

Comments on Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Article 5 Extension Request, delivered by Mine Action Review
Intersessional Meetings, 30 June – 2 July 2020

Mine Action Review appreciates the level of qualitative detail provided by Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) in its third, and hopefully final, Article 5 Extension Request. This includes information on the strategic approach to divide all remaining suspected and confirmed hazardous areas into logical geographical groupings referred as “Mine Suspected Areas” or “MSAs”; its planned survey and clearance methodology for release of the 488 MSAs identified; and its prioritisation system, in accordance with humanitarian, developmental, and safety needs of municipality and local communities, as well as the level of threat.

However, the quantitative data contained in the extension request contain many inconsistencies and inaccuracies, which must be addressed in order to improve the clarity and overall accuracy of the request. To assist, Mine Action Review can provide details of these via the Article 5 Committee.

BiH was previously granted a two-year interim extension request, up to 1 March 2021, in order to set a new baseline and establish a new foundation for realistic planning for implementation of its Mine Action Strategy 2018–25 and for preparation of its final Article 5 extension request.

Therefore, it is essential that BiH must now provide the international community with a clear picture of the remaining challenge and a concrete plan for Article 5 completion. In particular, BiH should provide the States Parties with the following as soon as possible:

- A multi-year workplan for the extension period, with estimates of the amount of mined area it expects to cancel through non-technical survey, reduce through technical survey, and release through clearance each year. There is currently no such work plan in the extension request.
- Clarity and consistency on the extent of mined area remaining, disaggregated by SHA and CHA, in accordance with IMAS. Different figures are provided on the extent of that area in the extension request.¹
- Information on what steps it plans to mainstream gender and diversity within its mine action programme.
- Plans for establishing a sustainable national capacity to address the discovery of previously unknown mined areas following completion (i.e. residual contamination).

On page 7 of the extension request, it says that of the nearly 95km² released in 2018–19, over 89% was cancelled through non-technical survey, with almost 9% of the remainder reduced by technical survey, and less than 2% released through clearance. This, and previous land release data, indicates that actual anti-personnel mine contamination in BiH is only a small proportion of the total hazardous area currently on the database – a fact that BHMALC itself highlights.

With this in mind, it is now essential that all implementing partners, in all parts of the country, routinely apply evidence-based land release survey in accordance with IMAS. The use of technical

¹ Table 8 on page 16 of the extension request does provide a breakdown of the total remaining contamination of almost 967km², disaggregated by SHA and CHA, by province, and separated into 488 “MSAs”, but it is not clear as at what date this baseline is effective. Also, elsewhere in the extension request it says the 488 MSAs totalled 1,030km² at the end of the Country Assessment project, and it is not clear why this figure is greater than the 967km² referred to in Table 8.



survey to confirm or deny evidence of mine contamination, will be especially important. BiH should review its current national mine action standards to ensure they allow for this.

BHMAC plans to review and update its national mine action strategy in-line with latest data; and, with support from GICHD, it also plans to complete the migration of its information management system in 2020 onto IMSMA Core, which will help it monitor and report on progress in Article 5 implementation.

With the requisite strategic planning; national mine action standards; strong national and international demining capacity; continued donor support; and sustainable information management; either already in place or soon to be in place, the element that will truly determine BiH's success in fulfilling its Article 5 commitment above all else is political will and national ownership.

Thank you.