCMAT's *hyperspectral camera*.

CCMAT planned, for early autumn, some flights in South Africa using a CASI hyperspectral sensor. They requested EUDEM2 to assist them in finding a Humanitarian Demining organization operating in Mozambique and Angola, which could help them to fly over a minefield. EUDEM2 contacted MgM, NPA and BACTEC for this purpose. BACTEC was finally identified as candidate organization to support the CCMAT request.

- Support to Dr. J. Goschnick, *Forschungszentrum Karlsruhe*, for the execution of a study on "*New Methods for the Detection of Landmines for Humanitarian Demining*" (Neue Verfahren zur Detektion von Landminen für das Humanitäre Minenräumen) sponsored by the German BMBF (Federal Ministry for Education and Research). Sent and received questionnaires to various research centres in and outside Europe; analysis and results were shared between EUDEM2 and Karlsruhe.

The study was released in July 2002 as an internal document in German and with a brief results section. Its analysis is integrated in the EUDEM2 Catalogue of Advanced Technologies for HD (under preparation) as well as in the EUDEM2 overviews of national research activities (Organigrammes, already released).

- Support to the *University of Kansas* for their *study on mapping* (Symbolization of landmines, minefields, and mine actions, on analog and digital maps, including the GIS environment) supported by GICHD. The project aims at recommending a set of cartographic symbols that may be implemented in GICHD's Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA), and which may also be adopted by the demining community.

Acknowledgment of the receipt of "some very good replies" and general appreciation for the support provided.

- Support to the *GICHD* sponsored *Manual Clearance Study*, aimed at understanding the costing elements of manual clearance activities, human factors in manual humanitarian demining operations, and management structures in humanitarian demining operations, via direct discussions, provision of contacts and help in preparing questionnaires, collection of field data from several HD organizations by means of on-site field visits and time and motion studies (see *D19-Interviews Final Report*), and the subsequent data analysis. An MOU (Annex-1) with the GICHD has been signed for the support of this study, which is in progress.
- Support to a Danish *industrial design engineer candidate* on different concepts to enhance demining operations, in particular manual ones, including advice on the design of prodding tools. This support is believed to have helped the candidate in steering his work towards applications with a higher degree of success. The candidate's final examination was successfully passed and the work is freely available on his Internet site.
- Collaboration with P. Szyngiera, Silesian University of Technology (Poland), on *metal detector technologies*. Provision of experimental data and publication of a joint article in the EUDEM2-SCOT conference. Encouragement and availability to help with patenting issues on a new metal detector concept, based on spread spectrum techniques.
- Direct support to R. Medek, at that time with Schiebel (Austria), which has been involved in a number of EC sponsored projects, on *metal detector and soil response theory*. Extensive discussion and provision of key references and other literature (EPFL, 24-25/4/2003).
- Direct support to John Crawford (CH, formerly with PSI Villigen) on *ideas for the inductive detection of mine detonators* (distinguishing hollow from solid objects). Provision of experimental data and corresponding routines. Explanations.
- Mailing and follow up of HUDEM04 IARP workshop.
- Addition of a job announcement section to the EUDEM2 site, upon request.

2.2 Support to EC

The project's partners, and in particular the VUB (due to its advantageous physical proximity to the Commission's services), have also provided direct support to interested parties within the EC, for the organisation of already planned activities such as the Cluster meetings (see below), as well as in case of particular needs and information requests, e.g., technical information on selected topics of interest, contact persons, etc. Also, the EUDEM2 Website was enhanced with a section (<http://www.eudem.vub.ac.be/ec-ist.htm>) devoted to EC-IST sponsored activities.

3 Reference Material (WP520)

The provision of a collection of **reference material** on **topics of recurrent and general interest** was meant to aid the R&D community in gaining an overall picture of the landmine problem, of the end users' needs and of the current status in R&D (e.g. key players), and in helping with the access to test facilities, mine replicas and national contact points.

The chosen strategy was not to duplicate information or existing efforts, rather to **redirect the EUDEM2 customer** – mostly technology developers – **to existing information sources** (e.g., ITEP concerning test facilities). Whenever additional information is available, for example a test facility outside ITEP, it was advertised on the **EUDEM2** web pages. All other information which was required but unavailable from external sources was sought by the project.

In practical terms this translated into analysing the available documentation and extracting the most relevant literature, or identifying and seeking the missing one, in particular a number of reports either from occasional information sources or from leading institutions such as:

- GICHD (User Needs, International Mine Action Standards, Catalogues),
- JRC (mine replicas, mine signature databases), and
- ITEP (existing test facilities, integrated with complementary information on test facilities outside ITEP).

This information was structured and made available on the EUDEM2 Website. It was complemented by a number of other key texts and studies, in particular:

- Conference reports, Market Studies and other Reference Studies,
- Theses (MSc and PhD), Journal Special Issues and Soil Studies, prevalently aimed at the scientific community, and
- a number of Organigrammes detailing the structure of the R&D efforts in several European countries, and the corresponding key players.

4 Clusters Organization (WP530)

The **objective** of the **Project Clusters** activity, as defined in the *IST Workprogramme 2000*, was:

“To facilitate synergy between existing projects that have agreed to undertake part(s) of their work in close-co-operation with one other. Clusters can address areas within one key-action or cross-programme themes. Participation of relevant interest groups (that may not otherwise be present in IST) is specifically to be encouraged.”

