

REQUEST FOR AN EXTENSION OF THE DEADLINE FOR COMPLETING THE DESTRUCTION OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 5 OF THE CONVENTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Submitted by Bosnia and Herzegovina

1. The challenge in the implementation of Article 5 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction in Bosnia and Herzegovina dates back from the period 1992-1995. From 1992 to 1995 warring factions in Bosnia and Herzegovina laid a huge number of minefields throughout the country. All warring factions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, (Army of BH, Army of Republic of Srpska, Croatian Defence Council), laid minefields and primarily between confrontation lines, in order to prevent or slow down the movement of military units of one faction into the area controlled by another faction. Minefields were also laid in front of strategic points of all warring factions and military facilities. Geographically speaking, minefields were laid throughout the country, from Herzegovina to the south and south/west, over the mountains, canyons, and gorges of Central Bosnia to the flat areas to the north of the country. Minefields are present on the ground with all types of vegetation typical for Bosnia and Herzegovina (high grass and forest) at all types of ground (stone, karst).
2. The Mine action program in Bosnia and Herzegovina commenced in 1996, through the establishment of UNMAC and in order to build local structure and capacities for mine action. Entity centres for mine action (MAC Republika Srpska and Federation MAC), along with the coordination centre on the state level (BHMAL) were established in 1998. With the passing of the Demining Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2002, the existing mine action structure has been transformed. The central body of the State is presented by the Demining Commission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, operating within the Ministry of Civil Affairs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The expert Commission's body for demining in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Mine Action Centre BiH (BHMAL) has been established by the Decision of the Council of Ministers and based on the Demining Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
3. A General assessment of mine problem in Bosnia and Herzegovina was carried out in the preparation of the previous request in 2007, where the Study identified 1.631 communities (inhabited places) contaminated with mines. It is estimated that mine contaminated micro-locations directly affect the safety of 921.513 persons, out of which 154.538 inhabitants in high threat communities, 342.550 in medium threat communities and 424.425 persons in low threat communities. Out of the total number of endangered communities, 122 or 7% were categorized as high threat communities, 625 or 38% as medium threat and 884 or 55% as low threat communities.
4. On 26 March 2008, Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted a request to extend its 1 March 2009 mine clearance deadline. The request was granted at the Ninth Meeting of the States Parties and a new deadline set for 1 March 2019. After nine (9) years of implementation Bosnia and Herzegovina will not be able to fulfil obligations in accordance with the previous request.
5. The circumstances that have prevented Bosnia and Herzegovina from meeting the deadline of 1 March 2019 are related to the following: lack of financial means, the size of the mine problem, non-functional minefield records available and prevailing climate conditions.
6. Nevertheless, over the course of the previous request the affected area has been reduced from 1,688,033,658 square metres to 1,080,207,829 square metres. During this period a total of 607,825,829 square metres were addressed (45% out of the plan) with 514,325,299 square metres of the SHA cancelled through non-technical survey operations (51% out of the plan), 77,800,000 square metres of SHA reduced through technical survey operations in 1,630 realized tasks or technically

surveyed locations (30% out of the plan) and 15,690,000 square metres of CHA cleared in 953 realized tasks or locations cleared (20% out of the plan). A total of 14,385 anti-personnel mines, 1,181 anti-tank mines and 15,105 pieces of ERW, including cluster munitions were identified and destroyed.

7. From 2013 to 2016 and in order to fulfil the obligations taken under the Article 5 of the Convention, Mine Action Centre in BiH realized “Land Release” project IPA 2011, with the support from the Delegation of the European Union in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The said project promoted the full employment of the land release process with non-technical survey efforts resulting in either cancellation of the SHAs in case of insufficient evidence about the existence of mine/explosive devices or confirmation of hazardous areas. This process enabled efficient tasking in technical survey for the purpose of systematic and targeted investigation ensuring that clearance assets were directed onto confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) only.
8. Within the stated project, the Mine Action Centre in BiH created the following first three chapters of the new Standards: Land Release, non-technical survey and technical survey. These chapters were drafted in accordance with IMAS and adopted by the Demining Commission in Bosnia and Herzegovina in January 2016.
9. The results of the “Land Release” project are out of total area released to final users (42.788.962m²), cancellation of 91% of the area through non-technical survey by Mine Action Centre BiH, 8,5% of area reduced through technical survey¹ and 0,5% cleared by accredited organizations through mine clearance. This has proven that with the right application of non-technical and technical survey Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the financial support of partners, will be in a position to declare completion in a not too distant future.
10. The total remaining contamination in Bosnia and Herzegovina totals 8,967 SHAs measuring 1,056,574,142 square metres and 935 CHAs measuring 23.846.939 square metres
11. In accordance with Article 5, Para 1, Bosnia and Herzegovina is requesting a two (2) year extension from 01 March 2019 to 01 March 2021, to carry out survey and clearance activities to better define the precise perimeter of mined areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Following the better definition of the remaining challenge, Bosnia and Herzegovina will be in a better position to highlight the exact amount of time required to implement its obligations under Article 5. Bosnia and Herzegovina will submit a final request for extension for completion based on a more precise understanding of the remaining challenge by 31 March 2020.
12. Elimination of risk for population and social and economic development of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be resolved through integrated approach to mine action. Through the system of defining the mine suspected areas (MSA)² non-Technical Survey, Technical Survey and clearance with priorities being set in accordance with the needs of local communities and municipalities/cities in order to eliminate threat for population.
13. The application of “land release”, with evidence-based decision making will allow reliable definition of areas where technical survey activities will be needed. Through the full application of land release SHAs will be identified through the collection of indirect evidence and CHAs will be identified where direct evidence exists, likewise, activities will lead to significant cancellation of areas where no evidence exists and reduction through technical survey. Non-technical survey effort will provide for

