

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



CLEARING THE MINES 2024

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

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: HEAVY

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

50km²

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2023

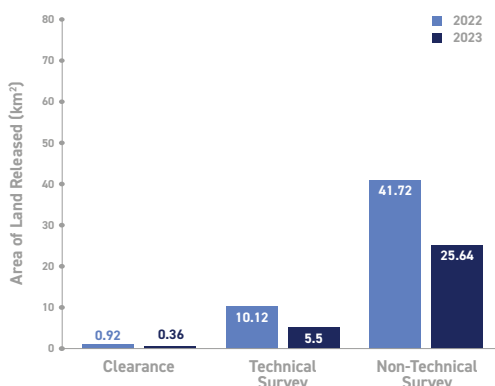
0.36km²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2023

1,363

(INCLUDING 577 DURING
SPOT TASKS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



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

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) land release output decreased by 40% from 2022 and it did not meet its land release target for the year. BiH is not on course to complete clearance by its current Article 5 deadline and is planning to request a new deadline once it has completed a review of its National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, which after much delay finally started in 2024. At only 0.36km², mine clearance in 2023 was the lowest on record for BiH.

FIVE-YEAR OVERVIEW

Progress in land release in BiH over the past five years has been significantly slower than planned. Only one third of the anti-personnel (AP) mined area planned for release between 2020 and 2023 has been achieved. BiH is now facing the need to submit a fourth request to extend its Article 5 deadline. To complete clearance within the next ten years, BiH must drastically increase the amount of land cancelled through non-technical survey (NTS), particularly since recent systematic surveys have shown that 90% of mined areas can be cancelled in this manner. That said, BiH still lacks a credible baseline of contamination, as most of the areas remain classified as suspected hazardous areas (SHAs). By significantly enhancing coordination with donors and operators and by ramping up clearance, BiH can fulfil its Article 5 obligations without the need for a fifth Article 5 extension.

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.
- 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.
- BiH should strengthen the governance and management of its mine action programme by improving communication and coordination with operators and other key stakeholders, including through the re-establishment of a “Country Coalition” and technical working groups (TWGs).

- BHMAL should adopt international best practice in land release and ensure that operators can use NTS to confirm and delineate areas of actual contamination prior to clearance and be empowered to cancel areas that do not contain mines.
- BHMAL should finalise implementation of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core, ensuring that all data is accurate and up to date before migration.
- BHMAL should detail the steps it plans to take to effectively 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 (2023)	Score (2022)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	5	5	BiH estimates that more than 838km ² of AP mined area remains in its territory. However, only 2% of the contamination estimate is in confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and it is accepted that the size of many SHAs is considerably inflated and that NTS will cancel much of the remaining mined area.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	5	5	National management of mine action falls to the Demining Commission and BHMAL. The process to adopt the amended demining law was restarted in 2022 but, as at the middle of 2024, had not yet concluded. In December 2023, a meeting was held with representatives from all key donors who reaffirmed their commitment to mine action in BiH. However, the Country Coalition established between BiH and Germany in 2020 has not met since and the TWG 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. Yet, within BHMAL's own programme, and those of clearance operators too, women make up only a small proportion of staff and an even smaller proportion of operations personnel.
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION* (10% of overall score)	4	Not Scored	BiH does not have either an environmental management policy or a national mine action standard (NMAS) on environmental management. Some mitigation measures are in place such as restrictions on the use of threshing machines in agricultural areas. A 2022 study identified a link between mine contamination and recovery efforts post flooding, but BHMAL does not consider climate related or extreme weather events when tasking. Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) have implemented their own environmental policies and mitigation measures.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	6	6	BHMAL is migrating from its own information management system to the new web-based IMSMA Core. A new project to migrate the remaining data began in February 2023 and was completed on 30 August 2024. BiH submitted its Article 7 report for 2023, disaggregating mined area into suspected and confirmed hazardous area.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	6	7	After significant delays, the first revision of the National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 began in 2024. With none of the land release targets met, BiH was planning to release 150km ² during 2025 and 2026. Large mined areas are assigned to operators for land release, but operators report that task dossiers are often not issued in a timely manner and frequently lack detailed NTS information.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM** (10% of overall score)	6	7	BHMAL has in place national standards and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for mine survey and clearance. The NMAS were revised and, as at May 2024, awaiting publication. Only BHMAL can conduct NTS, a situation operators have been seeking to change as operators typically need to conduct additional survey/ community liaison to supplement the information provided by BHMAL.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	5	6	Land release output decreased by 40% between 2022 and 2023 and fell far short of BiH's land release target for the year. BiH will not meet its current Article 5 deadline and expects to submit a further extension request with a new proposed completion date. In order to achieve completion within the medium term, BiH will need to increase its annual land release output significantly, with a particular focus on cancellation through NTS as well as increased clearance.
Average Score	5.1	5.8	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

* New criterion introduced in 2024 to assess performance.

