

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2021
EXTENSION REQUESTED TO 31 DECEMBER 2025

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION:

MEDIUM, 10 KM²
(MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE)

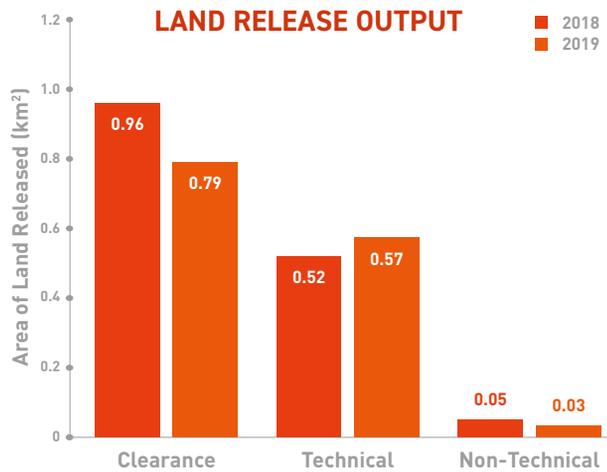
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2019

0.79 KM²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2019

325

(INCLUDING 57
DESTROYED
DURING SPOT TASKS)



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per Oslo Political Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Colombia is not on track to meet its current Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline of March 2021 and has requested a second extension to 2025. In response to comments by the Article 5 Committee, Colombia submitted additional information on its extension request in August 2020, but this added little new detail to what was already known. While some improvements have been made to the mine action programme, such as the shift towards a more evidence-based estimate of contamination, numerous challenges impede the effectiveness and efficiency of land release. Continued insecurity affects access to contaminated areas but the approach to land release is neither cost effective nor efficient.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Colombia should further endeavour to conduct a baseline survey to elaborate a more meaningful and evidence-based understanding of contamination.
- Colombia should prioritise non-technical survey with integrated explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) capacity in accessible areas and continue to review and clean the data on “events” in the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database.
- Colombia should complete the review of national mine action standard (NMAS), finalise and apply its land release NMAS, and correctly implement its technical survey standards. Operators should be supported to use the full toolbox of land release methodologies.
- Colombia should engage more positively and collaboratively with civilian operators and task them in a manner that ensures the best use of resources and prioritises the highest impact areas in response to humanitarian, community, and development needs.
- Quality management of operations should be streamlined and applied equally to all operators, including the military.
- Colombia should provide an updated work plan through to 2025, taking into account the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and including realistic targets for land release.
- Colombia should provide more detailed information on how it will mainstream gender and diversity considerations in its mine action programme, including with targets and timeframes.

- Colombia should establish a National Mine Action Platform (NMAP) for regular dialogue among all stakeholders, as recommended by the APMBC's Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance, develop resource mobilisation plans, and use all mechanisms within the Convention to disseminate information on challenges and requirements for assistance.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2019)	Score (2018)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	4	3	The precise extent of anti-personnel mine contamination remains unknown. While a nationwide baseline survey has yet to be conducted, non-technical survey is taking place in accessible areas. Colombia is now presenting a more evidence-based estimate of remaining contamination that is at least partially based on survey. Insecurity remains an obstacle to access of suspected mined areas and new mines are being emplaced in some areas.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	6	6	In early 2019, Descontamina Colombia was reallocated to the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace and a new leadership installed. However, there have been no regulatory changes in the management structure and most decisions related to mine clearance remain with the <i>Instancia de Desminado</i> , led by the Ministry of Defence. Roles and responsibilities at national level are generally clear but operators reported significant delays to approval and decision-making and said consultation with stakeholders is tokenistic. Colombia is projected to fund 30% of mine action costs to 2025.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	6	6	In 2019, Colombia developed the Gender Guidelines for Mine Action and gender is included within the framework of the new Strategic Plan for 2020–25. The needs of different groups must be taken into account during community liaison with gender-balanced teams but this is not required by the non-technical survey national mine action standard (NMA). A woman heads the national authority and women make up 63% of the staff dedicated to mine action. However, among deminers this figure drops to 4%.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	4	4	Improvements have been made to information management in Colombia following a review of the IMSMA database. However, Colombia continues to rely on "events" where more recent survey data is unavailable as the main indicator of contamination even though these are beset with errors and are often cancelled or discarded once investigated. Discrepancies between operator data and figures from the national authority are also frequent due to delays in information processing and quality control. Colombia submitted its 2020 Article 5 extension request, which fails to address longstanding issues around land release, task prioritisation and quality management and lacks clear and achievable goals for land release of all contaminated areas.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	4	4	In 2019, Colombia developed a new five-year strategic plan and an operational plan for demining which includes land release targets although it is unclear how much will be released by survey and how much by clearance. A continuing issue within the mine action programme is prioritisation and task allocation, which has led to operators being locked into inaccessible tasks or which do not allow for an efficient deployment of resources. The Armed Forces, as the largest operator, has been tasked with more than it can manage while civil society operators stand idle due to a lack of feasible tasks. A new prioritisation model has been developed but it is as yet unclear whether this has improved task allocation. This continuing issue can be attributed to operators' priorities not being meaningfully considered and included in either the plan or the model.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	5	5	Colombia has 15 NMA in place, but no defined land release concept. In 2019, a participatory review was conducted of all the NMA. The land release NMA has been in development for over five years and, as at May 2020, had still to be finalised. Despite contamination being characterised as low density, the approach to land release is very risk averse, which results in over-clearance of areas (meaning clearance of considerable area without contamination being found). The national authority reported that no contamination was found in 58% of tasks cleared.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	4	4	Colombia's land release output fell in 2019 and again there are discrepancies between the figures from operators and those provided by the national authority. Colombia has submitted a request to extend its Article 5 deadline to 31 December 2025. Significant challenges exist to meeting this second extended deadline, particularly as a result of the security situation and ongoing problems with effective and efficient land release.
Average Score	4.6	4.4	Overall Programme Performance: POOR

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP)
– Descontamina Colombia

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Humanitarian Demining Brigade (Brigada de Desminado Humanitario (BRDEH))
- Marine Corps Explosives and Demining Association (Agrupación de Explosivos y Desminado de Infantería de Marina (AEDIM))
- Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas (CCCM)
- Asociación Colombiana de Técnicos y Expertos en Explosivos e Investigadores de Incendios y NBQR (ATEXX) (not operational in 2019 and closing its programme in 2020)
- Humanicemos DH (not operational in 2019)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Danish Demining Group (DDG)
- The HALO Trust
- Humanity and Inclusion (HI)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
(closing its programme in 2020)
- Perigeo (closing its programme in 2020)
- Polus Colombia (not operational in 2019)

OTHER ACTORS

- Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD)
- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)
- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- Organization of American States (OAS)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The precise extent of anti-personnel mine contamination in Colombia remains unknown. As at December 2019, it was reported that 322¹ municipalities have both suspected and confirmed mine contamination. Of this total, 156 municipalities have been assigned to clearance operators and 166 municipalities have “known unknowns” and are awaiting intervention.² In figures reported by the national authority between 2016 and 2019, 212 municipalities have been released through clearance and 179 have been released through the qualification of information bringing the total to 713.³

This is an increase from the 673 municipalities that were estimated to have anti-personnel mine contamination in Colombia's strategic plan for 2016–21. This estimate was based on a calculation that takes 15% of the number of IMSMA “events” from 1990 to 2009 and adds them to 24% of the number IMSMA events from 2010 to 2015, with a further 20% added for both periods. These percentages were calculated based on information from historic humanitarian demining operations. The figure it generates is then multiplied by an estimated average confirmed hazardous area (CHA) of 5,000m², which generated the “baseline” contamination figure for the country.⁴

While a nationwide baseline survey has yet to be conducted in Colombia, operators are conducting non-technical surveys to investigate IMSMA reports and collect additional information from affected communities. This has provided an initial mapping of contamination in the municipalities that have been assigned for demining.⁵ IMSMA events are notoriously unreliable and are frequently not directly related to a hazardous area.⁶ At least Colombia is now presenting a more evidence-based estimate of remaining contamination in its official reporting – one that is partially based on non-technical survey.