In this respect the DG-INFOSO organized **cluster workshops** aiming at bringing together consortia and institutions participating in EC-IST funded projects and EU-national projects, to *improve the systematic information exchange* and *forge links* between teams that share a common theme in RTD related to Humanitarian Demining.

The task of EUDEM2 in this work package was to support the clustering effort of the DG-INFOSO by organizing cluster meetings (2 per year) in the field of Humanitarian Demining RTD. Such an activity comprised:

- Analysing the ongoing EC-RTD projects to define tasks and themes that would be addressed on a common approach,
- Choosing and contacting key partners, from ongoing EC-RTD projects, that are involved in these tasks,

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- Organizing the venue on behalf of DG-INFISO in terms of logistic,
- Insuring an appropriate synthesis and publishing quality of the meeting report together with the rapporteur.

This activity has started early on in the project, as soon as precise needs arose on the Commission's side, and actually continued throughout the project, even after the initial Cluster meetings.

Themes and invited speakers were suggested and presented to the EC for the preparation of the Cluster meetings, as detailed in *D16-Cluster Themes*. The meetings' reports were drafted, announced and reported on the EUDEM2 web pages. A link to the EC-IST web pages has also been made available from the EUDEM2 pages.

EUDEM2 proposed the following **cluster themes**, derived from commonalities and shared interests amongst the ongoing projects (EC funded and EU national projects). They were then refined with the Project Officer:

- End-User Requirements,
- Exploitation Strategy,
- Technology Limitations,
- Test & Evaluation,
- Multi-Sensor Systems,
- The role of the End-User in HD related RTD projects.

EUDEM2 also put forward the following **suggestions for the organization of workshops** dealing with reinforced synergies between projects and players (proposed methodology for Cluster Workshops organization):

- Limited number of selected topics per workshop,
- Extend Duration to two days,
- Recurrent workshops (the workshops dealing with given topics should be repeated),
- Appointment of a moderator per topic,
- Firm commitments (follow-up per EC officer for proposals/commitments).

Two Cluster meetings were held during the first phase of the project (13-14 Nov. 2001 and 21 June 2002), followed by a larger "Humanitarian Demining (HD) Concertation Meeting" (24 March 2003), and the "Risk Management & Humanitarian Demining in FP 6" meeting (25 March 2003). All events were held to the Commission Service's satisfaction.

As an example, we report below the Conclusions extracted from the minutes of the second Cluster Meeting (prepared by K. De Bruyn on behalf of the EUDEM2 Team, edited by the Project Officer):

“The cluster meeting was notable for the excellent technical content and quality of the presentations. New information that is highly relevant to HD research was given throughout the day in several sessions e.g. development of user requirements, actual ground truth data on areas cleared in Croatia, some of the first results of real-time data fusion, etc. Discussion time was reduced due to several presenters over-running their allocated time, but lively and informative exchanges took place.

There were clear expressions of the advantages that could be obtained from greater collaboration and networking in such areas as testing and data fusion.

Thanks are due to all who made presentations and contributed to the debates, which made the day a success.”

5 EC-RTD projects Representation (WP540)

The EUDEM2 Team did its best to represent and present EC-RTD projects and DG-INFOS activities, whenever required and obviously whenever the projects themselves were not present, at the conferences or workshops which it attended. These events have been listed in the Management and Annual Reports, as well as in *D20_21-Workshop Report* and *D22-Workshop Report*.

In addition, information on EC-RTD projects and DG-INFOS activities was also provided during formal and informal communications and discussions whenever possible. The EUDEM2 team also pointed to the EUDEM2 Website or provided direct contacts for the projects which have made less publicity. Part of this activity was logged under the InfoDesk tasks.

6 Overall Conclusions

The Support Tasks have taken into account the early feedback from the project’s Advisory Panel, thus adapting to EUDEM2’s customers requirements. The project Team also did its best to keep contact with other major players in the field in order to quickly adapt to changes in the “working environment”, such as a modifications in the role of the other main players, and providing complementary services. As an example, topics of general interest were more and more covered by leading institutional organisations such as GICHD; the publications of reports by them meant that it was sufficient to refer to them in order to avoid duplication of effort, and refocus efforts to other areas.

Spontaneous input of information to the project was in general quite low, an attitude which is (unfortunately) in line with the use of most Internet based resources, and the general workload profile of the EUDEM2 customers. This attitude was countered by the project Team dedicating more efforts to pro-actively look for the missing information in selected areas. Its success can be judged by how densely the EUDEM2 Website has been populated in all it sections, and by the quality of the information contained therein.

Support to the ongoing EC-RTD projects, although advertised, did not turn out to be a major task. This is only partly surprisingly, as it is consistent with what observed during the earlier EUDEM project (1999). This attitude might also be linked to (perceived) Intellectual Property issues. Other support actions did on the other hand turn out to be more important than foreseen (see §2.1.4).

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Close contact with the Commission Services was kept throughout the project.

Summarising, we believe that the project was successful in identifying its customers and its place within the Humanitarian Demining community. The EUDEM2 Team is overall quite satisfied with the development of its Support Tasks – the nature and level of support provided. The same seems to be true of its “customers” according to a host of comments and feedback received during informal discussions, as well as direct feedback (e.g., mail replies).