

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



CLEARING THE MINES 2019

ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2021
INTERIM TWO-YEAR EXTENSION REQUESTED FOR SURVEY

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION:

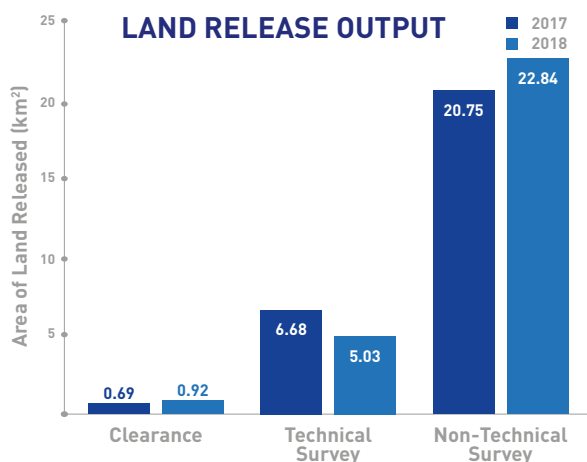
HEAVY, 50KM²
(ESTIMATED)

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2018

0.92KM²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2018

2,101



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per Maputo +15 Political Declaration aspiration): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) finalised a new national mine action strategy for 2018–25 in 2018, which was adopted by the Council of Ministers in January 2019. In 2018, BiH began a European Union (EU)-funded country assessment project to help determine a more accurate baseline of anti-personnel

mine contamination for realistic planning and to support the preparation of what is hoped will be its last Article 5 deadline extension request, due to be submitted before the end of March 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- BiH should adopt, without further delay, the amended demining law drafted in 2017.
- BiH should implement the recommendations of both the 2015 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Mine Action Governance and Management Assessment, and the 2016 performance audit report of the Audit Office of the Institutions of BiH. In particular, BiH should continue reforming and strengthening the governance and management of the mine action programme.
- BHMIC should strive to ensure that all implementing partners are conducting evidence-based survey and clearance, to more accurately identify and delineate areas of contamination, in line with the National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) and Standing Operating Procedures (SoPs).
- BHMIC should report more accurately and consistently on the extent of anti-personnel mine contamination, including using the classification of suspected hazardous area (SHA) and confirmed hazardous area (CHA) in a manner consistent with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).
- BHMIC should strive to improve gender balance in the sector, at the least by meeting the target of 40% female staff set by the 2003 Law on Gender Equality.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2018)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	5	BiH's current baseline of mined area is not accurate, with inflated SHAs. The "country assessment" project, currently underway, should help to determine a more accurate baseline and inform planning.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP & PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	5	National ownership of mine action in BiH falls under the responsibility of the Demining Commission and BHMIC, and the BiH mine action strategy for 2018–25 has been adopted. Governance and management of the mine action programme could be strengthened and reformed. As at June 2019, the amended demining law was still awaiting parliamentary adoption.
GENDER (10% of overall score)	5	The National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 supports the 2003 Law on Gender Equality. BHMIC has stated that, under its leadership, relevant actors will include gender in all phases of all mine action activities. However, of BHMIC's own 107 operations staff in the field, only 10 were women.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT & REPORTING (10% of overall score)	6	There is considerable scope to improve the accuracy and consistency of BHMIC's mine action data and information management system, which should also be made consistent with the IMAS. BHMIC is in the process of developing a new database, which will fulfil IMAS requirements.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	6	BiH adopted its National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 in January 2019. It is hoped that the results of the EU-funded "country assessment" project, expected to be completed at the end of 2019, will assist planning and the realisation of the new National Strategy.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	8	BiH has NMAS and SoPs in place for the efficient release of mined areas through evidence-based survey (including technical survey with targeted investigation) and clearance. BHMIC must ensure that all implementing partners adhere to the methodology.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	6	The amount of land released through clearance and cancelled through non-technical survey in 2018 was a slight increase on 2017, while technical survey output decreased slightly. Efforts in the latter half of 2018 were put into the "country assessment" project, to set a new baseline for realistic Article 5 implementation planning.
Average Score	6.0	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT

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

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Armed Forces of BiH
- BHMIC
- Civil Protection Administration of Republic of Srpska
- Federal Administration of Civil Protection
- Non-governmental organisations:
 - Association UEM
 - DEMIRA
 - Mine Detection Dog Centre (MDDC)
 - Pro Vita
 - Stop Mines
 - Udruga "Pazi Mine Vitez"
 - WBE

- Commercial demining companies:

- Detektor
- N&N Ivsa
- In Demining N.H.O

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

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

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

BiH is heavily contaminated with mines, primarily as a result of the 1992–95 conflict related to the break-up of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. All warring factions in BiH laid mines, primarily between confrontation lines.² Nearly twenty-four years after the end of the conflict, BiH is still the most heavily mined country in Europe. BiH is also contaminated with explosive remnants of war (ERW), including cluster munition remnants (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2019* report on BiH for further information).