In the 156 municipalities assigned to operators as at December 2019, 2,202 areas have had survey or clearance.⁷ A total of 2,723 non-technical surveys have been carried out in the 156 municipalities, which has provided information on 1,344 suspected and confirmed hazardous areas (SHAs and CHAs) covering an estimated total size of 7.49km². Of this, 877 SHAs and CHAs covering 4.16km² have been released, leaving 467 mined areas totalling 3.33km².⁸

Colombia has projected a further 4.95km² of contaminated area exists across 2,843 areas within the 156 affected municipalities that have not yet been surveyed. This projection was calculated using an average contaminated area of 4,700m² per area plus a 5% margin. An additional 166 municipalities where neither survey nor clearance has been conducted have reported “events” related to anti-personnel mines, but have not yet been assigned to demining operators.⁹ As at July 2020, access to 147 of these municipalities was restricted due to lack of security, with no plan on promoting and thus potentially opening humanitarian spaces in these areas.¹⁰

During 2019, 133 SHAs with a size of 624,843m² and 137 CHAs with a size of 698,058m² of previously unrecorded anti-personnel mine contamination in 13 departments were identified and added to the database.¹¹ Of this, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) reported adding 103,178m²; The HALO Trust 109,185m²; Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas (CCCM) 125,006m²; Danish Demining Group (DDG) 50,712m²; and Humanity and Inclusion (HI) 60,788m².¹² None of this newly recorded contamination corresponds to new or recent use of anti-personnel mines; security still restricts access to areas where new mines are being laid.¹³

All the landmines remaining in Colombia are said to have been laid by non-state armed groups (NSAGs) and all are of an improvised nature. According to The HALO Trust, mined areas in Colombia are low-density, nuisance minefields with the average size of minefields identified by the organisation in 2019 as approximately 2,200m² in size.¹⁴ The average size of minefields in 2019, according to figures reported by the national authority, was 4,574m².¹⁵ Mines were planted in isolated rural areas to protect strategic positions; often coca cultivations whose crops were used by NSAGs to fund operations. When the groups moved on, the mines were left behind, blocking access to roads, paths, schools, and other civilian infrastructure, preventing productive use of land.¹⁶ As there was little, if any, mapping of mined areas by NSAGs and the intended victims were the military or paramilitaries, local communities were often informed that certain areas were mined, though no specifics were typically given. This has led to a widespread belief that mines are everywhere and local people are afraid to use vast areas of land for fear of mines, despite scant firm evidence of their presence.¹⁷

In many areas where the FARC-EP (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia–People’s Army) demobilised, the government has yet to arrive in force, with other NSAGs now struggling for power.¹⁸ This includes FARC-EP dissidents,¹⁹ the National Liberation Army (ELN), and drug-trafficking groups, especially the largest among them, the Gaitán Self-Defence Forces. Most of the fight for control is concentrated in about one-quarter of the country’s municipalities. Mine action operations will only be undertaken with the local community’s agreement, often in areas where mistrust of the state is high and community members are sceptical of the operator’s intentions due to the perception that operators are linked to the military, which is often exacerbated by the proximity of the demining brigade’s operations to civilian operators’ areas of intervention. This negatively affects the ability of humanitarian demining organisations to conduct survey and clearance and to determine an accurate estimate of contamination in these areas.²⁰

NEW CONTAMINATION

In 2019, there were 111 civilian and military casualties from anti-personnel mines in Colombia, a 38% decrease from the 178 victims recorded in 2018.²¹ Over half of the victims come from three departments: Antioquia, Arauca, and Norte de Santander; areas traditionally the most affected by armed groups.²² Other departments with high numbers of victims include Bolívar, Cauca, Chocó, Meta, and Nariño.²³ All these territories coincide with drug production and trafficking routes, both for cocaine and marijuana.²⁴ Despite President Duque’s governments aggressive approach to coca plant eradication, with 100,000 hectares destroyed in 2019, the amount of land used for coca leaf production rose by 2% over 2018.²⁵ New mines are said to be emplaced to protect these plantations. According to Miguel Ceballos, the High Commissioner for Peace, the government is particularly concerned about the resurgence of this practice in the northern Chocó region, an ELN stronghold.²⁶

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

In April 2017, following the adoption of a Presidential Decree, the Directorate for Comprehensive Mine Action (Dirección para la Acción Integral contra minas Antipersonal, DAICMA) became Dirección para la Acción Integral contra Minas Antipersonal – Descontamina Colombia. Descontamina Colombia was ostensibly made Colombia’s national mine action authority, with responsibility for formulating the strategic direction of mine action, coordinating and monitoring mine action at national and local level, applying technical guidance and regulating state and non-state operators, and elaborating and implementing national standards. In practice, it also serves as the national mine action centre.²⁷ In February 2019, responsibility for Descontamina Colombia was reallocated to the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace along with the appointment of a new Director, the Commissioner for Peace.²⁸ In turn, coordination of the sector has been delegated to the Deputy Commissioner.²⁹ Decrees 179 and 1784, both ratified in 2019, elevated decision-making on AICMA to the presidential level and established its functions at national and local level.³⁰ However, in this process AICMA has been disconnected from the Office of the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization, limiting access for the sector to stabilisation and development funds.³¹

In 2011, Decree 3750 created the Instancia Interinstitucional de Desminado Humanitario (IIDH – Interinstitutional Tribunal for Humanitarian Demining) which is composed of a representative from the Ministry of National Defence, the General Inspectorate of the Military Forces, and Descontamina Colombia. It is responsible for recommending or suspending the certification of humanitarian demining organisations to the Ministry of National Defence and, determining and assigning demining tasks.³² In addition, Decree 3750 called for the elaboration of National Standards for Humanitarian Demining and regulates the quality management of demining operations.³³ Promulgated in July 2017, Decree 1195 outlines mitigation and correction measures that must be applied by operators when demining in National Parks and other areas of ecological value.³⁴ Operators are currently expected to reforest in protected areas after clearance to mitigate environmental impact.³⁵ However, the extent of reforestation often exceeds any estimated impact from manual clearance.³⁶

While roles and responsibilities at a national level are generally clear, operators often experience costly delays due to slow approval and lengthy decision-making processes.³⁷ HI and DDG both reported difficulties obtaining accreditation for international staff with an EOD 2 qualification or above.³⁸ Operators also reported delays in tax exemptions being granted for new contracts. In 2019, operators had to wait for several months as the national authority was involved in a judicial inquiry within the Colombian administration to clarify this process.³⁹

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) has been supporting Colombia in a number of key areas for several years, including support for information management, gender and diversity, non-technical survey training for trainers, operational analysis, and through a study on the effect of ageing on improvised anti-personnel mines.⁴⁰ This study is particularly pertinent to the Colombian context due to the large proportion of non-functional mines found. As of writing, however, it appeared that the process had stalled and, as at August 2020, no results have been published.⁴¹ The Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD) has been helping Descontamina Colombia to develop, review, and implement national standards and to improve their information management capacities, albeit with mixed success. In July 2019, following the start of FSD’s new contract, an additional information management advisor was hired to support Descontamina Colombia with data analysis and evidence-based decision making.⁴² The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) provides technical assistance to the national authority as well as training and capacity building with a focus on national operators. In 2019, UNMAS worked closely with Humanicemos DH to support capacity development with the ultimate aim of it becoming a fully self-sufficient operator and, in March 2020, UNMAS was designated as responsible for the quality management of Humanicemos DH.⁴³

Colombia has estimated the total cost of the mine action programme in 2020–25 will be almost US\$250 million, of which the government will fund 30%. Colombia plans to seek funding from the international community to cover the remaining 70%.⁴⁴ Of this, the projected cost of

demining activities is estimated at \$183 million of which the government will fund \$55 million.⁴⁵ For demining, Colombia is seeking almost \$128 million from the international community to build the quality management capacity within the national authority, in funding for civilian operators, and equipment servicing and replacement for the national military.⁴⁶ In 2019, Colombia received \$37.62 million in international funding for mine action an increase from the \$35.84 million received in 2018.⁴⁷ For 2019–21, the OACP's new investment project has increased national allocation of resources to mine action by 134% from approximately US\$500,000 in 2018 to approximately US\$1.4 million in 2019, with a further expected 37% increase in 2020.⁴⁸ However, this funding is only being allocated to the OACP and there is still a funding shortfall within the mine action sector.

