

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 2020

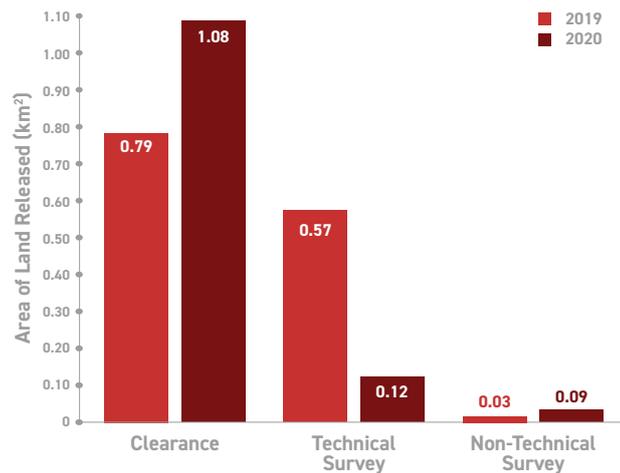
1.08 KM²

AP MINES DESTROYED IN 2020

196

(INCLUDING 52 DESTROYED IN SPOT TASKS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



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

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2020, Colombia requested and was granted a second extension to its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline through to the end of 2025. While overall land release output fell in 2020, on a positive note clearance output increased despite the restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Improvements were also made to the mine action programme throughout the year with the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP) allocating all safely accessible tasks to operators and completing a review of national mine action standards (NMAS). However, numerous challenges to efficient and effective land release persist, and it remains to be seen how the mine action programme will adapt.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Colombia should further endeavour to conduct a baseline survey to elaborate a more meaningful and evidence-based understanding of contamination while continuing to clean the data on “events” in the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database.
- Colombia should establish a National Mine Action Platform (NMAP) for regular dialogue among all stakeholders, including donors, as recommended by the APMBC’s Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance, to collectively discuss progress, challenges, and support for Article 5 implementation in Colombia.
- Colombia should implement the new technical norms and operators should be supported by the national mine action authority and the Organization of American States (OAS) to use the full toolbox of land release methodologies.
- Colombia should task all operators in a manner that ensures the best use of resources by geographically clustering task assignments and should prioritise the highest impact areas in response to humanitarian, community, and development needs.
- Quality management of operations should be streamlined and targeted towards making operations more efficient rather than imposing unnecessary delays on operators. The national authority should ensure that the OAS has personnel with the required capability to perform appropriate technical monitoring of clearance activities.

- Colombia should provide an updated work plan through to 2025, in light of the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and including realistic targets for land release with current demining capacity.
- Colombia should proceed with the study on the effect of ageing on improvised anti-personnel mines in the country given the large proportion of non-functional mines found. Colombia should conduct a risk analysis of anti-personnel mine functionality and define a level of acceptability for residual risk that is based on the high proportion of non-functioning mines found.
- Colombia should provide more detailed information on how it will mainstream gender and diversity considerations in its mine action programme, including with targets and timeframes.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2020)	Score (2019)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	4	4	The precise extent of anti-personnel mine contamination remains unknown. While a nationwide baseline survey has yet to be conducted, non-technical survey is taking place in accessible areas and Colombia has developed guidance on establishing a baseline. Colombia is now presenting a more evidence-based estimate of remaining contamination that is at least partially based on survey. Of the areas surveyed Colombia estimated anti-personnel mine contamination as at end 2020 at 2.95km ² . Insecurity remains an obstacle to access of suspected mined areas and mines are still being emplaced in some areas.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	6	6	There is strong national ownership in Colombia with responsibility for the mine action programme sitting with the OACP, and decision making the responsibility of the <i>Instancia de Desminado</i> , led by the Ministry of Defence. Roles and responsibilities at a national level are generally clear. Operators were actively consulted in the review of national standards, although Colombia would benefit from improved coordination mechanisms that are inclusive of all stakeholders in demining, including donors. In 2020, Colombia elaborated a resource mobilisation strategy and there was an increase in national funding for mine action.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	7	6	Colombia has Gender Guidelines for Mine Action in place and gender is included within the framework of the new Strategic Plan for 2020–25. The needs of different groups must be considered during community liaison with gender-balanced teams according to the technical norm on mine risk education (MRE), but gender and diversity provisions are not reflected in the land release technical norm. A woman heads the national authority and women make up 63% of the staff dedicated to mine action. However, among deminers overall this figure drops to only 4%. This proportion varies widely between operators, however, with only the military demining brigades not having any female deminers.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	5	4	Improvements have been made to information management in Colombia following a review of the IMSMA database, and in 2020 a dashboard was introduced to allow for real-time monitoring of survey and clearance tasks. However, Colombia continues to rely on “events” where more recent survey data is unavailable as the main indicator of contamination even though these are beset with errors and are often cancelled or discarded once investigated. Discrepancies between operator data and figures from the national authority are also frequent, due to delays in information processing and quality control. 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)	5	4	Colombia has a five-year strategic plan through to 2025 and an operational plan for demining which includes land release targets although it is unclear how much will be released through survey and how much by clearance. Colombia has allocated all the tasks to operators that it is able to although 129 municipalities remain inaccessible due to insecurity. It is unclear why the updated annual land release targets until 2025 that Colombia provided in its latest Article 7 report only project to release 2.77km ² of contaminated area. Prioritisation and task allocation continue to be an issue within the mine action programme, with operators often locked into inaccessible tasks or being deployed into new areas without prior consideration of their capacity. A new criterion for assigning tasks has been included in the new technical norms and will be aligned with performance indicators that will measure operators efficiency. It remains to be seen whether this will improve the situation once the technical norms have been implemented.
Average Score	5.3	4.6	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

Criterion	Score (2020)	Score (2019)	Performance Commentary
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	6	5	In 2020, Colombia developed a new set of 17 NMAS renamed as technical norms which were developed in consultation with operators and other mine action stakeholders and are an important step in improving land release processes in Colombia. These include new technical norms on land release, survey, and information management. As at June 2021, the norms had been issued, with their implementation due to begin in September.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	5	4	Overall land release output in Colombia fell in 2020 and clearance output increased by 62% from the previous year. Colombia was able to exceed the target set out in its 2020 extension request in spite of the ongoing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, Colombia was granted an extension to its Article 5 deadline to 31 December 2025. It is difficult to assess whether Colombia will be able to meet this deadline as it is unclear how much contamination remains. If the land release output of the past few years is maintained, completion by 2026 looks unlikely.
Average Score	5.3	4.6	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

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

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Humanitarian Demining Brigade (Brigada de Desminado Humanitario (BRDEH)
- Marine Corps Explosives and Demining Association (Agrupación de Explosivos y Desminado de Infantería de Marina (AEDIM)
- Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas (CCCM)
- Asociación Colombiana de Técnicos y Expertos en Explosivos e Investigadores de Incendios y NBQR (ATEXX) (closed its programme in 2020)
- Humanicemos DH

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Danish Demining Group (DDG) (now renamed Danish Refugee Council's Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding Sector, DRC)
- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Humanity and Inclusion (HI)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) (closed its programme in 2020)
- Perigeo (closed its programme in 2020)

OTHER ACTORS

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

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The precise extent of anti-personnel mine contamination in Colombia remains unknown. As at end 2020, Colombia reported a total of 419 anti-personnel mined areas with an estimated size of 2.95km² remaining to be addressed in 13 departments (see Table 1). This includes just over 1.85km² across 232 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and just over 1.09km² across 187 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs).¹ While a nationwide baseline survey has yet to be conducted in Colombia, operators are conducting non-technical surveys to investigate IMSMA reports and collect additional information from affected communities. This has provided an initial mapping of contamination in the municipalities that have been assigned for demining.² However, IMSMA “events” in Colombia are a notoriously unreliable source for contamination and are frequently not directly related to a hazardous area.³

Table 1: Anti-personnel mined area by department (at end 2020)⁴

Department	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total SHAs/CHAs	Total area(m ²)
Antioquia	23	107,297	23	217,011	46	324,308
Bolivar	11	22,954	12	58,488	23	81,442
Caldas	2	19,075	7	38,082	9	57,157
Caqueta	45	349,331	20	150,946	65	500,277
Cauca	25	75,530	17	30,844	42	106,374
Huila	7	365,465	11	205,053	18	570,518
Meta	48	563,413	7	27,778	55	591,191
Nariño	5	16,894	6	12,327	11	29,221
Putumayo	45	129,092	62	168,859	107	297,951
Santander	4	45,139	6	52,948	10	98,087
Sucre	0	0	1	3,330	1	3,330
Tolima	6	106,562	7	94,392	13	200,954
Valle del Cauca	11	51,838	8	32,852	19	84,690
Totals	232	1,852,590	187	1,092,910	419	2,945,500