** The weighting of this criterion was previously 20% of overall performance score, but is now given a 10% weighting.

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 (BHMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Armed Forces of BiH
- BHMAC
- Civil Protection Administration of Republika Srpska (CPARS)
- Federal Administration of Civil Protection (FACP)
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs):
 - DEMIRA
 - Mine Detection Dog Centre (MDDC)
 - Pro Vita
 - Stop Mines

- Commercial demining companies:
 - Detector
 - Heksogen
 - In Demining N.H.O
 - N&N Ivsa
 - Udruga "Pazi mine"
 - UEM (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, as at the end of 2023, more than 838km² of (mostly) suspected mined area remained (see Table 1). This included only some 18km² of confirmed hazardous area (CHA), equating to 2% of total mined area.¹ This is a decrease from the 869km² of mined area in BiH a year earlier, which is largely consistent with the amount of land release reported by BHMAC for 2023.²

Table 1: Mined area (at end 2023)³

Canton	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total SHAs and CHAs	Total area (m ²)
Unsko-Sanski	120	2,455,601	508	84,864,399	628	87,320,000
Posavski	3	255,060	157	14,084,940	160	14,340,000
Tuzlanski	46	1,279,207	629	68,650,793	675	69,930,000
Zeničko-Dobojski	42	1,532,201	558	107,377,799	600	108,910,000
Bosansko-Podrinjski	14	915,190	176	41,504,810	190	42,420,000
Srednjobosanski	78	2,398,612	574	98,271,388	652	100,670,000
Hercegovačko Neretvanski	64	2,570,502	865	124,209,498	929	126,780,000
Zapadnohercegovački	3	228,308	3	28,308	6	256,616
Kanton Sarajevo	24	668,655	173	47,891,345	197	48,560,000
Kanton 10	26	631,640	351	61,198,360	377	61,830,000
Republika Srpska	248	4,774,920	82	4,675,080	330	9,450,000
Brčko district	2	197,383	2,166	167,662,617	2168	167,860,000
Totals	670	17,907,279	6,242	820,419,337	6,912	838,326,616

In 2017, BHMAC, clearance operators, and the European Union (EU) formalised plans for a country assessment project to establish a more accurate baseline of mine contamination

and improve clearance efficiency.⁴ The project, conducted from 2018 to 2020, involved a nationwide NTS by BHMAC, the Armed Forces of BiH, and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA).

1 Email from Mirjana Marić, Senior Officer for Analysis and Reporting, BHMAC, 29 April 2024; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form C.
2 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, Interpreter, BHMAC, 23 March 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C.
3 Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAC, 29 April 2024; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form C.
4 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.

The project processed data for 143 municipalities, confirming mined areas in 118 of them.⁵ During the project, 103km² of land was released, reducing total mined area from 1,069km² to 966km². The NTS corrected 1,151 mined area locations, added 300 new minefield records, and removed 6,023 records from the database.⁶

The remaining mined area was divided into 478 Mine Suspected Areas (MSAs), which average 1.94km² in size.⁷ MSA is a BiH-specific term, not consistent with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), and defined locally 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”.⁸ In addition, some mine contamination outside the MSAs is assigned to operators for release. BHMAL has not specified how much of the contaminated area is within MSAs and how much is outside. It had been expected that the assessment project would result in a significant amount of cancellation, but in fact this amounted to less than 10% of the total mined area at the time.⁹ Significant further cancellation is therefore expected during release of the MSAs.

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.¹⁰ More than twenty-five years after the end of the conflict, BiH is still heavily contaminated with mines. Mined areas generally contain relatively small numbers of mines, which are typically either in patterns or are “randomly laid”. In its Article 7 report for 2020, BiH stated it had collected 70% of all minefield records.¹¹ The quality of approximately 30% of minefield records was not sufficiently accurate for the identification of the precise location and shape of the mined area in question.¹² Physical changes to mined areas (such as in the form of vegetation) and a lack of witnesses to the laying of the mines pose additional challenges.¹³ BiH is also reported to be affected by AP mines of an improvised nature in Goraždanka and Čapljinka but says their detection is possible through standard methods.¹⁴

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 BHMAL 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 BHMAL 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 for considering the periodic re-accreditation of field operators,

based on a recommendation from BHMAL. It also proposes the appointment of BHMAL senior staff for approval by the Council of Ministers.¹⁶

BHMAL is responsible for regulating mine action and implementing BiH's survey and clearance plans.¹⁷ It operates from its headquarters in Sarajevo, two main operations offices in Sarajevo and Banja Luka, and eight regional offices (in Banja Luka, Bihac, Brčko, Mostar, Pale, Sarajevo, Travnik, and Tuzla).¹⁸ A new director of BHMAL was appointed in October 2023.¹⁹

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

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

7 Revised 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 5 and 10–11; and Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form C.

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

9 Based on BiH's draft Mine Action Report for 2020, undated draft, p. 11. In BiH's Revised 2020 Article 5 deadline extension request, 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.

10 Revised 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 4.

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

12 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 8.

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 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, “Preliminary Observations”, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18–20 June 2024.

15 BHMAL Organisational chart, accessed 6 May 2022, page no longer available.

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

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

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

19 Email from Pauline Boyer, Country Director, MAG, 25 April 2024.

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 in 2022 but, at the time of writing, had 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 mine action stakeholders in BiH.

Since 2010, NPA has supported the capacity building of the Armed Forces of BiH Demining Battalion.²² National capacity development remains a strategic priority for NPA, which, in collaboration with national stakeholders, developed a Capacity Development plan for 2022–25, focused on enhancing the Demining Battalion's role in implementing BiH's Mine Action Strategy. The plan's success depends on funding availability. In 2023, NPA continued to support improvements to the Battalion's information management system, identifying the need for improved data collection, processing, and analysis to boost mine action efficiency, alongside NPA's ongoing work with BHMAL on IMSMA Core.²³

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) in BiH, through the “MAGMA” project, provides technical assistance to BHMAL and the Demining Commission BiH; supports the improvement of the BHMAL information management system; coordinates activities for the Board of Donors sessions and act as a co-chair of the Board; and engages “mine action advocates” to promote the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC).²⁴ After a 10-year hiatus, Board of Donors meetings resumed in September 2015.²⁵ BiH's new National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 specifies that at least two such meetings should be organised every year.²⁶ One was held in December 2023 with representatives from all key donors. The donors reaffirmed their commitment to demining in BiH and announced ongoing support for mine action.²⁷