There is no established coordination mechanism to convene stakeholders on a regular basis to discuss and address issues with Article 5 implementation.⁴⁹ A number of workshops were held in 2019 on the new National Strategy for Mine Action 2020–25 and the accompanying Operational Plan, and on Colombia's 2020 extension request. Operators were invited and then asked to provide comment, though it was widely felt that this was not a meaningful consultation with very short timeframes provided for comment, no feedback given by the national authority, and no revisions made, based on the comments given.⁵⁰

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

In 2019, Colombia, with the support of the GICHD, developed Gender Guidelines for Mine Action and reports that gender is mainstreamed within the framework of the new Strategic Plan 2020–25 and in its national standards, although the gender and diversity provisions in IMAS are not reflected throughout all the relevant national standards.⁵¹ Data are disaggregated by gender, age, and ethnicity. According to the mine risk education NMAS it is stipulated that the approach must take into account the needs capacities and strengths of men, women, youth, boys and girls of all ethnic groups, and that teams must be gender balanced.⁵² Operators often conduct non-technical survey in communities that were previously inaccessible due to lack of security. All the operators stressed the importance of community liaison and of working with local people, including by employing "local guides", as a way of both building relationships with the community and as a source of accurate information about the existence of contamination.⁵³ The CCCM, DDG, The HALO Trust, HI, and NPA, all reported consulting women and children as well as men during non-technical survey and community liaison and employing women in their non-technical survey teams, but this is not done systematically nor is it required by the non-technical survey NMAS although FSD report that it will be in the updated version and it is a requirement of the risk education NMAS.⁵⁴

Colombia has a significant indigenous and ethnic minority group population at 13.7%, which are afforded their own constitutional protections and therefore require a specific approach during demining tasks. Indigenous communities are said to have been disproportionately affected by anti-personnel mine contamination.⁵⁵ In the Implementation Framework Plan 2017–2032 and the National Development Plan there are commitments to clear anti-personnel mines from ethnic minority communities.⁵⁶ However, there is no information or associated actions on how the needs of ethnic and minority groups are being taken into account during community liaison, survey, and clearance activities in the extension request, despite the commitments made in the 2017 Peace Deal and the Implementation Framework Plan. In order to gain access to indigenous reserves, special permission must be granted and operators work closely with communities to build trust by employing community liaison officers, deminers and non-technical survey personnel directly from those communities. Operators involve local ethnic minority communities in the liaison process ahead of any field operations, working with them to map contamination

and prioritise tasks.⁵⁷ The involvement of local indigenous communities during the community liaison process also gives operators an understanding of the necessary preparations that must take place before survey or clearance can be conducted on sacred land.⁵⁸

Colombia has a female head of its national mine action authority, one of the few women who hold this position in the world. In the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, of the 30 officials dedicated to mine action 19 (63%) are women. However, from the 4,566 accredited deminers in Colombia, only 194 (4.2%) are female deminers.⁵⁹ As reported in the 2020 Article 5 deadline extension request, BRDEH, the largest operator in Colombia, had no female deminers operational in 2019 and nor did AEDIM, the smaller military operator.⁶⁰ As at August 2020, no information had been provided by the BRDEH or AEDIM to Mine Action Review on whether there is equal access to employment within these organisations for qualified women and men or whether any measures have been put in place to achieve this.

The HALO Trust has an organisational gender and diversity policy. Open recruitment for jobs such as deminers specifically encourages women to apply because manual labour is often seen as not appropriate for women in some rural regions of Colombia.⁶¹ In 2019, an average of 480 staff were employed across the programme each month, of whom 33% were women. Operations staff consisted of an average of 310 staff per month, of whom 22% were women. In 2019, 23% of all managerial and senior positions were held by women, including survey and demining supervisors, location managers and the deputy programme manager.⁶²

NPA set gender and diversity as an internal Key Performance Indicator for 2019. During the year, NPA established the country's first all-female clearance team. NPA also recruited indigenous and staff with disabilities during a recruitment drive when the programme opened in Caquetá department in April 2019. NPA set a target of 50% for new female recruitment which it was not able to meet due to the proportionately lower number of applications from women, though it did reach 35%. Of the 87 operational staff employed by NPA in 2019, 19 were women (22%). NPA in Colombia in 2019 had four women in its nine-strong Country Management Team, amounting to 44% of the total.⁶³

HI has an organisational disability, gender, and age policy which specifies that HI Colombia will need to elaborate an implementation plan. HI actively recruits women and offers gender-appropriate working conditions, such as separate living quarters in the field. In 2019, within operational and supervisory positions there were 35% women on average. At managerial level this rose to 60%.⁶⁴ Ethnic minority groups made up 11% of staff employed in operational roles in HI anti-personnel mine survey and clearance teams and 2% of them were employed in managerial level/supervisory positions. In addition, 88 people from local communities were employed by HI on anti-personnel mine survey and clearance teams, and 10 of them were from ethnic minority groups.⁶⁵

CCCM has a gender and diversity policy and implementation plan. In 2019, CCCM conducted gender equality training to equip teams with an understanding of gender inequalities to better mainstream gender in their operational work. It sought to raise awareness of discrimination and violence against women and create reporting channels within the organisation; to ensure women were promoted to leadership positions; that all of the organisations policies have been reviewed and updated; and that workshops have been conducted with local communities on violence against women and the recognition of rights. A pilot project was also initiated on the inclusion of LGBTQ+ communities and the creation of safe spaces.

In 2019, the CCCM Gender Advisor enrolled in the GICHD Gender Focal Point Capacity Development programme, an 18-month programme comprising of an introduction to gender and diversity in mine action e-Learning; 10-day face-to-face training; assignments to put knowledge and skills acquired into practice; participation in an online community of practice. This further strengthened CCCCM's capacity on gender and diversity.⁶⁶ Gender focal points were also appointed within community liaison, survey and clearance teams to ensure that gender is being mainstreamed throughout the organisation. CCCM has reviewed its hiring processes to make roles more accessible to women both at the operational and managerial level, but despite these efforts the inclusion of women remains a challenge. In 2019, 29% of clearance teams and 31% of non-technical survey teams were women and 50% of the national management team and 31% of the operational management team are female.⁶⁷

In 2019, DDG reported that its staff team was gender and LGTQBI+ inclusive composed of 52 individuals, of which 31% were female and 71% were from local communities and indigenous groups. Within operational teams, 58% of staff were by local people from San José del Fragua.⁶⁸

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Government Decree 1649 of 2014 assigned Descontamina Colombia responsibility for the IMSMA database and mandated it to "compile, systematise, centralise, and update relevant information" to serve as a basis for programme planning.⁶⁹ Descontamina Colombia uses the IMSMA database and its own Periferico database. Poor information management has been a feature of the mine action programme since its inception. In 2018, an evaluation of information management was conducted and as a result the national authority, in partnership with FSD, elaborated an Improvement Plan 2018–19. According to the national authority this has led to a review of the IMSMA database, increased data sharing with external parties, increased information management capacity, and improved reporting procedures and data management.⁷⁰

The GICHD have also noted improvements since 2017 in data sharing and data quality following a significant review and correction of IMSMA data.⁷¹ Access to data has improved with IMSMA now available online and licences are granted to the operators for access to the Periferico database. Training has also been provided for operators in the management of the online platforms that are required to submit demining outputs.⁷² In addition, new data collection, analysis and processing tools have been introduced and promoted by the NMAA, UNMAS, and the GICHD with the support of ESRI Colombia (Survey 1,2,3, Collector, Dashboard, and Historical Maps, among others).⁷³ HI says Descontamina are willing to listen and provide support in solving problems.⁷⁴