In 2020, the mine action department of the OACP, with technical assistance from the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD) elaborated the “Baseline Methodology 2020. Statistical Operation: Results of the humanitarian demining operations” with a view to establishing a strategic direction for the demining programme and provide technical guidance to operators on establishing a baseline.⁵

In addition, within the 135 “zones” which have been assigned to operators but have not yet been surveyed, it is estimated there are 1,018 hazardous areas totalling 4.78km². This projection was calculated using an average for a contaminated area of 4,700m² per area plus a 5% margin. There are also 138 municipalities where neither survey nor clearance has been conducted, but “events” related to anti-personnel mines have been reported that have not yet been assigned to demining operators.⁶

During 2020, Humanity and Inclusion (HI) discovered and reported five anti-personnel mined areas totalling 21,343m² that were not linked to “events” recorded in the national database.⁷ The HALO Trust reported a total of 166,078m² of newly discovered anti-personnel mined area. In both cases, this was believed to be legacy not newly emplaced contamination.⁸

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 The HALO Trust, mined areas in Colombia are low-density, nuisance minefields with the average size of minefields identified by the organisation

in 2019 as approximately 2,200m² in size.⁹ The average size of minefields in 2019, according to figures reported by the national authority, was 4,574m².¹⁰ Mines were planted in isolated rural areas to protect strategic positions; often coca cultivations whose crops were used by NSAGs to fund operations. When the groups moved on, the mines were left behind, blocking access to roads, paths, schools, and other civilian infrastructure, preventing productive use of land.¹¹ As there was little, if any, mapping of mined areas by NSAGs, and the intended victims were the military or paramilitaries, local communities were often informed that certain areas were mined, though no specifics were typically given. This has led to a widespread belief that mines are everywhere and local people are afraid to use vast areas of land for fear of mines, despite scant firm evidence of their presence.¹²

In many areas where the FARC-EP (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People’s Army) demobilised, the government has yet to arrive in force, with other NSAGs now struggling for power.¹³ This includes FARC-EP dissidents,¹⁴ the National Liberation Army (ELN), and drug-trafficking groups, especially the largest among them, the Gaitán Self-Defence Forces, made up of former mid-level paramilitary leaders. Most of the fight for control is concentrated in about one quarter of the country’s municipalities. Mine action operations will only be undertaken with the local community’s agreement, often in areas where mistrust of the State is high and community members are sceptical of the operator’s intentions due to the perception that operators are linked to the military. This is often

exacerbated by the proximity of the demining brigade's operations to civilian operators' areas of intervention. This negatively affects the ability of humanitarian demining organisations to conduct survey and clearance and to determine an accurate estimate of contamination in these areas.¹⁵

NEW CONTAMINATION

Descontamina Colombia recorded a 52% increase in the number of victims of anti-personnel mines from 114 in 2019 to 173 in 2020.¹⁶ More than three quarters of the victims came from five departments: Antioquia, Cauca, Nariño, Norte de Santander, and Valle del Cauca.¹⁷ These departments are among those with the highest levels of coca cultivation, and new landmines have reportedly been planted to prevent current coca crop eradication campaigns. There are also reports of new mines are being emplaced by the ELN and the Gaitán Self-Defence Forces in the department of Chocó in a battle for control over territory.¹⁸

In April 2021, the Venezuelan government requested technical on-the-ground assistance from the United Nations (UN) to deactivate an undisclosed number of anti-personnel mines that had been discovered in the state of Apure, on the border with Colombia and reported that two soldiers had died from anti-personnel mine blasts and other nine were injured.¹⁹ The presence of anti-personnel mines in this area and in the Norte de Santander (on the Colombian side of the border) also presents a danger to thousands of Venezuelan migrants that cross into Colombia on a daily basis escaping the longstanding social and economic crisis in the country.²⁰

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

In April 2017, following the adoption of a Presidential Decree, the Directorate for Comprehensive Mine Action (Dirección para la Acción Integral contra minas Antipersonal, DAICMA) became Dirección para la Acción Integral contra Minas Antipersonal – Descontamina Colombia. Descontamina Colombia was ostensibly made Colombia's national mine action authority, with responsibility for formulating the strategic direction of mine action, coordinating and monitoring mine action at national and local level, applying technical guidance, regulating State and non-State operators, and elaborating and implementing national standards. In practice, it also serves as the national mine action centre.²¹

In February 2019, responsibility for Descontamina Colombia was reallocated to the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP) along with the appointment of a new Director, the Commissioner for Peace.²² Coordination of the mine action sector has been delegated to the Deputy Commissioner.²³ Decrees 179 and 1784, both issued in 2019, elevated decision-making on Descontamina Colombia to the presidential level and established its functions at national and local level.²⁴ However, in this process Descontamina Colombia has been disconnected from the Office of the Presidential Counsellor for Stabilization, limiting access for the sector to stabilisation and development funds.²⁵

In 2011, Decree 3750 created the Instancia Interinstitucional de Desminado Humanitario (IIDH – Interinstitutional Tribunal for Humanitarian Demining), which is composed of a representative from the Ministry of National Defence, the General Inspectorate of the Military Forces, and Descontamina Colombia. It is responsible for recommending or suspending the certification of humanitarian demining organisations to the Ministry of National Defence as well as for determining and assigning demining tasks.²⁶

Decree 3750 also called for the elaboration of National Standards for Humanitarian Demining and regulates the quality management of demining operations.²⁷ Promulgated in July 2017, Decree 1195 outlines mitigation and correction measures that must be applied by operators when demining in national parks and other areas of ecological value.²⁸ Operators are currently expected to reforest in protected areas after clearance to mitigate environmental impact.²⁹ However, the extent of reforestation often exceeds any

estimated impact from manual clearance and there has been a lack of consistency in the application of the decree at a regional and local level.³⁰ In response, the OACP, with the support of FSD, created a toolkit which was being finalised as at June 2021, with a view to clarifying the obligations for operators and the process they should follow to comply with the decree; to clarify certain concepts and terminology; and to confirm the roles and responsibilities at local, regional, and national level within the environmental authorities.³¹

Operators report that there is largely an enabling environment for mine action in Colombia, although the approval and decision-making process can be slow (although this is not restricted to the mine action sector).³² HI and CCCM reported difficulties obtaining accreditation for international staff with an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) 2 qualification or above and delays in tax exemptions being granted for new contracts.³³ CCCM reported that this issue was raised with the OACP and a new procedure subsequently put in place.³⁴

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) has been supporting Colombia for several years on information management, gender and diversity, non-technical survey training of trainers, operational analysis, and through a study on the effect of ageing on improvised anti-personnel mines.³⁵ This study is particularly pertinent to the Colombian context due to the large proportion of non-functional mines found. Unfortunately, the process stalled due to a lack of political will and, by July 2021, the study had been shelved.³⁶ In 2021, the GICHD was working with Descontamina Colombia on the implementation of quality management systems which involves conducting an in-country assessment of the quality management system and review of the quality management standard. Upon completion, the GICHD will provide Descontamina Colombia with recommendations on how to improve their quality management systems. The GICHD is also conducting a study of the humanitarian and socio-economic impact of explosive ordnance in Colombia.³⁷

FSD has been helping the OACP to develop, review, and implement national standards, and to improve their information management capacities, albeit with mixed success. In July 2019, following the start of FSD's new contract, an additional information management advisor was

hired to support Descontamina Colombia with data analysis and evidence-based decision making.³⁸ In 2020, FSD drafted a new matrix for evaluating new assignments for operators, which was approved by the OACP during a technical meeting with FSD, OAS and UNMAS, and performance indicators to measure operational efficiency and effectiveness as well as providing support to the OACP and operators on environmental management.³⁹ In 2021, the FSD conducted an analysis on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on demining in Colombia, consolidated the final version of the performance indicators, and conducted training on data analysis for the OACP and the operators to prepare for implementation of the performance indicators.⁴⁰

