

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

MINE ACTION REVIEW

CLEARING THE MINES 2023

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2027
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: HEAVY

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

50 km²

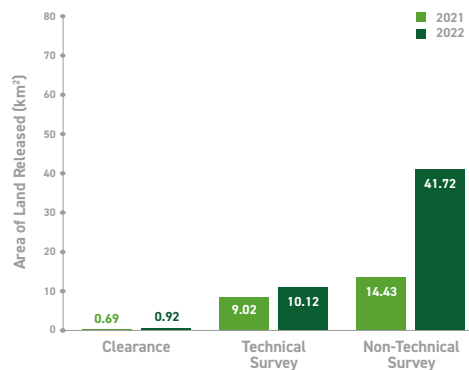
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

0.92 km²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

3,527

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) doubled its land release output in 2022 compared to the previous year and met its clearance target for the year as set out in its 2020 Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline extension request. However, its non-technical survey (NTS) output continues to be significantly lower than is required for timely completion of clearance. BiH is not on course to complete clearance by its current Article 5 deadline and was planning to set a new deadline in the course of 2023, following a mid-term review of its National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- The BiH Mine Action Centre (BHMAC) should promptly establish a revised completion deadline that is both achievable and realistic and develop a detailed and costed multiyear work plan with attainable and measurable milestones aligned with an updated national mine action strategy.
- The amended demining law drafted in 2017, which had still to be adopted as of writing, should be revised and re-submitted to Parliament for adoption. Liability policy and clearly defining “all reasonable effort” in the context of BiH should be discussed in parallel with the revision.
- BiH should strengthen the governance and management of its mine action programme by improving communication and coordination with clearance operators and other key stakeholders, including through the re-establishment of a “Country Coalition” approach and technical working groups (TWGs).
- BHMAC should fully adopt international best practice in land release and ensure that all stakeholders in all parts of BiH, including BHMAC’s regional offices, are empowered to use evidence-based survey to confirm and delineate areas of actual contamination prior to clearance.
- BHMAC should detail the steps it plans to take to further mainstream gender and diversity within its mine action programme and improve gender balance in the sector, at the least by meeting the target of 40% female staff set by the 2003 Law on Gender Equality.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	5	4	BiH estimates that over 869km ² of anti-personnel (AP) mined area remains in its territory. In an encouraging development, BiH reported the extent of its remaining contamination in a manner consistent with international standards by classifying it into suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) and confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs). However, only 2% of the contamination estimate is in CHAs and it is understood that many of the SHAs are considerably inflated and that significant further cancellation through NTS is to be expected.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	5	5	National ownership of mine action in BiH falls under the responsibility of the Demining Commission and BHMACH, with a new Commission appointed in July 2022. The process to adopt the amended demining law (2017) was restarted in 2022 but had not concluded as at March 2023. Governance of the national mine action programme needs to be strengthened and Article 5 implementation better coordinated. Regrettably, the Country Coalition established between BiH and Germany in 2020 has not met since and the technical working group has not been re-formed.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	4	4	The National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 aligns with the 2003 Law on Gender Equality. However, women continue to represent a small portion of staff within BHMACH and clearance operators' programmes, especially in field operations, despite BHMACH's commitment to integrating gender in all mine action activities. One of the three people in the Demining Commission appointed in 2022 is a woman.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	6	6	BHMACH is transitioning to IMSMA (Information Management System for Mine Action) Core from its own information management system. The first phase concluded in 2020, and the final phase is scheduled for completion by mid 2024. BHMACH submitted its Article 7 transparency report for 2022, disaggregating mine contamination into SHAs and CHAs. However, land release data is divided into contamination that is within Mine Suspected Areas (MSAs – groups of SHAs and CHAs) and outside MSAs causing unnecessary confusion.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	7	7	A first revision of BiH's National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 was scheduled for 2020 but is now planned to be completed in 2023. Whole MSAs are assigned to operators for land release. However, operators report that task dossiers are often not issued in a timely manner and frequently lack comprehensive NTS information.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	7	7	BHMACH had planned to revise and develop its national mine action standards (NMAS) in 2020. After a three-year delay, the NMAS had been updated and were under review by BHMACH as at June 2023. In 2022, a total of 17 organisations were deployed for mine action operations in BiH.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	6	5	Land release output more than doubled from 2021 to 2022 but still fell far short of BiH's land release target for the year. BiH is highly unlikely to meet its current Article 5 deadline and expects to submit a further extension request with a new completion date of approximately 2030 although this had yet to be confirmed at the time of writing. In order to achieve timely completion BiH will need to increase its annual land release output, particularly release through NTS.
Average Score	5.8	5.4	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- The Demining Commission (representatives from three ministries (Civil Affairs, Security, and Defence) elected to represent BiH's three main ethnic groups (Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs))
- Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre (BHMACH)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Armed Forces of BiH
- BHMACH
- Civil Protection Administration of Republika Srpska (CPARS)
- Federal Administration of Civil Protection (FACP)

Non-governmental organisations:

- DEMIRA
 - Mine Detection Dog Centre (MDDC)
 - Pro Vita
 - Stop Mines
- ### Commercial demining companies:
- Detector
 - Heksogen d.o.o
 - In Demining N.H.O
 - N&N Ivsa
 - Udruga "Pazi mine"
 - UEM d.o.o (UEM is also an NGO)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

OTHER ACTORS

- European Union Force Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR)
- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

BHMAC reported that at the end of 2022, more than 869km² of (mostly) suspected mined area remained (see Table 1). This included only some 18km² of CHA, equating to 2% of the total mined area.¹ This is a decrease compared to the 922km² of mined area remaining in BiH a year earlier, which is largely consistent with the land release reported by BHMAC for 2022.² It is also a sizeable reduction on the 883km² of remaining mined area (which equated to 1.7% of its total territory), as reported by BiH at the Twentieth Meeting of States Parties in November 2022.³

Table 1: Mined area (at end 2022)⁴

Province	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total CHAs and SHAs	Total area (m ²)
Unsko-Sanski	120	2,455,601	509	84,334,399	629	86,790,000
Posavski	3	255,060	163	14,584,940	166	14,840,000
Tuzlanski	49	1,298,628	675	73,471,372	724	74,770,000
Zeničko-Dobojski	39	1,457,650	572	108,242,350	611	109,700,000
Bosansko-Podrinjski	14	915,190	186	43,134,810	200	44,050,000
Srednjobosanski	78	2,392,871	583	99,557,129	661	101,950,000
Hercegovačko Neretvanski	64	2,566,992	941	131,073,008	1,005	133,640,000
Zapadnohercegovački	3	228,308	6	591,692	9	820,000
Kanton Sarajevo	23	666,497	172	49,183,503	195	49,850,000
Kanton 10	26	631,640	356	61,898,360	382	62,530,000
Republika Srpska	266	5,100,758	135	172,509,242	401	177,610,000
Brčko district	5	197,383	2,299	12,862,617	2,304	13,060,000
Totals	690	18,166,578	6,597	851,443,422	7,287	869,610,000