It had been hoped that the “Country Coalition” established between BiH and Germany would provide a forum for regular dialogue among all mine action stakeholders, help demonstrate national ownership, strengthen coordination of APMBC Article 5 and CCM Article 4 implementation (now completed), and identify and overcome challenges, and monitor progress against the 2018–25 strategy. The first Country Coalition meeting, convened jointly by BiH and Germany, was in 2020, attended by representatives from a wide range of mine action stakeholders, including NGO clearance operators and donors.²⁸ Regrettably, as at May 2024, no further Country Coalition meetings had been convened.²⁹

Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and NPA both reported that since the new director was appointed, BHMAL have shown an openness to reforming the TWGs to allow operators, the BHMAL, and its regional offices to share lessons learned, challenges, and successes across BiH. It has been suggested these would be convened on a bimonthly or quarterly basis and both operators have offered their support for organising the TWGs. It is hoped they would be established in 2024.³⁰

National funding supports BHMAL and survey and clearance by the BiH Armed Forces, financed by the State budget through the Council of Ministers. The Federation of BiH funds the Federal Administration of Civil Protection (FACP), while the Republika Srpska government finances the Civil Protection Administration for Republika Srpska (CPA RS).³¹ In 2020, 55% of mine action funding came from international donors, with 45% from national sources, but total funding fell short of the Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 targets.³² In 2023, BHMAL received more than BAM 7.57 million (approximately US\$4.29 million) from BiH, an increase on the support provided the year before. Additionally, domestic institutions allocated over BAM 10.62 million for demining (BAM 2.99 million for the Armed Forces, BAM 4.3 million for the FACP, and BAM 3.33 million for the CPA RS).³³ In 2024, BiH secured €10 million from the EU's Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) for a three-year clearance programme in over 20 municipalities, aiming to clear over 70km² of land. Clearance along the Sava river's right bank is underway in partnership with the Ministry of Transport and Communication and The World Bank.³⁴

20 Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAL, 12 April 2024.

21 Email from the GICHD, 14 May 2021.

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

23 Emails from Valerie Warmington, Country Director, NPA, 6 April 2023 and 9 May 2024.

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

25 Interview with Tarik Serak, BHMAL, 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, page no longer available.

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

27 Ibid.

28 BHMAL website, “Embassy of the Republic of Germany in Bosnia and Herzegovina in cooperation with the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs, organized online Country Coalition conference”, 14 October 2020, at: <http://bit.ly/2NwxatH>; and Statement of Germany, Second CCM Review Conference (Part 1), virtual format, 25–27 November 2020.

29 Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAL, 12 April 2024.

30 Emails from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 25 April 2024; and Valerie Warmington, NPA, 9 May 2024.

31 Emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAL, 22 March 2022; and Suad Baljak, UNDP, 18 September 2020.

32 Revised 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 7.

33 Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAL, 29 April 2024.

34 Statement of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18–20 June 2024.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 specifies that: “Under the leadership of BHMAG, relevant actors will include gender and diversity into all phases of planning, realisation and follow-up of all mine activities”.³⁵ 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.³⁶

Table 2: Gender composition of operators in 2023³⁷

Operator	Total staff	Women staff	Total managerial or supervisory staff	Women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total operational staff	Women in operational positions
BHMAG	153	36 (24%)	18	4 (22%)	177	20 (11%)
FACP	191	41 (21%)	12	5 (42%)	142	14 (10%)
NPA	120	14 (12%)	8	4 (50%)	97	8 (8%)
MAG	97	12 (12%)	16	4 (25%)	90	7 (8%)
Totals	561	103 (18%)	54	17 (31%)	506	49 (10%)

As at the end of 2023, however, as Table 2 illustrates, only 24% of BHMAG’s employees were female, with women employed in 22% of managerial or supervisory positions and 11% of operational positions.³⁸ This is largely the same proportion as in 2021 and 2022. BHMAG reported having a gender and diversity policy in place and claimed that BHMAG upholds the Law on Gender Equality and routinely includes it in the development of strategies and standards.³⁹

NPA reported that the overall gender split of its staff in 2023 was only 12% female, with a mere 8% of operational roles held by women although women were in 50% of the managerial posts.⁴⁰ Since 2022, the proportion of women holding managerial roles has increased from 22%.⁴¹ NPA is committed to mainstreaming gender and diversity within its BiH mine action programme. In 2023, a female candidate who scored the same as a male candidate was given preference during recruitment.⁴²

MAG has a comprehensive gender policy, actively promoting gender equality and diversity, with a focus on gender mainstreaming and equal employment opportunities for both women and men, especially in operational roles. The

organisation prioritises employing staff from diverse ethnic backgrounds, and its community liaison team maintains a balanced gender and ethnic representation, which fosters strong local acceptance. Despite efforts, recruiting women for deminer positions remains challenging, partly due to workforce trends in BiH, where many youth emigrate for jobs in the EU. To further enhance gender inclusion, MAG was developing a regional gender and inclusion action plan between April and September 2024 to increase female participation and integrate gender-sensitive programming across its Eastern Europe programmes. Additionally, in January 2024, the Community Liaison Manager and Country Director attended a Gender & Conflict Sensitivity training, organised with MAG’s partner, International Alert, to reinforce a conflict-sensitive approach.⁴³

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 is a woman.⁴⁴ During survey and community liaison activities, the CPA RS cooperates with the local population, regardless of ethnicity, and where needed has representatives from different ethnic groups.⁴⁵

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

36 Ibid.

37 Emails from Mirjana Marić, BHMAG, 12 April 2024; Valerie Warmington, NPA, 22 April 2024; Muamer Husilović, FACP, 24 April 2024; and Pauline Boyer, MAG, 25 April 2024.

