

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2025
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

10 KM²

AP MINE CLEARANCE IN 2022

1.84 KM²

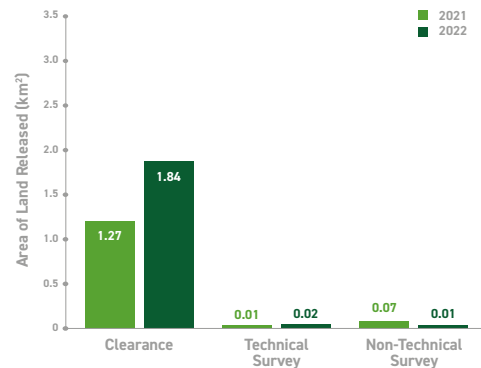
(OFFICIAL DATA)

AP MINES DESTROYED IN 2022

322

(INCLUDING 43 DESTROYED IN SPOT TASKS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



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

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Clearance output increased in 2022 compared to the previous year despite the deteriorating security situation in some affected municipalities but Colombia will not meet its second extended clearance deadline under Article 5 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) of the end of 2025. An updated and revised Operational Plan for Mine Action 2023–2025 was presented to the Article 5 Implementation Committee in May 2023.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Colombia should conduct a baseline survey of contamination as and where this is possible, while continuing to clean data in the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database.
- Quality management of operations should be targeted towards making operations more efficient rather than imposing unnecessary delays on operators.
- Colombia should consider changing its approach on security risk assessments from a military lens to a community lens and remove mine action as a pre-requisite before other peace, stabilisation, and developmental activities can proceed.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	6	5	The precise extent of anti-personnel (AP) mine contamination continues to remain unknown. While a nationwide baseline survey has yet to be conducted, Colombia is now presenting a more evidence-based estimate of remaining contamination that is at least partially based on survey. Non-technical survey (NTS) is taking place in accessible areas and Colombia has developed a baseline for its operations for 2023–25. Of the areas surveyed so far, Colombia estimates AP mined area at 3.82km ² as at end 2022. Insecurity remains an obstacle to access all suspected mined areas and mines are still being emplaced in some areas by non-State armed groups (NSAGs).
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	8	7	There is strong national ownership in Colombia with overall responsibility for the mine action programme sitting with the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP), and decision-making on demining is the responsibility of a body within the Ministry of Defence. Roles and responsibilities at a national level are generally clear. Mine action has become a key component in the peace process under a law adopted in 2022. Demining operators were invited to participate in the preparatory dialogues and the National Dialogue to provide inputs for the 2023–25 Operational Plan. In 2022 and the first half of 2023, Colombia elaborated the Operational Plan in compliance with the Article 5 deadline extension granted to Colombia. A resource mobilisation strategy developed in 2021 achieved increased international and national funding for mine action in 2022.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	7	7	Colombia has Gender Guidelines for Mine Action in place and gender is included within the framework of the new 2023–25 Plan. The needs of different groups are considered during community liaison with gender-balanced teams and gender and diversity provisions reflected in the land release technical standards. The Vice President of Colombia is an Afro-descended woman who presides over the Intersectorial National Mine Action Commission (CINAMAP) and women are two thirds of the staff dedicated to mine action in the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP) – AICMA Group. However, among deminers overall this figure drops to less than 3%. This proportion varies widely between operators, especially for the military demining groups: the Humanitarian Demining Brigade (BRDEH) has one woman deminer and two female EOD personnel.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	6	5	Improvements have been made to information management in Colombia following a review of the IMSMA database. However, Colombia continues to rely on “events” where more recent survey data is unavailable as the main indicator of contamination, even though these are beset with errors and are often cancelled or discarded once investigated. Discrepancies between operator data and figures from the national authority are also frequent, due to the fact that the OACP only reports on land release after completion of tasks and the External Monitoring Component (CEM) has certified the process. Meanwhile, delays in information processing continued to be reported by operators. Article 7 reports are submitted on a timely basis and the latest report also included information in relation to the implementation of the Oslo Action Plan.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	6	6	Colombia has a new three-year operational plan through to 2025 for demining which includes land release targets per municipalities and areas and defined outputs for NTS, technical survey (TS) and clearance. Colombia has allocated all the tasks to operators that can be performed, but 124 municipalities remain inaccessible due to insecurity or contain areas where mine-laying may reoccur. The micro focus on “safe” areas within difficult-to-access municipalities continues to be implemented. Prioritisation and task allocation continue to be an issue within the mine action programme, with operators often locked into inaccessible tasks or deployed into new areas without consideration of their capacity.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	7	7	In 2020, Colombia developed a new set of 17 national mine action standards (NMAS) but the TS NMAS is yet to be used by almost all civilian demining operators given debates on how to operationalise the norm. Furthermore, there are challenges regarding cancellation through NTS, including potential differences in methodology between operators with respect to “cancelling” mined area after investigating IMSMA events versus only cancelling mined area previously identified through NTS and which is already recorded in the information management system. This further adds to ongoing information management challenges.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	7	6	Overall land release output rose in 2022, in particular for clearance. But Colombia is not on track to meet its extended Article 5 clearance deadline of end 2025. The authorities have consistently maintained that achieving mine-free status depends on access to all affected communities, which in turn demands peace.
Average Score	6.7	6.7	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP – AICMA Group)
- Intercollegiate Humanitarian Demining Body (Instancia Interinstitucional de Desminado Humanitario (IIDH))
- Intersectorial National Mine Action Commission (Comisión Intersectorial Nacional para la Acción contra las minas Antipersonal (CINAMAP))

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Humanitarian Demining Brigade (Brigada de Desminado Humanitario (BRDEH))
- Batallón de Desminado e Ingenieros Anfibios (BDIAN)
- Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas (CCCM)
- Corporación HUMANICEMOS DH (HUMANICEMOS DH)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Danish Refugee Council's Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding Sector (DRC)
- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Humanity & Inclusion (HI)

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- Organization of American States (OAS) Comprehensive Mine Action Program (AICMA Program – OAS)
- FSD
- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The precise extent of anti-personnel (AP) mined area in Colombia remains unknown. At the end of 2022, survey had identified a total of almost 3.82km² of AP mined area, of which more than 1.9km² was in confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and nearly 1.9km² in suspected hazardous areas (SHAs). Contamination was spread across 25 departments and 226 municipalities (see Table 1).¹ The department of Sucre was declared mine free in 2022.² As at end 2022, 25 out of 32 departments and 226 of 1,122 municipalities in Colombia contain mined areas. One fifth of all municipalities have some sort of AP mine contamination.

Table 1: AP mined area by department (at end 2022)³

Department	Affected municipalities	CHA (m ²)	SHA (m ²)	Total area (m ²)	Municipalities with data on size
Antioquia	37	267,036.86	296,207.42	563,244.28	16
Arauca	7	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bolívar	14	6,647.00	58,488.00	65,135.00	2
Boyacá	4	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Caldas	4	35,234.00	90,362.00	125,596.00	3
Caquetá	11	256,872.00	541,081.00	797,953.00	8
Casanare	4	3.79	0.00	3.79	2
Cauca	18	73,231.00	7,296.00	80,527.00	4
Cesar	8	75,840.00	7,503.00	83,343.00	2
Choco	27	0.00	3,173.00	3,173.00	1
Cordoba	4	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Guainía	1	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Guaviare	4	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Huila	2	225,463.00	133,210.00	358,673.00	2
La Guajira	5	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Meta	11	791,749.11	68,356.52	860,105.63	8
Nariño	21	0.00	2,470.00	2,470.00	2
Norte de Santander	17	0.00	0.00	0.00	0

1 Email from Mariany Monroy Torres, Coordinator, Office of the High Commissioner for Peace – Integrated Action on Anti-Personnel Mines (OACP – AICMA Group), 31 July 2023.