The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) provides technical assistance to the national authority as well as training and capacity building with a focus on national operators. UNMAS worked closely with Humanicemos DH to support capacity development to enable it to become a fully self-sufficient operator. In March 2020, UNMAS was given responsibility for quality management of the work of Humanicemos DH, which formally began survey and clearance operations in November 2020.⁴¹ In 2021, UNMAS was working with the OACP to develop a standardised methodology for post-clearance impact assessments that can be used by all operators. These are expected to help identify the link between mine action and the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs).⁴²

Colombia has estimated the total cost of the mine action programme in 2020–25 will be almost US\$250 million, of which the government will fund 30%. Colombia plans to seek funding from the international community to cover the remainder.⁴³ Of this, the projected cost of demining activities is estimated at \$183 million, of which the government will fund \$55 million.⁴⁴ For demining, Colombia is 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.⁴⁵

In 2020, Descontamina Colombia received \$1.4 million in national funding, a reported 32% increase on the previous year. The resources were mainly allocated to MRE and victim

assistance. In addition, the Humanitarian Demining Brigade (BRDEH) received over \$42 million in national funding in 2020 and the Marine Corps Explosives and Demining Association (AEDIM) received nearly \$400,000.⁴⁶ In 2020, Colombia received \$23.8 million in international funding for mine action, a 37% decrease from the \$37.7 million received in 2019. In addition, Colombia received \$38.1 million from the Howard G. Buffet Foundation to strengthen the national capacity of the BRDEH for the period 2017–21.⁴⁷

In 2020, Colombia elaborated a resource mobilisation strategy which estimated a funding shortfall of \$174.1 million for demining activities, MRE, victim assistance, information management, and technical assistance for 2020–25. This takes into account the funding needs of civilian operators and the technical and financial support required by the BRDEH and AEDIM. It was approved in June 2021 that funding from the UN Multi-donor Fund for Sustaining Peace in Colombia (UN-MPTF) should include mine action.⁴⁸

Operators have reported being consulted during the review of national standards.⁴⁹ In its latest Article 7 transparency report, Colombia reported that during 2020 the OACP worked on developing a coordination strategy in concert with the Presidential Cooperation Agency of Colombia (APC-Colombia) and in accordance with the National Strategy for International Cooperation (ENCI). It expected this would be consolidated in the first quarter of 2021, but this does not seem to have yet occurred.⁵⁰ However, Colombia does not have a platform in place which brings all stakeholders together to discuss the strengths and challenges of Article 5 implementation and coordination between national government entities is reported to be poor. The last meeting held by the OACP and donors was in 2019 but the Swiss Embassy in Colombia has offered support to the OACP to initiate a forum to bring together the OACP, operators, and other partners from the mine action sector with the aim of eventually bringing in other donors and national entities.⁵¹

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Colombia, with the support of the GICHD, developed the Gender Guidelines for Mine Action in 2019 and reports that gender is mainstreamed within the framework of the new Strategic Plan 2020–25.⁵² Data are disaggregated by gender, age, and ethnicity. The CCCM, DRC, The HALO Trust, HI, and NPA, all reported consulting women and children as well as men during non-technical survey and community liaison and employing women in their non-technical survey teams.⁵³ According to the MRE technical norm, approaches must consider the needs, capacities, and strengths of everyone and all ethnic groups, and teams must be gender balanced. However, the technical norm on land release does not reflect the gender and diversity provisions in the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).⁵⁴

Colombia has a significant indigenous and ethnic minority group population at 13.7%, which are afforded their own constitutional protections and therefore require a specific approach during demining tasks. Indigenous communities

are said to have been disproportionately affected by anti-personnel mine contamination.⁵⁵ The Implementation Framework Plan 2017–2032 and the National Development Plan both contain commitments to clear anti-personnel mines affecting ethnic minority communities.⁵⁶ However, there is no information or associated actions on how the needs of ethnic and minority groups are being considered during community liaison, survey, and clearance activities in the extension request, despite the commitments made in the 2017 Peace Deal and the Implementation Framework Plan. In order to gain access to indigenous reserves, special permission must be granted and operators work closely with communities to build trust by employing community liaison officers, deminers, and non-technical survey personnel directly from those communities. Operators involve local ethnic minority communities in the liaison process ahead of any field operations, working with them to map contamination and prioritise tasks.⁵⁷ The involvement of local indigenous communities during the community liaison process also gives

operators an understanding of the necessary preparations that must take place before survey or clearance can be conducted on sacred land.⁵⁸ CCCM reported that they also actively hire indigenous and afro-Colombia people for the non-technical survey and clearance teams in order to be more inclusive and improve their access to territories with indigenous populations.⁵⁹ There is also a plan in place by UNMAS for MRE materials to be made available in indigenous languages.⁶⁰

Colombia has a female head of its national mine action authority, one of the few women who hold this position in the world. In the OACP, of the 30 officials dedicated to mine action 19 (63%) are women.⁶¹ However, from the 5,563 accredited deminers in Colombia, only 220 (4.1%) are female deminers.⁶² As reported in Colombia's latest Article 7 report, BRDEH, the largest operator in Colombia, had no female deminers operational in 2020 and nor did AEDIM, the smaller military operator.⁶³ As at July 2021, no information had been provided by the BRDEH or AEDIM to Mine Action Review on whether there is equal access to employment within these organisations for qualified women and men or whether any measures have been put in place to achieve this.

The HALO Trust has an organisational gender and diversity policy. Open recruitment for jobs such as deminers specifically encourages women to apply because manual labour is often seen as not appropriate for women in some rural regions of Colombia.⁶⁴ In 2020, an average of 454 staff were employed across the programme each month, of whom 33% were women. Operations staff consisted of an average of 366 staff per month, of whom 37% were women. Managerial/supervisory staff consisted of an average of 88 staff per month, of whom 26% were women.⁶⁵

HI has an organisational disability, gender, and age policy which is being implemented in Colombia. HI actively recruits women and offers gender-appropriate working conditions, such as separate living quarters in the field. In 2020, 35% of staff in operational roles were women, which rose to 41%

at a managerial/supervisory level. HI's community liaison personnel are recruited locally and selected by the local community. HI's demining staff are usually also recruited locally with the exception of some positions which require more experienced personnel as per the national standards. This also applies when HI works within indigenous communities.⁶⁶

In 2020, Danish Demining Group (DDG), now renamed Danish Refugee Council's Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding Sector (DRC), reported that 43% of the total number of its employees in Colombia are women with 20% of managerial/supervisory positions held by women and 42% in operational positions. The non-technical survey team leaders participated in an online course in 2020 which provided an "Introduction to Gender and Diversity in Mine Action" from the GICHD.⁶⁷

CCCM has a gender and diversity policy and implementation plan. In 2020, the CCCM updated its gender and diversity policy and developed new procedures to promote efforts to achieve gender parity within the organisation and build a work environment that is free of all types of discrimination and gender-based violence. This work was extended to include the families of their staff with the aim of achieving safe spaces both at home and at work.⁶⁸

Gender focal points have been appointed within community liaison, survey, and clearance teams to ensure that gender is being mainstreamed throughout the CCCM. The organisation has reviewed its hiring processes to make roles more accessible to women both at the operational and managerial level, but despite these efforts the inclusion of women remains a challenge. In 2019, 29% of clearance teams and 31% of non-technical survey teams were women while 50% of the national management team and 31% of the operational management team are female.⁶⁹ In 2021, twelve of CCCM's non-technical survey and clearance teams were led by women.⁷⁰

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Government Decree 1649 of 2014 assigned Descontamina Colombia responsibility for the IMSMA database and mandated it to "compile, systematise, centralise, and update relevant information" to serve as a basis for programme planning.⁷¹ Descontamina Colombia uses the IMSMA database and its own Periferico database. Poor information management has been a feature of the mine action programme since its inception. In 2018, an evaluation of information management was conducted and as a result the national authority, in partnership with FSD, elaborated an Improvement Plan 2018–19. According to the national authority, this has led to a review of the IMSMA database, increased data sharing with external parties, increased information management capacity, and improved reporting procedures and data management.⁷²

The GICHD have also noted improvements since 2017 in data sharing and data quality following a significant review and correction of IMSMA data.⁷³ Access to data has improved, with IMSMA now available online and licences granted to the operators for access to the Periferico database. Training has also been provided for operators in the management of the online platforms that are required to submit demining

outputs.⁷⁴ In addition, efforts from the national authority to improve the data in the database are ongoing. New data collection, analysis, and processing tools have been introduced and promoted by the NMAA, UNMAS, and the GICHD with the support of ESRI Colombia (Survey123, Collector, Dashboard, and Historical Maps, among others).⁷⁵ The HALO Trust reported that the use of Survey123 for weekly reporting on clearance activities worked well in 2020 and has not increased the workload for operators.⁷⁶ HI says Descontamina Colombia are willing to listen and provide support in solving problems.⁷⁷ The national authority reported that in 2020 improvements were made to reporting tools and a dashboard of demining operations was created which is updated weekly and allows for real-time monitoring of survey and clearance tasks.⁷⁸

Since 1990, Colombia has collected and reported on "events" related to anti-personnel mines, unexploded ordnance (UXO), and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). These data have been the main indicators of contamination and have formed the basis of demining planning and prioritisation.⁷⁹ IMSMA "events" are the main source of contamination information in areas that have not yet been surveyed and form the starting

point for non-technical surveys carried out by operators.⁸⁰ Operators have found these IMSMA events are beset with errors, including duplications and inaccuracies. Despite some improvements to the registration of events and a clean-up of the database, when operators are assigned a task and investigate each event, they are still finding that most do not contain either mines or UXO.⁸¹ As a result, most of the investigated events are cancelled or discarded.