Since 1990, Colombia has collected and reported on "events" related to anti-personnel mines, unexploded ordnance (UXO), and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). This data has been the main indicator of contamination and has formed the basis of demining planning and prioritisation.⁷⁵ IMSMA "events" are the main source of contamination information in areas that have not yet been surveyed and form the starting point for non-technical surveys carried out by operators.⁷⁶

Operators have found these IMSMA events are beset with errors, including duplications and inaccuracies. Despite some improvements to the registration of events and a clean-up of the database, when operators are assigned a task and investigate each event they are still finding that most do not contain either mines or UXO.⁷⁷ As a result, most of the investigated events are cancelled or discarded. The national authority conducted an analysis of IMSMA events in the database and found that 59% of the total number of hazardous areas that had been identified corresponded with sectors where IMSMA events had been found and investigated and that 30% of hazardous areas identified had an IMSMA event within 200m of the polygon.⁷⁸ Once non-technical survey has been carried out, there is a much clearer understanding of contamination and the data in the national information system for these areas become reliable.⁷⁹

There are frequent discrepancies between operators' data and the figures from the national authority. While the national authority provide a weekly update of all demining statistics, there is often a delay in information processing, which means that the publicly available figures are not always accurate or up to date.⁸⁰ Administrative delays between the National Authority, the external monitoring system (the Organization of American States; OAS) and operators contribute to delays with approvals taking time between various parties.⁸¹ Article 7 reports are submitted on a timely basis, and in March 2020, Colombia submitted its Article 5 deadline extension request which while there are some positives in that it presents an estimate of contamination that is at least partially based on non-technical survey, it fails to address longstanding issues around land release, task prioritisation, and quality management; contains data inconsistencies; and lacks clear and achievable targets for land release of all the contaminated land remaining to be addressed.⁸²

PLANNING AND TASKING

In 2019, Colombia developed a new Strategic Plan 2020–25 “Towards a Colombia free of the suspicion of anti-personnel mines for all Colombians”, which formed the basis of Colombia’s 2020 extension request. In March 2019, a participatory review of the mine action sector began. Operators and other sector stakeholders including UNMAS and FSD were asked to help redesign the mine action strategy through workshops, but these ceased in June 2019 as did feedback or progress updates from Descontamina.⁸³ According to operators, the consultation process was tokenistic and going forward the role of civil society is very unclear and nebulous with little indication the government intends to continue collaboration beyond 2021.⁸⁴ Some operators also reported concerns that the framework for the strategy lacks specific detail in addressing some key issues, such as prioritisation, technical survey, insecurity, and lack of capacity at the national authority.⁸⁵

Colombia included an operational plan for demining in its extension request and latest Article 7 report and has provided annual land release/clearance targets for 2020–23 for the 3.33km² of suspected and confirmed hazardous area that has been identified through non-technical survey in 156 municipalities (see Table 1). These tasks have already been assigned to operators, the majority of which at 64%, has been assigned to the Humanitarian Demining Brigade (Brigada de Desminado Humanitario, BRDEH).⁸⁶ It is not clear from the extension request how much of this will be released through survey and how much through clearance.

Table 1: Annual land release projections⁸⁷

Year	SHAs/CHAs	Area (km ²)
2020	194	1.02
2021	101	1.33
2022	140	0.95
2023	32	0.03
Totals	467	3.33

According to the plan, the additional 166 municipalities with reported anti-personnel mine contamination, but no ongoing operations, will be surveyed and cleared in 2024–25 although this is obviously heavily dependent on security conditions allowing for access to these areas and the amount of contamination that is found once access is granted. As at July 2020, access to 147 of these municipalities was restricted due to insecurity with 19 municipalities now accessible and ready to be assigned to operators.⁸⁸ Colombia plans to implement a micro-targeting methodology in these municipalities which will involve convening working groups to assess the available information about inaccessible areas that have suspected mine contamination.⁸⁹ Although not included in the annual targets, Colombia reports elsewhere in its 2020 Extension Request that an estimated 4.95km² of mined area located in areas where non-technical survey has yet to be completed in the 156 municipalities already assigned to operators will also require clearance.⁹⁰ Colombia projected it would release 80 municipalities with a total area of 1.62km² in 2019.⁹¹ It did not meet that goal, releasing just 1.40km². In 2020, Colombia plans to release 1.02km², however, in light of the outbreak of COVID-19 and the resultant lockdown it is unclear how realistic this target was. As at the beginning of July, demining operations had already been stood down for more than three

months. Taking this into account the national authority is in the process of updating its Operational Plan for Humanitarian Demining 2020–2025 which it will present at the APMB 18th Meeting of States Parties. In response to the outbreak, new safety protocols have been implemented and, as at September 2020, operations had been restarted in 102 municipalities.⁹²

Colombia prioritised its task allocation according to the IIDH and the Strategic Plan for Comprehensive Action against Antipersonnel Mines 2016–2021. The IIDH takes into account information provided by local bodies, the Early Warning System of the Ombudsman’s Office, and the General Command of the Military Forces, and Descontamina Colombia.⁹³ The Strategic Plan 2016–21 categorised municipalities in Type (Priority) I, II, and III, which are then proposed for task allocation to the demining organisations without a given order, hindering a systemic approach to demining. Of the 156 municipalities assigned to operators for land release in 2020–23, 53% are Type I and 40% are Type II.⁹⁴ Type I areas, which correspond to municipalities with human casualties from anti-personnel mines between January 2010 and December 2015, tend to have the highest levels of anti-personnel mine contamination and the most security issues. In these areas, contaminated territories are often inaccessible to operators or operators are forced to suspend survey and clearance operations due to security concerns. These suspensions can last anywhere from a few days to an indefinite period depending on how severely the situation disrupts operations.⁹⁵

In Colombia’s 2020 extension request information was included on a new model for prioritisation was alluded to but no detailed information was provided.⁹⁶ According to Colombia, this new model integrates IMSMA data with more than 40 indicators that take into account security conditions, public policy, and bids from demining operators.⁹⁷ However, there was no consultation with operators on this new model nor was this model discussed in the strategic review workshops.⁹⁸

Descontamina Colombia’s ability to coordinate has come under scrutiny, as it has been locking in operators to tasks before the extent of the challenge is known and without a clear appreciation of operators’ future capacities. In the view of UNMAS, in Descontamina Colombia’s push to assign tasks demonstrating the peace accord’s new opportunities, operators are often deployed into new areas disconnected from their existing areas of operation and without prior consideration of their capacity. This is not an efficient use of resources.⁹⁹ Under Article 6(8) of the APMB, States Parties receiving international assistance are obligated to cooperate with a view to ensuring the full and prompt implementation of agreed assistance programmes. In 2019, operators bid for municipalities of which all but one was assigned to the BRDEH despite a number of civil society operators having funding and teams in place ready to conduct clearance. According to NPA, the criteria for selection are biased towards the Demining Brigade without good reason.¹⁰⁰ In the operational plan, included in the extension request, Colombia indicates that in 2020–25 it will review the method for assigning tasks and it will reassign tasks where operations are not possible as part of the forthcoming land release NMAS.¹⁰¹

Within municipalities, operators prioritise tasks in agreement with municipal authorities, local leaders and the national mine action authority.¹⁰² There are no specific criteria for task prioritisation within municipalities and operators are at liberty to follow their own priorities.¹⁰³

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Colombia has 15 NMAS in place, including a glossary of mine action terms, up from just three when the 2016–21 strategic plan was launched.¹⁰⁴ In October 2019, a participatory review of every national standard began and workshops were held with all mine action stakeholders, with technical support provided by FSD, to discuss how the NMAS could be improved. It is planned that by the end of 2020 all current NMAS would be updated and new NMAS, including for land release and information management, would be implemented.¹⁰⁵ The information management NMAS is key to establishing consistent and meaningful procedures for collecting, analysing, reporting, and sharing information across and outside the sector.¹⁰⁶