2 An area made up of SHAs and CHAs which encompasses one or more impacted communities and due to economic, cultural or geographical and other reasons is selected as a logical unit. The MSA is selected by BHMIC in close cooperation with the municipal authorities. These areas are then treated comprehensively through the land release procedure.

efficient tasking in technical survey, which will include both systematic and targeted investigation in order to confirm or refute the presence of mines and ensure that mine clearance capacities are deployed to CHAs only. In order to ensure the quality of the efforts carried out in the next year, the BHMACH has developed and adopted three chapters in its new standards on non-technical survey, technical survey and land release. All three have been developed in accordance with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS 07.11).

14. During the requested time period three main activities will be carried out:

- **Country assessment of SHAs in Bosnia and Herzegovina:** The Mine Action Centre Bosnia and Herzegovina, Armed Forces BiH and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) will carry out a project entitled "Country assessment of SHAs in Bosnia and Herzegovina" which will be carried out from 2 July 2018 – 31 December 2019. This project is approved and will be financed through EC emergency grants. The aim of this project is to increase the efficiency in mine action in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the aim of setting a new baseline through the application of non-technical survey and technical survey i.e. it will aim to establish a new baseline for realistic planning in mine action in order to plan for the realization of the Mine Action Strategy 2018-2025 and preparation of the final request for fulfilling the obligations under Article 5 of the Convention.
- **Mine Action Governance and Management Project:** the BHMACH with support of the UNDP and financing from the European Union will create a new web orientated database to replace the existing system and increase accessibility and transparency of mine action data. Project Title is "Mine Action Governance and Management Project". This project will aim to influence policy and build the capacity to instil greater organisational openness and adaptability to new implementation methodologies such as the country assessment project. The aim is to re-establish donor confidence through the formulation of a credible, realistic and achievable completion plan to clear all remaining mined areas in the country and comply with the country's obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.
- **Land release operations: survey and clearance operations** will continue in line with the annual priorities presented by municipal authorities as well as in line with the financing available for implementation. As per the National Demining Law, these plans are developed on an annual basis. It is expected that through these operations at total of 237,000,000 square metres will be addressed including 179,000,000 square metres cancelled through non-technical survey, 30,000,000 reduced through technical survey and 2,000,000 square metres cleared. In addition to this the BHMACH will prepare through non-technical survey a total of approximately 120 MSAs totalling approximately 263,200,000 square metres. Parallel to these activities marking of SHAs with 18,000 signs for emergency marking will take place.

15. At the moment, there are 26 accredited organizations for mine action in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Five of them are government organizations (Armed Forces, Fed. Administration of CP FBiH, Republic Administration of CP RS, Brčko District Civil Protection and Red Cross Society BiH), seven commercial organizations (all national) and fourteen non-government organizations (11 national and 3 international). Within accredited organizations, 1.200 persons are engaged, all accredited for the conduct of mine action and licensed for work, i.e. 900 deminers and 300 persons accredited for managerial and supervision tasks (team and site leaders, operational officers, quality assurance officers, EDD trainers, dog-handlers, operators etc.). Organizations accredited for mine actions have at their disposal 37 accredited machines (for vegetation removal, ground disturbance and removal of debris), 1.257 metal detectors and 63 accredited explosive detection dogs.

16. Mine risk education in the period 2019-2020 will be implemented through public information, education of affected population groups and through linking mine action with an affected community. Mine risk education will focus on the priority implementation of activities in communities that have large SHAs of priority category III and the most affected target population groups.

17. In accordance with the Demining Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina, funds for the conduct of mine action in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be ensured via donors' sources, budgets of Bosnia and Herzegovina institutions, entity budgets and other sources. In order to fulfil the obligations under Article 5 of the Convention in requested timeframe (two years), the funds totalling 79,260,000 BAM (approximately USD47 million) are necessary. The finance plan according to the operational plan for 2019-2020 is prepared in accordance with the realistic financial frame of mine action, and in accordance with the analysis of financial plan for mine action in the period 2009-2017.