In 2017, BHMAC, clearance operators, and the EU formalised plans for a country assessment project to establish a more accurate baseline of mine contamination and improve clearance efficiency.⁵ The project, conducted from 2018 to 2020, involved a nationwide NTS by BHMAC, the Armed Forces of BiH, and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). The project processed data for 143 municipalities, confirming mined areas in 118 of them.⁶ During the project, 103km² of land were released, reducing the total mined area from 1,069km² to 966km². The NTS corrected 1,151 minefield GEO positions, added 300 new minefield records, and removed 6,023 records from the database.⁷

The remaining mined area was divided into 478 Mine Suspected Areas (MSAs), averaging 1.94km² in size.⁸ MSA is a BiH-specific term, not consistent with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), and defined as "an area made up of SHAs and CHAs which encompasses one or more impacted communities and due to economic, cultural or geographical and other reasons is selected as a logical unit".⁹ In addition, there is some mine contamination outside the MSAs that is also being assigned to operators for survey and clearance. BHMAC has not specified how much of the contaminated area is within MSAs and how much is outside. It had been expected that the project would result in a significant amount

1 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, Interpreter, BHMAC, 23 March 2023; and Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form C.

2 BiH draft Mine Action Report for 2021, undated, p. 5.; and emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 15 April 2022 and Mirjana Marić, Senior officer for analysis and reporting, BHMAC, 21 September 2022.

3 Statement of BiH on Article 5, APMBT Twentieth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 21 to 25 November 2022.

4 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March 2023; and Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form C.

5 Interviews with Darvin Lisica, then Programme Manager and Regional Director, NPA, Sarajevo, 8 May 2017; Fotini Antonopoulou, EU, Sarajevo, 8 May 2017; and Tarik Serak BHMAC, Sarajevo, 10 May 2017.

6 BiH draft Mine Action Report for 2020, undated draft, p. 11.

7 Email from Jonas Zachrisson, Country Director, NPA, 26 March 2020.

8 2020 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2020, pp. 5 and 10–11; BiH draft Mine Action Report for 2020, undated draft, pp. 3 and 13; and Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form C.

9 2020 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2020, pp. 6 and 16.

of cancellation, but it amounted to less than 10% of the total mined area.¹⁰ Significant further cancellation is therefore expected during land release of the MSAs.

Minefields in BiH generally contain relatively small numbers of mines, which are typically either "in groups or randomly laid". The quality of approximately 30% of minefield records was not sufficiently accurate for the identification of the precise minefield location and shape. Furthermore, it seems that approximately 40% of minefield records were never made or handed over, and records were often destroyed or lost for several reasons, such as the death or emigration of

the persons who created the relevant record.¹¹ In its Article 7 report for 2020, BiH reported it had collected 70% of all minefield records.¹² Physical changes to mined areas (such as in vegetation) and a lack of witnesses to the laying of the mines pose additional challenges.¹³

BiH is heavily contaminated with mines, primarily as a result of the 1992–95 conflict related to the break-up of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. All warring factions in BiH laid mines, primarily between confrontation lines.¹⁴ More than twenty-five years after the end of the conflict, BiH is still heavily contaminated with mines.

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

BiH is also contaminated with explosive remnants of war (ERW). The last cluster munition remnants (CMR) were destroyed at the end of August 2023, and BHMAC declared completion of its Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Article 4 clearance obligations at the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the CCM in Geneva in September 2023.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Demining Commission, under the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs, supervises the State-wide BHMAC and represents BiH in its relations with the international community on mine-related issues.¹⁵ The Demining Commission is composed of representatives from three ministries (Civil Affairs, Defence, and Security) elected to represent BiH's three main ethnic groups (Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs). Whereas the Minister for Civil Affairs remains ultimately responsible for mine action, the Demining Commission is the body responsible for setting mine action policy, and it proposes the appointment of BHMAC senior staff, for approval by the Council of Ministers.¹⁶ The mandate of the most recent Commission ended on 30 April 2022, and a new Commission was appointed on 28 July 2022.¹⁷

BHMAC is responsible for regulating mine action and implementing BiH's survey and clearance plans.¹⁸ BHMAC operates from its headquarters in Sarajevo, two main offices in Sarajevo and Banja Luka, and eight regional offices (Banja Luka, Bihac, Brčko, Mostar, Pale, Sarajevo, Travnik, and Tuzla).¹⁹

Since 2008, efforts have been made to adopt new mine action legislation in BiH with a view to creating a stable

platform for mine action funding by the government and local authorities. The process was restarted again in 2022 after being suspended the previous year but, as at August 2023, is not yet concluded.²⁰ The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) believes the amended demining law should be revised further and re-submitted for adoption, with the topics of "All Reasonable Effort" and liability discussed in parallel to the revision.²¹ Clearer legislation on liabilities related to mine action activities would be beneficial to all stakeholders in BiH.

Since 2010, NPA has been helping to build the capacity of the Armed Forces of BiH Demining Battalion.²² National capacity development remains NPA's strategic commitment, and in close cooperation with national stakeholders, it elaborated a Capacity Development plan for 2022–25. The plan, which will depend on the availability of funding, focuses on capacity development of the BiH Demining Battalion as a key national stakeholder in implementation of BiH's Mine Action Strategy. NPA provides direct operational support for the Demining Battalion's clearance tasks, and in 2022 assessed the Demining Battalion's information management system, identifying a need to enhance the Battalion's data collection,

10 Based on BiH's draft Mine Action Report for 2020, undated draft, p. 11. In BiH's 2020 Revised Article 5 extension request, August 2020, the amount of mined area cancelled was reported to be nearly 966.7km² (p. 5), but this figure is believed to be an error, given that 1,030km² of mined area was addressed during the country assessment (p. 11) and remaining mined area as at the beginning of 2020 was nearly 966.7km² (p. 16 and Annex 2). The 966.7km² referred to incorrectly as cancelled on p. 5 is believed by Mine Action Review to refer to the total remaining mined area as at the end of the assessment at the beginning of 2020, as indicated on pp. 7 and 16, and in Annex 2.

11 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 8.

12 Article 7 report (covering 2020), Form C.

13 Audit Office of the Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, "Performance Audit Report. Efficiency of the Demining System in Bosnia and Herzegovina", 4 November 2016, p. 26.

14 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2020, p. 4.

15 BHMAC Organisational chart, accessed 6 May 2022 at: <http://bit.ly/2Ycj4xl>.

16 UNDP, Draft Mine Action Governance and Management Assessment for BiH, 13 May 2015, p. 22.

17 Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAC, 21 September 2022.