In localities where security allows operators to conduct survey and clearance, contaminated areas are characterised as being low density and “low functionality”. The HALO Trust estimated that at least 90% of the ordnance they have found has degraded due to water ingress and is non-functional. However, the NMAS have not adapted to this context and are more appropriate to contamination that is high density and high functionality. This makes clearance extremely inefficient and expensive. Furthermore, the government has adopted an extremely conservative approach to risk management, with an over-reliance on full clearance.¹⁰⁷ The land release NMAS, which has been under development for over five years, was sent to the OACP for review as at May 2020.¹⁰⁸

The NMAS on technical survey was approved by Descontamina Colombia in December 2017 but is not yet implemented by all operators, as according to the standard if any contamination is found during survey full clearance

must be carried out, negating the efficiencies of technical survey.¹⁰⁹ A revised technical survey NMAS was expected to be approved by the end of 2019.¹¹⁰ As at April 2020, the NMAS had still to be approved.¹¹¹

There is also a lack of clarity about the destruction of items found by non-technical survey teams. If a non-technical survey team finds a mine, there are “open-for-interpretation” statements in the NMAS that may or may not allow the team to eliminate that immediate risk, dependent on whether the OAS gives the go-ahead. In some cases, the team needs to investigate further – if it was an isolated mine in a footpath for instance – or if they should report it as a hazardous area. In addition, there are restrictions on immediate investigation of possible isolated items using technical tools during non-technical survey operations, which may result in reporting areas for clearance when what is found is actually an isolated item of ordnance.¹¹²

In 2019, of the 14 tasks cleared by NPA, half were found to have no contamination.¹¹³ The HALO Trust cleared 44 areas with no mines found: approximately 60% of all minefields cleared in 2019.¹¹⁴ For HI, of the 19 areas cleared in 2019, no contamination was found in nine (42%).¹¹⁵ And for CCCM, of the 27 areas cleared in 2019, 14 had no contamination (52%).¹¹⁶ The national authority reported that, in 2019, no contamination was found in 58% of tasks cleared.¹¹⁷ According to Colombia’s 2020 Article 5 extension request the high proportion of clearance conducted on areas with no mine contamination was in part due to the high perception of risk from anti-personnel mines by affected communities.¹¹⁸

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Colombia has a large operational clearance capacity at its disposal with a total of 11 operators accredited to carry out demining operations, although Humanicemos DH and ATEXX did not conduct any operations in 2019.¹¹⁹ By far the largest clearance operator is the National Army’s Humanitarian Demining Brigade (Brigada de Desminado Humanitario (BRDEH). The Marine Corps Explosives and Demining Association (AEDIM), a smaller military operator, conducts clearance and destruction of anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) in areas under the jurisdiction of the National Navy.¹²⁰ Demining is also conducted by international mine action NGOs. The HALO Trust, NPA and HI are the largest of these operators, while DDG and Perigeo also conduct limited survey and clearance. National NGOs CCCM and ATEXX were also active in 2019.

Table 2: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2019¹²¹

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers*	Dogs and handlers	Machines**	EOD personnel	Comments
BRDEH	N/R	3,276	24 dogs	3	36	Increase from 2018
AEDIM	N/R	78	0	1	76	Increase from 2018
CCCM	6	24	0	0	2	Increase from 2018
HALO	31	228	0	1	9	No change from 2018
NPA	3	28	6 dogs	5	0	Reduction from 2018
HI	5	55	0	0	16	Reduction from 2018
DDG	3	27	0	0	10	Increase from 2018
Perigeo	N/R	7	0	0	7	N/K
Totals	N/K (48)	3,723	30 dogs	10	156	

* Excluding team leaders, medics, and drivers. ** Excluding vegetation cutters and sifters.
N/R = Not reported N/K = Not known

The HALO Trust's clearance capacity remained approximately the same from 2018 to 2019. But the number of non-technical survey teams dropped by 70% (from 26 to 9 teams) as there was insufficient area assigned to continue their deployment. In 2020, the number of clearance teams will remain approximately the same. The number of non-technical survey teams is likely to continue shrinking unless new areas are assigned.¹²² In 2019, the HALO Trust had four dog teams consisting of five dogs, five handlers, and three supervisors. However, the dog teams were being trialled and were never operationally deployed. The teams were subsequently dissolved once the trials came to an end. In 2019, the HALO Trust increased operational efficiency through the accreditation and roll-out of a linear clearance method as well as the accreditation and deployment of its first mechanical asset that is used for vegetation removal and ground preparation in support of manual clearance.¹²³

HI's clearance capacity decreased in 2019 because operations were suspended due to lack of security in two municipalities in Cauca; there was a reduction in funding and focus on non-technical survey rather than clearance in Meta; and there was a reduction of funding for Caquetá. In 2020, there will be a further reduction in Caquetá due to security conditions; there will be an increase in Cauca of five new non-technical survey teams due to new task assignments; and a mechanical team is likely to start operations in Meta. The machine will be used for ground preparation, which is expected to be highly useful for supporting efficient operations in the Colombian context thanks to its small size and weight that allow easier mobility.¹²⁴

NPA's clearance capacity reduced by approximately 50% from 2018 to 2019 due to termination of funding from the United States. In 2018, NPA had two incidents where mines were found after clearance had been conducted by mine detection dog (MDD) teams. After thorough investigation it was concluded it was the way MDDs were used and not the effectiveness of the assets as such that was the problem. NPA developed detailed plans to correct the problems identified and is confident that MDDs are an effective asset for Colombia when used correctly.¹²⁵ NPA uses a toolbox comprising manual deminers, MDDs, and machines. In 2019, these assets were rebalanced to achieve optimal output, which was found to be a ratio of, three manual teams, three MDD teams, and two mechanical teams. Mechanical teams undertake ground preparation.¹²⁶ NPA decided to close its programme in Colombia as it was decided that the resources could be better deployed elsewhere. Survey and clearance operations ceased at the end of February 2020.¹²⁷

CCCM reported an increase in the amount of clearance personnel deployed in 2019 from 2018 as more contaminated areas had been reported in the municipalities which had been assigned so a larger number of clearance personnel was needed. CCCM also deployed 12 non-technical survey teams totalling 48 personnel in 2019 and plans to increase this by four teams totalling 16 personnel in 2020.¹²⁸

In 2019, DDG trained non-technical survey, clearance, and QA/QC teams, but due to long delays ascribed to the OAS they were only able to deploy their non-technical survey capacity.¹²⁹

Humanicemos DH, the demining organisation comprised of ex-fighters from the FARC-EP, was accredited in August 2017.¹³⁰ In March 2020, the United Nations and the Government of Colombia, with the support of the European Union, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) facilitating the demining operations of Humanicemos DH. The MoU designated UNMAS as the responsible agency for external quality management and monitoring of Humanicemos DH.¹³¹

The OAS serves as the body for accreditation and monitoring of humanitarian demining in Colombia, for all operators with the exception of Humanicemos DH. It has been criticised for being too focused on compliance rather than on supporting the operators to run effective demining operations. This has manifested itself in non-critical conformities being determined by rigid application and varied interpretation of national standards and/or SOPs, leading to delays in operations.¹³² Operators are most frequently given non-conformities based on excessive administrative scrutiny, with HALO reporting 140 of 231 (61%) of all non-conformities in 2019 coming from administrative errors. The impact of excessive oversight can often disrupt the continuity of operations, causing the shut-down of tasks for minor non-safety related issues.¹³³

At the request of Descontamina Colombia, FSD has been seeking to build capacity in the OAS, including by refocusing monitoring on QA and QC, rather than on minor administrative non-conformities.¹³⁴ In 2018, a new system of confidence levels was introduced into the revised quality management standard which was hoped would improve these processes. Each operator would be assigned a confidence level and an operator with good confidence levels would be subject to less frequent visits from OAS, allowing them to focus on operators that need more support.¹³⁵ In 2019, a pilot phase for this new system was in development.¹³⁶ However, as at August 2020, the revised quality management standard had stalled and the pilot programme had not been implemented.¹³⁷ According to FSD, in general, the OAS has been very resistant to external support and very little capacity building has been carried out.¹³⁸