In its latest Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 7 transparency report, BiH claimed a total of 1,018km² of mined area, across 8,525 locations, but did not disaggregate SHA and CHA.³ This represents a decrease of 43km² compared to the 1,061km² of mined area as at the end of 2017.⁴ The difference in figures between mined area as at the end of 2017 and 2018 cannot be satisfactorily reconciled based on the land released through survey and clearance in 2018.

Mined area reported to Mine Action Review (see Table 1) also totalled 1,018km² (as per BiH's Article 7 report), but was reported to be across a total of 8,948 mined areas (8,141 SHAs and 807 CHAs).⁵

Table 1: Anti-personnel mined area by canton (at end 2018)⁶

Canton	"Known" mined areas	Area (km ²)	Suspected mined areas	Area (km ²)
Unsko-Sanki	132	3.00	640	98.70
Posavski	6	0.37	174	17.39
Tuzlanski	57	1.39	704	78.43
Zanicko-Dobojski	52	1.79	665	115.83
Bosansko-Podrinjski	19	1.14	222	44.18
Srednje-Bosanski	100	3.23	761	119.52
Hercegovacko-Neret	68	3.00	1,225	147.00
Zapadno-Hercegovacki	3	0.23	10	0.08
Sarajevo	29	1.02	285	67.84
Canton 10	36	1.07	475	74.20
Subtotal BiH Federation	502	16.24	5,161	763.17
Republika Srpska	303	5.79	2,834	218.12
Brčko district	2	0.05	146	14.64
Totals	807	22.08	8,141	995.93

A 2016 national audit office report on the efficiency of the demining system in BiH concluded that: "Twenty years after the war ended, the Mine Action Centre still does not have complete information on the locations of landmines in BiH, which is to say it does not know the total suspected hazardous area."⁷ Similarly, a 2015 UNDP evaluation reported that the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre (BHMIC) is aware that not all of the SHA is actually mined, but "without more efficient non-technical survey and technical survey procedures the exact extent of the problem cannot be quantified."⁸

During 2017, plans were formalised between BHMIC, clearance operators, and the EU for a country assessment to establish a more accurate baseline of mine contamination and improve the efficiency of clearance operations.⁹ The resultant 18-month project, "Country assessment of mine-suspected areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018–2019" (hereafter, the "country assessment" project), was signed in August

and was planned to be completed by February 2020 (see the *Land Release System* section of this report for further information).¹⁰ If this leads to very significant reduction of SHA and identification of truly mined area, this will make a major contribution to improving programme performance.

Minefields in BiH generally contain relatively small numbers of mines, which are typically either "in groups or randomly laid". The quality of approximately 30% of minefield records was not sufficiently accurate for the identification of the precise minefield location and shape. Furthermore, approximately 40% of minefield records were reportedly never made or handed over, and records were often destroyed or lost for several reasons, such as the death or emigration of the persons who created the minefield records.¹¹ Physical changes to mined areas (such as in vegetation), and a lack of witnesses to the laying of the mines, pose additional challenges.¹²

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Demining Commission, under the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs, supervises the state-wide BHMAC and represents BiH in its relations with the international community on mine-related issues.¹³ The Demining Commission is composed of representatives from three ministries (Civil Affairs, Defence, and Security) elected to represent BiH's three main ethnic groups (Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs). Whereas the Minister for Civil Affairs remains ultimately responsible for mine action, the Demining Commission is the strategic body responsible for setting mine action policy, and it proposes the appointment of BHMAC senior staff, for approval by the Council of Ministers.¹⁴ The existing Demining Commission representatives were re-elected for a further two years (October 2017 to October 2019).¹⁵

One problem posed by the structure of the Demining Commission is that each of the three represented ministries has separate portfolios in their respective ministries; and their work on the Demining Commission is only part-time in addition to their other responsibilities.¹⁶ Furthermore, according to the 2016 audit office report, "The Commission has not developed a methodology on how to monitor the work of the BHMAC".¹⁷