2 "Sucre declarado Libre de Sospecha de contaminación con Minas Antipersonal", Press release, 5 September 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/47rxD4J>.

3 Telephone interview with Mariany Monroy Torres, and Maicol Velásquez, OACP – AICMA Group, 30 July 2023; and email from Mariany Monroy Torres, OACP – AICMA Group, 31 July 2023. The data provided by the OACP – AICMA Group are more accurate and updated than those provided in the Article 7 Report for 2022.

Table 1 Continued

Department	Affected municipalities	CHA (m ²)	SHA (m ²)	Total area (m ²)	Municipalities with data on size
Putumayo	7	56,684.51	179,314.66	235,999.17	6
Risaralda	2	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Santander	4	25,596.00	156,304.00	181,900.00	4
Tolima	4	61,061.00	278,789.00	339,850.00	3
Valle del Cauca	8	71,913.00	53,913.00	125,826.00	3
Vaupés	1	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Vichada	1	186.43	653.89	840.32	1
Totals	226	1,947,517.70	1,877,121.49	3,824,639.19	67

While a nationwide baseline survey has yet to be conducted in Colombia, discussions on the possibility restarted in 2022 but did not progress.⁴ The Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP), the OAS – AICMA Program, The HALO Trust (HALO), Humanity & Inclusion (HI), and FSD all believe that the dynamics of the Colombian conflict and the size of the country effectively preclude the possibility of a nationwide baseline survey.⁵ In addition, the new national mine action standard (NMAS) on land release, the increase in operator capacity for non-technical survey (NTS), and the improved security conditions in some mine-affected municipalities as a result of the Final Peace Agreement with the FARC-EP in 2016, make it possible to determine the extent of contamination more accurately based on evidence from the communities themselves.⁶ Nevertheless, one of the primary sources of information for tasking of demining operators continues to be the “events” in the IMSMA database, which continue to be a generally unreliable source.⁷ For the AICMA Program – OAS, the first step on clarifying the contamination should be a desktop evaluation of existing areas in the database. Newly recorded areas identified by operators while conducting NTS are more accurate and can be included as mined areas. But significant cancellation of areas recorded earlier, especially unconfirmed “events”, is likely.⁸

The Operational Plan 2023–2025 presents the new baseline on suspected contamination and operational projections for

the three years of the plan.⁹ The Plan was approved by the Intersectoral National Mine Action Commission (CINAMAP) on 4 May 2023. The baseline uses a range of data including statistical analysis of demining operations concluded and certified by the External Monitoring Component (CEM) between 2016 and December 2022; information provided by the demining operators during the National Dialogues on Mine Action as a contribution to the Total Peace Policy; data from the Armed Forces and the Police gathered while conducting military operations; and finally community and local authorities reports.¹⁰ During 2022, new mined areas were recorded by the Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines (CCCM), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), HALO, Humanity & Inclusion (HI), and Corporación HUMANICEMOS DH (HUMANICEMOS DH).¹¹

In previous years, and as part of the Final Peace Agreement (2016) with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP), a tripartite mechanism (OACP/FARC-EP/United Nations Verification Mission (UNVMC), with technical support from the United Nations Mine Action Service – UNMAS) was established with a view to collecting all available information on areas that may have been contaminated by explosive ordnance in Colombia by former FARC-EP combatants. The data started to be collected in 2021.¹² UNMAS acted as technical support to the UNVMC,¹³ and continued to do throughout 2022 and

4 Telephone interview with Mariany Monroy Torres, OACP – AICMA Group, 5 August 2023; and Tammy Hall, General Coordinator, Mine Action Program, Department of Public Security, Organization of American States (OAS), 5 August 2023; and email from Arturo Bureo, Operations Manager, HI, 30 June 2022.

5 Emails from Aderito Ismael, Demining Operations Manager /Senior Project Manager on Land Release & EOD, Humanity & Inclusion, 22 August 2023; Angela de Santis, Country Director, FSD Colombia, 16 August 2023; Oliver Ford, Programme Manager Colombia, HALO, 16 June 2023; telephone interview with Mariany Monroy Torres, OACP – AICMA Group, 18 June 2023; and Tammy Hall, OAS, 13 March 2023; and emails from Yessika Morales, Coordinator, OACP – AICMA Group, 20 July 2022; Mariany Monroy Torres, and Diana Marisol Peñalosa, OACP – AICMA Group, 30 September 2022; Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 20 September 2022; and Angela de Santis, FSD Colombia, 13 September 2022.

6 Emails from Yessika Morales, OACP – AICMA Group, 20 July 2022; Diana Marisol Peñalosa, OACP – AICMA Group, 23 and 26 August 2022; and Mariany Monroy Torres and Diana Marisol Peñalosa, OACP – AICMA Group, 30 September 2022.

7 Emails from Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023 and Tom Griffiths, HALO Regional Director for Latin America, 20 June 2022; Arturo Bureo, HI, 7 May 2021 and 30 June 2022; and Maria Sanz, Resources Mobilisation Manager, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

8 Telephone interview Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 9 April 2023; email Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 20 September 2022.

9 Operational Plan for Mine Action 2023 – 2025, 8 May 2023, pp. 15 – 18.

10 Ibid. pp. 16–18; email from Mariany Monroy Torres, OACP – AICMA Group, 22 April 2023; OACP – AICMA Group Presentations, Roundtable on Cooperation and Donors Assistance, 11 May 2023.

11 Emails from Francisco Moreno, Projects and Monitoring Director, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, Programmes Manager, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 3 August and 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

12 Email from Yessika Morales, OACP – AICMA Group, 20 July 2022.

13 UNMAS Colombia Newsletter, March 2021.

into 2023, developing in the process, a methodology in IMSMA forms with the former combatants who laid the mines.¹⁴ However, six years after the signature of the peace accord Colombia has still to implement a fully fledged project to support the gathering of data from former combatants, which could result in a significant loss of information and accuracy.¹⁵

All the mines remaining in Colombia are said to have been laid by non-state armed groups (NSAGs) and all are of an improvised nature. According to HALO, mined areas in Colombia are low-density, nuisance minefields.¹⁶ Mines were planted in isolated rural areas to protect strategic positions; often coca cultivations and illegal gold mining sites. In other cases, they were laid by the side of communal paths, which were used also by the military, as well as around hamlets, schools, on hills, and in riverbanks. The depth to which the mines were laid can vary between 10 and 13 centimetres.¹⁷ HUMANICEMOS DH has reported in their area of operations in Caquetá, that mined areas coincided with NSAG camps.¹⁸

HUMANICEMOS DH also said that there is no pattern to mine laying in Colombia, and further that the form of use varies in each department.¹⁹ The CCCM has found that the patterns of minelaying correspond to illicit cultivation areas as well as areas where the military stop and rest.²⁰ The intended victims were the military or paramilitaries.²¹