There have also been long waiting times after paperwork has been submitted, which has also delayed operations. The HALO Trust reported that once a non-technical survey report has been submitted to the OAS, there can be a significant delay before the report gets approved.¹³⁹ NPA waited 127 days for approval to use its mechanical assets, with MDD assets standing idle as a result, despite the dog teams having already been accredited.¹⁴⁰ In 2019, NPA had major issues with reaccreditation of its MDD teams with 3 MDDs waiting six months to be reaccredited by the national authority and the OAS at great cost.¹⁴¹

DEMINER SAFETY

In February 2019, NPA staff were threatened at gunpoint and had a vehicle set alight in Puerto Lleras, Meta, and were informed that they should leave the area. The area where the incident happened was close to coca production and distribution routes. As a result, NPA suspended all demining activities in the Meta department until security conditions improved.¹⁴²

In August 2019, a HALO Trust non-technical survey team was held at gunpoint and their vehicle was stolen. No staff were injured in the incident.¹⁴³

In October 2019, in the department of Cauca, a team from HI were instructed at gunpoint to leave their vehicle which was taken. This led to the suspension of activities in the municipalities of Caloto and Corinto. In Caquetá, at the end of 2019, personnel received threats by phone-call, leading to the evacuation of the personnel from the operational camp and the suspension of operations in the municipality of San Vicente del Caguan. In March 2020, two staff members were attacked in their homes in the urban area of San Vicente del Caguan and a third one was also sought out, but was not at home; fortunately, no one was injured.¹⁴⁴

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2019

A total of nearly 1.40km² of mined area was released in 2019,¹⁴⁵ of which 0.79km² was cleared, 0.57km² was reduced through technical survey, and 0.03km² was cancelled through non-technical survey.

In addition, a total of 1.32km² of previously unrecorded anti-personnel mine contamination was identified and added to the database.¹⁴⁶

SURVEY IN 2019

In 2019, 33,644m² was cancelled through non-technical survey (see Table 3), a 30% decrease from the 48,405m² cancelled in 2017. Operators' figures differ significantly from those reported by Colombia in its latest Article 7 report.¹⁴⁷ According to operators, areas cancelled through non-technical survey are either cancelled during clearance but recorded through non-technical survey teams or are the values of the IMSMA events with the equivalent size of the area per cancelled event as defined by the national authority.¹⁴⁸

A total of 574,473m² was reported as reduced through technical survey in 2019 (see Table 4), a slight increase from the 524,936m² reduced in 2018. As in previous years, neither the HALO Trust, CCCM, HI, NPA, nor DDG, reported reducing any mined areas through technical survey, as the activity had not been properly implemented in the country.¹⁴⁹

Table 3: Cancellation through non-technical survey in 2019¹⁵⁰

Department	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
Antioquia	N/R	4,699
Bolivar	N/R	1,228
Caldas	N/R	70
Caquetá	N/R	8,690
Meta	N/R	16,025
Putumayo	N/R	1,288
Tolima	N/R	813
Valle Del Cauca	N/R	831
Total		33,644

N/R = Not reported

Table 4: Reduction through technical survey in 2019¹⁵¹

Department	Operator	Area reduced (m ²)
Antioquia	N/R	192,849
Caldas	N/R	44,045
Caqueta	N/R	100,574
Huila	N/R	35,392
Meta	N/R	15,813
Nariño	N/R	30,519
Putumayo	N/R	22,180
Santander	N/R	27,832
Sucre	N/R	11,717
Tolima	N/R	50,365
Valle del Cauca	N/R	43,187
Total		574,473

CLEARANCE IN 2019

In 2019, a total of 791,078m² was cleared and 268 anti-personnel mines destroyed (see Table 5), a 18% decrease from the 962,232m² cleared in 2018 (and 322 anti-personnel mines destroyed). In addition, seven municipalities across seven departments were declared free of contamination through qualification of information in 2019.¹⁵²

Table 5: Mine clearance in 2019¹⁵³

Province	Operator	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Antioquia	N/K	N/K	155,368	89	9
Bolivar	N/K	N/K	11,778	5	3
Caldas	N/K	N/K	43,832	10	0
Caqueta	N/K	N/K	156,146	67	8
Cauca	N/K	N/K	4,344	0	44
Huila	N/K	N/K	48,957	3	6
Meta	N/K	N/K	83,090	32	158
Nariño	N/K	N/K	59,914	3	0
Putumayo	N/K	N/K	44,767	36	4
Santander	N/K	N/K	17,389	2	2
Sucre	N/K	N/K	11,666	2	0
Tolima	N/K	N/K	71,822	10	72
Valle del Cauca	N/K	N/K	82,005	9	1
Totals			791,078	268	307

AP = Anti-personnel

An additional 57 anti-personnel mines were found and destroyed during spot tasks in 2019: 16 by HI; 24 by CCCM; 11 by DDG and 6 by HALO.¹⁵⁴

NPA clearance output rose slightly from 106,235m² in 2018 to 107,308m² in 2019. These figures include some re-clearance which NPA carried out following the missed mines incident with the MDDs. The clearance output in 2019 was achieved with an approximately 50% reduction in operational assets.¹⁵⁵ In 2019, HALO cleared 21,843m² more than the previous year. This is largely attributed to a slight increase in the number of teams deployed in 2019.¹⁵⁶ HI's clearance output fell in 2019 because it focused on non-technical survey and deployed its resources accordingly.¹⁵⁷ CCCM reported that in 2019 while the overall area cleared fell from 2018 to 2019 the number of areas increased: in 2018, the average area cleared was 1,902m² while in 2019 it was 1,203m².¹⁵⁸

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Table 6: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2019	0.79
2018	0.96
2017	0.38
2016	0.29
2015	0.36
Total	2.78

Under Article 5 of the APMB, Colombia is required to destroy all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 March 2021. It will not meet this deadline and has submitted a request for a second extension of its Article 5 deadline in March 2020, for a period of four years and nine months, until 31 December 2025. It is unlikely that Colombia will be able to meet this new deadline given the numerous challenges it will have to overcome, some of which are outside of the control of the mine action programme (though some are of its own making).

It is also difficult to conduct an accurate assessment of whether it is feasible for Colombia to achieve completion of Article 5 during the requested extension as it is unclear how much contamination remains in the country. Based on the reported figures of 3.33km² of SHAs/CHAs identified through non-technical survey and an additional 4.95km² of projected contamination in areas yet to be surveyed, this would give a total of approximately 8.28km² of land to release from 2020 to 2025, in the 156 municipalities accessible to operators. From 2011 to 2019, Colombia released 5.95km², which averaging 0.74km² per year.¹⁵⁹ Although land release has increased in the past two years, with 1.54km² released in 2018 and 1.40km² released in 2019, Colombia would need to release an average of at least 1.66km² per year for the next five years. According to its extension request Colombia is aiming to release just over 1.02km² in 2020. However, on 18 March, President Duque announced a state of emergency and nationwide isolation measures that restrict movement to essential activities, which will undoubtedly have a significant impact on survey and clearance outputs for the year.¹⁶⁰

In addition, there are 166 municipalities where survey or clearance has yet to take place and which are currently inaccessible due to security problems. The extent of contamination in these 166 municipalities is not estimated in the extension request. Ongoing issues with security, with FARC-EP dissidents, the ELN, the EPL and paramilitary groups such as Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia fighting for control in certain areas, mean it is unlikely humanitarian demining organisations will be able to gain access any time soon. Focus for demining operations should remain on the high impact areas that can be accessed while ensuring that these operations are effectively and efficiently planned.

Non-technical and technical survey is vital to efficient demining operations and both are particularly important in Colombia when the initial information given at the task allocation stage has been found to be so unreliable. Despite the NMAS being under review, as at May 2020, the land release NMAS had yet to be finalised and the technical survey NMAS was still not implemented effectively. A high percentage of mined areas are being cleared without any mines found and, according to findings from The HALO Trust, up to 90% of mines that are found are non-functioning. The challenging terrain and climatic conditions along with an over-reliance on full clearance means that demining in Colombia is very expensive and, in this context, it is especially important that demining is conducted in the most effective and efficient way possible. Furthermore, Colombia should ensure that operators are tasked and deployed efficiently with ability to adapt to the changing security environment so that operators are not standing idle with no tasks to complete.