BHMAC, established by a 2002 Decree of the Council of Ministers, is responsible for regulating mine action and implementing BiH's demining plan, including accreditation of all mine action organisations.¹⁸ BHMAC operates from its headquarters in Sarajevo, and two main offices in Sarajevo and Banja Luka, and eight regional offices (Banja Luka, Bihac, Brčko, Mostar, Pale, Sarajevo, Travnik, and Tuzla).¹⁹

Since 2008, efforts have been made to adopt new mine action legislation in BiH with a view to creating a stable platform for mine action funding by the government and local authorities. BiH demining authorities are following the 2015 recommendation of the Council of Ministers to amend the existing law, instead of adopting a new law,²⁰ and a working group which consisted of representatives from the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the Demining Commission, BHMAC, the Armed Forces, and the entity Civil Protections, created a first draft of the amended demining law.²¹ However, as at June 2019 the amended text from 2017 was still awaiting parliamentary adoption. Clearer legislation on liabilities related to mine action activities would be beneficial to all mine action stakeholders in BiH.

After a 10-year hiatus, Board of Donor meetings resumed in September 2015.²² As at April 2019, however, the last Board of Donor meeting had taken place in Sarajevo in November 2017.²³ BiH's new National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 specifies that at least two such meetings should be organised every year.²⁴ In October 2016, expert working groups (EWGs), which used to meet until 2009, were reinitiated and continue to meet.²⁵

BiH's second goal, in its National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, is that the "Mine action programme in BH is promoted on both national and international level to increase its visibility and improve liability, commitment and support of the state", and the strategy includes operational goals linked to this strategic goal.²⁶ As committed to in its national mine action strategy, BiH published a separate financial plan for implementation of the BiH mine action strategy for 2018–25. The plan sees BiH commit a national budget of 4.5 million BAM (over US\$2.5 million) per annum for the Armed Forces and 5.945 million BAM (US\$3.4 million) per annum for BHMAC, for 2019 and 2020; which is forecast to increase to a total of 21.55 million BAM (over US\$12.3 million, at current exchange rates) per annum in 2021–25.²⁷ This national funding is in addition to forecast international funding, which is also budgeted in BiH's financial plan.²⁸

BHMAC is funded by the common institutions of BiH and other institutions at state level.²⁹ BiH has calculated that the required cost to fulfil BiH's plans during its two-year interim extension period is almost 80 million BAM (US\$46 million), of which 50% will be national funding and 50% donor funding. Funds for non-technical survey activities by BHMAC will be ensured from the budgets of BiH institutions and implemented through operational activities of BHMAC. Budgets of BiH institutions will also ensure funds for technical survey and mine clearance activities to be implemented by Armed Forces. Entity governments' budgets will ensure funds for technical survey and mine clearance operations, to be implemented by entity civilian protections. Other funding resources from BiH include: Brčko District budget, budgets of cantons and municipalities, and budgets of public and private companies.³⁰

GENDER

The National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 specifies that "Under the leadership of BHMAC, relevant actors will include gender and diversity into all phases of planning, realisation and follow-up of all mine activities".³¹ The mine action strategy considered and supported the 2003 Law on Gender Equality in BiH, which includes equal treatment of the genders and equality of opportunity, and prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of gender. The Law on Gender Equality determines that equal representation of men and women exists when the percentage of either gender in bodies at all levels in BiH (state, entity, cantonal, and municipality level) is at least 40%. BiH's national mine action strategy also considered the 2017 Gender Equality Action Plan.³² However, as at April 2019, out of BHMAC's 171 employees, only 42 were women (25%). Of BHMAC's 107 operations staff in the field, 10 were women (9%).³³

BHMAC reported that it has a gender and diversity policy and that BHMAC upholds the Law on Gender Equality and routinely includes it in the development of strategies and standards.³⁴

Mines Advisory Group (MAG) has a gender policy and equal employment opportunities for suitably qualified females and males. However, as at August 2019 MAG's programme in BiH had never received applications from women for vacant operational roles, and of its 62 operational staff in BiH, only two medic positions were held by women, in addition to a female operations assistant. MAG does not have dedicated community liaison in BiH, but it reported that its survey and clearance teams seek to talk to all women and men living near the survey area to obtain as much data as possible. Of MAG's management team, the country director was female in 2018, along with a support services officer.³⁵

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) reported that it promotes gender equality in all aspects of its programme activities in BiH. Mixed gender representation is an obligation for NPA teams conducting community liaison and risk education.³⁶ NPA reported that the overall gender split of its staff as at April 2019 was 98 male employees and 10 female (9%).³⁷ NPA reported that it is driving to achieve a gender balance, and that the programme encourages the employment of women, including into managerial and operational staff positions.