18 Bosnia and Herzegovina Official Gazette, Sarajevo, 17 March 2002.

19 BiH, National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, p. 8.

20 Emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March and 31 August 2023.

21 Email from the GICHD, 14 May 2021.

22 Email from Jonas Zachrisson, NPA, 14 March 2021.

processing, and analysis to improve the efficiency of its mine action. These activities were continuing into 2023.²³

In 2022, the GICHD and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) delivered training on mine action and the sustainable development goals (SDGs) to BHMAC, the Demining Commission, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, demining operators, the European Union Force Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in BiH. In addition, the GICHD and UNDP co-authored a study, "The Sustainable Development Outcomes of Mine Action in Bosnia and Herzegovina", which was launched in June 2022.²⁴ UNDP BiH, through the "MAGMA" project that aims to complete clearance,²⁵ supported mine action in BiH during 2022 by providing training for BHMAC quality inspectors.²⁶

After a 10-year hiatus, Board of Donors meetings resumed in September 2015.²⁷ BiH's new National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 specifies that at least two such meetings should be organised every year.²⁸ One meeting was held in April 2022 and one meeting is planned for October 2023.²⁹

The Country Coalition established between BiH and Germany was intended to facilitate regular dialogue among mine action stakeholders, demonstrate national ownership, strengthen coordination of APMBC Article 5, as well as implementation of CCM Article 4 (now completed), address challenges, and monitor progress against the 2018–25 strategy. The first meeting in October 2020 has representatives from non-governmental organisation (NGO) clearance operators and donors, but no further meetings had been convened as at August 2023. Although the Demining Commission has submitted a proposal to the Council of Ministers that the

Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Demining Commission be instructed to formally establish the Country Coalition as an international body that will be part of the demining process in BiH.³⁰

MAG had hoped the Country Coalition would lead to the reform of TWGs, which would allow operators, the BHMAC, and its regional offices to share lessons learned, challenges, and successes across the different parts of BiH. However, no meetings had been held in 2022 or to date in 2023. However, MAG report that, at a regional level, there is ongoing open dialogue during land release projects.³¹

National funding supports BHMAC and survey and clearance activities implemented by the BiH Armed Forces. Operations of the Armed Forces are supported by the Council of Ministers from the national budget, while the Government of the Federation of BiH finances the operations of the Federal Administration of Civil Protection (FACP).³² The Civil Protection Administration of Republika Srpska (CPA RS) is financed by the Government of Republika Srpska.³³ According to a statement of the Demining Commission in November 2020, international donors provided 55% of mine action funding with 45% coming from national sources.³⁴ According to BiH, as at 2020, available financial resources had not met the projected funding of the Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, which may not allow "full realisation" of the goals set.³⁵ In 2022, BHMAC was funded by BiH to the sum of over BAM6.14 million (over US\$3.47 million), an increase from 2021. In addition, over BAM10.16 million were allocated by domestic institutions for demining (BAM2.8 million by the BiH Armed Forces; BAM3.6 million by FACP; BAM3.45 million by the CPA RS; and BAM0.3 million by the Government of Brčko district).³⁶

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

BiH does not have a national mine action standard (NMAS) on environmental management. However, BHMAC claimed that existing demining procedures (e.g. methods for vegetation removal, removal of metals and waste, and use of machinery) generally contribute to environmental management and protection. In certain cases modifications are made to safeguard the environment, and local communities are consulted during the approval of demining plans "as and where necessary". Threshing machines are banned in agricultural areas due to soil disturbance

and compaction, and machines are not used on mountain pastures to protect against removal of layers of grasses. In forests, as part of procedures to ensure the use of metal detectors at the required height, BHMAC consults landowners to make informed decisions about vegetation removal and tree preservation.³⁷

The 2022 study on SDGs and mine action in Bosnia identified the direct contribution of land release to 12 SDGs and 35 of their associated targets, including relating to flood prevention.³⁸ Following the 2014 flood in BiH, a recovery

23 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023.

24 Email from Stanislav Damjanovic, Advisor, GICHD, 25 May 2023.

25 See: <https://bit.ly/3qELnYZ>.

26 Email from Sanja Corovic, UNDP, 14 June 2023.

27 Interview with Tarik Serak, BHMAC, Sarajevo, 10 May 2017; and emails from Fotini Antonopoulou, EU, 19 June 2017; and Suad Baljak, Mine Action Officer, UNDP, 15 June 2017; and UNDP BiH, "Mine Action Board of Donors Meeting", 31 March 2016, at: <http://bit.ly/300f4lp>.

28 BiH, National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, p. 20.

29 Emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March and 31 August 2023.

30 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 31 August 2023.

31 Email from Pauline Boyer, Country Director, MAG, 6 April 2023.

32 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 22 March 2022.

33 Email from Suad Baljak, UNDP, 18 September 2020.

34 Statement of BiH, APMBC Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties, 16 to 20 November 2020.

35 2020 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2020, p. 7.

36 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March 2023.

37 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 22 March 2022.

38 GICHD and UNDP, "The Sustainable Development Outcomes of Mine Action in Bosnia and Herzegovina", 2 June 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3X9qv8z>.

needs assessment was initiated by the government which found that mines contaminated more than 70% of the flood-affected zone and were a major safety hazard to implementing recovery efforts.³⁹ In Donji Svilaj and Novi Grad (FBiH) along the border with Croatia, mines along the Sava River and very close to the road hindered flood protection and safe mobility. Contamination also impeded access to land for the purpose of flood prevention measures. Clearance allowed channels to be accessed to allow the construction of the first major motorway in BiH, connecting the country with Croatia. The motorway also serves as a flood protection barrier.⁴⁰

NPA is implementing an Environmental Assessment and Management System (EAM) for its country programmes, starting with assessing offices and administration. In addition, NPA's BiH country programme has an Environment and Climate Country Policy in place.⁴¹ NPA BiH is advocating for increased inclusion of environmental impacts in the forthcoming updates to the national mine action strategy. In 2022, NPA BiH staff attended training on environmental

safeguarding in operations and promoted waste separation and litter removal at task sites. NPA BiH also worked to eradicate single-use plastic packaging waste among all personnel.⁴²

The FACP takes the environment into consideration when drafting operational plans for the destruction of mines and UXO on site.⁴³

MAG has both an environmental policy and environmental standard operating procedure (SOP) in place and applies both when possible in its operations. Its programme also endeavours to increase staff awareness concerning the importance of reducing the impact on the environment, not only during clearance but also within the office environment and programmes support services in Sarajevo.⁴⁴ MAG ensures that field-generated rubbish, including unserviceable equipment, is disposed of at specialised recycling or disposal facilities. Reusable plastic bottles have replaced single-use plastic on demining sites, and field sanitation practices have been adapted to be more eco-friendly.⁴⁵