NEW CONTAMINATION

New minelaying by NSAGs continues to occur in Colombia. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in its Annual Report for 2023, refers to more improvised AP mines being used, with armed groups seeking greater territorial and social control.²² In 2022, the most affected departments were Antioquia, Arauca, Chocó, Meta, Nariño, and Norte de Santander.²³ According to UNMAS, new AP mines are laid to control the transit of communities and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has recorded more displacements and confinements as a result.²⁴

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

A new national government took office on 7 August 2022 with the goal of achieving “Total Peace” in Colombia and a new High Commissioner for Peace came into office as well as a new AICMA – Group Coordinator. Mine Action was included as a key element of the new public policy of Total Peace, reflected in Law 2272 of 4 November 2022.²⁵ On 30 December 2022, Presidential Decree 2647 modified the structure of the Administrative Department of the Presidential Office and clarified the structure and functions of the OACP, making it responsible for elaborating a national mine action strategy and concluding national standards.²⁶ The new National Development Plan 2022–2026, highlights the role of mine action and calls for gender and diversity to be incorporated in humanitarian demining.²⁷

In February 2019, Descontamina Colombia was ostensibly made Colombia’s national mine action authority by presidential decree and reallocated to the OACP. It became Grupo AICMA (Integrated Action on Anti-Personnel Mines), one of three working groups of the OACP. The Instancia Interinstitucional de Desminado Humanitario (IIDH: Intercollegiate Body for Humanitarian Demining) was

created in 2011, bringing together representatives from the Ministry of National Defence, the General Inspectorate of the Military Forces, and OACP – AICMA Group. It is responsible for recommending or suspending the certification of humanitarian demining organisations to the Ministry of National Defence as well as for prioritising, at national level, areas, zones, and municipalities to be demined and assigning specific demining tasks. Responsibility for drafting and adopting national mine action standards, their dissemination, implementation, and compliance was reassigned to the OACP under Presidential Decree 1784 of 2019.²⁸ The OACP – AICMA Group capacity continued to be reduced in 2022 and 2023.

Operators have reported a largely enabling environment for mine action in Colombia, although the approval and decision-making process can be slow. For some operators the change of government and pivot towards the Total Peace Policy is considered a key milestone for addressing mine contamination as it directs efforts towards peace negotiations with all NSAGs. This, it is hoped, will expand the humanitarian space available for demining.²⁹ In general, operators noted that in the second half of 2022 there was

14 Email from Pablo Parra, Chief Mine Action Programme, UNMAS Colombia, 22 August 2023; UNMAS Colombia Newsletter, May 2023.

15 Email from Pablo Parra, UNMAS Colombia, 22 August 2023.

16 Email from Tom Griffiths, HALO Latin America, 20 June 2022.

17 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form E.

18 Emails from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023 and 19 July 2022.

19 Emails from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 September 2023 and 8 June 2023.

20 Email from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023 and 15 June 2022.

21 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO, 6 August 2020; and Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form D.

22 ICRC, Annual Report 2022, p. 232.

23 ICRC, “Humanitarian Challenges 2023 Colombia”, pp. 6–7; and UNMAS Colombia Newsletter, August–September 2022.

24 Email from Pablo Parra, UNMAS Colombia, 22 August 2023.

25 Law 2272, Article 16, 4 November 2022.

26 Law 1421, 21 December 2010.

27 National Development Plan 2022–2026, Law 2294, 19 May 2023.

28 OACP – AICMA Group “Instancia Interinstitucional de Desminado Humanitario – IIDH”, undated, last accessed 19 July 2022.

29 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

increased consultation between the OACP – AICMA Group and civilian demining organisations. Nonetheless, decisions on demining continue to be taken almost entirely by the Group and the IIDH.³⁰ HUMANICEMOS DH has raised the issue of a lack of balance in the composition of the IIDH: two military organisations and one organisation from the civilian part of the Government and no representation from civilian demining operators.³¹ Moreover, operators have been confronted with more bureaucracy in seeking to obtain visas for international staff and tax exemptions.³²

In 2022, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) continued to support the OACP – AICMA Group, including on linking mine action with broader agendas and national dialogues.³³ In 2022, a study on “Mine Action’s contributions to sustainable development” was published.³⁴ The findings underlined the importance of mine action for economic growth, social cohesion, environmental protection, confidence-building, and peace efforts. The study provided evidence of the “transformative and multidimensional role of comprehensive mine action in Colombia, identifying direct contributions to 16 Sustainable Development Goals and at least 83 of their associated targets”.³⁵ But a proposed study on the effect of ageing on improvised AP mines, particularly pertinent to the Colombian context due to the large proportion of non-functioning mines found, was shelved. This was, according to the GICHD, the result of a lack of sufficient data and the ban on taking samples from the ageing mines out of Colombia.³⁶ The GICHD provided training on IMSMA and inclusion and gender equality.³⁷

The Organisation of American States (OAS) provides technical and capacity support to the OACP – AICMA Group for mine action through its AICMA Program – OAS, in particular for humanitarian demining. It is now responsible for external monitoring of all demining in Colombia (CEM).³⁸ In previous years, UNMAS conducted CEM of HUMANICEMOS DH, but since April 2023, this is the task of the OAS.³⁹ The OAS, also assesses demining personnel for accreditation, with additional support provided by the Group of Interamerican

Monitors (GMI) of the Interamerican Defense Board.⁴⁰ In addition, the AICMA Program – OAS monitors compliance with the NMAS and operator standard operating procedures (SOPs); and inspects released land before handover to local authorities and communities.⁴¹

FSD has provided advice through technical experts to the national mine action authority (NMAA) in areas such as explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), use of mine detection dogs (MDDs), mechanical demining, information management, environmental protection, operational efficiency, and hazard cartography. During 2022, FSD concentrated its support to the OACP – AICMA Group on refinement of the land release standards.⁴²

In 2022, UNMAS, working with the OACP – AICMA Group at the Tolemaida Base, delivered the first EOD Level II training,⁴³ certifying 21 deminers at the end of the course of whom seven were women. It also provided technical support to local authorities in preparing 13 regional annual mine action plans and 39 contingency plans. UNMAS enhanced the methodology of Post-Clearance Impact Assessment (PCIA) by incorporating “new artificial intelligence models to monitor changes in land use, such as the emergence of buildings and roads, changes in vegetation cover and installation of new human settlements”. In support of the UNVMC, UNMAS produced more than 200 reports on explosive ordnance contamination based on information from former FARC-EP combatants.⁴⁴

Initially, Colombia had estimated the total cost of the mine action programme for 2020–25 would be almost US\$250 million, of which the government would fund 30% and the remainder would come from the international community.⁴⁵ Of this, the projected cost of demining activities was estimated at \$183 million, of which the government would fund \$55 million.⁴⁶ For demining, Colombia was seeking almost \$128 million from the international community to build the quality management capacity within the national authority, to fund civilian operators, and for equipment servicing and replacement for the military.⁴⁷

30 Emails from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 September 2023; Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

31 Email from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 September 2023.

32 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

33 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D, p. 61; GICHD, *Annual Report 2022*, June 2023, p. 16.

34 GICHD, *Annual Report 2022*, June 2023, p. 16.

35 Email from Angela Hoyos Iborra, Advisor, GICHD, 22 August 2023.

36 Ibid.

37 Operational Plan for Mine Action 2023–2025, 8 May 2023, pp. 103–04.

38 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form H, p. 96; Operational Plan for Mine Action 2023 – 2025, 8 May 2023, p. 20; and email from Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 21 July 2022.

