



Republic of Serbia

**Request for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction
of antipersonnel mines in mined areas in accordance with Article 5, paragraph 1
of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer
of Antipersonnel Mines and on Their Destruction**

Submitted to the Chair of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation

Date 31 March 2022

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Abbreviations

APMBC	Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
AP KiM	Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija
CHA	Confirmed Hazardous Areas
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards
ITF	ITF Enhancing Human Security
MRE	Mine Risk Education
NMAS	National Mine Action Standards
SHA	Suspect Hazardous Areas
SMAC	Mine Action Centre of the Republic of Serbia
QA	Quality Assurance
QC	Quality Control
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
UXO	Unexploded Explosive Ordnance

Executive Summary

1. The former State Union of Serbia and Montenegro ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, on 18 September 2003. The Convention entered into force on 1 March 2004. The continuity to the Convention in relation to the Republic of Serbia was established in accordance with Article 60 of the Charter of the State Union. Serbia is fully committed to the implementation of its obligations under the Convention.

In accordance with Article 5, paragraph 1, of the Convention, Serbia had an obligation to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in minefield areas under its jurisdiction or control, as soon as possible, but not later than ten years after the entry into force of the Convention (1 March 2014).

2. At the 13th Meeting of the States Parties of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on their Destruction, which was held in the period 2-6 December 2013, Geneva, Switzerland, the Republic of Serbia was granted a 5-year extension of the deadline for fulfilment of its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention, which was **1 March 2019**.

3. In its initial 10-year period for the fulfilment of the Article 5 obligations, 2004-2014, the problem related to contamination by landmines and the progress of Serbia in response to its Article 5 challenge is documented in detail in its first extension request.

4. At the 17th Meeting of the States Parties of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on their Destruction, which was held in the period 26-30 November 2018, Geneva, the Republic of Serbia was granted a 4-year extension of the deadline for fulfilment of its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention, which was **1 March 2023**.

5. In its second extension 4-year period for the fulfilment of the Article 5 obligations, 2019-2023, the problem related to contamination by landmines and the progress of Serbia in response to its Article 5 challenge is documented in detail in its second extension request.

6. Since the 17th Meeting in November 2018, when the Republic of Serbia was granted a 4-year extension of the deadline for fulfilment of its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention, mine contaminated area totalled **2,354,540 sqm** in the Municipality of Bujanovac with 12 areas suspected to contain anti-personnel mines.

Table: Summary of areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines as of March 2018

Municipality	Village	Number of areas known to contain anti-personnel mines	Number of areas suspected to contain anti-personnel mines	Total number of areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines	Amount of area known to contain anti-personnel mines(square metres)	Amount of area suspected to contain anti-personnel mines(square metres)	Total amount of area known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines(square metres)
Bujanovac	Ravno Bučje	/	3	3	/	575,020	575,020
	Končulj	/	5	5	/	1,181,820	1,181,820
	Dobrosin	/	1	1	/	248,000	248,000
	Đorđevac	/	1	1	/	145,100	145,100
	Lučane	/	1	1	/	73,200	73,200
	Turija	/	1	1	/	131,400	131,400
Total	6	/	12	12	/	2,354,540	2,354,540

7. Since the previous request, 5 projects were implemented and clearance of the area of 623,020 square metres was completed in 2018 in the Municipality of Bujanovac. The funds for 4 projects have been donated, through

ITF Enhancing Human Security, by the US the Republic of Korea. For one project, funds have been provided by the Republic of Serbia and matched through ITF with the US donation and the donation by the Republic of Korea

In 2019, 3 projects by the SMAC were implemented in the Municipality of Bujanovac, total area of 606.210 sqm. The funds for one project were provided by the Serbian Government which were matched, through ITF, by the US donation and the donation of the Republic of Korea.

One project was funded by Japan, with the support of the U.S., through ITF.

One project was financed by the Joint Stock Company "Elektromreža Srbije" - Transmission System Maintenance Division, Belgrade.

In 2020, one project by the SMAC was implemented in the Municipality of Bujanovac, total area of 269.280 sqm. The funds for the project were provided by the Serbian Government which were matched, through ITF, by the US donation.