Four managerial positions in the NPA BiH programme are held by women.³⁸

All groups affected by mines, including women and children, are reported to be consulted during survey and community liaison activities by both BHMIC and NPA, and survey and community liaison teams are inclusive with a view to facilitating this. BHMIC and NPA also reported that relevant mine action data is disaggregated by sex and age.³⁹

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

As at April 2019, BHMIC was using its own information management system, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Information System (BHMAIS).⁴⁰ However, BHMIC does not report accurately or consistently on mine contamination by SHAs and CHAs, in a manner consistent with IMAS. In addition, there are frequent inaccuracies in BHMIC reporting on land release.

Information in BHMIC's information management system is made available to clearance operators,⁴¹ but at present this is restricted to data for the specific tasks on which the operators are engaged.⁴²

BHMIC, with the support of UNDP and financing from the EU, plans to create a new web-based database to replace the existing system and increase accessibility and transparency of mine action data. The project aims "to influence policy and build the capacity to instil greater organisational openness and adaptability to new methodologies".⁴³ According to the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), the UNDP-supported project to improve information management through the development of a web-based database will improve the accessibility and transparency of data.⁴⁴ The joint development of the database (IMSMA Core) began in 2019 and was ongoing as at June 2019; it was expected to be completed by 2020.⁴⁵

PLANNING AND TASKING

In 2017, BiH developed a new national mine action strategy for 2018–25, with support from the GICHD, which addresses all mine and cluster munition remnant contamination. The strategy was formally adopted in January 2019.⁴⁶

The BiH previous Mine Action Strategy for 2009–19, adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2008,⁴⁷ set the target of the country becoming free of mines by 2019. BHMIC conducted the first of three planned revisions of the strategy in 2012–13⁴⁸ (the other two were due in 2015 and 2017, respectively).⁴⁹

In 2016, BHMIC, in consultation with the GICHD, started the third revision process. This time, BiH, with support from the GICHD, and participation from government ministries, clearance operators, and other stakeholders, produced an entirely new national mine action strategy for the period through to projected completion of mine and cluster munition remnant clearance (2018–25).

The new National Mine Action Strategy for 2018–2025, which was only adopted in January 2019, contains a general plan and timeframe for the completion of mine clearance, as well as for cluster munition remnants. It is due to be revised in 2020 and 2023, to consider progress and adjust for any changes in context.⁵⁰ The strategy also includes a section on management of residual contamination, which specifies that BiH is obliged to create a strategy for the management of residual contamination by 2022.⁵¹

BiH's annual operational mine action plan for 2019, in accordance with Article 16 of the Demining Law, has been adopted by the Demining Commission.⁵²

The EU-funded "country assessment" of the size and impact of mine and ERW contamination, was signed on 15 August 2018, with an implementation period of 18 months.⁵³ The assessment aims to determine a more accurate baseline

of mine contamination and provide a new foundation for meaningful planning. Results of the assessment will enable BiH to plan for the implementation of its new National Strategy and prepare its final Article 5 extension through to completion.⁵⁴ Under the project, non-technical survey will be conducted by BHMIC (nine non-technical survey teams), the BiH Armed Forces (two non-technical survey teams), and NPA (three non-technical survey teams), with €1.1 million (approx. US\$1.25 million) of EU funding.

As part of the "country assessment" project, 1,030km² of remaining mined area is expected to be subdivided into about 500 MSAs (mine-suspected areas) requiring further survey and clearance, while 30km² is expected to be cancelled.⁵⁵ The MSA polygons will be made up of SHAs and CHAs that encompass one or more impacted communities and which, due to economic, cultural, geographical or other reasons, form a logical geographical area on which comprehensive survey and clearance will be undertaken.⁵⁶ It is envisaged that the creation of MSAs will enable mine action operations to better respond to the needs of the community through strengthening community liaison and ensuring that the community needs are prioritised and addressed. It is also intended to simplify the tasking procedure by assigning specific organisations a larger geographical area in which to carry out operations.⁵⁷ Local administrations and BHMIC will together agree on the size and priority of MSAs in accordance with humanitarian, developmental, and safety needs of municipality and local communities.⁵⁸ The MSAs will be categorised into three categories: high, medium, and low risk, based on available general assessment data. MSAs with a higher probability of containing PROM mines, large confirmed minefields, and high-/medium-impact MSAs based on general assessment, will be categorised as high- and medium-risk MSAs within one municipality. All other MSAs will be categorised as low risk.⁵⁹

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Results of mine action in BiH show that the applied land release model was efficient in the period 2005–09, and prior to 2009, BHMAC cancelled significant amounts of land annually through non-technical survey.⁶⁰ Since then, however, non-technical survey output has declined, but there remains significant potential for further reduction in the size of the SHA.