39 Telephone interviews Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 13 March 2023 and 18 May 2023; and emails from Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 14 April 2023, and 21 July 2022; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

40 Email from Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 31 August 2023; “Grupo de Monitores Interamericanos de Desminado Humanitario en Colombia Apoya Certificación para Operaciones Desminado Humanitario”, Inter American Defense Board, 26 April 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3qs896K>; and “Evaluación de nuevos operadores en el manejo, identificación y destrucción de artefactos explosivos (EOD)”, at: <https://bit.ly/3dzzFIP>.

41 “Programa de Acción Integral contra Minas Antipersonal de la OEA (AICMA – OEA)”, at: <https://bit.ly/3RDT3TD>; Informe a la Comisión de Seguridad Hemisférica, Programa de Acción Integral contra Minas Antipersonal de la OEA en Colombia, 30 March 2023; AICMA – OEA Infographic 2022; Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form H, p. 104; and email from Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 20 September 2022.

42 FSD, *Annual Report 2022*, p. 17; and email from Angela de Santis, FSD, 13 September 2022.

43 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form H, p. 104.

44 UNMAS Annual Report 2022, pp. 47–49; UNMAS Colombia Newsletter, May 2023.

45 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 86–87.

46 Ibid, p. 96.

47 Ibid.; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form H, pp. 94–95.

During 2022, the allocated funds from the national budget to the OACP – AICMA Group amounted to COP\$4.4 billion (some US\$915,000) all of which went to risk education and victim assistance. The National Army's Humanitarian Demining Brigade (BRDEH) was allocated COP\$29.5 billion (some US\$6.13 million) and the Batallón de Desminado e Ingenieros Anfobios (BDIAN) (almost US\$1.23 million). Colombia says that it supported mine action operators in raising approximately US\$39 million from donors during the year.⁴⁸

Colombia does not have a platform in place which brings all stakeholders together to discuss the strengths and challenges of Article 5 implementation as recommended by the APMB Committee on Article 5 Implementation.⁴⁹ The Swiss Embassy in Colombia has promoted a forum to bring together the OACP – AICMA Group, operators, and other partners from the mine action sector with the

aim of eventually bringing in other donors and national entities. HALO continues to advocate for a more effective strategic-level dialogue between the OACP – AICMA Group and its partners.⁵⁰ UNMAS has been advocating for a coordination platform led by the NMAA. The UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Peace Building (MPTF), which has reintroduced mine action as a result of UNMAS's advocacy, has become a "proxy" for the coordination platform where the Colombian Government, the UN, donors, and civil society meet and discuss projects.⁵¹ A National Dialogue on Mine Action as a contribution to the Total Peace Policy was convened on 6–7 December 2022 in Bogota, bringing together all stakeholders in country to discuss development of the next national work plan. Mine Action Review gave a virtual presentation its key recommendations for the national mine action programme.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Colombia has not produced a specific NMAS for environmental management although Presidential Decree 1195 of 2017 outlines mitigation and correction measures that must be applied by operators when demining in national parks and other areas of ecological value. During 2022, there were no further developments but according to the OACP – AICMA Group there have been inconsistencies in the application of Decree 1195 at regional and local levels. In response, the OACP – AICMA Group with support from FSD created a set of tools that clarify the obligations of demining operators and the process they must follow. The roles and responsibilities at local, regional, and national levels of environmental authorities have also been clarified.⁵²

All the civilian operators have SOPs in line with Decree 1195 of 2017, which they apply especially when working in environmentally protected areas.⁵³ The CCCM's policy on environment for within the organisation and while implementing operations is committed to "Do No Harm with Action" ("Acción sin daño") and focuses on reducing risk and/

or impact in relation to environmental degradation, climate change, and natural disasters. An SOP on the environment provides instruction and guidance for all demining phases, camps, medical support, and EOD.⁵⁴

DRC has been seeking to mitigate the impact of demining in local communities for several years. Deminer camps all functioned with 100% energy generated from solar panels during 2021.⁵⁵ In addition, the organisation's environmental management SOP reflects best practices for environmental management in land release operations, including the possible effects on soil, water, air, and flora and fauna.⁵⁶ Small-scale mitigation measures are conducted, such as reforestation with 250 native tree species after demining operations in an indigenous reserve in San José del Fragua, Caquetá, in June 2023. For DRC, "it was one of the most meaningful experiences in this regard since we merge both our environmental commitment and our ethnic and diversity responsibility with the communities."⁵⁷

48 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form A, pp. 17–18.

49 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations", Intersessional Meetings, 19–21 June 2023, p. 4.

50 Emails from Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; and Tom Griffiths, HALO Latin America, 20 June 2022.

51 Email from Pablo Parra, UNMAS Colombia, 22 August 2023.

52 Email from Yessika Morales, OACP – AICMA Group, 20 July 2022.

53 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 3 August and 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

54 Email from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023.

55 Paula Cadena, DRC, 16 August 2023.

56 Email from Paula Ximena Cadena, Programme Officer, DRC Colombia, 23 September 2022.

57 Email from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023.

HALO's management system includes SOPs on interaction with the environment during clearance, from waste management in camps and location bases, to minimising cutting trees over 10cm in diameter and only cutting if it blocks an evacuation route. HALO includes in its SOPs guidance on the location of septic tanks and mitigation measures on use of plastics and action to reduce the risk of fires, explosions, or pipeline spills. In 2022, HALO developed

an environmental marker pilot to assess environmental pre-conditions in its assigned municipalities.⁵⁸

HI seeks to protect the environment in natural parks, in several of which HI has had demining operations. This includes the planting of trees in coordination with the local communities and environmental authorities. Budget for this is systematically incorporated in all demining operations.⁵⁹

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Colombia's diversity and gender policy is included in the Operations Plan 2023–2025, in line with the National Development Plan 2022–2026, which refers to the essential need to transform the gender relationships embedded in cultural, economic, and social structures so as to overcome gender-based violence, discrimination, and inequality. As highlighted by HI, the new NMAS on Land release (NTC 6469) recognises that different groups of populations call for different attention and protection needs. Those include responses related to gender, ethnic, age, disability condition, socio-economic condition, and cultural identities, in order to ensure that mine action interventions promote equal opportunities and respect for their differences.⁶⁰ During 2022, the so-called "Differential Approach" was mainstreamed towards different ethnic minority, gender, age, and disabilities groups, including AP mine victims, in demining and risk education operations and victim assistance programmes.⁶¹

In the seven humanitarian demining operators, there are a total of 817 NTS personnel of whom 17% (143) are women, while of the 3,633 deminers, 125 are women and of the 208 EOD personnel, 20 are women. The Government

recognises the challenges ahead in order to increase the participation of women in the sector and they are committed to the empowerment of women as agents of change and for sustainable development.⁶²

In the case of the military operators, the BRDEH has the highest number of demining personnel which includes 460 men and 1 woman in the NTS teams, 3,059 male deminers and 1 woman, and 80 EOD men and 2 women. This is in addition to 3 women and 286 men support in the support and administrative staff. The BDIAN on the other hand has no women in their operations personnel nor in its administrative and support section.⁶³

Data are disaggregated by gender, age, and ethnicity. The CCCM, DRC, HALO, HI, and HUMANICEMOS DH all reported consulting women and children as well as men during NTS and community liaison and employing women in their NTS teams and or demining teams.⁶⁴

The five civilian operators have reported 1,256 staff members of whom 518 are women.⁶⁵ For details see Table 2.