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 specifies that: "Under the leadership of BHMACH, relevant actors will include gender and diversity into all phases of planning, realisation and follow-up of all mine activities".⁴⁶ The mine action strategy considered and supported the 2003 Law on Gender Equality in BiH, which includes equal treatment of the genders and equality of opportunity, and prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on the ground of gender. The Law on Gender Equality determines that equal representation of men and women exists when the percentage of either gender in bodies at all levels in BiH (State, entity, cantonal, and municipality level) is at least 40%. BiH's national mine action strategy also considered the 2017 Gender Equality Action Plan.⁴⁷

Table 2: Gender composition of mine action operators in 2022⁴⁸

Operator	Total staff	Women employed	Total staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Women in operational positions
BHMACH	157	36	20	4	121	20
FACP	201	43	9	5	148	16
MAG	95	11	20	4	86	7
NPA	124	15	18	4	102	8

39 Ibid. p. 59.

40 Ibid. pp. 60–61.

41 Email from Charles Frisby, NPA, 19 March 2022.

42 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023.

43 Email from Muamer Husilović, FACP, 23 March 2023.

44 Email from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 6 April 2023.

45 Email from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 14 August 2023.

46 BiH, National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, p. 14.

47 Ibid.

48 Emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMACH, 23 March 2023; Muamer Husilović, FACP, 23 March 2023; Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023; and Pauline Boyer, MAG, 6 April 2023.

As at the end of 2022, however, as Table 2 illustrates, only 23% of BHMAC's employees were female, with women employed in 20% of managerial or supervisory positions and 11% of operational positions.⁴⁹ This is largely the same proportion as in 2021. BHMAC reported having a gender and diversity policy in place and said that it upholds the Law on Gender Equality and routinely includes it in the development of strategies and standards.⁵⁰ One of the three new members of the newly appointed Demining Commission is a woman.⁵¹ BHMAC has reported that it consults all groups affected by mines, including women and children, during survey and community liaison activities, and BHMAC's survey and community liaison teams are inclusive with a view to facilitating this. Relevant mine action data are disaggregated by gender and age.⁵²

NPA reported that the overall gender split of its staff in 2022 was 12% female, with eight (8%) women employed in operational roles and four (22%) women holding managerial positions.⁵³ This is largely the same as the proportion of women overall working for NPA in 2021. In 2022, NPA BiH continued implementing NPA's Global Gender Equality Policy through its annual work plans, with access to equal opportunities for all staff regardless of gender, age, or ethnic and religious background. NPA BiH remains the only demining organisation in BiH with a woman deminer—but only one—in its clearance teams.⁵⁴

MAG has a comprehensive gender policy, actively promoting gender mainstreaming and equal employment opportunities for qualified women and men, particularly in operational positions. Diversity is also a priority, with efforts to employ staff from different ethnic backgrounds. The community liaison team maintains a balanced gender and ethnic representation, fostering strong acceptance among local populations in all operational areas. They actively involve community members from diverse backgrounds in their liaison work. However, recruiting women, especially for deminer positions, is a significant challenge due to workforce trends in BiH. Many Bosnian youth emigrate to EU countries for employment opportunities. In 2022, despite training several women for deminer roles, none accepted job offers. Some candidates did not attend interviews.⁵⁵

The CPA RS reported that in 2022 nearly 24% of its staff were female, including 30% of managerial/supervisory positions. It has six female medics that support its demining operations, but none of its deminers are women.⁵⁶ During survey and community liaison activities, it cooperates with the local population, regardless of ethnicity, and where needed has representatives from different ethnic groups.⁵⁷

As at July 2022, the Demining Battalion of the Armed Forces of BiH had a workforce of 455 personnel, including 28 women (6% of the total). This included 1 (2%) of the 55 managerial/supervisory positions and 27 (7%) of the 391 operations positions.⁵⁸

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

BHMAC currently uses its own Paradox-based information management system, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Information System (BHMAIS),⁵⁹ but installation of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core has been ongoing since 2019. The first phase of IMSMA Core implementation was completed in May 2020.⁶⁰ A new project to migrate the remaining data and workflows from BHMAIS to IMSMA Core, funded by the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) and conducted in partnership with the GICHD and NPA, started in February 2023 and is due to be completed by mid 2024.⁶¹

BiH's national information management system needs to improve in terms of accuracy and sustainability. During implementation and migration from BHMAIS to IMSMA Core, data quality will be checked and improved wherever feasible. Data-collection forms will also be reviewed and improved as part of the process.⁶² NPA believes that IMSMA Core will help to ensure BiH has reliable mine action data, all of which will be stored and managed by BHMAC. It will also contribute to better operational planning, including for fulfilment of BiH's APMBC and CCM obligations.⁶³ At present, while clearance operators do have access to data on specific tasks being undertaken, they do not have access to BHMAC's full Information Management database.⁶⁴

49 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March 2023.

50 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 24 April 2019.

51 Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAC, 6 October 2022.

52 Emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 24 April 2019; Goran Šehić, Deputy Programme Manager, NPA, 25 February 2019; and GICHD, 27 April 2022; and BiH, National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, p. 52.

53 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 29 June 2023.

54 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023.

55 Email from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 6 April 2023.

56 Emails from Milisav Pantic, on behalf of Dragan Kos, Assistant Director, Civil Protection Administration of Republika Srpska (CPA RS), 3 June 2021 and 12 September 2022.

57 Emails from Dragan Kos, CPA RS, 2 April 2020; and Milisav Pantic, CPA RS, 12 September 2022.

58 Email from Brig. Dzevad Zenunovic, Demining Battalion of the Armed Forces of BiH, 13 July 2022.

59 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 22 March 2022.

60 2020 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 5; and email from the GICHD, 27 April 2022.

61 Emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March 2023; Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023; Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 25 May 2023; and Henrik Rydberg, GICHD, 29 June 2023.

62 Email from the GICHD, 27 April 2022.

63 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023.

64 Emails from Kristina Duric, NPA, 30 July 2021; and Clement Meynier, MAG, 30 July 2021.

In addition, UNDP developed a Geographic Information System (GIS) mobile application, which allows the general public to access information on the location of hazardous areas through their mobile electronic devices.⁶⁵

BHMAC has submitted its APMB Article 7 transparency report covering 2022 and disaggregated remaining mine contamination into SHAs and CHAs. However, that some AP mine contamination is classified as being within the MSAs and some remains outside MSAs in “classic tasks” creates a lack of clarity in land release data.