38 Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAG, 12 April 2024.

39 Emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAG, 24 April 2019 and 23 March 2023.

40 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 22 April 2024.

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

42 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 22 April 2024.

43 Email from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 25 April 2024.

44 Emails from Milisav Pantic, on behalf of Dragan Kos, Assistant Director, CPA RS, 3 June 2021 and 12 September 2022.

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

As at July 2022, the Demining Battalion of the Armed Forces of BiH had a workforce of 455 personnel, of whom only 28 (6%) were women. Only 1 of the 55 managerial/supervisory positions (2%) is a woman and 27 (7%) of the 391 operational

positions.⁴⁶ The FACP reported that 21% of its employees are female, with women filling 42% of managerial/supervisory positions and 10% of operational positions.⁴⁷ This is largely the same as 2022.⁴⁸

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

BiH does not have a national mine action standard (NMAS) on environmental management. BHMACH, however, 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, BHMACH consults landowners to make informed decisions about vegetation removal and tree preservation.⁴⁹

The 2022 study on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (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.⁵⁰ Following the 2014 flood in BiH, a recovery needs assessment conducted by the government found that mines contaminated more than 70% of the flood-affected zone and were a major safety hazard that hampered recovery efforts.⁵¹ In Donji Svilaj and Novi Grad in FBiH, along the border with Croatia, mines along the Sava river and very close to the road hindered flood protection and safe movement. Contamination also impeded access to land for the purpose of implementing flood prevention measures. Clearance allowed channels to be accessed for the construction of the first major motorway in BiH, connecting the country with Croatia. The motorway is said to serve as a form of flood protection barrier.⁵²

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.⁵³ NPA BiH is advocating for increased inclusion of environmental impacts in the forthcoming updates to be made to the national mine action strategy. NPA was planning to introduce an environmental assessment and screening tool called the Green Field Tool in BiH in late 2024. NPA reported that the following mitigation measures are in place for its survey and clearance activities: machines are not supposed to be used for ground preparation close to water or sensitive ecosystems; efforts are made to retain trees and ground cover as much as possible; consumables, such as mine tape, are reused to the extent possible; use of plastic has been reduced; and efforts are underway to introduce recycling and reduce paper archives.⁵⁴

MAG has an environmental policy and standard operating procedures (SOPs) that guide its operations, though it does not currently conduct environmental assessments for planning survey and clearance. The programme minimises environmental impact during clearance and within office operations in Sarajevo. MAG ensures proper disposal of field-generated waste at specialised facilities and has replaced single-use plastic bottles with reusable ones on demining sites while also adapting field sanitation to be more eco-friendly. Despite using plastic marking tape as required by the NMAS, MAG strives to reuse it whenever possible.⁵⁵ MAG's demining in wildfire-affected areas improves firefighter access, aiding in fire prevention, while clearance in flood-prone regions supports safe embankment reconstruction, protecting homes, and enhancing conditions for fishing and navigation. MAG educates fire brigades on explosive ordnance to further these efforts.⁵⁶

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

47 Email from Muamer Husilović, FACP, 24 April 2024.

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

49 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMACH, 22 March 2022.

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

51 Ibid., p. 59.

52 Ibid., pp. 60–61.

53 Email from Charles Frisby, Country Director, NPA, 19 March 2022.

54 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 22 April 2024.

55 Email from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 25 April 2024.

56 Ibid.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

BHMAC still uses its own Paradox-based information management system, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Information System (BHMAIS),⁵⁷ with migration to IMSMA Core ongoing since 2019. The first phase of IMSMA Core implementation was completed in 2020.⁵⁸ 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 was completed on 30 August 2024.⁵⁹

A monitoring team comprising NPA and the European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR) oversees progress. The GICHD has deployed an information management staff member to conduct regular missions, visiting for two weeks each month to support implementation.⁶⁰ NPA reported that while migration of the country assessment data collected by NPA from 2018 to 2020 is complete, many issues have been encountered in migrating BHMACH completion and other operational data to IMSMA Core. Extra technical support has been brought on board but the migration was said to be progressing much slower than planned.⁶¹

Overall, 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 But 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.⁶³ UNDP has 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.⁶⁴

BiH has submitted its APMBC Article 7 transparency report covering 2023 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. There are also issues with data accuracy, with errors made in the calculations in the contamination table.

PLANNING AND TASKING

BiH's National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 addresses all mine contamination. BHMAC initially planned the first revision of the strategy by the end of 2020 with a second revision set for 2023.⁶⁵ However, after significant delays, the first revision began in 2024, led by BHMAC in collaboration with the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Demining Commission.⁶⁶ In March 2024, BHMAC organised a meeting with operators to plan the revision of the strategy. This is expected to lead to a two-day workshop to help develop the revised strategy and inform a new Article 5 deadline extension request.⁶⁷

The revised strategy includes a comprehensive action plan for all five strategic goals, detailing operational objectives, indicators, and target states for 2025 and 2026. In terms of survey and clearance, work plans have been updated based on available capacities. The revised plan outlines that 67km² will be released through NTS annually, focusing on 32 MSAs. It is planned that 75km² will be released each year in 2025

and 2026, totalling 150km².⁶⁸ 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).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 each year since 2020 and will need to release over 200km² each year in order to reach its current completion deadline, which it is not even planning to do. BiH was asked by the Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties to submit an updated work plan by 30 April 2023 but had not done so as of the middle of 2024.⁷¹

⁵⁷ Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 22 March 2022.

⁵⁸ 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 5; and email from the GICHD, 27 April 2022.