Table 2: Gender composition of mine action operators⁶⁶

Operator	Total staff	Total women staff	Total staff in managerial/supervisory positions	Total women in managerial/supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Total women in operational positions
CCCM	394	181	81	36	313	131
DRC*	186	70	17	6	67	22
HALO	437	167	82	29	355	139
HI	136	66	35	18	101	48
HUMANICEMOS DH	103	34	13	7	66	21
Totals	1,256	518	228	96	902	361

* Data cover 1 January 2022 to 23 May 2023.

58 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023.

59 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

60 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 30 June 2022.

61 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D, pp. 65.

62 Presentation of Colombia, Intersessional Meetings, 19 June 2023, pp. 2–3.

63 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form A, Table 3, p. 22.

64 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, Programmes Manager, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 3 August and 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

65 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June and 9 September 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 3 August and 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

66 Ibid.

Colombia has a significant indigenous and ethnic minority group population (13.7% of the total population), who are afforded constitutional protections and therefore require a specific approach during demining. Indigenous communities are said to have been disproportionately affected by AP mines. According to UNMAS, almost three (28.5%) of every 10 victims registered in 2021 were indigenous or Afro descended persons.⁶⁷ The OACP and the demining operators have developed annexes to the NMAS on NTS and territorial management in order to facilitate negotiation with ethnic communities on demining interventions.⁶⁸ The NTS Technical Note has a specific methodology for interacting and negotiating with ethnic communities, so as to guarantee direct participation throughout the land release cycle.⁶⁹

Operators reported that in 2022 they continued to request special permissions to gain access to indigenous reserves and to work closely with concerned communities to build trust by employing community liaison officers, deminers, and NTS personnel directly from those communities. Operators involve local ethnic minority communities in the liaison process ahead of any operations, working with them to map contamination and prioritise tasks.⁷⁰ The involvement of local indigenous communities gives operators an understanding of the preparations that must take place before survey or clearance can be conducted on sacred land.⁷¹

The CCCM has indicators for showing the evolution of gender and diversity mainstreaming within the organisation, including a minimum of 30% women in operational teams. The CCCM is looking at other indicators to include such as on ethnicity and disability. There is currently no mechanism that would allow identification of the needs of women, girls, and boys directly within the national process of task prioritisation.⁷²

DRC has highlighted that during 2022 the following managerial and supervisory positions were held by women:

head of programme, programme coordinator, EORE coordinator, country director, and NTS team leaders. DRC has also started to implement its age, gender, and diversity approach strategy, applied to the entire mine action project cycle.⁷³

HALO reported that all internal information management records and indicators are set up by gender, age, and ethnic status (if relevant), and that projects always include disaggregated data on beneficiaries according to gender and diversity policies and guidelines. These are included in the different phases of the project cycles, including needs assessments, planning and monitoring. HALO stated that their gender implementation policies have been mainstreamed across recruitment policies, training plans, the code of conduct, and safeguarding practices. HALO promotes compliance while employees are required to agree to uphold them as part of their employment contracts.⁷⁴

HI's institutional policy on Disability, Gender and Age requires programmes to assess their degree of consideration concerning sensitivity and transformational programming for the three categories. In Colombia, ethnicity is also included. It is generally necessary to choose a representative for each ethnic group, no matter how large the area of intervention. If a given territory has Afro, indigenous, and farmer communities, a person will have to be contracted from each group for community liaison.⁷⁵ HI has noted that the standard NTS forms do not require collection of data on disability, which is a significant drawback.⁷⁶

HUMANICEMOS DH surpassed its initial target of hiring 31 women into the organisation in early 2023 and obtained a national seal of approval on non-discrimination for their best practices concerning gender, diversity, and inclusion.⁷⁷ Its staff comes from different regions of the country and identify themselves belonging to diverse ethnic groups.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Colombia's national information management system is managed by the OACP – AICMA Group. The Information Management System uses both Periferico, where weekly reports are uploaded using Survey123, and IMSMA (once the uploaded through Periferico have been verified and validated). Once data on each individual task have been uploaded to IMSMA they are released to the general public.

As at end 2022, there were 278 licensed active users for the Periferico and 28 licensed active users for IMSMA.⁷⁸

During 2022, improvements continued to be made to the information management system, mainly on filtering data and clearing duplications on the database.⁷⁹ Meetings between individual operators and the OACP – AICMA Group are held periodically to address data uploading delays, which can

67 UNMAS Colombia Newsletter, February 2022.

68 Email from Yessika Morales, OACP – AICMA Group, 20 July 2022.

69 Ibid.

70 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023 and 15 June 2022; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023 and Caterina Weller, DRC, 9 June 2022; Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; Tom Griffiths, HALO Latin America, 20 June 2022; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023 and 30 June 2022; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023 and 19 July 2022.

71 Email from Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 18 July 2020.

72 Email from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023.

73 Email from Paula Cadena, DRC, 16 August 2023.

74 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023.

75 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

76 Ibid.

77 The Instituto Colombiano de Normas Técnicas (ICONTEC) is affiliated to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

78 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form A, p. 29; telephone interview Mariany Monroy, OACP – AICMA Group, 11 August 2023.

79 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

be prolonged.⁸⁰ HALO has found that delays have led to material inaccuracies in the publicly available information.⁸¹ Other operators agree there are often delays between data processing, updating of the database, and publishing after they have fed information into the Periferico system.

According to DRC, the information management system is accurate enough to cover mine action operations at the administrative level of municipalities (1:100,000) but not to the hazardous areas scale (usually ranging between 1:500 to 1:200).⁸²

Article 7 reports are submitted on a timely basis and Colombia's latest Article 7 report also includes detailed information on its implementation of the Oslo Action Plan. There are, however, large disparities in the clearance data recorded in the reports compared to the data recorded on the humanitarian demining dashboard that is regularly updated by the OACP – AICMA Group. In 2022, inconsistencies in reporting continued, including with respect to the extent of contamination and land release in Colombia's Article 7 report covering 2022 between narrative, summary tables, and Annexes which contain the official data. This may be an internal communication problem within the OACP – AICMA Group.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Colombia's goal for 2023–2025 is to declare 102 municipalities free from suspicion of AP mines. These are the municipalities currently being addressed by demining operations.⁸³

The IIDH continued assigning demining tasks in 2022, which can correspond to a whole municipality, or a zone or a sector within a municipality. Operators note, though, that a key issue in tasking is the Body's assessment of security. A total of 124 municipalities have not been assigned for intervention so far, even though these have the highest humanitarian need and

micro focalisation could be used to identify zones or sectors where demining could take place safely.⁸⁴ HUMANICEMOS DH has called for security determinations to accord greater weight to the information that the affected communities themselves provide.⁸⁵

HALO recognises that Colombia continues to treat all areas as mined until proven otherwise. This means that developmental action is blocked until mine action has taken place, which in turn is obstructed by strict security protocols.⁸⁶

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

The set of 17 NMAS (NTC)⁸⁷ were formally issued in 2021 but have not yet been fully operationalised, in particular due to debate on the technical survey (TS) standard. The key issue is whether areas reduced through TS can be considered free of contamination, as improvised AP mine laying does not follow any kind of pattern. The absence of patterns in Colombia's mined areas is agreed upon by all operators.⁸⁸ In 2022, the AICMA Program – OAS invited demining stakeholders to discuss TS techniques and compare other experiences with the Colombian context. But the issue remains unresolved.⁸⁹ DRC wants the criteria that will be taken into account to be detailed in the discussion of TS techniques.⁹⁰ For HI it is not clear how the OACP – AICMA Group can accept responsibility

for released land after handover where only a part of the initially identified suspicion has been physically cleared.⁹¹

HALO also notes the concern that more than 60% of all CHAs/SHAs cleared in Colombia do not contain any mines. By granting NTS teams greater flexibility in assessing and identifying hazardous areas, HALO believes it may be possible to enhance the efficiency and success rate of demining. Other topics that could usefully be considered are a greater focus on TS and more flexible clearance approaches that adapt to the actual threat posed by devices as they rapidly degrade over time and their lethality decreases.⁹²

80 Email from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023.

81 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023.