PLANNING AND TASKING

BiH's National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 addresses all mine and CMR contamination. BHMAC initially planned the first revision of the strategy by the end of 2020, based on the country assessment project and progress in implementation, with a second revision set for 2023.⁶⁶ In November 2020, the Demining Commission sent a request to the Council of Ministers to initiate a first revision.⁶⁷ BHMAC later reported that the first revision only was planned to be completed in 2023.⁶⁸ BHMAC also elaborates and implements annual work plans, which are adopted by the Demining Commission.

According to BiH's 2020 Article 5 deadline extension request, from 2020 to 2027 BiH plans to release a total of 967km²: 816.6km² through cancellation; 141.7km² through reduction; and 7.8km² through clearance, see Table 3 for annual targets.⁶⁹ While BiH did disaggregate the amount cancelled, reduced, and cleared each year, in its operational plan the totals in several columns did not correctly sum to the annual total.⁷⁰ BiH has fallen well behind its land release targets from 2020 to 2022 and will need to release on average 173.5km² per year in order to reach its current completion deadline. It is unlikely to do so.

Table 3: Planned land release 2023–2027⁷¹

Year	Land release target (km ²)
2020	71.8
2021	91.3
2022	110.3
2023	126.4
2024	145.5
2025	155.7
2026	131.4
2027	134.6

In its extension request, BiH describes its prioritisation system for releasing MSAs, which is said to accord with humanitarian, developmental, and safety needs of municipality and local communities, as well as the level of threat (high, medium, or low).⁷² Of the 478 MSAs created, 189 were high-risk MSAs, 274 medium-risk MSAs, and 15 low-risk MSAs.⁷³ BHMAC has not yet completed the preparation of project documentation/task dossiers for all 478 MSAs created during the country assessment.⁷⁴

In 2022, BHMAC prepared 27 MSAs and 17 tasks outside of MSAs for technical survey (TS) and clearance, which includes both mines and CMR.⁷⁵ Operators are assigned whole MSAs by BHMAC, inside which BHMAC designates specific areas (CHA or SHA polygons) for either systematic TS or targeted TS as well as clearance (if contamination is confirmed). Officially, only BHMAC can conduct NTS and release mined area through cancellation.⁷⁶ In 2023, BHMAC reported that TS and clearance was underway on 25 MSAs and 15 clearance tasks.⁷⁷

65 Email from Suad Baljak, UNDP, 18 February 2021.

66 BiH, National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, p. 34.

67 Statement of BiH, APMB Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties, 16 to 20 November 2020.

68 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March 2023.

69 2020 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2020, p. 24.

70 Ibid., Table, p. 24.

71 Ibid., p. 24.

72 Ibid., pp. 6 and 19–22.

73 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form C.

74 Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAC, 21 September 2022.

75 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March 2023.

76 Emails from Muamer Husilović, FACP, 12 March 2021; Clement Meynier, MAG, 11 March 2021; and Jonas Zachrisson, NPA, 14 March 2021.

77 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 31 July 2023.

The FACP, NPA, and MAG reported that task dossiers were not always issued in a timely manner, as the BHMIC regional offices do not have sufficient personnel to issue project documentation.⁷⁸ MAG also highlighted that resource constraints limit the number of survey and clearance tasks a regional office can oversee in any given operational year, as other demining activities (e.g. from State operators) may also be conducted simultaneously within their area of responsibility.⁷⁹ NPA reported that task dossiers lacked the detailed NTS information needed for efficient TS and clearance.⁸⁰ Operators have found they need to conduct additional survey/community liaison to supplement the task dossier and provide further information to BHMIC.⁸¹

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

In 2016, the Demining Commission formally adopted three revised chapters of the NMAS on land release, NTS, and TS, drafted in cooperation with EU technical assistance through the Land Release pilot project, UNDP, and the GICHD.⁸² Plans to revise the NMAS and further develop relevant chapters was planned by BHMIC for 2020. As at June 2023, the NMAS had been updated and they were under review by BHMIC.⁸³

In recent years, various land release projects, which have included use of systematic TS and TS with targeted investigation, have revealed that around 90% of mined area can be cancelled through NTS; around 8 or 9% reduced through TS; and less than 2% needs to be cleared.⁸⁴ These and previous land release data indicate that actual AP mine contamination in BiH is only a small proportion of the total hazardous area currently on the database and deployment of clearance assets is therefore only required for relatively small areas.⁸⁵

It is crucial that NTS is used to identify the location of mine contamination more accurately before TS and clearance are conducted. However, current NMAS and SOPs in BiH stipulate that only BHMIC can formally conduct NTS and cancel land. BHMIC conducts NTS and cancels some area before an MSA is assigned to an operator although, as previously mentioned, operators often find they need conduct additional survey/community liaison to supplement the information provided. Most cancellation through NTS by BHMIC occurs following the completion of TS and clearance of all hazardous areas within an MSA.⁸⁶

NPA and MAG both advocate for BHMIC to consider allowing operators with adequate capacity and experience to take responsibility for cancellation through NTS. This

could improve the efficiency of the land release process, by alleviating the strain on essential BHMIC resources responsible for NTS, including the preparation of land release projects. MAG believes operators should make recommendations for cancellation to BHMIC, who then formally approve and therefore take responsibility for the cancellation, as part of the overall site completion and handover process.⁸⁷ NPA stressed the importance of BHMIC enabling operators to plan and implement land release projects effectively in line with international best practice.⁸⁸

NPA BiH said it will continue to work to promote the IMAS and compliance of the NMAS on land release, and to advocate for further development of national procedures to increase operational efficiency and enhance confidence in the land release process itself.⁸⁹ MAG believes that, in general, the NMAS in BiH are suitable to enable the conduct of efficient land release. However, NPA and MAG continued to notice differences in the processes and approach to land release between the BHMIC regional offices.⁹⁰ It is important, therefore, that land release workshops are organised at all levels, including BHMIC headquarters and all BHMIC regional offices, to ensure consistent application of land release methodology.⁹¹

BHMIC has stated previously that it will ensure through quality management (QM) that all organisations accredited for TS and clearance comply with the principles of land release.⁹² In January 2022, BHMIC, in cooperation with UNDP and funded by Germany, held a workshop to enhance the NTS process in BiH. The workshop, attended by BHMIC staff from head office and regional offices, focused on survey, QC, and QA.⁹³

78 Emails from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023; and Muamer Husilović, FACP, 23 March 2023.

79 Email from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 6 April 2023.

80 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023.

81 Email from Jonas Zachrisson, NPA, 14 March 2021.

82 BHMIC, "Report on Mine Action in BiH for 2016", February 2017, p. 18; and Audit Office of the Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, "Performance Audit Report. Efficiency of the Demining System in Bosnia and Herzegovina", No. 01-02-03-10-16-1-1101/16, October 2016, p. 26; BHMIC, "Adoption of three new chapters of Mine Action Standard for land release, the new approach for solving the mine problem", 28 January 2016; and email from Fotini Antonopoulou, EU, 18 September 2017.