⁵⁹ Emails from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023; Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 25 May 2023; Henrik Rydberg, GICHD, 29 June 2023; and Mirjana Marić, BHMAC, 12 April and 16 September 2024.

⁶⁰ Email from Boris Ohanyan, GICHD, 2 July 2024.

⁶¹ Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 22 April 2024.

⁶² Email from the GICHD, 27 April 2022.

⁶³ Emails from Kristina Duric, NPA, 30 July 2021; and Clement Meynier, MAG, 30 July 2021.

⁶⁴ Email from Suad Baljak, UNDP, 18 February 2021.

⁶⁵ BiH, National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, p. 34.

⁶⁶ Statement of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18–20 June 2024.

⁶⁷ Email from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 25 April 2024.

⁶⁸ Statement of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18–20 June 2024.

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

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 24.

⁷¹ Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18–20 June 2024.

Table 3: Planned land release 2023–2027⁷²

Year	Land release target (km ²)	Release achieved (km ²)
2020	71.8	16.2
2021	91.3	24.1
2022	110.3	52.8
2023	126.4	31.5
Subtotals	399.8	124.6
2024	145.5	
2025	155.7	
2026	131.4	
2027	134.6	
Total	967.0	

In its 2020 extension request, BiH described 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).⁷³ Of the 478 MSAs created,

189 were considered high impact, 274 medium impact, and 15 low impact.⁷⁴ BHMAC has not yet completed preparation of project documentation/task dossiers for all 478 MSAs created during the country assessment.⁷⁵

In 2023, BHMAC prepared 30 MSAs and 12 tasks outside of MSAs for clearance and technical survey (TS) totalling 79km².⁷⁶ 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). Formally, only BHMAC can conduct NTS and cancel mined area.⁷⁷

The FACP, NPA, and MAG reported that task dossiers were not always issued in a timely manner, as the BHMAC regional offices do not have sufficient personnel to draft project documentation.⁷⁸ MAG also highlighted the fact that resource constraints limit the number of survey and clearance tasks a regional office can oversee in any given year, as other demining (e.g. by State operators) may also need to 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 BHMAC.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 BHMAC for 2020. As at May 2024, the NMAS had been finalised and were awaiting publication.⁸³

In recent years, land release projects that have included use of systematic TS and TS with targeted investigation have revealed that around 90% of mined area can be cancelled through NTS and a further 8 or 9% can be reduced through TS. This means that 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 on the database and therefore deployment of clearance assets is only required for relatively small areas.⁸⁵

It is thus crucial that NTS is used to identify the location of mined areas more accurately before TS and clearance are conducted. BHMAC conducts NTS and cancels some area before an MSA is assigned to an operator although, as previously mentioned, operators often find they need to conduct additional survey and/or community liaison to supplement the information provided. In practice, most cancellation by BHMAC occurs following completion of TS and clearance of all hazardous areas within an MSA.⁸⁶

MAG and NPA both advocate for operators with adequate capacity and experience to take responsibility for cancellation through NTS but this has been met by resistance from BHMAC.⁸⁷ This could improve the efficiency of the land release process, by alleviating the strain on essential BHMAC resources responsible for NTS, including the preparation of land release projects. MAG believes operators should

72 Revised 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Table, p. 24.
73 Ibid., pp. 6 and 19–22.
74 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form C.
75 Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAC, 21 September 2022.
76 Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAC, 29 April 2024.
77 Emails from Muamer Husilović, FACP, 12 March 2021; Clement Meynier, MAG, 11 March 2021; and Jonas Zachrisson, NPA, 14 March 2021.
78 Emails from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023; and Muamer Husilović, FACP, 23 March 2023.
79 Emails from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 6 April 2023 and 25 April 2024.
80 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023.
81 Emails from Jonas Zachrisson, NPA, 14 March 2021; and Valerie Warmington, NPA, 22 April 2024.
82 BHMAC, "Report on Mine Action in BiH for 2016", February 2017, p. 18.
83 Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAC, 12 April 2024.
84 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 5 and 10; and Revised 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 7.
85 BiH, National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, pp. 6 and 11; and Revised 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 17.
86 Emails from Clement Meynier, Country Director, MAG, 14 March 2022; and Charles Frisby, NPA, 11 April 2022.
87 Emails from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 25 April 2024; and Valerie Warmington, NPA, 22 April 2024.

make recommendations for cancellation to BHMAG, who then formally approve and therefore take responsibility for the cancellation, as part of the overall site completion and handover process.⁸⁸ NPA stressed the importance of BHMAG enabling operators to plan and implement land release projects effectively in line with international best practice.⁸⁹

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.⁹⁰ 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 BHMAG regional offices.⁹¹ It is important, therefore, that land release workshops are organised at all levels, including BHMAG headquarters and all BHMAG regional offices, to ensure consistent application of land release methodology.⁹² BHMAG 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.⁹³

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2023, a total of 15 organisations were deployed in BiH: four government organisations (Armed Forces of BiH, the FACP, the CPA RS, and Brčko District Civil Protection (which only removes and destroy ERW not mines); seven commercial organisations, all national (Point, Detector, CHR, DCM Media, In Demining, N&N Ivsa, and UEM); two national NGOs (Mine Detection Dog Centre (MDDC) and Stop Mines) and two international NGOs (MAG and NPA).⁹⁴

Table 4: Operational TS and clearance capacities deployed in 2023⁹⁵

Operator	No. of teams	Total personnel	Dogs and handlers	Machines	Comments
Point	1	9	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
Detector	1	11	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
CHR	1	8	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
N&N Ivša	1	8	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
UEM	1	10	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
DCM Media	1	8	N/R	N/R	Only clearance
In Demining	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	10	53	6 dogs, 6 handlers	2	Clearance and TS
MAG	8	49	3 dogs, 2 handlers	0	Clearance and TS
FACP	11	53	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	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
Totals	81	516	13 dogs, 12 handlers	4	

N/R = Not reported

⁸⁸ Email from Clement Meynier, MAG, 14 March 2022.