82 Email from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023.

83 Presentation of Colombia, Intersessional Meetings, 19 June 2023, p. 3.

84 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

85 Email from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

86 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO 16 June 2023.

87 The Normas Técnicas Colombianas (NTC) are equated to NMAS, but with a higher level of obligation.

88 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

89 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

90 Email from Paula Cadena, DRC, 16 August 2023.

91 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

92 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO 16 June 2023.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Colombia has a large operational clearance capacity at its disposal with a total of seven operators accredited to carry out demining: two military operators and five non-governmental organisations (NGOs). By far the largest clearance operator is the National Army's Humanitarian Demining Brigade (BRDEH). BDIAN (previously known as the Marine Corps Explosives and Demining Association, AEDIM), a smaller military operator, conducts clearance and destruction of AP mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) in areas under the jurisdiction of the National Navy. Demining is also conducted by civilian organisations: two national NGOs the CCCM and HUMANICEMOS DH; and three international NGOs: DRC, HALO, and HI.

A successful experience arising from the 2016 Peace Agreement with the FARC-EP is the national Demining and Risk Education organisation HUMANICEMOS DH. Comprising personnel that signed the 2016 Peace Agreement with the government, and who are in the process of being reintegrated economically and socially into civilian life, HUMANICEMOS

DH was first accredited in August 2017.⁹³ In November 2020, HUMANICEMOS DH began survey and clearance operations in La Montañita, Caquetá.⁹⁴ UNMAS was designated the agency responsible for external quality management and monitoring of HUMANICEMOS DH, as in previous years US funding policies did not allow the OAS to work directly with HUMANICEMOS DH.⁹⁵ The OAS CEM component took over this function in April 2023 in order to integrate the organisation into overall national monitoring framework, using funding from the Swiss Government for one year.⁹⁶ HUMANICEMOS DH said the long delay in having the CEM component certifying their demining operations resulted in planning problems for them.⁹⁷

In general, civilian operators reported increasing survey personnel during 2022 with 293 accredited staff in comparison to 222 in 2021 (see Table 3). Civilian operators are moving towards using multitask teams (MTTs), which can conduct both NTS and clearance.

Table 3: Survey capacities in 2022 (as reported by demining operators)⁹⁸

Operator	NTS teams	NTS personnel	TS teams	TS personnel	Comments
CCCM	31	151	0	0	Average for the year 2022, as teams multitask between NTS and clearance.*
DRC	10	36	*	*	TS teams also conduct full clearance (see Table 4 on clearance capacities). Data for 1 January to 2 December 2022.
HALO	13 (monthly average)	46 (monthly average)	0	0	
HI	9	36	0	0	Average personnel per month including team leaders (in HI they actively conduct NTS).
HUMANICEMOS DH	5	24	0	0	Staff are not trained for TS.
Totals	68	293	0	0	

* See the narrative below on clearance capacities.

DRC reported that throughout 2022, there was a significant increase in the programme's operational capacity in Colombia, going from 117 to 176 staff. This growth was particularly evident in NTS (from 22 to 35).

In 2022, the 5 accredited NGOs: CCCM, DRC, HI, HALO and HUMANICEMOS DH had their respective accreditations renewed.⁹⁹

93 Email from Maria Sans, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 September 2023.

94 Emails from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023 and 19 July 2022; and HUMANICEMOS DH, *Boletín Externo No. 2*, 14 February 2023.

95 Email from Pablo Parra, UNMAS Colombia, 22 August 2023.

96 Email from Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 31 August 2023. UNMAS Facebook post, 1 June 2020, at: <http://bit.ly/3f3UI1Z>.

97 Emails from Matia Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June and 8 September 2023.

98 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

99 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D, p. 58.

Operators, consider that the annual accreditation renewals requirement (despite several years of successful interventions) hinders the fluidity of land release operations. Similarly, waiting times for the evaluation and accreditation of trained personnel tend to be excessive (up to three months after completion of training), resulting in operational and resource downtime for the organisations. In addition, it is still not possible to accredit personnel at EOD Level III.¹⁰⁰

With regard to clearance capacities during 2022, civilian operators reported a total of 314 manual deminers, a drop of ten from 2021. (See Table 4 on clearance capacities).

Table 4: Clearance capacities deployed in 2022 (as reported by demining operators)¹⁰¹

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers	Comments
CCCM	13	77	Average for 2022 as teams multitask between NTS and clearance.
DRC	7	63	Manual teams also conduct TS. Data for 1 January to 2 December 2022.
HALO	27 (monthly average)	135 (average 5 deminers per team)	
HI	3	18	A ground preparation machine was tested in 2021, but not used in 2022. No further explanation was provided.
HUMANICEMOS DH	3	21	
Totals	53	314	

The CCCM reported that for 2022, their NTS and clearance teams move between NTS and manual clearance depending on operational need, and there was no reduction in the overall personnel. In total during 2022, they had 228 personnel accredited for both NTS and clearance. EOD-accredited personnel increased by 77% as 4 women and 13 men received EOD Level I certification. At the time of writing, the CCCM had 22 people certified for EOD. The CCCM planned to increase the number of manual deminers in 2023 to speed up clearance of areas confirmed by the NTS teams. This will allow MTTs to be more cost efficient and provide more flexibility during deployments.¹⁰²

HALO's number of deployed survey and clearance personnel reduced in 2022 compared to 2021 due to the completion of assigned municipalities in Boyacá and Putumayo departments and the finalisation of a five-and-a-half-year contract with Canada.¹⁰³

HI saw a drop in the number of deminers of almost one half in comparison to 2021, due to several factors including a "transition phase" from demining to NTS, due to the completion of clearance in several municipalities (Inza, Puracé, and Santander de Quilichao) as well as the deteriorating security conditions in Vista Hermosa (Meta), but NTS staff numbers increased in 2022 following the allocation

of six new municipalities (Carepa, Puerto Concordia, Remedios, Segovia, Vegachi, and Yali).¹⁰⁴ For 2023, HI planned to have 12 NTS teams which will be trained as MTTs and five clearance teams with six to eight deminers each, as per the requirements of the new tasks in the recently allocated municipalities.¹⁰⁵

HUMANICEMOS DH had a drop of seven deminers in 2022 compared to 2021; however, this did not affect operations in 2022, as their teams are multitask and deminers are trained to conduct NTS and risk education as well as clearance. For 2023 it plans to increase the number of deminers to 32.¹⁰⁶

With regard to operational tools, only the CCCM has been working on testing of new tools. It is implementing a pilot project on dual detection, which combines a Japanese-designed ALIS (Advanced Landmine Detection System) prototype, dual-sensor mine detector. The detector combines electromagnetic induction sensors and ground penetrating radar (GPR) which gives it the capacity to differentiate AP mines from buried metal. ALIS was developed by scientists at Tohoku University in Japan in 2002 and has already been used in Cambodia. Since 2022, the CCCM has been testing the ALIS in areas tasked for demining.¹⁰⁷

100 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

101 Ibid.; and email from María Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

102 Email from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023.

103 Emails from Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; and Tom Griffiths, HALO, 8 September 2023.

104 Email from Aderito Ismael, HI, 22 August 2023.

105 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

106 Email from María Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June and 8 September 2023.

107 Email from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023.

DEMINER SAFETY

No accidents involving landmines occurred in 2022. However, security incidents were reported by both the CCCM and HALO for the year 2022.