83 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMIC, 7 June 2023.

84 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 5 and 10; and Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2020, p. 7.

85 BiH, National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, pp. 6 and 11; and Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2020, p. 17.

86 Emails from Clement Meynier, Country Director, MAG, 14 March 2022; and Charles Frisby, Country Director, NPA, 11 April 2022.

87 Email from Clement Meynier, MAG, 14 March 2022.

88 Email from Charles Frisby, NPA, 11 April 2022.

89 Ibid.

90 Email from Clement Meynier, MAG, 14 March 2022; and Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023.

91 Email from Charles Frisby, NPA, 11 April 2022.

92 Draft Demining plan in BiH for 2020, Annex 6 to the 2020 Revised Article 5 deadline extension request, August 2020, p. 20.

93 BHMIC website, "Workshop on improving the process of non-technical survey in BiH", 26 January 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3PfvM8G>.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2022, a total of 17 organisations were deployed in BiH: four government organisations (Armed Forces of BiH, Federal Administration of Civil Protection (FACP), Civil Protection Administration of Republika Srpska (CPA RS), and Brčko District Civil Protection (only conducts removal and destruction of ERW, not mine clearance)); nine commercial organisations, all national (Point, Detector, CHR, Heksogen, DCM Media, In Demining, N&N Ivša, UG EKO DEM, and UEM); and three national (Mine Detection Dog Centre (MDDC), Pro Vita, and Stop Mines) and two international NGOs (NPA and MAG).⁹⁴

Table 4: Operational TS and clearance capacities deployed in 2022⁹⁵

Operator	No. of teams	Total personnel*	Dogs and handlers	Machines	Comments
Point d.o.o	1	9	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
Detector	1	11	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
CHR d.o.o	1	8	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
N&N Ivša	1	8	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
Heksogen d.o.o	1	9	N/R	N/R	Only clearance
UEM d.o.o	1	10	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
DCM Media d.o.o	1	8	N/R	N/R	Only clearance
In Demining N.H.O	2	22	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
MDDC	1	8	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
Stop Mines	3	21	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
NPA	8	48	4 dogs, 4 handlers	2	Clearance and TS
MAG	7-8	49-56	2-4 dogs, 2-4 handlers	0	Clearance and TS
UG EKO DEM	1	9	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
FACP	(TS) 6 (Clearance) 11	(TS) 48 (Clearance) 63	4 dogs, 4 handlers	2	Clearance and TS
Brčko District Civil Protection	1	6	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
Armed Forces of BiH	32	200	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
CPA RS	7	50	2 dogs, 2 handlers	N/R	Clearance and TS
Totals	86-87	587-94	12-14 dogs, 12-14 handlers	4	

* Excluding team leaders, medics, drivers, etc. N/R = Not reported

⁹⁴ Emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMACH, 23 March 2023 and 31 July 2023.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

MAG does not conduct its own NTS in BiH but contributes information gathered by its community liaison teams through identification and interviews with informants during TS and clearance operations.⁹⁶ Similarly, NPA has a two-person NTS team that reports collated information to BHMAL to be incorporated into their NTS data.⁹⁷ BHMAL integrated drones into NTS after their successful use in the country assessment project. Drone records help identify confrontation line trenches, roads, areas in use, and other crucial elements for demining project development. Targeted investigation is used to identify risk areas during NTS.⁹⁸

Clearance and TS operations in BiH involve mechanical land preparation, manual clearance, and the use of MDDs depending on geographical conditions.⁹⁹ Much of the remaining mined area is in hilly or mountainous terrain, which restricts machinery use. The CPA RS maintains an MDD team of two dogs that were used in demining in 2022. However, this marks a significant decrease compared to previous years. The operator is of the opinion that the limited deployment of MDDs in land release tasks across BiH is an issue that needs to be addressed and changed.¹⁰⁰

BHMAL reports that they expect an increase in the overall number of TS and clearance personnel in 2023 because of two new demining projects, IPA III and demining of the Sava river.¹⁰¹ MAG reported that its clearance capacity increased in 2022 from seven teams to eight in August due to the start of a new project but MDD capacity decreased, due to two dogs retiring in April, so now they have only one MDD team. MAG expects that its capacity would remain the same in 2023.¹⁰² NPA reported no change in its operational capacity from 2021 to 2022 and expected to maintain its capacity in 2023.¹⁰³ The number of deminers employed by FACP reduced by seven in 2022 due to employee retirement and termination of contracts and it did not expect a change in capacity in 2023.¹⁰⁴

The State operators, the BiH Armed Forces' Demining Battalion and the Civil Protection entities, are good partners and have effective capacities, but have suffered from logistical challenges and equipment deficits, which can prevent them from working at full capacity.¹⁰⁵

The teams of the FACP are trained in rapid response to remove the injured (civilians or deminers) from mined areas. The FACP believes that accident and incident investigation, which is currently only conducted by BHMAL staff, should be expanded to include representatives from the wider demining community, such as the entities civil protection authorities, the armed forces, and EUFOR, to help improve the safety and quality of operations. According to the FACP, there are no obstacles to including representatives from the wider demining community in accident investigation.¹⁰⁶

With the exception of MAG and NPA, clearance operators in BiH typically compete for international tenders in order to secure their funding. A UNDP evaluation suggested that this resulted in considerable capacity being underused and recommended alternative contracting models more appropriate for land release (either by having longer term contracts or being contracted for the clearance of larger areas). This could be more attractive to the demining organisations in terms of security and could also make best use of capacity in the long run.¹⁰⁷ National demining NGOs, such as Stop Mines or Pro Vita, which are registered in a similar way to companies, potentially have capacity to quickly mobilise additional resources and up-scale operations.¹⁰⁸ According to the CPA RS, a lack of demining personnel is becoming a problem.¹⁰⁹

The Demining Commission is responsible for considering the periodic re-accreditation of field operators, following the recommendation from BHMAL. QC and QA is conducted by BHMAL.¹¹⁰

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

In 2022, a total of 52.76km² of AP mined area was released, of which 41.72km² was cancelled through NTS, 10.12km² was reduced through TS, and 0.92km² was cleared, based on national authority data. In total, 3,527 AP mines were found and destroyed, of which 194 during were found during TS and 3,333 during clearance.

96 Emails from Clement Meynier, MAG, 11 March 2021 and 14 March 2022.

97 Emails from Jonas Zachrisson, NPA, 14 March 2021; Kristina Duric, NPA, 30 July 2021; and Charles Frisby, NPA, 11 April 2022.

98 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAL, 15 April 2022.

99 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 11.