⁸⁹ Email from Charles Frisby, NPA, 11 April 2022.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Emails from Clement Meynier, MAG, 14 March 2022; and Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023.

⁹² Email from Charles Frisby, NPA, 11 April 2022.

⁹³ Draft Demining plan in BiH for 2020, Annex 6 to the Revised 2020 Article 5 deadline extension request, p. 20.

⁹⁴ Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAG, 29 April 2024.

⁹⁵ Emails from Mirjana Marić, BHMAG, 29 April 2024; Pauline Boyer, MAG, 25 April 2024; Valerie Warmington, NPA, 22 April 2024; and Muamer Husilović, FACP, 24 April 2024.

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.⁹⁶ Similarly, NPA has a two-person NTS team that reports collated information to BHMAC to be incorporated into their NTS data.⁹⁷ BHMAC 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 hazardous areas during NTS.⁹⁸

Clearance and TS operations in BiH involve mechanical ground preparation, manual clearance, and the use of mine detection dogs (MDDs), depending on the conditions of the mined area.⁹⁹ Much of the remaining mined area is on hills or in mountains, which restricts machinery use. In 2022, the CPA RS maintained an MDD team of two dogs that were used in demining. However, this marks a significant decrease compared to previous years and at the time of writing it is not known how many dogs were used in 2023. The CPA RS thinks that limited deployment of MDDs in land release across BiH needs to be addressed and changed.¹⁰⁰

BHMAC reported an overall decrease in capacity in 2023 but expected an increase in the total number of TS and clearance personnel in 2024 thanks to two new demining projects – one under the EU Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance “IPA III” and another for demining of the Sava river.¹⁰¹ Under the IPA III project, €10 million of funding has been allocated over three years and will cover 42 mine-suspected areas (MSAs) across BiH, spanning 65.87km²: 24 in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 18 in the Republic of Srpska.¹⁰² MAG reported that its clearance capacity remained the

same in 2023 and expected no changes for 2024.¹⁰³ NPA reported capacity was down in 2023 with no replacements possible due to inflation-driven funding shortfalls and a drop in Swiss funding. NPA is also addressing “Beneficiary Length of Service” entitlements, which in 2024 enabled five operational staff to retire early.¹⁰⁴ The number of deminers employed by the FACP dropped in 2023 due to retirement, contract termination, and the death of an employee. The FACP planned to hire six additional deminers in 2024.¹⁰⁵ State operators the BiH Armed Forces’ Demining Battalion and the Civil Protection entities are thought to be good partners with effective capacities, but they have suffered from logistical challenges and equipment deficits, which can prevent them from fully functioning.¹⁰⁶

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

The Demining Commission is responsible for periodic re-accreditation of field operators, based on a recommendation from BHMAC. Quality control and quality assurance are both conducted by BHMAC.¹¹⁰

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2023

In 2023, based on national authority data, a total of 31.5km² of AP mined area was released – 25.64km² cancelled through NTS, 5.5km² reduced through TS, and 0.36km² cleared. In total, 1,363 AP mines were found and destroyed: 786 during clearance and technical survey, and 577 during EOD spot tasks.

SURVEY IN 2023

In 2023, a total of 31.14km² was released through survey. BHMAC cancelled almost 25.64km² through NTS, of which

9.25km² was cancelled following completion of TS and clearance of assigned tasks by operators (see Table 5), and

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

97 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 22 April 2024.

98 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 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 Mirjana Marić, BHMAC, 29 April 2024.

102 Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAC, 16 September 2024.

103 Email from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 25 April 2024.

104 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 22 April 2024.

105 Email from Muamer Husilović, FACP, 24 April 2024.

106 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, BHMAC, Sarajevo, 10 May 2017.

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 Pantic, CPA RS, 23 September 2022.

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

16.38km² was cancelled through NTS before the tasks were assigned. A total of 5.5km² was reduced through TS, of which 4.18km² was within the MSAs and almost 1.32km² was within tasks outside MSAs (see Table 6).¹¹¹ This is a 40% decrease from 2022 when 51.84km² was released through survey – 41.72km² cancelled through NTS and 10.12km² reduced through TS.¹¹² BHMAL is directly responsible for reporting all cancellation of mined areas in BiH and does so only upon completion of whole MSAs. There were discrepancies between the TS data reported by BHMAL and the data reported by operators. FACP reported reducing 731,293m², compared to 413,041m² reported by BHMAL.¹¹³ Similarly, MAG reported 1,518,886m², and NPA reported 1,445,387m², with no corresponding data from BHMAL reported for either operator (see footnote 116 for a detailed breakdown).¹¹⁴

Table 5: Release of mined area through NTS in 2023 (BHMAL data)¹¹⁵

Canton	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
Tuzlanski	Armed Forces of BiH	1,566,379
Hercegovacko Neretvanski	MAG	780,201
Zenicko Dobojski	MAG	1,591,560
Tuzlanski	NPA	32,750
Bosansko-Podrinjski	MDDC	1,191,290
Hercegovacko Neretvanski	MDDC	1,243,492
Srednje Bosanski	MDDC	210,629
Total BiH Federation		6,616,301
Republika Srpska	CPA RS	650,391
Republika Srpska	Armed Forces of BiH	273,834
Republika Srpska	CPA RS	699,287
Republika Srpska	MAG	452,284
Republika Srpska	NPA	560,425
Total Republika Srpska		2,636,221
Grand Total		9,252,522