In December 2012, having recognised the need for more efficient land release in BiH, the EU, with pre-accession funding, started a pilot “land release” project with BHMAC.⁶¹ The resulting “IPA 2011 Land Release” was implemented from 2013 to 2016, with EU funding.⁶² The project enabled efficient tasking of systematic technical survey and technical survey with targeted investigation, helping ensure clearance assets were only directed into CHAs.⁶³ Results from six completed tasks in the EU pilot project revealed that 91% of the total land released was cancelled through non-technical survey, 8.5% was reduced through technical survey, and 0.5% was cleared.⁶⁴ Assuming the six tasks are representative of much of BiH’s remaining SHAs, BHMAC predicts that only a minor proportion of the remaining SHAs contain contamination and deployment of clearance assets will therefore only be required for relatively small areas.⁶⁵ This has been factored into the new National Mine Action Strategy, and it is hoped that the new land release concept will greatly speed up release of suspected mined area.⁶⁶

The application of technical survey with targeted investigation was also piloted by NPA in 2015, and has subsequently been expanded and implemented by other operators and state bodies, including the BiH Armed Forces and civil protection entities. As part of the process, BHMAC and NPA identified new sources of information, including former soldiers and commanders. Several methodologies can then be applied as part of technical survey to locate contamination, including manual clearance lane(s) towards

a specific target, MDDs to search for a specific target, or to help identify a specific target. Selection of techniques for each target is guided by several factors, including analysis of the characteristics of indirect evidence examined and environmental conditions (including the type of terrain and density of vegetation).⁶⁷ Further promotion of national ownership by BHMAC and the Demining Commission, including the adoption of a clear definition of “all reasonable effort” and an appropriate division of liabilities would enhance efficient and effective land release process in BiH.

In 2016, in collaboration with the GICHD and UNDP, BHMAC held a workshop on “standards and SOP revisions”.⁶⁸ Efforts focused on ensuring the standards and SoPs allow for the optimal release of land through evidence-based survey, including through technical survey.⁶⁹ The BiH Demining Commission has adopted three chapters of the standards so far: one on non-technical survey, one on technical survey, and one on the opening and monitoring of tasks.⁷⁰ In addition, a specific SoP was approved by the Demining Commission for the new 18-month “country assessment” project.⁷¹

There is broad agreement among operators and experts that technical survey with targeted investigation could significantly improve the efficiency of land release in BiH. This could more accurately define CHAs, potentially reducing the area released through clearance to between 1% and 3% of the original SHA.⁷²

The Federal Administration of Civil Protection, however, reported that it had suggested a number of suggested proposals for the improvement of current standards on mine clearance and UXO removal, non-technical survey, technical survey, and land release, but without significant results, which it attributed to a lack of readiness for dialogue from BHMAC leadership.⁷³

OPERATORS

As at September 2018, 26 organisations were accredited for mine action in BiH: four government organisations (Armed Forces of BiH, Federal Administration of Civil Protection, Civil Protection Administration of Republic of Srpska, and Brčko District Civil Protection), the Red Cross Society of BiH; seven commercial organizations (all national); 7 commercial organizations, and 14 non-government organizations (NGOs) (11 national and 3 international).⁷⁴ Overall demining capacity totalled 1,200 persons in accredited organisations, comprising 900 deminers and 300 others (including team leaders, site leader, operational officers, QA officers, and dog trainers). The accredited organisations also have at their disposal a total of 37 accredited machines (for vegetation removal, ground disturbance, and removal of debris), 1,257 metal detectors, and 63 accredited explosive detection dogs. In addition, BHMAC has at its disposal 44 surveyors (i.e. 22 survey teams for non-technical survey and emergency marking), 8 officers for planning non-technical survey operations, 12 inspectors and 28 senior clerks for QC/technical supervision/inspection.⁷⁵