In contrast, the national authority had conducted an analysis of IMSMA events in the database and found that 59% of the total number of hazardous areas that had been identified corresponded with sectors where IMSMA events had been found and investigated and that 30% of hazardous areas identified had an IMSMA event within 200 metres of the polygon.⁸² Once non-technical survey has been carried out, there is a much clearer understanding of contamination and the data in the national information system for these areas become reliable.⁸³

There are frequent discrepancies between operators' data and the figures from the national authority. While the national authority provide a weekly update of all demining statistics, there is often a delay in information processing, which means

that the publicly available figures are not always accurate or up to date.⁸⁴ Administrative delays between the National Authority, the external monitoring system (the Organization of American States, OAS) and operators contribute to delays with approvals taking time between various parties.⁸⁵

Article 7 reports are submitted on a timely basis, and Colombia's latest Article 7 report also includes comprehensive information in relation to the implementation of the Oslo Action Plan. There are large disparities in the clearance data recorded in the Article 7 reports when compared to the clearance data recorded on the humanitarian demining dashboard that is regularly updated by the OACP – Descontamina. In March 2020, Colombia submitted its Article 5 deadline extension request which while there are some positives in that it presents an estimate of contamination that is at least partially based on non-technical survey, it fails to address longstanding issues around land release, task prioritisation, and quality management; contains data inconsistencies; and lacks clear and achievable targets for land release of all the contaminated land remaining to be addressed.⁸⁶

PLANNING AND TASKING

In 2019, Colombia developed a new Strategic Plan 2020–25 "Towards a Colombia free of the suspicion of anti-personnel mines for all Colombians", which formed the basis of Colombia's 2020 extension request. In March 2019, a participatory review of the mine action sector began. Operators and other sector stakeholders including UNMAS and FSD were asked to help redesign the mine action strategy through workshops, but these ceased in June 2019, as did feedback or progress updates from Descontamina.⁸⁷ Some operators also reported concerns that the framework for the strategy lacks specific detail in addressing some key issues, such as prioritisation, technical survey, insecurity, and lack of capacity at the national authority.⁸⁸ GICHD reported that they were not involved in any review of the strategy and that the process did not seem to follow the strategic planning guidance.⁸⁹

Colombia included an operational plan for demining in both its extension request and Article 7 report covering 2019 and provided annual land release/clearance targets for 2020–23 for the 3.33km² of suspected and confirmed hazardous area that has been identified through non-technical survey in 156 municipalities (see Table 2). These tasks have already been assigned to operators, the majority of which at 64%, has been assigned to the Humanitarian Demining Brigade (Brigada de Desminado Humanitario, BRDEH).⁹⁰ It is not clear from the extension request how much of this will be released through survey and how much through clearance.

According to the plan, the additional 166 municipalities with reported anti-personnel mine contamination, but no ongoing operations, will be surveyed and cleared in 2024–25, although this is obviously heavily dependent on security conditions. As at July 2021, 129 municipalities were restricted due to insecurity with the rest of the 37 municipalities now accessible and assigned to operators. The OACP has now tasked all operators with all the accessible contaminated municipalities but UNMAS has raised concerns that the 129 inaccessible municipalities should not be left behind and

that there should be an entry strategy in place for the mine action activities which are possible in these areas, such as MRE.⁹¹ Colombia plans to implement a "micro-targeting" methodology in these municipalities which will involve convening working groups to assess the available information about inaccessible areas that have suspected mine contamination.⁹² Although not included in the annual targets, Colombia reports elsewhere in its 2020 extension request that an estimated 4.95km² of mined area located in areas where non-technical survey has yet to be completed in the 156 municipalities assigned to operators will also require clearance.⁹³

Table 2: Annual land release projections in the 2020 Article 5 deadline extension request⁹⁴

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

In 2020, Colombia planned to release 1.02km² across 194 hazardous areas, a target which Colombia managed to exceed despite the challenges posed by the outbreak of COVID-19 in the country. The Colombian government ordered a mandatory countrywide lockdown from March to June 2020 and all demining operations were suspended during this time. In June, the government began progressively opening some sectors of the economy and demining operations were allowed to officially restart. HI reported that at a national level operators were required to elaborate a biosecurity protocol to prevent the spread of the virus. In addition, local communities and municipal authorities adopted additional restrictions regarding mobility and were generally reluctant

to allow entry to non-community members. This varied from one place to another and led to some re-tasking for operators in June–August.

Some communities required teams to quarantine for two weeks before starting operations and limited the number of teams; others required periodic negative PCR tests. Operations were also affected by suspected or confirmed COVID cases, requiring quarantine period for part of the staff.⁹⁵ DRC reported that they had to suspend their operations during the official lockdown and then again from the end of June to November due to the number of COVID-19 cases within the teams.⁹⁶ For the HALO Trust operations did not fully resume until the end of August due to travel restrictions but they were able to restart inter-municipal and inter-departmental travel from late June allowing some operations to resume.⁹⁷

In its latest Article 7 report, Colombia presented updated annual land release targets to 2025 for 397 “zones” across 2.77km² of suspected and confirmed hazardous area (see Table 3). In the new targets Colombia is planning to release only 459,890m² of hazardous area in 84 zones in 2021 across the departments of Antioquia, Bolívar, Caldas, Caquetá, Cauca, Huila, Santander, Sucre, and Valle del Cauca.⁹⁸ It is unclear when Colombia plans to release the remaining contamination, as the projections in the latest Article 7 report (covering 2020) do not even extend to include all the 2.95km² across a total of 419 confirmed and suspected hazardous areas that Colombia reported as at end 2020.

Table 3: Annual land release projections from Article 7 report (covering 2020)⁹⁹

Year	SHAs/CHAs	Area (km ²)
2021	84	0.46
2022	69	0.51
2023	94	0.79
2024	37	0.40
2025	113	0.61
Totals	397	2.77

Colombia prioritised its task allocation according to the IIDH and the Strategic Plan for Comprehensive Action against Antipersonnel Mines 2016–2021. The IIDH considers information provided by local bodies, the Early Warning System of the Ombudsman's Office, and the General Command of the Military Forces, and Descontamina Colombia.¹⁰⁰ The Strategic Plan 2016–21 categorised municipalities in Type (Priority) I, II, and III, which are then proposed for task allocation to the demining organisations without a given order, hindering a systemic approach to demining. Of the 156 municipalities assigned to operators

for land release in 2020–23, 53% are Type I and 40% are Type II.¹⁰¹ Type I areas, which correspond to municipalities with human casualties from anti-personnel mines between January 2010 and December 2015, tend to have the highest levels of anti-personnel mine contamination and the most security issues. In these areas, contaminated territories are often inaccessible to operators or operators are forced to suspend survey and clearance operations due to security concerns. These suspensions can last anywhere from a few days to an indefinite period depending on how severely the situation disrupts operations.¹⁰²

In Colombia's 2020 extension request, a new model for prioritisation was alluded to but no detailed information was provided.¹⁰³ According to Colombia, this new model integrates IMSMA data with more than 40 indicators that consider security conditions, public policy, and bids from demining operators.¹⁰⁴ However, there was no consultation with operators on this new model nor was this model discussed in the strategic review workshops.¹⁰⁵

Descontamina Colombia's ability to coordinate has come under scrutiny, as operators are not always assigned tasks in geographical clusters or are assigned tasks that are disconnected from their existing areas of operation. This is not an efficient use of resources and it continued to be an issue into 2021. For example, an area in Chaparral, a municipality in the department of Tolima, was recently tasked to HI despite it not having a presence in the department and with the two other areas in the same municipality already tasked to BRDEH and the HALO Trust.¹⁰⁶ CCCM also provided an example from May 2021 when several new municipalities were opened and tasks were allocated to operators that had no previous presence in the area rather than to operators already assigned to neighbouring municipalities.¹⁰⁷ Under Article 6(8) of the APMBC, States Parties receiving international assistance are obligated to cooperate with a view to ensuring the full and prompt implementation of agreed assistance programmes.