According to CCCM some municipalities saw the access restricted due to NSAGs “violent” actions. The municipalities of Murindó, Puerto Leguizamo, and Vista Hermosa tasked to the CCCM were not actioned as the security context did not allow operations to be conducted in safety. Between 5 and 10 May, an attack by a demobilised group of the Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia (AGC) led to a halt in demining operations in several regions of the country. On 6 May, the AGC approached one of the NTS teams that had set up their camp and demanded their immediate departure from the area. The CCCM decided to move the NTS team to a locality in Urrao municipality where the CCCM has a local office. On their way there, the NTS team was stopped by another group of armed men from the AGC, who told the NTS team they were not permitted to move around the municipality. The men became very aggressive and ordered them to leave the vehicles, which they later burnt. This was the first time CCCM personnel had faced such a complex security risk.¹⁰⁸

In November 2022, HALO was involved in a non-violent security incident in Ondas del Cafre, an indigenous reserve in Mesetas in Meta department. During the incident, HALO staff were detained by local FARC dissidents for around four hours but were released without harm and a vehicle was stolen.¹⁰⁹

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

Colombia reported clearing 1.84km² of mined area in 2022 along with cancellation of 0.01km² through NTS and reduction of 0.02km² through TS. Total land release was thus 1.87km². This is based on the latest official data reported by the OACP – AICMA Group as at end-June 2023.¹¹⁰ These figures differ to those included in Colombia’s Article 7 Report but are more accurate.¹¹¹ Land release data provided by the OACP – AICMA Group comprises only data for release that has been certified by the CEM and therefore differs from operator data.

New previously unrecorded mined areas were identified by operators in 2022. The CCCM reported 60 new areas in six departments (Antioquia, Boyacá, Casanare, Chocó, Putumayo and Vichada) covering 70,142m²; DRC identified 10 new areas covering 34,432m² in Caquetá; HALO identified 49 areas measuring 75,283m²; HI identified and cleared nine new areas, measuring 11,286m²; HUMANICEMOS DH identified one new area in Solita Caquetá measuring 26,066m².¹¹² All these newly identified areas are legacy contamination and all have been incorporated in the national database.¹¹³

In 2022, operators reported clearing substantial areas of land without finding AP mines. The CCCM cleared 52 areas covering 39,551m² without finding AP mines; DRC cleared four areas in Caquetá covering 2,803m² without encountering any AP mines; HALO cleared 43 minefields which proved to contain no AP mines (covering a total of 80,519m²); and for HI, only one of nine clearance tasks they conducted in 2022 contained mines: a single improvised AP mine.¹¹⁴

SURVEY IN 2022

In 2022, through civilian operators conducting NTS a total of 116,426m² were cancelled in eight departments (see Table 5).

Mine Action Review and some of the operators have identified issues regarding cancellation through NTS. First, there is a potential difference in methodology between operators with respect to “cancelling” mined area after investigating IMSMA events versus only cancelling mined area previously identified through NTS and which is already recorded in the information management system. The second potential difference is in methodology and understanding or interpreting NTS survey in municipalities tasked to an operator that are not coming from SHAs or CHAs and that cannot be considered as cancelled through NTS, as per the NTCs.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Email from Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023.

¹¹⁰ Email from Mariany Monroy Torres, OACP – AICMA Group, 31 July 2023.

¹¹¹ Article 7 Report (covering 2022). The data in the report were accurate to 31 March 2023.

¹¹² Email from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 3 August 2023.

¹¹³ Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June and 3 August 2023.

¹¹⁴ Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

¹¹⁵ Email and telephone interview with Maicol Velázquez, OACP – AICMA Group, 4 and 5 August 2023; and telephone interview with Tammy Hall, OAS, 5 August 2023.

Table 5: Release of mined area through NTS in 2022 (demining operator data)¹¹⁶

Department	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
Antioquia	HALO	1,284
Caquetá	DRC	15,184
Caquetá	HUMANICEMOS DH	116
Casanare	HALO	2,202
Cauca	HI	67,314
Chocó	HI	1,831
Putumayo	CCCM	5,290
Tolima	HI	23,205
Total		116,426

HALO cancelled land on the basis of community members using the land they had been tasked to release.¹¹⁷ HI's cancellation in 2022 was the result of discarding "IMSMA events" which had no contamination in the assigned area.¹¹⁸ HUMANICEMOS DH for the first time reported cancellation through NTS in La Montañita, Caquetá.¹¹⁹ CCCM cancellation increased by 1,504m² over the 3,786m² cancelled in 2021.¹²⁰ DRC reported cancelling through NTS 15,184m² "during the conduct of clearance tasks due to the evidence found in the areas".¹²¹ Its report of 25,256km² as being "free of suspicion of mines" through NTS in the departments of Caquetá (25,084km²) and Bolivar (172.5km²) do not correspond to cancellation as the term is understood in the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).

Only the military operator BRDEH (in Antioquia) and DRC (in Caquetá) reduced area through TS in 2022 (see Table 6). That civilian operators are not using TS in Colombia is due to several problems: first, a lack of clarity in the NTC on TS which they feel would either duplicate efforts or delay the land release process in some cases; and second, the dynamics of the Colombian conflict, which mean that devices do not reflect predictable patterns. The OAS has shown an interest in again addressing the issue of efficiency in 2023.¹²²

Table 6: Release of mined area through TS in 2022 (operator and OACP – AICMA Group data)¹²³

Department	Operator	Area reduced (m ²)
Antioquia	BRDEH	19,151
Caquetá	DRC	251
Total		19,402

HI noted that given the nature of contamination in Colombia, and based on the evidence found in the field by HI's NTS teams, the average size of areas reported are often up to 4,000m². Most of the time, the polygon is a shape where the safety distance between deminers required by the NTC on TS makes it difficult to deploy more than six deminers and therefore area reduction is almost impossible if procedures and safety are to be fully respected.¹²⁴

CLEARANCE IN 2022

Clearance output was significantly greater in 2022 in comparison to the previous year, with a total of 1.84km² cleared manually by the seven demining operators (two military and five civilian) (see Table 7).

116 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 3 August and 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

117 Emails from Oliver Ford, HALO, 3 August and 16 June 2023.

118 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

119 Email from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

120 Email from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023.

121 Emails from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; and Paola Paula Ximena Cadena, DRC Colombia, 3 August 2023.