During 2018, technical survey and/or clearance of anti-personnel mines was conducted by the BiH Armed Forces, the Federal Administration of Civil Protection, the Civil Protection Administration of Republic of Srpska, and twelve other clearance organisations, comprising nine NGOs (Association UEM, DEMIRA, Mine Detection Dog Centre (MDDC), MAG, NPA, Pro Vita, Stop Mines, Udruga “Pazi Mine Vitez”, and WBE) and three commercial organisations (Detektor, N&N Ivsa, and In Demining N.H.O).⁷⁶ BHMAC did not expect any major changes to demining capacity in 2019.⁷⁷

The BiH Armed Forces’ survey and clearance operations, which include use of machinery and explosive detection dogs, are fully engaged from March to November, and with reduced activity, predominantly in southern BiH, from December to February.⁷⁸ Since 2010, NPA has increasingly focused on building the capacity of the Army’s Demining Battalion. This involves transfer of knowledge through operational planning of clearance and technical survey operations; direct operational support; and provision of mine detection dogs (MDDs) and equipment, among other things.⁷⁹ The BiH Armed Forces require ongoing support to secure personal protective

equipment, batteries for detectors, and fuel for demining machinery, since the Army's own complex procurement system often cannot deliver such items in sufficient time.⁸⁰ The Demining Battalion also receives support from Austria, France, Italy, and the United States, as well as EUFOR, which alone provides 90% of support.⁸¹

The state operators, the BiH Armed Forces' Demining Battalion and Civil Protection, are both good partners and have effective capacities, but have suffered from logistical challenges and equipment deficits, which can prevent them from working at full capacity.⁸² Deminers in the BiH Armed Forces, however, are forced to stop demining at the age of 38 (this upper limit, until recently, had been 35). This results in experienced deminers being forced to retire at a very early age and results in a high turnover of personnel.⁸³

In the opinion of a UNDP expert, the BiH Armed Forces have sufficient demining equipment, but could benefit from stronger management and better oversight of demining operations.⁸⁴

Federal administration of civil protection teams are spatially distributed to cover the entire territory of the Federation of BiH and are located in Bihac, Busovaca, Gorazde, Livno, Mostar, Orasje, Sarajevo, Travnik, Tuzla, and Zepce. Capacity includes 11 demining teams with 95 employees, 8 UXO teams with a total of 27 employees (solely responsible for removing UXOs in the Federation of BiH following reports from citizens and institutions), 4 MDD handlers with 4 dogs, a mechanical debris removal team that has one armoured excavator and two armoured trucks to remove UXO contaminated debris, and a demining team with two demining machines and 4 operators.⁸⁵

The teams of the Federal administration of civil protection are trained in fast response to remove injured persons (both civilians and deminers) from mine-contaminated areas. The Federal administration of civil protection believes that accident and incident investigation, which is currently only conducted by BHMIC staff, should be expanded to include representatives from the wider demining community, such as the entities civil protection authorities, the Armed Forces, and EUFOR, to help improve the safety and quality of operations.⁸⁶

The Civil Protection of Brčko District only conducts removal and destruction of ERW, and not demining.

NPA is, according to the 2015 UNDP evaluation, well respected in BiH and is treated almost like a national asset, even though it is international and independently donor funded.⁸⁷ Both machines and dogs are integrated into NPA demining operations in BiH. NPA uses MDD and special detection dogs (SDDs) for clearance and technical survey tasks, including targeted technical survey.⁸⁸ In 2018, NPA had 8 manual clearance/technical survey teams with a total of 53 deminers, 6 MDD handlers and 9 dogs, and 4 machine operators and machines. In addition, NPA had one three-strong non-technical survey team in 2018. In 2019, this increased to three non-technical survey teams, as part of the EU-funded "country assessment" project.⁸⁹ As mentioned above, since 2010, NPA has also focused on building the capacity of the Armed Forces Demining Battalion.