In previous years operators have raised concerns that the criteria for selection are biased towards the BRDEH with all but one municipality assigned to BRDEH in 2019.¹⁰⁸ FSD reported that the criteria for assigning tasks have been changed and will be aligned with a set of operational performance indicators that will measure efficiency of operators' task completion. The performance indicators will be used when assigning new tasks and also during operators' accreditation renewal. The performance indicators are in the technical norm for information management and the new criteria for assigning tasks is set out within the annex of the technical norm for assigning tasks.¹⁰⁹

Within municipalities, operators prioritise tasks in agreement with municipal authorities, local leaders and the national mine action authority according to the needs of the local community.¹¹⁰

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

In 2020, Colombia developed a new set of 17 NMAS, which it renamed technical norms. The process was finalised in December with support from ICONTEC (Colombian Institute of Technical Standards and Certification) and the technical norms and annexes were published in June 2021. A working group was established by the OACP to review the technical norms with representatives from the Ministry of Defence; the General Inspectorate of the Military Forces; the OAS and UNMAS in their

capacity as the monitoring bodies; FSD in its role as advisor; and the national and international mine action operators.¹¹¹ According to operators they were consulted throughout the review process and the new technical norms were also subject to a public consultation process. Although the OACP did not adopt all the suggestions from stakeholders the new NMAS are viewed as an important step in improving land release processes in Colombia.¹¹² The operators have three months from the publication of the technical norms to elaborate their standard operating procedures (SOPs), which will be reviewed by the OACP with implementation due to begin from September 2021.¹¹³

The new technical norms include the long-awaited land release standard and also new standards for technical survey, non-technical survey, and information management. The information management technical norm is key to establishing consistent and meaningful procedures for collecting, analysing, reporting, and sharing information across and outside the sector.¹¹⁴ Technical survey had not yet been implemented by all operators in Colombia as, according to the previous standard, if any contamination was found during survey full clearance of the entire area must be carried out, negating the efficiencies of technical survey.¹¹⁵ It is planned that once the new technical norms are implemented from mid-September 2021 operators should be able to conduct technical survey.¹¹⁶

In localities where security allows operators to conduct survey and clearance, contaminated areas are characterised as being of low density and “low functionality”. The HALO Trust estimated that at least 90% of the ordnance they

have found has degraded due to water ingress and is non-functional. However, the NMAS have not adapted to this context and are more appropriate to contamination that has a high functionality. This makes clearance extremely inefficient and expensive. Furthermore, the government has adopted an extremely conservative approach to risk management, due to concerns around legal liability, with an over-reliance on full clearance.¹¹⁷ According to the FSD, this issue will be addressed in part by the new technical norms and they allow for the full toolbox of land release methodologies including technical survey and improvements to non-technical survey by including deployment of explosive ordnance disposal capacity to avoided marking areas for clearance when just EOD is necessary.¹¹⁸

In 2020, HI reported that in both of the two areas in which clearance operations were finalised in 2020, no contamination was found at all, totalling 2,687m² of cleared area.¹¹⁹ DRC cleared three areas with no mines found totalling 2,039m² and the HALO Trust cleared 37 areas with no mines found totalling 86,414m².¹²⁰ The national authority reported that, in 2019, no contamination was found in 58% of tasks cleared.¹²¹ The CCCM, however, reported an improvement from 2019 to 2020 in the number of items of explosive ordnance found per hazardous area.¹²² According to Colombia's 2020 Article 5 deadline extension request, the high proportion of clearance conducted on areas with no mine contamination was in part due to the high perception of risk from anti-personnel mines by affected communities.¹²³ This is not persuasive from a land release perspective.

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 operations: two national operators and five non-governmental organisations (NGOs).¹²⁴ By far the largest clearance operator is the National Army's Humanitarian Demining Brigade (Brigada de Desminado Humanitario (BRDEH)). The Marine Corps Explosives and Demining Association (AEDIM), a smaller military operator, conducts clearance and destruction of anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) in areas under the jurisdiction of the National Navy.¹²⁵ Demining is also conducted by international mine action NGOs The HALO Trust, HI, and DRC, and national NGOs CCCM and Humanicemos DH. In 2020, NPA decided to close its programme in Colombia as it was decided that the resources could be better deployed elsewhere. Survey and clearance operations ceased at the end of February.¹²⁶

Table 4: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2020¹²⁷

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers*	Dogs and handlers	Machines**	EOD personnel	Comments
BRDEH	N/R	4,058	10 dogs	3	78	Increase from 2019
AEDIM	N/R	142	0	0	164	Increase from 2019
CCCM	26	129	0	0	12	Increase from 2019
HALO	30	150	0	0	8	No change from 2019
HI	3	22	0	0	28	Reduction from 2019
DRC	3	15	0	0	2	Increase from 2019
Humanicemos DH	N/R	18	0	0	10	N/K
Totals	N/K (62-)	4,534	10 dogs	3	302	

* Excluding team leaders, medics, and drivers. ** Excluding vegetation cutters and sifters.

The HALO Trust deployed on average three non-technical survey teams per month totalling 12 personnel in 2020. Overall, there was no significant increase or decrease in staffing numbers from 2019 to 2020. Due to additional funding from the US government HALO Trust is expecting to increase capacity of both clearance and survey teams in 2021 with HALO expanding its area of operations.¹²⁸

There was a reduction in clearance capacity from 2019 to 2020 for HI due to an indefinite suspension of operations in San Vicente del Caguan, Caqueta. Overall HI's capacity remained stable as during 2020 non-technical survey operations were initiated in Cauca. HI deployed six non-technical survey teams totalling 28 personnel across the departments of Meta and Cauca in 2020. In 2021, HI expected a small overall increase in capacity due to new task assignments and has introduced a new mechanical asset into its operations.¹²⁹ HI has begun using the GCS-100 machine for mechanical ground preparation, which is expected to be highly useful for supporting efficient operations in the Colombian context, thanks to its small size and weight (and thus easier mobility). HI had planned to implement the machine in 2020 but was unable to do so due to issues around security, COVID-19 and importation which resulted in HI "losing" accredited personnel, having to train again and only start operations in 2021.¹³⁰

In 2020, CCCM was assigned tasks in nine new municipalities, with demining activities planned to begin in 2021. The operator's demining capacity is also planned to increase in 2021 by 320%. In order to increase efficiency, capacity has been reconfigured with most teams now operating as multi-task teams able to conduct both survey and clearance and four teams remaining as solely non-technical survey teams.¹³¹

In 2020, DRC began clearance activities for the first time; it also deployed two non-technical survey teams totalling six people. In 2021, DRC planned to expand and conduct survey and clearance in Curillo, Milan, and Solano municipalities in the department of Caquetá by adding one community liaison team, five non-technical survey teams, and four clearance teams to its existing capacity.¹³² DRC is using drones to conduct marking during non-technical survey activities. In addition, DRC has developed information management software, which automates reporting, mapping, and risk analysis. DRC has also started using a new protection material called Dyneema, which is more resistant and lighter than Kevlar and is not so easily affected by humidity.¹³³

Humanicemos DH, the demining organisation comprised of ex-fighters from the FARC-EP, was accredited in August 2017.¹³⁴ In March 2020, the United Nations and the Government of Colombia, with the support of the European Union, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) facilitating the demining operations of Humanicemos DH. The MoU designated UNMAS as the responsible agency for external quality management and monitoring of Humanicemos

DH.¹³⁵ In November 2020, Humanicemos DH began survey and clearance operations in La Montanita, Caqueta and has been tasked with demining a second municipality in Caqueta in 2021. In 2021, they have deployed a total of around 100 personnel divided into four non-technical survey teams and two to three clearance teams.¹³⁶