122 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023 and 13 September 2022; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023 and Paola Paula Ximena Cadena, DRC Colombia, 3 August 2023; Caterina Weller, DRC, 9 June 2022; Oliver Ford, HALO, 3 August, 16 June 2023 and 15 September 2022; Tom Griffiths, HALO Latin America, 20 June 2022; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023 and 30 June 2022; Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023 and 19 July 2022.

123 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 3 August and 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023; and email from Mariany Monroy Torres, OACP -AICMA Group, 31 July 2023.

124 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

Table 7: Mine clearance in 2022 (OACP – AICMA Group data)¹²⁵

Department	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed during clearance/TS	AP mines destroyed during spot tasks	UXO destroyed during mine clearance/TS
Antioquia	BRDEH	294,599	22	2	1
Antioquia	CCCM	7,118	8	0	0
Antioquia	HALO	53,329	86	10	0
Bolívar	BDIAN	20,064	1	6	9
Boyacá	CCCM	1,773	0	0	0
Boyacá	HALO	2,327	0	0	1
Caldas	BRDEH	129,196	16	1	0
Caquetá	BRDEH	162,133	13	9	0
Caquetá	DRC	28,285	9	0	4
Caquetá	HUMANICEMOS DH	3,360	3	0	0
Casanare	CCCM	3,960	0	0	0
Casanare	HALO	8,753	0	0	2
Cauca	HI	5,541	0	7	0
Choco	CCCM	1,081	2	1	0
Huila	BRDEH	162,446	9	1	3
La Guajira	BRDEH	0	0	0	0
Meta	BRDEH	106,976	0	0	0
Meta	HALO	24,801	2	0	5
Nariño	HALO	0	0	1	0
Putumayo	BRDEH	53,023	2	0	0
Putumayo	CCCM	86,543	60	0	0
Putumayo	HALO	30,053	2	3	0
Santander	BRDEH	124,316	5	0	2
Tolima	BRDEH	159,834	10	1	2
Tolima	HALO	10,719	2	0	1
Tolima	HI	160	0	0	0
Valle del Cauca	BRDEH	306,739	10	1	0
Valle del Cauca	HALO	56,932	17	0	0
Vichada	CCCM	0	0	0	0
Totals		1,844,061	279	43	30

125 Email from Mariany Monroy Torres, OACP – AICMA Group, 31 July 2023.

Table 8: Mine clearance in 2022 (civilian demining operator data)¹²⁶

Department	Operator	Area cleared (m²)	AP mines destroyed during clearance and TS	AP mines destroyed during spot tasks	IEDs destroyed during clearance and TS	IEDs destroyed during spot tasks	UXO destroyed during clearance and TS
Antioquia	CCCM	7,118	8	4	0	1	4
Boyacá	CCCM	1,773	0	0	0	0	0
Casanare	CCCM	3,960	0	0	0	0	3
Chocó	CCCM	1,081	2	1	0	0	1
Putumayo	CCCM	90,092	48	12	9	13	5
Vichada			0	0	0	0	7
Subtotals	CCCM	104,024	58	17	9	14	20
Caquetá	DRC	21,758	5	0	4	5	4
Subtotals	DRC	21,758	5	0	4	5	4
Antioquia	HALO	91,147	133	4	0	2	0
Boyacá	HALO	2,327	0	0	0	0	1
Casanare	HALO	20,543	0	0	0	1	2
Meta	HALO	19,396	4	0	0	1	5
Nariño	HALO	0	0	0	0	0	0
Putumayo	HALO	29,816	2	0	0	0	0
Tolima	HALO	1,060	0	0	0	0	0
Valle del Cauca	HALO	46,372	14	1	0	0	0
Subtotals	HALO	210,661	153	5	0	4	8
Tolima	HI	6,473	0	0	0	0	0
Cauca	HI	4,813	0	0	1	1	0
Subtotals	HI	11,286	0	0	1	1	0
Caquetá	HUMANICEMOS DH	18,889	6	0	0	1	0
Subtotals	HUMANICEMOS DH	18,889	6	0	0	1	0
Totals		366,618	222	22	14	25	32

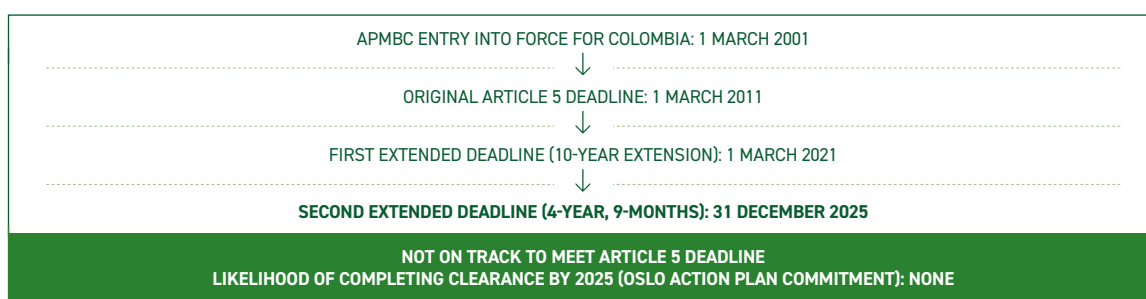
In total, according to the OACP – AICMA Group, 322 improvised AP mines, 147 items of UXO, and 57 IEDs were destroyed during 2022 (see Table 9).

¹²⁶ Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, Programmes Manager, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 3 August and 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

Table 9: Reported destruction of explosive ordnance in 2022 (OACP – AICMA Group data)¹²⁷

Operator	AP mines destroyed	UXO destroyed	IEDs destroyed
BDIAN	7	16	5
BRDEH	101	47	16
CCCM	71	27	10
DRC	9	4	10
HALO	124	27	10
HI	7	26	6
HUMANICEMOS DH	3	0	0
Totals	322	147	57

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC, and in accordance with the four-year and nine-month extension granted by States Parties in 2020, Colombia is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2025.

Colombia will not be able to meet this deadline given the numerous challenges it faces. Its current goal is to declare free of landmines the 102 municipalities currently being cleared by the end of 2025.¹²⁸

Table 10: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	1.84
2021	1.27
2020	1.08
2019	0.79
2018	0.96
Total	5.94

It remains to be seen whether implementation of the new technical standards will improve the efficiency of land release in Colombia. A high percentage of mined areas are still being cleared without any mines found and HALO believes that a large proportion of the old legacy mines being found are non-functional.¹²⁹ The challenging terrain and climatic conditions along with an over-reliance on full clearance means that demining in Colombia is very expensive. Demining can and should be conducted more efficiently.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Colombia does not yet have a plan in place to manage residual contamination after clearance is completed in accordance with Article 5. The OACP – AICMA Group is aware of the importance of management of residual contamination, although an official plan has not been drafted yet.

Annex A to Land Release Technical Note NTC6469 is dedicated to residual risk, but this should not be confused with the management of residual contamination once clearance is completed as per Article 5. The Annex refers to the methodology for managing residual risk within the framework of land release. It addresses the responsibilities of the operators for the six months after handover.

¹²⁷ Email from Maicol Velásquez, OACP – AICMA Group, 2 August 2023.

¹²⁸ Presentation of Colombia, Intersessional Meetings, 19 June 2023, p. 3.

¹²⁹ Email from Oliver Ford, HALO, 15 September 2022.