MAG received operational accreditation in April 2017, and began technical survey and clearance operations in mid-May 2017.⁹⁰ In 2018, MAG deployed 61 staff to conduct technical survey and clearance, an increase of four teams (36 staff, plus 2 medics and 1 site surveyor), compared to MAG's capacity in the previous year. MAG expected capacity in 2019 to remain constant.⁹¹

With the exception of MAG and NPA, clearance operators in BiH typically compete for international tenders in order to secure their funding. The UNDP evaluation suggested that this resulted in considerable capacity being underused and recommended alternative contracting models more appropriate for land release (either by having longer term contracts or being contracted for the clearance of larger areas), which could be more attractive to the demining organisations in terms of security and could also make best use of capacity in the long run.⁹² National demining NGOs, such as STOP Mines or PROVITA, which are registered in a similar way to companies, potentially have capacity to quickly mobilise additional resources and up-scale operations.⁹³

Quality control and quality assurance (QA) is conducted by BHMIC.⁹⁴

OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Clearance and technical survey operations in BiH include mechanical preparation of land, manual clearance, and the use of MDDs and SDDs depending on the geographical conditions.⁹⁵ Much of the remaining mined area is in hilly or mountainous terrain, which restricts the use of machinery.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2018

A total of 28.79km² of mined area was released in 2018, of which almost 0.92km² was cleared, over 5.03km² was reduced through technical survey, and 22.84km² was cancelled through non-technical survey.

SURVEY IN 2018

In 2018, over 5.03km² was reduced through technical survey, conducted by various government organisations, NGOs, and commercial organisations (see Table 2).⁹⁶ This is a decrease on the 6.68km² reduced through technical survey in 2017.⁹⁷ In addition, a further 22.84km² was cancelled through non-technical survey in 2018,⁹⁸ compared to 20.75km² in 2017.⁹⁹

Table 2: Reduction of mined area through technical survey by canton in 2018¹⁰⁰

Canton	Area reduced (m ²)
Unsko-Sanki	553,587
Posavski	515,654
Tuzlanski	602,633
Zanicko-Dobojski	130,153
Bosansko-Podrinjski	74,001
Srednje-Bosanski	472,011
Hercegovacko-Neret	193,600
Sarajevo	263,910
Canton 10	215,716
Total Federation BiH	3,021,265
Total Republika Srpska	1,684,002
Total Brčko district	330,015
Sum total	5,035,282

CLEARANCE IN 2018

A total of almost 0.92km² was cleared in 2018, during which 2,101 anti-personnel mines, 57 anti-vehicle mines, and 1,974 ERW were destroyed (see Table 3).¹⁰¹ This is an increase on the 0.69km² of mined area cleared and 1,749 anti-personnel mines destroyed, in 2017. Of 0.92km² 2018 clearance total, 431,808m² of mined area was cleared (and 1,497 anti-personnel mines and 942 items of ERW destroyed), through tasks created through the EU country assessment project and cleared by the federal administration of civil protection, MDDC, NPA, MAG and Provita.¹⁰²

Mine clearance operations were conducted by the BiH Armed Forces, the Civil Protection of FBiH, the Civil Protection of RS, nine non-governmental organisations, and three commercial demining companies (see Tables 4).¹⁰³

Table 3: Mine clearance by canton in 2018¹⁰⁴

Canton	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	ERW destroyed
Unsko-Sanki	96,454	111	0	186
Posavski	75,137	33	0	20
Tuzlanski	93,765	100	10	88
Zanicko-Dobojski	19,774	9	0	14
Bosansko-Podrinjski	55,064	212	18	38
Srednje-Bosanski	744	1	0	6
Hercegovacko-Neret	375,864	1,061	0	858
Sarajevo	74,481	383	0	363
Total Federation BiH	791,283	1,910	28	1,573
Total Republic Srpska	106,169	174	29	235
Total Brčko district	22,080	17	0	166
Sum totals	919,532	2,101	57	1,974

AP = Anti-personnel AV = Anti-vehicle

Table 4: Mine clearance by operator in 2018¹⁰⁵

	Operator	No. of tasks	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	ERW destroyed
Government	Federal Administration of Civil Protection	6	41,041	59	10	355
	BiH Armed Forces	5	92,403	220	10	264
	Civil Protection Administration of RS	4	17,874	44	11	26
Local NGOs	Association UEM	2	33,833	22	0	7
	DEMIRA	2	3,158	2	0	0
	Pro Vita	4	357,528	884	0	888
	Stop Mines	1	1,735	1	0	0
	Udruga "Pazi Mine Vitez"	2	19,101	60	12	142
	WBE	1	615	0	0	0
International NGOs	Mine Detection Dog Centre (MDDC)	3	28,112	235	0	77
	NPA	3	33,213	322	0	16
	MAG	1	13,958	62	0	6
Commercial demining organisations	Detektor	5	27,857	72	5	10
	N&N Ivsa	16	229,728	115	5	182
	In Demining N.H.O	4	19,376	3	4	1
Totals		59	919,532	2,101	57	1,974

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBBC, BiH was granted a second extension request in 2018, for an interim two-year extension to 1 March 2021. Within this interim extension period, BiH plans to conduct a “country assessment”, to set a new baseline for realistic planning. Following completion of the “country assessment”, BiH believes it will be in a better position to calculate the time required to complete its Article 5 obligations. It has pledged to submit a final extension request, based on a more precise understanding of the challenge, by 31 March 2020.¹⁰⁶

Efforts to gain greater clarity on the extent of actual mine contamination are welcome but long overdue, considering that BiH still does not have an accurate picture of baseline contamination more than 20 years after becoming a state party to the APMBBC.