The OAS serves as the body for accreditation and monitoring of humanitarian demining in Colombia, for all operators with the exception of Humanicemos DH. It has been criticised for being too focused on compliance rather than on supporting the operators to run effective demining operations. This has manifested itself in non-critical conformities being determined by rigid application and varied interpretation of national standards and/or SOPs, leading to delays in operations.¹³⁷ The differences in interpretation can depend on the region or individual OAS personnel with the HALO Trust reporting that processes are adapted dependent on the location or individual monitor or even in the same location when there is a change of personnel by OAS.¹³⁸ The impact of excessive oversight can often disrupt the continuity of operations, causing the shut-down of tasks for minor non-safety related issues.¹³⁹ DRC considers that the delays imposed by the OAS due to their inefficiency to conduct proper monitoring has negatively affected DRC's work in the country.¹⁴⁰ There is a high turnover of leadership at the OAS with a new head of mission in post almost every year. As of writing, it had been without a head of mission since January 2021.¹⁴¹

At the request of Descontamina Colombia, FSD has been seeking to build capacity in the OAS, including by refocusing monitoring on QA and QC, rather than on minor administrative non-conformities.¹⁴² The introduction of a new system of confidence levels was under discussion but it was decided in 2020 not to proceed as it became too difficult to implement.¹⁴³ The initial idea was that each operator would be assigned a confidence level and an operator with good confidence levels would be subject to less frequent visits from OAS, allowing them to focus on operators that need more support.¹⁴⁴ However, the OAS wanted the confidence levels to work on an individual basis rather than an organisational one and this has now been superseded by the introduction of performance indicators. According to FSD, in general, the OAS has been very resistant to external support and very little capacity building has been carried out.¹⁴⁵ For example, the FSD was tasked by the OACP with analysing the OAS data on non-conformities, but the OAS refused to surrender these data, despite numerous requests from the OACP.¹⁴⁶

DEMINER SAFETY

There were two attacks by FARC dissidents on demining teams from the BRDEH during September 2020 in the Valle del Cauca department. In the first, a truck was burnt, and another vehicle was stolen along with demining equipment. In the second, twenty soldiers were detained by armed dissidents and then later released in a rural area.¹⁴⁷

In March 2020, in the municipality of San Vicente del Caguan, in Caqueta two HI staff members were attacked in their homes in the urban area of the municipality and a third staff member was also sought out, but was not at home; fortunately, there were no injuries. This follows on from threatening phone calls to HI personnel in 2019, which led to HI asking the national authority to be de-assigned from this task. In addition, security concerns have led to suspension or partial suspension of HI operations in the Caloto, Corinto, Cajibío, and Paez municipalities, in Cauca department, and in Vistahermosa, in Meta.¹⁴⁸

In the departments of Cauca and Valle del Cauca, HALO Trust operations were affected by a number of security incidents and the decision was made to suspend operations in both departments in July 2020.¹⁴⁹

CCCM has not been able to conduct operations in Vista Hermosa in the department of Meta since 2018 when one of their vehicles was held by non-state armed groups for two months. During 2020, CCCM held meetings with community members and the OACP and is planning to start working in the area again as soon as possible.¹⁵⁰

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2020

A total of just over 1.28km² of mined area was released in 2020, of which 1.08km² was cleared, 0.12km² was reduced through technical survey, and 0.09km² was cancelled through non-technical survey.

SURVEY IN 2020

In 2020, 86,891m² was cancelled through non-technical survey (see Table 5), more than double the 33,644m² cancelled in 2019. According to operators, areas cancelled through non-technical survey are either cancelled during clearance but recorded through non-technical survey teams or are the values of the IMSMA events with the equivalent size of the area per cancelled event as defined by the national authority.¹⁵¹

A total of 115,371m² was reported as reduced through technical survey in 2020 (see Table 4), an 80% decrease from the 574,473m² reduced in 2019.¹⁵² As in previous years, neither the HALO Trust nor HI reported reducing any mined areas through technical survey as they do not implement technical survey in the country.¹⁵³

Table 5: Cancellation through non-technical survey in 2020¹⁵⁴

Department	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
Antioquia	N/R	1,823
Caldas	N/R	2,026
Huila	N/R	34,692
Meta	N/R	35,104
Putumayo	N/R	630
Tolima	N/R	12,320
Valle del Cauca	N/R	296
Total		86,891

Table 6: Reduction through technical survey in 2020¹⁵⁵

Department	Operator	Area reduced (m ²)
Antioquia	N/R	18,027
Caldas	N/R	31,613
Caqueta	N/R	115
Huila	N/R	12,362
Santander	N/R	14,654
Tolima	N/R	21,123
Valle del Cauca	N/R	17,477
Total		115,371

N/R = Not reported

CLEARANCE IN 2020

In 2020, a total of 1,078,529m² was reported as cleared along with the destruction of 144 anti-personnel mines (see Table 7). This represents a 36% increase from the 791,078m² cleared in 2019, when 268 anti-personnel mines were found and destroyed.

Table 7: Mine clearance in 2020¹⁵⁶

Province	Operator	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	UXO Destroyed
Antioquia	N/K	36	184,017	21	3
Bolivar	N/K	5	8,428	0	0
Caldas	N/K	15	76,349	12	0
Caqueta	N/K	26	187,706	45	15
Huila	N/K	32	44,145	9	9
Meta	N/K	17	287,025	27	8
Nariño	N/K	6	17,062	1	1
Putumayo	N/K	7	57,935	17	4
Santander	N/K	10	61,837	3	0
Tolima	N/K	4	32,865	3	4
Valle del Cauca	N/K	23	121,160	6	3
Totals		181	1,078,529	144	47

AP = Anti-personnel

An additional 52 anti-personnel mines were found and destroyed during spot tasks in 2020: 19 by HI; 1 by DRC, and 32 by HALO.¹⁵⁷

HI reported an overall decrease in the amount of area cleared and cancelled through survey from 2019 to 2020 due to a suspension of operations from March to June due to the COVID-19 pandemic; a suspension of operations in Vistahermosa, Meta department, due to a security incident from September to December; and an indefinite suspension of operations in San Vicente del Caguán, Caqueta due to lack of security.¹⁵⁸ DRC reported an overall increase in output in 2020 as it did not undertake any clearance in 2019.¹⁵⁹ HALO Trust reported a significant decrease in the overall land released in 2020 compared with the previous year. The reason was attributed to the operational stand-down caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁶⁰

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE

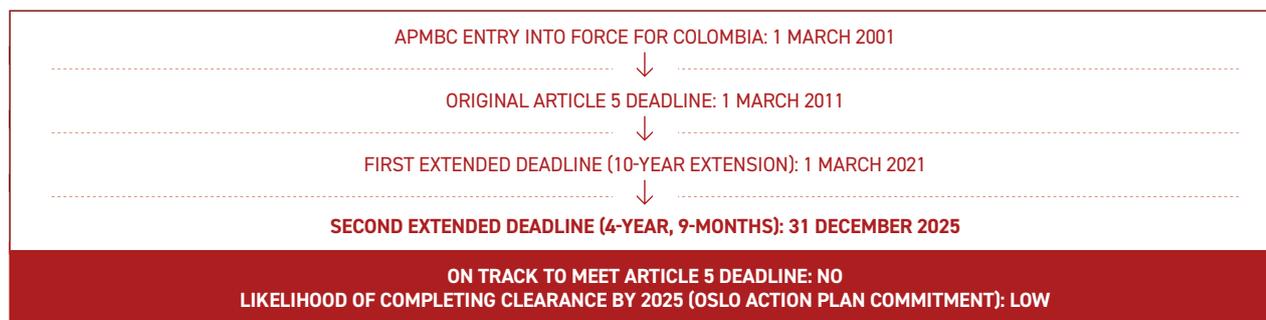


Table 8: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2020	1.08
2019	0.79
2018	0.96
2017	0.38
2016	0.29
Total	3.50

Under Article 5 of the APMBC, and in accordance with the four-year nine-month extension granted by States Parties in 2020, Colombia is required to destroy all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2025. It is unlikely that Colombia will be able to meet this deadline given the numerous challenges it will have to overcome, some of which are outside of the control of the mine action programme (though some are of its own making).