In 2021, one demining project was implemented, total area of 294.230 square metres. The funds for the project were provided by the Serbian Government which were matched, through ITF, by the US donation and the donation by the Republic of Korea.

Table showing progress against milestones 2018-2023

Year	Projected milestones		Cleared area (square metres)	Cancelled area (square metres)	Total area released (square metres)	Number of anti-personnel mines destroyed	Number of other explosive items destroyed	Size of newly identified/suspect hazardous areas
	Survey	Clearance						
2018	/	649,000	623,020	/	623,020	29	1,347	* /
2019	/	462,400	606,210	/	606,210	22	15	/
2020	/	467,880	269,280	/	269,280	1	1,586	/
2021	/	269,240	294,230	/	294,230	9	4	/
2022	/	291,400	/	/				/
2023	/	214,620	/	/				/
Total	/	2,354,540	1,792,740		1,792,740	61	2,952	/

***Please note that the data on the scope of the contamination of the newly identified suspect hazardous areas are not available at the time of writing this request.**

8. There are a number of circumstances that have impeded Serbia from complying with its 4-year period of first extension request. Particular issues faced by Serbia are as follows:

-Unregistered mine contaminated areas: The remaining areas contaminated by mines do not have registries and have not been planted in specific patterns, which aggravates demining efforts, namely survey results are subject to alterations.

-Newly discovered mine suspected areas in Bujanovac, in October 2019 and in August 2021. However, the data on the scope of the contamination of the newly discovered areas are not available at the time of writing this update.

-Climactic conditions: Contaminated areas are inaccessible during some periods of the year causing operation delays.

-Contamination other than mines: Specificity and complexity of the problem presents the fact that apart from mines still remaining in the territory of Serbia, Serbia also encounters with numerous challenges related to clearance of the areas contaminated with unexploded cluster munitions, air bombs – rockets and other UXO, as well as residual contamination and clearance operations triggered by infrastructure development projects.

-COVID-19 crisis: -In 2020, the Serbian Government initially allocated 350.000 EUR for demining operations, but due to the COVID-19 crisis and government measures in the fight against consequences of the crisis, the demining budget was decreased to 260.000 EUR.

10. The remaining mine contamination presents a severe socioeconomic impact on the municipality of Bujanovac. This municipality is the most underdeveloped municipality in Serbia. Mine contaminated areas affect safety of people. Presence of mines hinders safe exploitation of woods, development of cattle breeding and mushroom picking, which happen to be the main source of income of locals and in that way mines additionally impoverish them. In addition, road communications are blocked, environment affected, and fire risks increased.

10. As of March 2022, in the Republic of Serbia there are 3 areas suspected to contain groups of anti-personnel mines **totalling 561,800 square metres in the Municipality of Bujanovac plus newly discovered mine suspected areas in the Bujanovac Municipality. The data on the scope of the contamination of the newly discovered areas are not available at the time of writing this request.**

11. The Republic of Serbia's achievements regarding the fulfillment of its obligation under Article 5 have been significant so far. Our aim is to fulfill the remaining obligations within the short timescale. At the same time, we are facing a number of difficulties, and the most important is the lack of adequate financial resources. The unpredictability of secure financial resourcing presents the main obstacle. Furthermore, simultaneously with mine clearance, we have to deal with the clearance of areas contaminated with cluster munitions, air bombs-rockets and other UXO, since they also block significant resources of Serbia and its development and infrastructural projects.

Having in mind all the aspects of this issue, especially inadequate financial recourses, the remaining area to be cleared and its characteristics, the Republic of Serbia is requesting extension of the deadline for fulfilling its mine clearance obligations under the Convention.

Requested Period of Extension

In this context, Serbia is requesting extension of the deadline under Article 5 for a period of 2 years. We believe that a 2-year period is a realistic period in which Serbia could fulfill its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention until 2025. Serbia will put maximum effort into clearing known areas totaling 561,800 sqm in 2022. National and international funds for 2022 clearance operations have been secured. As regards the newly discovered mine suspected areas, since there is the need for recruitment of survey teams, training, survey of Bujanovac Municipality – input of all data – identification of confirmed and suspected areas – analysis and creation of prioritised plan for clearance, Serbia will need time and funds to complete these tasks. The global goal of a mine free world by 2025 remains our objective.