Table 6: Release of mined area outside MSA through TS in 2023 (BHMAL data)¹¹⁶

Canton	Operator	Area reduced (m ²)
Hercegovacko Neretvanski	FACP	56,219
Posavski	FACP	114,961
Posavski	FACP	120,828
Posavski	Armed Forces of BiH	85,170
Srednje Bosanski	FACP	115,446
Posavski	Armed Forces of BiH	45,153
Posavski	Point	47,606
Tuzlanski	Armed Forces of BiH	10,061
Tuzlanski	Armed Forces of BiH	12,300
Tuzlanski	In Demining N.H.O.	10,601
Tuzlanski	In Demining N.H.O.	24,656
Zenicko Dobojski	UEM	27,440
Tuzlanski	In Demining N.H.O.	14,087
Srednje Bosanski	Detektor	67,030
Zenicko Dobojski	UEM	24,274
Hercegovacko Neretvanski	Point	18,584
Sarajevo	UEM	36,772
Unsko Sanski	Stop Mines	25,659
Unsko Sanski	Stop Mines	38,544
Srednje Bosanski	Detektor	20,642
Zenicko Dobojski	UEM	49,799
Unsko Sanski	Stop Mines	22,467
Unsko Sanski	Stop Mines	21,098
Srednje Bosanski	Detektor	46,692

111 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form C.

112 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAL, 23 March 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C.

113 Email from Muamer Husilović, FACP, 24 April 2024.

114 Emails from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 25 April 2024 and Valerie Warmington, NPA, 22 April 2024.

115 Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAL, 29 April 2024.

116 Ibid. FACP reported reducing 61,123m² in Posavina canton, 104,777m² in Zenica-Doboj canton, 354,778m² in Herzegovina-Neretva canton, 45,520m² in Sarajevo canton, 61,213m² in Una-Sana canton, 76,150m² in Bosnian-Podrinje canton, and 27,732m² in Central Bosnia canton. NPA reported reducing 801,475m² in Tuzla canton, 487,989m² in Brčko district, and 155,923m² in Republika Srpska. MAG reported reduction of 514,838m² in Tuzla canton, 505,587m² in Herzegovina-Neretva canton, 389,477m² in Brčko district, and 108,984m² in Republika Srpska. Emails from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 25 April 2024; Valerie Warmington, NPA, 22 April 2024; and Muamer Husilović, FACP, 24 April 2024.

Table 6 Continued

Canton	Operator	Area reduced (m ²)
Hercegovacko Neretvanski	Point	18,143
Zenicko Dobojski	UEM	21,889
Srednje Bosanski	FACP	5,587
Zenicko Dobojski	UEM	4,320
Tuzlanski	UEM	8,992
Total BiH Federation		1,115,020
Republika Srpska	Armed Forces of BiH	59,113
Republika Srpska	CPA RS	12,727
Republika Srpska	UEM	26,441
Republika Srpska	N&N Ivsa	48,833
Republika Srpska	Point	40,496
Republika Srpska	UEM	6,649
Republika Srpska	DCM Media	7,893
Total Republika Srpska		202,152
Grand Total		1,317,172

CLEARANCE IN 2023

In 2023, BHMAL reported clearance of 0.36km², of which 0.18km² was within MSAs (see Table 7) and 0.18km² was outside (see Table 8).¹¹⁷ A total of 691 AP mines were destroyed during clearance within MSAs, 32 AP mines were destroyed during clearance outside MSAs, and 63 AP mines were destroyed during technical survey giving a total of 786.¹¹⁸ There is a significant difference between the data reported by BHMAL and the data reported by the FACP, NPA, and MAG (see Table 9). This is at least partially explained

by the fact that BHMAL only records clearance data upon completion of tasks whereas operator data are reported on an ongoing basis.

This is a significant decrease from the 0.92km² of mined area cleared in 2022 with 3,333 AP mines destroyed, of which 0.57km² was within MSAs and 0.35km² was outside MSAs.¹¹⁹

Table 7: Clearance of MSAs in 2023 by canton (BHMAL data)¹²⁰

Canton	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed
Tuzla	12,665	39
Bosnian-Podrinje	16,249	56
Central Bosnia	1,915	14
Zenica-Doboj	63,765	370
Herzegovina-Neretva	36,035	61
Totals BiH Federation		130,629
Republika Srpska	52,706	151
Grand Totals		691

Table 8: Mine clearance outside MSAs in 2023 by canton (BHMAL data)¹²¹

Canton	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed
Central Bosnia	1	22,902
Zenica-Doboj	2	13,155
Una-Sana	1	23,967
Totals BiH Federation		60,024
Republika Srpska	11	70,626
Brčko District	2	47,244
Grand Totals		177,894

Table 9: Mine clearance (FACP, MAG and NPA operator data)¹²²

Canton	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed
Bosnian-Podrinje	FACP	15,350	63
Central Bosnia	FACP	6,268	23
Herzegovina-Neretva	FACP	2,247	13
Herzegovina-Neretva	MAG	129,647	68
Posavina	FACP	1,870	12
Sarajevo	FACP	11,439	99
Tuzla	FACP	2,220	1

¹¹⁷ Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAL, 29 April 2024.

¹¹⁸ Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAL, 16 September 2024.

¹¹⁹ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C; and email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAL, 1 August 2023.

¹²⁰ Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form C.

¹²¹ Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form C.

¹²² Emails from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 25 April 2024; Valerie Warmington, NPA, 22 April 2024; and Muamer Husilović, FACP, 24 April 2024.