Overall land release output fell from nearly 1.40km² in 2019 to just over 1.28km² in 2020, although clearance output increased by 62%.¹⁶¹ Colombia was able to exceed the 1.02km² target for 2020 set out in its extension request despite the countrywide suspension of demining operations for three months due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although Colombia has begun non-technical survey and has started

reporting both suspected and confirmed hazardous areas, it is still difficult to assess whether it is feasible for Colombia to achieve completion of Article 5 during the extension period, first and foremost as it remains unclear how much contamination exists.

Based on the reported figures of 2.95km² of SHAs/CHAs identified through non-technical survey and an additional 4.78km² of projected contamination in areas yet to be surveyed, this would give a total of approximately 7.73km² of land to release from 2021 to 2025 in the areas that are accessible to operators. This would mean that Colombia would need to release on average 1.93km² per year for the next four years. This is a sizeable increase from the 1.54km² released in 2018, 1.40km² released in 2019, and 1.02km² released in 2020.

It remains to be seen whether implementation of the new technical norms will improve the efficiency of land release processes in Colombia. A high percentage of mined areas are being cleared without any mines found and, according to findings from The HALO Trust, up to 90% of mines that are found are non-functioning. The challenging terrain and climatic conditions along with an over-reliance on full clearance means that demining in Colombia is very expensive and, in this context, it is especially important that demining is conducted in the most effective and efficient way possible which includes ensure that operators are tasked and deployed effectively.

PLANNING FOR RESIDUAL RISK AFTER COMPLETION

In accordance with the new technical norms, Colombia has made it obligatory for an operator to be responsible for addressing any residual contamination in an assigned municipality for six months after handover. After this time, it will be the responsibility of the BRDEH and AEDIM, as Colombia's national demining capacity, to deal with any residual contamination. Colombia has a mechanism in place for communities to report any anti-personnel mine contamination that they encounter. This information is then analysed by the OACP before being passed onto the armed forces.¹⁶²

- 1 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D.
- 2 Email from Arturo Bureo, Operations Manager, HI, 13 May 2020.
- 3 Email from Rupert Leighton, Country Director, NPA, 24 April 2020; and email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 7 May 2021.
- 4 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D.
- 5 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 7 May 2021.
- 8 Email from Richard Scott, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 14 May 2021.
- 9 Emails from Oliver Ford, Programme Support Officer, HALO Trust, 17 May 2018 and 6 August 2020.
- 10 Office of the High Commissioner for Peace – Descontamina Colombia, Humanitarian Demining Statistics, 31 August 2020, at: <https://bit.ly/34eNTXc>.
- 11 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 6 August 2020; Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form D.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 "Colombia's Peace Deal Promised a New Era. So Why Are These Rebels Rearming?", *The New York Times*, 17 May 2019, at: <http://nyti.ms/2YRCuf1>.
- 14 FARC-EP dissidents are defined as those fighters never joined the peace process in the first place, or who have left the process since the signing of the peace agreement, or groups of fighters who were not part of the FARC-EP previously but have since joined.
- 15 International Crisis Group, "Risky Business: The Duque Government Approach", 21 June 2018; and interviews with Pauline Boyer and Aderito Ismael, HI, Vista Hermosa, 8 August 2018; Esteban Rueda, and Sergio Mahecha, NPA, Vista Hermosa, 9 August 2018; Hein Bekker, and Emily Chrystie, HALO Trust, San Juan de Arama, 10 August 2018; and John Charles Cagua Zambrano, and Francisco Profeta Cardoso, CCCM, Centro Poblado de Santo Domingo, 11 August 2018.
- 16 OACP, "Estadísticas de Asistencia Integral a las Víctimas de MAP y MUSE", at: <https://bit.ly/2UKJpNH>.
- 17 ICRC, "Humanitarian Challenges 2021 Colombia", at: <https://bit.ly/3yhzeaM>.
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- 19 Insight Crime, "Guerrillas colombianas exportan tácticas de minas terrestres a Venezuela", 22 April 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3AJ4lbc>.
- 20 UN News, "Continuing Venezuela exodus and COVID-19 highlights need for global solidarity for most vulnerable", 11 June 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3ALWoHS>.
- 21 Presidency of Colombia, Decree 672 of 2017.
- 22 Emails from Arturo Bureo, HI, 18 July 2019; and Rupert Leighton, NPA, 15 July 2019; Statement of Colombia, Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Geneva, 22 May 2019.
- 23 Email from UNMAS, 5 September 2020.
- 24 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form A.
- 25 Email from Jan Philip Klever, Programme Manager, UNMAS, 12 September 2019.
- 26 Descontamina Colombia, "Instancia Interinstitucional de Desminado Humanitario – IIDH", accessed 12 September 2018; email from Sergio Bueno Aguirre, Descontamina Colombia, 5 June 2018; and Ministry of National Defence, Decree 3750 of 2011.
- 27 Email from Sergio Bueno Aguirre, Descontamina Colombia, 5 June 2018.
- 28 Presidency of Colombia, Decree 1195 of 2017; and email from Carlos Afonso, FSD, 18 September 2018.
- 29 Email from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 28 August 2019.
- 30 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 6 August 2020; and telephone interview with Angela de Santis, FSD, 21 June 2021.
- 31 Telephone interview with Angela de Santis, FSD, 21 June 2021.
- 32 Emails from Caterina Weller, DRC, 5 May 2021; Arturo Bureo, HI, 7 May 2021; and Richard Scott, HALO Trust, 14 May 2021.
- 33 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 7 May 2021.
- 34 Email from Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 18 August 2021.
- 35 Email from GICHD, 13 May 2020.
- 36 Telephone interview with Pablo Parra and Gina Bernal, UNMAS, 14 July 2021.
- 37 Email from GICHD, 17 May 2021.
- 38 Email from Angela de Santis, Country Director, FSD, 20 August 2019.
- 39 Telephone interview with Angela de Santis, FSD, 21 June 2021.
- 40 Email from Angela de Santis, FSD, 5 August 2021.
- 41 Interview with Jan Philip Klever, UNMAS, Bogota, 16 August 2018; and email, 19 September 2018; and UNMAS Facebook post, 1 June 2020, at: <http://bit.ly/3f3U11Z>; and telephone interview with Pablo Parra and Gina Bernal, UNMAS, 14 July 2021.
- 42 Telephone interview with Pablo Parra and Gina Bernal, UNMAS, 14 July 2021.
- 43 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 86–87.
- 44 Ibid., p. 96.
- 45 Ibid., Annex 10 (exchange rate of 1USD = COP 3,430).
- 46 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form A.
- 47 Ibid., Form H.
- 48 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form H; and telephone interview with Pablo Parra and Gina Bernal, UNMAS, 14 July 2021.
- 49 Email from Caterina Weller, DRC, 5 May 2021; Arturo Bureo, HI, 7 May 2021; and Richard Scott, HALO Trust, 14 May 2021.
- 50 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form E.
- 51 Email from Pablo Parra, UNMAS, 13 September 2021.
- 52 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 77; and email from Arianna Calza Bini, Head of GMAP division, GICHD, 7 September 2020.
- 53 Emails from Arturo Bureo, HI, 18 July 2019; and Rupert Leighton, NPA, 15 July 2019; Hector Hernandez Acevedo, CCCM, 5 August 2019; and Martha Hurtado Granada, Office of the High Commissioner for Peace – Descontamina Colombia, 20 September 2019; Angela de Santis, FSD, 15 July 2020; and Juan Pablo Manríquez Möll, DRC, 14 August 2020.
- 54 Email from GICHD, 17 May 2021.
- 55 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 23 April 2020.
- 56 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form A.
- 57 Emails from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 23 April 2020; Rupert Leighton, NPA, 24 April 2020; and Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020.
- 58 Email from Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 18 July 2020.
- 59 Email from Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 18 August 2021.
- 60 Telephone interview with Pablo Parra and Gina Bernal, UNMAS, 14 July 2021.
- 61 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 84.
- 62 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Emails from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 9 and 21 August 2019.
- 65 Email from Richard Scott, HALO Trust, 14 May 2021.
- 66 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 7 May 2021.
- 67 Email from Caterina Weller, DRC, 5 May 2021.
- 68 Email from Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 18 August 2021.
- 69 Email from Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 18 July 2020.
- 70 Email from Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 18 August 2021.
- 71 Article 7 Report (covering 2014), Form C.
- 72 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form H.
- 73 Email from Marc Bonnet, GICHD, 31 August 2019.
- 74 Emails from Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020; and Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 18 July 2020.
- 75 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020.
- 76 Email from Richard Scott, HALO Trust, 14 May 2021.
- 77 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 18 July 2019.
- 78 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), p. 10.
- 79 Emails from Carlos Afonso, FSD, 18 August 2018; and Gabriel Vanegas Gómez, Descontamina Colombia, 9 October 2018.
- 80 Emails from Marc Bonnet, GICHD, 31 August 2019; and Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020.
- 81 Interviews with Pauline Boyer and Aderito Ismael, HI, Vista Hermosa, 8 August 2018; Esteban Rueda, Deputy Programme Manager, and Sergio Mahecha, Location Officer, NPA, Vista Hermosa, 9 August 2018; Hein Bekker, Location Manager, and Emily Chrystie, Trial Manager, HALO Trust, San Juan de Arama, 10 August 2018; John Charles Cagua Zambrano, Head of Base, and Francisco Profeta Cardoso, Operations Manager, CCCM, Santo Domingo, 11 August 2018; and emails from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 15 July 2019; Arturo Bureo, HI, 18 July 2019 and 7 May 2021; and Caterina Weller, DRC, 5 May 2021.