100 Email from Milisav Pantić, CPA RS, 17 August 2023.

101 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAL, 23 March 2023.

102 Email from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 6 April 2023.

103 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023.

104 Email from Muamer Husilović, FACP, 23 March 2023.

105 UNDP, Draft Mine Action Governance and Management Assessment for BiH, 13 May 2015, p. 29; and interviews with Darvin Lisica, NPA, Sarajevo, 8 May 2017; Haris Lokvancic, Swiss Embassy, Sarajevo, 9 May 2017; and Tarik Serak, BHMAL, Sarajevo, 10 May 2017.

106 Emails from the Cabinet, Federal Administration of Civil Protection, 29 August 2019; and Muamer Husilović, FACP, 18 March 2022.

107 UNDP, Draft Mine Action Governance and Management Assessment for BiH, p. 35.

108 Email from Fotini Antonopoulou, EU, 18 September 2017.

109 Email from Milisav Pantić, CPA RS, 23 September 2022.

110 2020 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2020, p. 8.

SURVEY IN 2022

In 2022, a total of 51.84km² was released through survey. BHMAC cancelled 41.72km² through NTS, of which 38.11km² was cancelled by BHMAC following completion of TS and clearance of assigned tasks by operators (see Table 5), and 3.61km² was cancelled by BHMAC through NTS before the tasks were assigned.¹¹¹ A total of 10.12km² was reduced through TS, of which 8.26km² was within the MSAs and 1.86km² was within tasks outside of MSAs with 194 AP mines found and destroyed.¹¹² This is more than double the survey output from 2021 when more than 9.02km² of mined area was reduced through TS; and almost 14.43km² was cancelled through NTS.¹¹³

BHMAC is directly responsible for reporting all cancellation of mined areas in BiH and does so only upon completion of whole MSAs.

Table 5: Release of mined area through NTS in 2022 by canton¹¹⁴

Province	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
CANTON 10	Armed Forces of BiH	10,371,497
Zenica-Doboj	MAG	1,551,283
Tuzla	Armed Forces of BiH	1,772,677
Central Bosnia	NPA	4,172,646
Central Bosnia	MDDC	1,735,316
Una-Sana	Stop Mines	1,550,890
Una-Sana	Armed Forces of BiH	284,087
Una-Sana	NPA	2,211,834
Una-Sana	MDDC	2,579,564
SARAJEVO	"In Demining" N.H.O.	2,341,573
Herzegovina-Neretva	MAG	2,624,955
Herzegovina-Neretva	Armed Forces of BiH	561,786
Total BiH Federation		31,758,108
Republika Srpska	CPA RS	2,993,202
Republika Srpska	NPA	2,545,342
Republika Srpska	MAG	811,567
Total Republika Srpska		6,350,111
Grand totals		38,108,219

CLEARANCE IN 2022

In 2022, BHMAC reported clearance of 0.92km² with 3,333 AP mines destroyed, based on national authority data. Of this, 0.57km² was within MSAs, with 3,180 AP mines found and destroyed (see Table 6), and 0.35km² was in tasks outside of MSAs with 153 AP mines found and destroyed (see Table 7).¹¹⁵ A further 194 AP mines were destroyed during TS as reported above. BHMAC only records clearance data upon completion of tasks, which likely accounts for the differences between BHMAC and operator clearance data provided to Mine Action Review (see footnotes), as the latter is reported on an ongoing basis.

This is an increase from the 0.69km² of mined area cleared in 2021, of which 0.06km² was in tasks outside of MSAs, 0.60km² was in MSAs, and 0.03km² was clearance in TS tasks with a total of 1,717 AP mines found and destroyed.¹¹⁶

111 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March 2023; and Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form C.

112 Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form C; and email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 1 August 2023.

113 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 15 April 2022.

114 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March 2023. MAG and FACP did not report any cancellation by NTS; NPA reported working with BHMAC to conduct non-technical survey on NPA tasks which resulted in BHMAC cancelling 2,042,134m² in Brčko District and 559,764m² in Republika Srpska in 2022.

115 Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form C; and email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 1 August 2023.

116 BiH draft Mine Action Report for 2021, undated, p. 35.

Table 6: Clearance of MSAs in 2022 by canton¹¹⁷

Canton	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	UXO Destroyed
Tuzla	Armed Forces of BiH	25,680	158	42
Sarajevo	"In Demining" N.H.O.	5,079	19	4
Central Bosnia	NPA, MDDC,	67,747	552	137
Zenica-Doboj	MAG	53,803	187	71
Una-Sana	Stop Mines, Armed Forces of BiH, MDDC, NPA	44,457	225	45
Herzegovina-Neretva	MAG, Armed Forces of BiH	94,913	248	22
Canton 10	Armed Forces of BiH	65,993	1,156	50
Totals BiH Federation		357,672	2,545	371
Republika Srpska	MAG, NPA, CPA RS	212,995	635	97
Grand totals		570,667	3,180	468

Table 7: Mine clearance outside MSAs in 2022 by canton¹¹⁸

Canton	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed
Central Bosnia	"In Demining" N.H.O., Detector	40,321	12
Zenica-Doboj	Armed Forces of BiH, Detector	24,325	1
Sarajevo	Armed Forces of BiH	2,798	0
Canton 10	FACP, UEM d.o.o.	29,521	26
Una-Sana	N&N Ivša, Stop Mines	121,679	23
Tuzla	FACP, Detector	14,369	1
Totals BiH Federation		233,013	63
Republika Srpska	Detector, "In Demining" N.H.O., N&N Ivša, UEM d.o.o., CPA RS	119,075	90
Grand totals		352,088	153

BHMAC stated that 19 tasks totalling 120,839m² were cleared in 2022 with no AP mines found.¹¹⁹ FACP reported that it cleared two tasks totalling 62,507m² with no AP mines found.¹²⁰ While MAG and NPA both confirmed that all clearance tasks in 2022 contained AP mines.¹²¹

BHMAC reported an increase in the amount of mined area cancelled, reduced, and cleared in 2022 compared to 2021 because more demining organisations were accredited and deployed and there were no longer restrictions in place due to COVID-19.¹²²

117 Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form C; and emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 1 and 31 August 2023. FACP reported clearing 55,926m² across the cantons of Posavina, Una-Sana, Sarajevo, Bosnian-Podrinje Canton Goražde, and Zenica-Doboj with 188 AP mines destroyed. MAG reported clearing 498,779m² across the cantons of Herzegovina-Neretva, Tuzla, Zenica-Doboj, Brčko District and Republika Srpska with 147 AP mines destroyed. NPA reported clearing 29,044m² across the cantons of Tuzla, Brčko District and Republika Srpska with 113 AP mines destroyed.