PLANNING FOR RESIDUAL RISK AFTER COMPLETION

There is an indication that Colombia will make substantial changes to residual risk management and post-clearance monitoring as part of its new land release NMAS. They planned to make it obligatory for an operator to be responsible for addressing any residual contamination in an assigned municipality for two years post-handover. Although subsequently this period was reduced to six months,¹⁶¹ this would still put operators in a difficult position as they would have to assume the cost of returning to a municipality and would be difficult to justify with donors.¹⁶²

- 1 In Colombia's 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request this is separated into 321 municipalities that have interventions and one that is "prioritised" for intervention.
- 2 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 58.
- 3 Email from Diana Marisol Peñalosa Mesa, Advisor, Comprehensive Action Group against Antipersonnel Mines, Office of the High Commissioner for Peace – Descontamina Colombia, 25 September 2020.
- 4 Descontamina Colombia, "Strategic Plan for Comprehensive Action against Antipersonnel Mines 2016–2021", p. 39; and email from Gabriel Vanegas Gómez, Descontamina Colombia, 9 October 2018.
- 5 Email from Arturo Bureo, Operations Manager, HI, 13 May 2020.
- 6 Email from Rupert Leighton, Country Director, NPA, 24 April 2020.
- 7 Email from Diana Marisol Peñalosa Mesa, Office of the High Commissioner for Peace – Descontamina Colombia, 25 September 2020.
- 8 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 58–60.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 63.
- 10 Email from Diana Marisol Peñalosa Mesa, Office of the High Commissioner for Peace – Descontamina Colombia, 25 September 2020.
- 11 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form D.
- 12 Emails from Oliver Ford, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, HALO Trust, 23 April 2020; Rupert Leighton, NPA, 24 April 2020; Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020; Alejandro Perez, Operations Director, CCCM, 18 July 2020; and Juan Pablo Manríquez Möll, Head of Programme, DDG, 14 August 2020.
- 13 Email from Martha Hurtado Granada, Office of the High Commissioner for Peace – Descontamina Colombia, 20 September 2019.
- 14 Emails from Oliver Ford, Programme Support Officer, HALO Trust, 17 May 2018 and 6 August 2020.
- 15 Office of the High Commissioner for Peace – Descontamina Colombia, Humanitarian Demining Statistics, 31 August 2020, at: <https://bit.ly/34eNTXc>
- 16 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 6 August 2020; Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form D.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 "Colombia's Peace Deal Promised a New Era. So Why Are These Rebels Rearming?", *The New York Times*, 17 May 2019, at: nyti.ms/2YRCuf1.
- 19 FARC-EP dissidents are defined as those fighters never joined the peace process in the first place, or who have left the process since the signing of the peace agreement, or groups of fighters who were not part of the FARC-EP previously but have since joined.
- 20 International Crisis Group, "Risky Business: The Duque Government Approach", 21 June 2018; and interviews with Pauline Boyer and Aderito Ismael, HI, Vista Hermosa, 8 August 2018; Esteban Rueda, and Sergio Mahecha, NPA, Vista Hermosa, 9 August 2018; Hein Bekker, and Emily Chrystie, HALO Trust, San Juan de Arama, 10 August 2018; and John Charles Cagua Zambrano, and Francisco Profeta Cardoso, CCCM, Centro Poblado de Santo Domingo, 11 August 2018.
- 21 Email from Jan Philip Klever, UNMAS, 10 August 2020.
- 22 Insight Crime, "Colombia's High Commissioner for Peace Lays Out New Appeal to Armed Groups", 19 May 2020, at: bit.ly/2CXzl3X.
- 23 ICRC, "La difícil realidad del conflicto armado en Colombia", 4 March 2020, at: bit.ly/3eWYHgK.
- 24 "Colombia's High Commissioner for Peace Lays Out New Appeal to Armed Groups", Insight Crime, 19 May 2020, at: bit.ly/2CXzl3X.
- 25 "A tale of two crises in Colombia", *The Economist*, 19 March 2020, at: econ.st/2ZwBtre.
- 26 "Colombian government denounces planting of anti-personnel landmines to protect coca crops", *Latin America Reports*, 1 July 2019 at: bit.ly/2Ysg4BP.
- 27 Presidency of Colombia, Decree 672 of 2017.
- 28 Emails from Arturo Bureo, HI, 18 July 2019; and from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 15 July 2019; Statement of Colombia, Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Geneva, 22 May 2019.
- 29 Email from UNMAS, 5 September 2020.
- 30 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form A.
- 31 Email from Jan Philip Klever, Programme Manager, UNMAS, 12 September 2019.
- 32 Descontamina Colombia, "Instancia Interinstitucional de Desminado Humanitario – IIDH", accessed 12 September 2018; email from Sergio Bueno Aguirre, Descontamina Colombia, 5 June 2018; and Ministry of National Defence, Decree 3750 of 2011.
- 33 Email from Sergio Bueno Aguirre, Descontamina Colombia, 5 June 2018.
- 34 Presidency of Colombia, Decree 1195 of 2017; and email from Carlos Afonso, FSD, 18 September 2018.
- 35 Email from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 28 August 2019.
- 36 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 6 August 2020.
- 37 Emails from Arturo Bureo, HI, 18 July 2019; and from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 15 July 2019.
- 38 Emails from Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020; and from Juan Pablo Manríquez Möll, DDG, 14 August 2020.
- 39 *Ibid.*; and email from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 23 April 2020.
- 40 Email from GICHD, 13 May 2020.
- 41 Email from Jan Philip Klever, UNMAS, 10 August 2020.
- 42 Email from Angela de Santis, Country Director, FSD, 20 August 2019.
- 43 Interview with Jan Philip Klever, UNMAS, Bogota, 16 August 2018; and email, 19 September 2018; and UNMAS Facebook post, 1 June 2020, at: bit.ly/3f3U1Iz.
- 44 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 86–87.
- 45 *Ibid.*, p. 96.
- 46 *Ibid.*, Annex 10 (exchange rate of 1USD = COP 3,430).
- 47 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form D.
- 48 *Ibid.*, Form H.
- 49 Emails from Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020; and Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 18 July 2020.
- 50 Emails from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 23 April 2020; Rupert Leighton, NPA, 24 April 2020; and Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020.
- 51 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 77; and email from Arianna Calza Bini, Head of GMAP division, GICHD, 7 September 2020.
- 52 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 77.
- 53 Interviews with Pauline Boyer, HI, Vista Hermosa, 8 August 2018; Esteban Rueda, and Sergio Mahecha, NPA, Vista Hermosa, 9 August 2018; and Lina Moreno, and Andrés Osorio, HALO Trust, Bogota, 16 August 2018; and John Charles Cagua Zambrano, and Francisco Profeta Cardoso, CCCM, Centro Poblado de Santo Domingo, 11 August 2018.
- 54 Emails from Arturo Bureo, HI, 18 July 2019; and Rupert Leighton, NPA, 15 July 2019; Hector Hernandez Acevedo, CCCM, 5 August 2019; and Martha Hurtado Granada, Office of the High Commissioner for Peace – Descontamina Colombia, 20 September 2019; Angela de Santis, FSD, 15 July 2020; and Juan Pablo Manríquez Möll, DDG, 14 August 2020.
- 55 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 23 April 2020.
- 56 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form A.
- 57 Emails from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 23 April 2020; Rupert Leighton, NPA, 24 April 2020; and Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020.
- 58 Email from Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 18 July 2020.
- 59 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 84.
- 60 *Ibid.*
- 61 Emails from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 9 and 21 August 2019.
- 62 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 23 April 2020.
- 63 Email from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 24 April 2020.
- 64 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020.
- 65 Debir Valdelamar, Deputy Operations Officer, HI, 15 July 2020.
- 66 Email from Arianna Calza-Bini, Head of Division, GMAP, 7 August 2020.
- 67 Email from Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 18 July 2020.
- 68 Email from Juan Pablo Manríquez Möll, DDG, 14 August 2020.
- 69 Article 7 Report (covering 2014), Form C.
- 70 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form H.
- 71 Email from Marc Bonnet, GICHD, 31 August 2019.
- 72 Emails from Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020; and Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 18 July 2020.
- 73 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020.
- 74 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 18 July 2019.
- 75 Emails from Carlos Afonso, FSD, 18 August 2018; and Gabriel Vanegas Gómez, Descontamina Colombia, 9 October 2018.
- 76 Emails from Marc Bonnet, GICHD, 31 August 2019; and Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020.
- 77 Interviews with Pauline Boyer and Aderito Ismael, HI, Vista Hermosa, 8 August 2018; Esteban Rueda, Deputy Programme Manager, and Sergio Mahecha, Location Officer, NPA, Vista Hermosa, 9 August 2018; Hein Bekker, Location Manager, and Emily Chrystie, Trial Manager, HALO Trust, San Juan de Arama, 10 August 2018; John Charles Cagua Zambrano, Head of Base, and Francisco Profeta Cardoso, Operations Manager, CCCM, Santo Domingo, 11 August 2018; and emails from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 15 July 2019; and Arturo Bureo, HI, 18 July 2019.