- 82 Email from Diana Marisol Peñalosa Mesa, Office of the High Commissioner for Peace – Descontamina Colombia, 25 September 2020.
- 83 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020.
- 84 Emails from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 23 April 2020; and Richard Scott, HALO Trust, 14 May 2021.
- 85 Email from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 24 April 2020.
- 86 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Fig. 9, p. 38. Figure titled “Areas cleared (m²) and explosive ordnance destroyed 2007-2020”, although these are actually annual land release figures. The figures covering 2018 and 2019 do not match the land release figures provided by Descontamina covering 2018 and the Article 7 report covering 2019. 2018 land release is 1.50km² on the chart and 1.54km² in Descontamina’s figures; 2019 land release is 1.37km² on the chart and 1.40km² in the Article 7 report.
- 87 Emails from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 9 August 2019; and Jan Philip Klever, UNMAS, 12 September 2019.
- 88 Email from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 15 July 2019; and Statement of Colombia, Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Geneva, 22 May 2019.
- 89 Email from GICHD, 17 May 2021.
- 90 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form D; 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 81.
- 91 Telephone interview with Pablo Parra and Gina Bernal, UNMAS, 14 July 2021.
- 92 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 89.
- 93 Ibid., p. 63.
- 94 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form D; 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 82.
- 95 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 7 May 2021.
- 96 Email from Caterina Weller, DRC, 5 May 2021.
- 97 Email from Richard Scott, HALO Trust, 14 May 2021.
- 98 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D.
- 99 Ibid.
- 100 Email from Sergio Bueno Aguirre, Descontamina Colombia, 5 June 2018.
- 101 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 18.
- 102 Emails from Arturo Bureo, HI, 18 July 2019; Hector Hernandez Acevedo, CCCM, 5 August 2019; and Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 9 August 2019.
- 103 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 20.
- 104 Statement of Colombia, Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Geneva, 22 May 2019.
- 105 Emails from Arturo Bureo, HI, 18 July 2019.
- 106 Interview with Jan Philip Klever, Programme Manager, UNMAS, Bogota, 13 August 2018; and emails, 19 September 2018 and 12 September 2019; and telephone interview with Pablo Parra and Gina Bernal, UNMAS, 14 July 2021.
- 107 Email from Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 18 August 2021.
- 108 Email from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 24 April 2020.
- 109 Telephone interview with Angela de Santis, FSD, 21 June 2021.
- 110 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 18 July 2019.
- 111 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form A; and emails from Caterina Weller, DRC, 5 May 2021; Arturo Bureo, HI, 7 May 2021; and Richard Scott, HALO Trust, 14 May 2021.
- 112 Email from Richard Scott, HALO Trust, 14 May 2021.
- 113 Telephone interview with Angela de Santis, FSD, 21 June 2021.
- 114 Email from Jan Philip Klever, UNMAS, 10 August 2020.
- 115 Email from Vanessa Finson, NPA, 11 May 2018.
- 116 Email from Angela de Santis, FSD, 5 August 2021.
- 117 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 23 April 2020.
- 118 Email from Angela de Santis, FSD, 5 August 2021.
- 119 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 7 May 2021.
- 120 Emails from Caterina Weller, DRC, 5 May 2021; and Richard Scott, HALO Trust, 14 May 2021.
- 121 Office of the High Commissioner for Peace – Descontamina Colombia, Humanitarian Demining Statistics, 31 August 2020, at: <https://bit.ly/34eNTXc>.
- 122 Email from Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 13 August 2021.
- 123 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 67.
- 124 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D.
- 125 Descontamina Colombia, “Agrupación de Explosivos y Desminado de Infantería de Marina – AEDIM”, undated but accessed 3 September 2018, at: <http://bit.ly/2McfRw1>.
- 126 Skype interview with Rupert Leighton, 17 July 2020.
- 127 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D; and emails from Caterina Weller, DRC, 5 May 2021; Arturo Bureo, HI, 7 May 2021; and Richard Scott, HALO Trust, 14 May 2021.
- 128 Email from Richard Scott, HALO Trust, 14 May 2021.
- 129 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 7 May 2021.
- 130 Ibid.
- 131 Email from Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 13 August 2021.
- 132 Email from Caterina Weller, DRC, 5 May 2021.
- 133 Ibid.
- 134 Email from Sergio Bueno Aguirre, Descontamina Colombia, 5 June 2018.
- 135 UNMAS Facebook post, 1 June 2020, at: <http://bit.ly/3f3U1Iz>.
- 136 Telephone interview with Pablo Parra and Gina Bernal, UNMAS, 14 July 2021.
- 137 Interviews with Pauline Boyer and Aderito Ismael, HI, Vista Hermosa, 8 August 2018; Esteban Rueda, and Sergio Mahecha, NPA, Vista Hermosa, 9 August 2018; Hein Bekker, and Emily Chrystie, San Juan de Arama, HALO Trust, 10 August 2018; and Alejandro Perez, CCCM, Bogota, 14 August 2018; and email from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 15 July 2019.
- 138 Email from Richard Scott, HALO Trust, 14 May 2021.
- 139 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO Trust, 6 August 2020.
- 140 Email from Caterina Weller, DRC, 5 May 2021.
- 141 Telephone interview with Angela de Santis, FSD, 21 June 2021.
- 142 Interview with Carlos Afonso, FSD, Bogota, 16 August 2018.
- 143 Telephone interview with Angela de Santis, FSD, 21 June 2021.
- 144 Interviews with representatives from OAS, Bogota, 15 August 2018; and Esteban Rueda, NPA, Vista Hermosa, 9 August 2018; and email from Gabriel Vanegas Gómez, Descontamina Colombia, 9 October 2018.
- 145 Email from Angela de Santis, FSD, 15 July 2020.
- 146 Telephone interview with Angela de Santis, FSD, 21 June 2021.
- 147 El Tiempo, “Presuntos disidentes retienen grupo de Desminado Humanitario en Tuluá”, 25 September 2020, at: <https://bit.ly/3ekhRyT>.
- 148 Telephone interview with Angela de Santis, FSD, 21 June 2021.
- 149 Email from Richard Scott, HALO Trust, 14 May 2021.
- 150 Email from Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 13 August 2021.
- 151 Emails from Rupert Leighton, NPA, 24 April 2020; and Arturo Bureo, HI, 13 May 2020.
- 152 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form D.
- 153 Emails from Arturo Bureo, HI, 7 May 2021; and Richard Scott, HALO Trust, 14 May 2021.
- 154 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D.
- 155 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D. DRC reported reducing 697m² in Caqueta.
- 156 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D. This differs from the OACP – Descontamina Colombia information dashboard where clearance in 2020 was reported as 1,348,325m² with 163 anti-personnel mines found and destroyed.
- 157 Emails from Caterina Weller, DRC, 5 May 2021; Arturo Bureo, HI, 7 May 2021; and Richard Scott, HALO Trust, 14 May 2021.
- 158 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 7 May 2021.
- 159 Email from Caterina Weller, DRC, 5 May 2021.
- 160 Email from Richard Scott, HALO Trust, 14 May 2021.
- 161 This is based on the figures provided by Colombia in its Article 7 report (covering 2020 and 2019). In the OACP – Descontamina Colombia humanitarian demining dashboard available online clearance in 2020 was recorded as 1.35km² in 2020 and as 1.81km² in 2019 which is closer to the figures provided for overall land release in the Article 7 reports. See: <https://bit.ly/3jXyG4t>.
- 162 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D.