Table 9 Continued

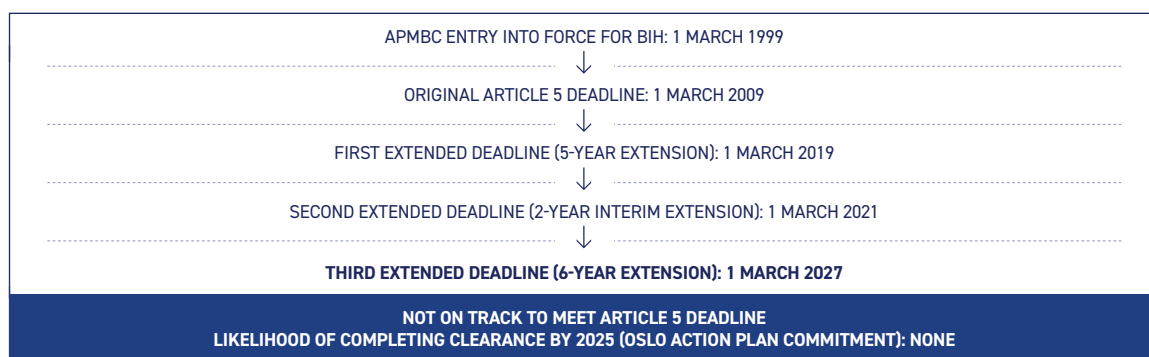
Canton	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed
Tuzla	NPA	17,672	92
Tuzla	MAG	149,391	178
Una-Sana	FACP	10,911	40
Zenica-Doboj	FACP	10,325	40
Totals BiH Federation		357,340	629
Republika Srpska	NPA	9188	50
Republika Srpska	MAG	75258	19
Brčko District	NPA	857	5
Brčko District	MAG	146597	68
Grand Totals		589,240	771

In addition, 577 AP mines were found and destroyed during EOD spot tasks by FACP.¹²³

BHMAC stated that 19 tasks totalling 28,730m² were cleared in 2023 with no AP mines found, a reduction from 2022.¹²⁴ MAG, NPA, and the FACP confirmed that all clearance tasks they undertook in 2023 contained AP mines.¹²⁵

BHMAC reported a decrease in the amount of mined area cancelled, reduced, and cleared in 2023 compared to 2022. According to BHMAC, this corresponds to the limited number of MSAs certified as completed in 2023, with many MSAs still undergoing clearance, covering a total of 56.6km². Due to the extensive size of these areas, clearance often extends over several years and BHMAC only reports MSAs that were officially certified by the end of 2023.¹²⁶

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. BiH will not meet this deadline. After the planned revision of the mine action strategy through to 2025, they expect to have a more precise projection of their completion date.¹²⁷

The 2020 extension request, granted by the Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties, was for the purpose of conducting

NTS and TS “to better define the precise perimeter of mined areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina”.¹²⁸ It is, however, assumed that there was an accidental omission of land release through clearance, and that BiH intended to complete 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 extent of AP mined area remaining and plan more effectively for its release.¹²⁹

¹²³ Email from Muamer Husilović, FACP, 24 April 2024.

¹²⁴ Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAC, 29 April 2024.

¹²⁵ Emails from Mirjana Marić, BHMAC, 29 April 2024; Pauline Boyer, MAG, 25 April 2024; Valerie Warmington, NPA, 22 April 2024; and Muamer Husilović, FACP, 24 April 2024.

¹²⁶ Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAC, 29 April 2024.

¹²⁷ Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March 2023.

¹²⁸ Revised 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 17.

¹²⁹ 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.

Over the last five years, BiH has released just over 3km² thorough clearance (see Table 10). 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 feel disillusioned that the mines have not been cleared.¹³⁰ Land release output decreased by 40% from 2022 to 2023 and BiH fell considerably short of its land release target of 126km² for the year. BiH has been consistently lagging behind the land release targets set out in its 2020 Article 5 deadline extension request, and is planning to release updated targets for 2025 and 2026 as part of the review of its national strategy. At the current rate of land release output, it would take BiH a further two decades to complete clearance.

Table 10: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2023	0.36
2022	0.92
2021	*0.69
2020	*0.53
2019	0.54
Total	3.04

* Combined TS and clearance output for MSAs

Systematic survey conducted in BiH over recent years has determined that 90% of mined area can be cancelled through NTS. To address this challenge, BHMAL should focus on enhancing NTS resources and capacity. The current approach

seems inefficient and lacks transparency with operators. For instance, as NPA nears completion of the "Mine-Free Majevica" project, the BHMAL Regional Office in Tuzla added 4km² to NPA's tasks, with another new task expected in Lopare, yet NPA has not been able to access the NTS information behind these decisions.¹³¹ A more effective strategy would be to empower operators to conduct NTS, with BHMAL focusing on oversight and approval. This change would unlock more potential resources and capacity and could lead to substantial increases in NTS output. If BHMAL also ensures a consistent and efficient approach to land release operations across all stakeholders, it could result in significant improvements in overall land release practices, helping BiH make meaningful progress towards its clearance goals.

In addition, BHMAL (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 does, however, require political will and strong oversight and commitment from BHMAL, 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 nor have the TWGs been reformed. 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 2024, the strategy had still to be elaborated but according to BHMAL an NMAL on management of residual contamination will be included in the updated standards once they are launched. Furthermore, once the first revision of the national strategy is completed, a plan for residual contamination will be prepared.¹³²

130 UNDP, Draft Mine Action Governance and Management Assessment for BiH, 13 May 2015, p. 14.
 131 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 22 April 2024.
 132 Emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAL, 23 March and 31 August 2023; and Mirjana Marić, BHMAL, 29 April 2024.