According to its 2018 interim Article 5 extension request, the next two years will see a transition of working methodologies throughout BiH, with land release being intensively conducted through the application of new standards and SoPs to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness.¹⁰⁷ Results gained so far through application of more efficient evidence-based land release methodology to more accurately determine the

location and extent of actual contamination, and cancel areas not contaminated, indicate the potential for large areas of uncontaminated SHA to be released through survey.¹⁰⁸ BiH has expressed its commitment to complete its Article 5 obligations by 2025, as detailed in the National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025.¹⁰⁹

The “country assessment” project, currently being undertaken, is expected to result in the cancellation of 30km² through high-quality non-technical survey and should enable more accurate tasking of technical survey and clearance going forward. However, this represents less than 3% of BiH’s total suspected mined area and it remains to be seen what the actual results of the assessment will be and how it will impact BHMBC’s Article 5 completion planning. The possibility of new areas being recorded as contaminated through the “country assessment” is considered to be low, but is a possibility. Over the last five years, BiH has released less than 6.5km² through clearance (see Table 5). Since the ten-year extension to its initial Article 5 deadline, granted in 2008, BiH has continuously fallen far short of its annual land release targets. The painfully slow pace of clearance has resulted in lack of confidence in the national mine action programme from donors but also from people living in mine-affected communities, who felt disillusioned that the mines have not been cleared.¹¹⁰

Analysis by both NPA and UNDP shows that in the first five years of the 2009–19 strategy, while international donors maintained their planned funding commitments, anticipated BiH government funding level were not met, especially with regard to planned “additional government” sources and consequently, by 2013, progress was way off target.¹¹¹ In the period 2006–17, only 50% of planned funds were available. The local and donor sources ensured the funds as planned, but unfortunately BiH did not provide additional funding to mine action, owing to its economic situation.¹¹² The Ministry of Civil Affairs, the Demining Commission, and BHMAC have highlighted the limited funds for demining and have requested funds from the national budget.¹¹³ BiH has calculated that the required cost to fulfil its planned two-year interim extension request is almost 80 million BAM (US\$46 million), of which 50% will be national funding and 50% donor funding.¹¹⁴

BHMAC expected land release operations for 2018 and 2019 to continue in line with annual workplans, and predicted that a total of 237km² would be released: 179km² cancelled through non-technical survey by BHMAC (82km² in 2018 and 97km² in 2019); an additional 30km² cancelled through non-technical survey by BHMAC, BiH Armed Forces, and NPA as part of the “country assessment” project; 26km² reduced through technical survey by accredited organisations (13km² in 2018 and 13km² in 2019); and 2km² cleared (1km² in 2018 and 1km² in 2019). In addition, through non-technical survey BHMAC expected to prepare a total of approximately 120 MSAs, covering approximately 263km².¹¹⁵

Based on 2018 land release outputs of almost 0.92km² cleared, over 5.03km² reduced, and 28.79km² cancelled, BiH has already fallen behind on its new target, especially with regards to clearance output.

Table 5: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance (2014–18)

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2018	0.92
2017	0.69
2016	1.34
2015	1.64
2014	1.85
Total	6.44

The new National Mine Action Strategy presents an opportunity for BiH to communicate and outline the mine action programme's goals and objectives, both to national and international stakeholders. To implement the new strategy, in particular high-quality survey to allow for the release of what is expected to be substantial area found without direct evidence of contamination, will, however, require strong oversight and commitment from BHMAC, and the Demining Commission and their superiors in the government. It will also require continued funding of the operational activities in order to realise the goals within the envisaged timeframe.

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- 104 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 9 July 2019; and Article 7 Report (for 2018), Form C. In 2018, NPA mechanically prepared 236,980m² for the Demining Battalion's tasks (email from Jonas Zachrisson, NPA, 22 April 2019).
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