<i>Table: Summary of areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines as of March 2022</i>							
Municipality	Village	Number of areas known to contain anti-personnel mines	Number of areas suspected to contain anti-personnel mines	Total number of areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines	Amount of area known to contain anti-personnel mines(square metres)	Amount of area suspected to contain anti-personnel mines(square metres)	Total amount of area known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines(square metres)
Bujanovac	Ravno Bučje	/	1	1	/	390,300*	390,300*
	Končulj	/	1	1	/	143,500	143,500
	Dobrosin	/	1	1	/	28,000	28,000
Total	3	/	3	3	/		561,800*

***In addition to 561,800 sqm, please note that the data on the scope of the contamination of the newly identified suspect hazardous areas are not available at the time of writing this request.**

10. Demining milestones:

The area of **561,800 sqm plus newly discovered areas** will be land released as follows:

2022: An area of 561,800 sqm, which will include:

- Municipality of Bujanovac, Villages of Ravno Bučje, Djordjevac and Dobrosin;

2023: Mine assessment of **newly discovered areas, which will include:**

- Municipality of Bujanovac;

2024: Survey and clearance of **newly discovered areas, which will include:**

- Municipality of Bujanovac;

2025: Clearance and verification of **newly discovered areas, which will include:**

- Municipality of Bujanovac;

For newly identified suspect hazardous areas discovered in 2019 and 2021 during forest fires, mine assessment needs to be done, namely non - technical survey – the use of all non-technical means, including desk assessments, analysis of available data and a wide range of other information gathering and analysis functions, as well as physical visits to field locations. These elements will contribute to identifying, accessing, collecting,

reporting and using information to help define where mines and ERW are to be found, as well as where they are not, and to support land cancellation, reduction and clearance decision making processes.

SMAC has tentatively provided donor funds to start a non-technical survey project, that will include 2 mixed survey teams (1 Serbian and 1 Albanian team of 2 surveyors each), which will be fully trained and equipped to conduct required tasks. These activities will be supervised and monitored by SMAC and in cooperation with the local authorities.

The project will take up to 1 year and will focus on the areas where fire forests occurred and explosions could be heard, but will also include all the other areas in Bujanovac where the existence of other mine indicators might be reported. During this period, technical survey projects will be developed, as well as land release projects for the assessed areas. Simultaneously with survey activities, MRE activities will be conducted in all 59 villages of the Municipality of Bujanovac. Upon completion of this project, SMAC will have a clear picture of the contamination, which means that by November 2023 (21MSP) an updated work plan for the remaining period of the request, 1 March 2025, could be provided.

Demining in the Municipality of Bujanovac (2022-2025)

Year	Municipality	Village	Estimated mine suspected area to be subject to technical survey/clearance (square meters)	Source of funding and Amount*
2022	Bujanovac	Ravno Bučje, Končulj, Dobrosin	561,800	National Budget (260,000 EUR) and international donations matched through ITF (500,000 EUR)**
2023		Subject to survey and assesment	Subject to survey and assesment	National Budget (260,000 EUR) and international donations matched through ITF or other sources of funding (500,000 EUR) **
2024		Subject to survey and assesment	Subject to survey and assesment	National Budget (260,000 EUR) and international donations matched through ITF or other sources of funding (500,000 EUR)**
2025		Subject to survey and assesment	Subject to survey and assesment	National Budget (260,000 EUR) and international donations matched through ITF or other sources of funding (500,000 EUR)**
	Total		561,800*	1,040,000 EUR + and international donations matched through ITF or other sources of funding 1,600,000 EUR**

****In addition to 561,800 sqm, please note that the data on the scope of the contamination of the newly identified suspect hazardous areas are not available at the time of writing this request.**

****Please note that at the time of writing this draft, we do not have confirmation by potential donors of the funds available for Serbia in the period to follow. In addition to funds from national budget (1,040,000 EUR), we estimate that we would need around 2,000,000 EUR secured by international donors.**