- 78 Email from Diana Marisol Peñalosa Mesa, Office of the High Commissioner for Peace – Descontamina Colombia, 25 September 2020.
- 79 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020.
- 80 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 23 April 2020.
- 81 Email from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 24 April 2020.
- 82 Fig. 9, p. 38. Figure titled "Areas cleared (m²) and explosive ordnance destroyed 2007-2020", although these are actually annual land release figures. The figures covering 2018 and 2019 do not match the land release figures provided by Descontamina covering 2018 and the Article 7 report covering 2019. 2018 land release is 1.50km² on the chart and 1.54km² in Descontamina's figures; 2019 land release is 1.37km² on the chart and 1.40km² in the Article 7 report.
- 83 Emails from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 9 August 2019; and Jan Philip Klever, UNMAS, 12 September 2019.
- 84 Email from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 24 April 2020.
- 85 Email from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 15 July 2019; and Statement of Colombia, Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Geneva, 22 May 2019.
- 86 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form D; 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 81.
- 87 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form D; 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 82.
- 88 Email from Diana Marisol Peñalosa Mesa, Office of the High Commissioner for Peace – Descontamina Colombia, 25 September 2020
- 89 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 89.
- 90 Ibid., p. 63.
- 91 Article 7 Report (covering 2018), Form C.
- 92 Email from Diana Marisol Peñalosa Mesa, Office of the High Commissioner for Peace – Descontamina Colombia, 25 September 2020.
- 93 Email from Sergio Bueno Aguirre, Descontamina Colombia, 5 June 2018.
- 94 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 18.
- 95 Emails from Arturo Bureo, HI, 18 July 2019; Hector Hernandez Acevedo, CCCM, 5 August 2019; and Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 9 August 2019.
- 96 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 20.
- 97 Statement of Colombia, Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Geneva, 22 May 2019.
- 98 Emails from Arturo Bureo, HI, 18 July 2019.
- 99 Interview with Jan Philip Klever, Programme Manager, UNMAS, Bogota, 13 August 2018; and emails, 19 September 2018 and 12 September 2019.
- 100 Email from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 24 April 2020.
- 101 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Annex 9.
- 102 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 18 July 2019.
- 103 Email from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 15 July 2019.
- 104 Interview with Sergio Bueno Aguirre, Descontamina Colombia, Bogota, 15 August 2018.
- 105 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form A.
- 106 Email from Jan Philip Klever, UNMAS, 10 August 2020.
- 107 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 23 April 2020.
- 108 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020.
- 109 Email from Vanessa Finson, NPA, 11 May 2018.
- 110 Email from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 28 August 2019.
- 111 Email from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 24 April 2020.
- 112 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020.
- 113 Email from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 24 April 2020.
- 114 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 23 April 2020.
- 115 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020.
- 116 Email from Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 18 July 2020.
- 117 Office of the High Commissioner for Peace – Descontamina Colombia, Humanitarian Demining Statistics, 31 August 2020, at: <https://bit.ly/34eNTXc>
- 118 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 67.
- 119 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 84.
- 120 Descontamina Colombia, "Agrupación de Explosivos y Desminado de Infantería de Marina – AEDIM", undated but accessed 3 September 2018, at: bit.ly/2McfRW1.
- 121 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form D.
- 122 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 23 April 2020.
- 123 Ibid.
- 124 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020.
- 125 Email from Jonas Zachrisson, interim Country Director, NPA Colombia, 11 October 2018.
- 126 Email from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 15 July 2019.
- 127 Skype interview with Rupert Leighton, 17 July 2020.
- 128 Email from Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 18 July 2020.
- 129 Email from Juan Pablo Manríquez Möll, DDG, 14 August 2020.
- 130 Email from Sergio Bueno Aguirre, Descontamina Colombia, 5 June 2018.
- 131 UNMAS Facebook post, 1 June 2020, at: bit.ly/3f3UI1Z.
- 132 Interviews with Pauline Boyer and Aderito Ismael, HI, Vista Hermosa, 8 August 2018; Esteban Rueda, and Sergio Mahecha, NPA, Vista Hermosa, 9 August 2018; Hein Bekker, and Emily Chrystie, San Juan de Arama, HALO Trust, 10 August 2018; and Alejandro Perez, CCCM, Bogota, 14 August 2018; and email from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 15 July 2019.
- 133 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 6 August 2020.
- 134 Interview with Carlos Afonso, FSD, Bogota, 16 August 2018.
- 135 Interviews with representatives from OAS, Bogota, 15 August 2018; and Esteban Rueda, NPA, Vista Hermosa, 9 August 2018; and email from Gabriel Vanegas Gómez, Descontamina Colombia, 9 October 2018.
- 136 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 18 July 2019.
- 137 Email from Jan Philip Klever, UNMAS, 10 August 2020.
- 138 Email from Angela de Santis, FSD, 15 July 2020.
- 139 Interview with Hein Bekker and Emily Chrystie, HALO Trust, San Juan de Arama, 10 August 2018; and email from Lina Moreno, Programme Officer, HALO Trust, 17 September 2018.
- 140 Email from Vanessa Finson, NPA, 12 September 2017.
- 141 Email from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 24 April 2020.
- 142 Ibid.
- 143 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 23 April 2020.
- 144 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020.
- 145 As Colombia continues to operate without a land release NMAS, technically land is not released but rather "declared free of the suspicion of mines".
- 146 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form D.
- 147 NPA reported 2,452m² cancellation through non-technical survey in Meta; HALO reported cancelling 1,916m² in Antioquia; HI reported cancelling 2,217m² in Meta, 48,430m² in Cauca, and 80,684m² in Caquetá; CCCM reported cancelling 12,624m² in Huila and 1,477m² in Cauca; and DDG reported cancelling 1,438,425m² in Caquetá.
- 148 Emails from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 24 April 2020; and Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020.
- 149 Emails from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 23 April 2020; Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020; Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 18 July 2020; Rupert Leighton, NPA, 24 April 2020; and Juan Pablo Manríquez Möll, DDG, 14 August 2020.
- 150 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form D.
- 151 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form D.
- 152 Ibid.
- 153 Ibid.
- 154 Emails from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 23 April 2020; Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020; Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 18 July 2020; and Juan Pablo Manríquez Möll, DDG, 14 August 2020.
- 155 Email from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 24 April 2020.
- 156 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 23 April 2020.
- 157 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020.
- 158 Email from Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 18 July 2020.
- 159 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Fig. 8, p. 37.
- 160 UK Government, "Foreign travel advice, Colombia", at: bit.ly/38sly0Z.
- 161 Email from UNMAS, 5 September 2020.
- 162 Emails from Arianna Calza-Bini, GMAP, 7 August 2020; and Jan Philip Klever, UNMAS, 10 August 2020.