118 Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form C; and emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 1 and 31 August 2023. BHMAC only records clearance data upon completion of tasks, which likely accounts for the differences between BHMAC and operator clearance data, as the latter is reported on an ongoing basis. FACP reported clearing 55,926m² across the cantons of Posavina, Una-Sana, Sarajevo, Bosnian-Podrinje Canton Goražde, and Zenica-Doboj with 188 AP mines destroyed. MAG reported clearing 498,779m² across the cantons of Herzegovina-Neretva, Tuzla, Zenica-Doboj, Brčko District and Republika Srpska with 147 AP mines destroyed. NPA reported clearing 29,044m² across the cantons of Tuzla, Brčko District and Republika Srpska with 113 AP mines destroyed.

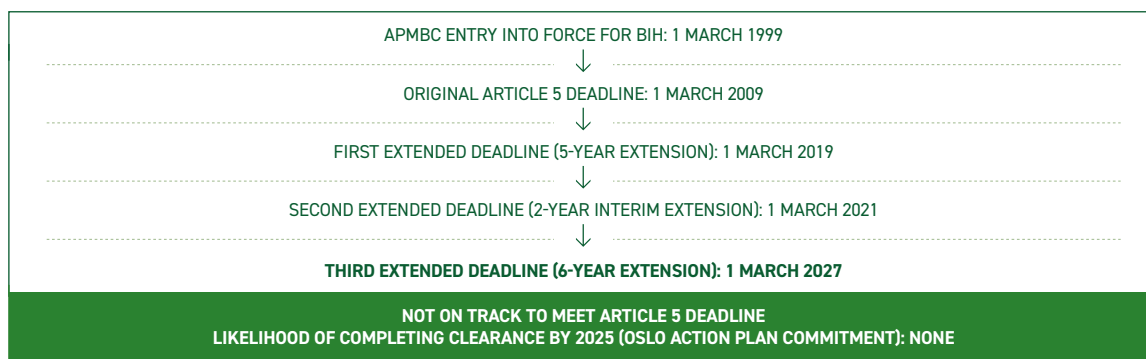
119 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March 2023.

120 Email from Muamer Husilović, FACP, 23 March 2023.

121 Emails from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 6 April 2023. and Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023.

122 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March 2023.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC and in line with the third extension (for six years) of its deadline, BiH is required to destroy all AP mines under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 March 2027. While BHMBC is making efforts to meet the current deadline, they expect clearance of AP mines to be completed only by 2030. After the planned revision of the mine action strategy through to 2025, they expect to have a more precise projection of their completion date.¹²³

The 2020 extension request, granted by the Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties, was for the purpose of non-technical and technical survey “to better define the precise perimeter of mined areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina”.¹²⁴ It is, however, assumed that there was an accidental omission of land release through clearance, and that BiH intends to complete both survey and clearance of remaining mined areas by the requested deadline. Prior to this, BiH had been granted a second extension request in 2018, for an interim two-year extension to 1 March 2021, during which it conducted a “country assessment”, to better understand the remaining AP mine contamination and plan more effectively for its release.¹²⁵

Over the last five years, BiH has released less than 4km² thorough clearance (see Table 8). Since the ten-year extension to its initial Article 5 deadline, granted in 2008, BiH has continuously fallen far short of its annual land release targets. The painfully slow pace of survey and clearance has resulted in lack of confidence in the national mine action programme from donors but also from people living in mine-affected communities, who felt disillusioned that the mines have not been cleared.¹²⁶

BiH more than doubled its land release output from 2021 to 2022 although it still fell considerably short of its land release target for the year. According to BiH's 2020 Article 5 extension request, BiH planned to release 110.3km² in 2022 (92.9km² through cancellation; 16.4km² through reduction, and 0.9km² through clearance although this actually adds up to 110.2km²).¹²⁷ While BiH did not meet its overall land release target, it did meet its clearance target and came close to reaching its target for reduction through TS but where it delivered a significant shortfall was in its NTS output, achieving less than half the target amount. Unfortunately, BiH has been consistently lagging behind its land release targets since 2020, and will need to release an average of 173.5km² per year to 2027 in order to reach its completion deadline. At the current rate of land release output, it would take BiH approximately 16 years to complete clearance.

Table 8: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	0.92
2021	*0.69
2020	*0.53
2019	0.54
2018	0.92
Total	3.60

* Combined TS and clearance output for MSAs

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2020, p. 17.

¹²⁵ 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 19; and “BiH Statement on Interim Request for Extension to the Deadline for Fulfilling Obligations as per Article 5”, 7 June 2018, Geneva.

¹²⁶ UNDP, Draft Mine Action Governance and Management Assessment for BiH, 13 May 2015, p. 14.

¹²⁷ Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2020, p. 24.

Systematic survey conducted in BiH over recent years has determined that 90% of mined area can be cancelled through NTS. The land release targets to 2027 in its 2020 extension request also reflect this finding, as BHM MAC has allocated the majority of annual land release output to be achieved through NTS. However, it is now highly unlikely that BiH will be able to release the amount of hazardous area required in the next four years and BHM MAC has itself acknowledged that it will not meet its current Article 5 deadline.

To address this challenge, BHM MAC should focus on enhancing NTS resources and capacity. The current approach does not seem effective enough, warranting a shift towards empowering operators to conduct NTS while BHM MAC assumes an oversight and approval role. This change will open up more potential resources and capacity and could lead to substantial increases in NTS output. Provided that BHM MAC also ensures that all stakeholders adopt a more consistent and efficient approach to land release operations, it could also lead to an overall improvement in land release practices. By using NTS in this way, BiH could make significant progress towards achieving its clearance goals.

In addition, BHM MAC (both headquarters and its regional offices) must ensure stronger coordination and an enabling operating environment, with a more sustained and efficient mobilisation of strategic national demining resources such as the Demining Battalion and Civil Protection entities. This will, however, require political will and strong oversight and commitment from BHM MAC, the Demining Commission, and their superiors in the government, which is lacking at present.

It is disappointing that no Country Coalition meetings have taken place since the first one in 2020. BiH should fully embrace and use the Country Coalition formed with Germany, as a useful platform to help strengthen coordination and actively address and overcome the ongoing challenges in Article 5 implementation. In order to achieve completion, BiH must sustain national and international funding to its Mine Action Programme, and mechanisms such as the Country Coalition and Board of Donor meetings are an essential element in achieving this.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

The National Mine Action Strategy for 2018–2025 required the development of a strategy for the management of residual contamination by 2022. As at August 2023, the strategy had still to be elaborated but according to BHM MAC an NMAS on management of residual contamination will be included in the updated standards once they are launched and that once the first revision of the national strategy is completed a plan for residual contamination will be prepared.¹²⁸

128 Emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHM MAC, 23 March and 31 August 2023.