11. Despite the difficult economic situation in the country and modest funds from the National Budget, we will endeavor to secure funding of demining either by submitting projects to ITF applying for their funding, or lobbying with other foreign donors to provide funds for implementation of projects. The funds from the Serbian State Budget will be provided to support the on-going work of the SMAC – salaries of the staff, running costs (electricity, water, heating), office and consumption material costs, fuel costs, maintenance of vehicles, costs of the SMAC staff insurance – as well as survey activities, development of adequate project tasks for demining/clearance of locations confirmed to be contaminated by mines, cluster munitions and other UXO, follow-up of the implementation of project tasks and conduct of demining quality assurance and quality control. However, in 2015, the funds (100,000 EUR) for demining operations have been allocated from the Serbian State Budget for the first time.

In the period 2018-2022, the Serbian Government has allocated **1,330,000 EUR** for demining operations (2018=200,000EUR; 2019=350,000 EUR; 2020=260,000 EUR; 2020=260,000 EUR; 2020=260,000 EUR).

We expect the Serbian Government will continue to allocate the funds for demining operations throughout the requested extension period. According to some rough estimations, in addition to funds from national budget (**1.040,000 EUR**), we estimate that we would need around **2,000,000 EUR** secured by international donors.

Assumptions and Risks

12. If the funds for demining operations are provided, namely if international funding is made available for clearance of anti-personnel mines, national funding continues to flow for the implementation of the programme and no additional mine areas are discovered ahead of completion, Serbia intends, by the use of methods such as cancelation and reduction through non-technical and technical survey, manual demining, mechanical demining (where applicable) to complete clearance in Serbia well before 2025 deadline.

Note: In the territory of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija, there are mined areas, as well as areas contaminated with cluster bombs remaining after the armed conflicts." Pursuant to Resolution 1244 of the United Nations Security Council (Annex II, item 6), it is envisaged that after the withdrawal, an agreed number of the Republic of Serbia personnel, will be allowed to return to perform certain functions, including marking and clearing minefields. As this provision of Annex II has not been implemented, this issue is still within the competence of UNMIK in accordance with Resolution 1244. "

Detailed Narrative

Introduction

Serbia acceded to the Convention on 18 September 2003, and the Convention entered into force for Serbia on 1 March 2004. In its initial transparency report, Serbia reported areas under its jurisdiction or control in which anti-personnel mines are known or suspected to be emplaced. In accordance with Article 5 of the Convention, Serbia undertakes to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in these areas as soon as possible but not later than 1 March 2014.

On 27 March 2013, Serbia submitted a request for extension that was granted at the 13th Meeting of the States Parties, held in Geneva, 2-6 December 2013. The Republic of Serbia was granted a 5-year extension of the deadline for fulfilment of its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention, which was 1 March 2019.

At the 17th Meeting of the States Parties, the Republic of Serbia was granted a 4-year extension for fulfilment of its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention, which was **1 March 2023**. In their request Serbia indicated that their remaining challenge totalled 3 totalled **2,354,540 square metres** in the Municipality of Bujanovac with 12 areas suspected to contain anti-personnel mines.

Furthermore, as we emphasized that, Serbia, at the same time, had to deal with clearance of areas contaminated with cluster munitions, air bombs – rockets and other UXO, since they also block substantial resources and hinder implementation of development and infrastructure projects. In this way, Serbia's effort to fulfil its obligations under Article 5 forms part of its overall response to address all explosive hazards in Serbia.

Origin of the Article 5 implementation challenge

The original problem related to contamination by anti-personnel landmines can be found in relevant sections of Serbia's 2013 and 2018 extension requests.

In addition to the landmines, the Republic of Serbia suffers from additional contamination by cluster munitions contamination, and by Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) as follows:

- It is suspected that the area of 866,437 square meters has been still contaminated with cluster munitions resulting from 1999 bombing.

- It is assumed that since the 1999 bombing, around 150 air bombs – rockets weighing up to 930 kg are located throughout the country in locations in the ground at a depth of up to 20 m, as well as in the Sava River and the Danube River.
- It is suspected that after a fire and explosion in the military depot in Paraćin (19 October 2006) outside of military objects, in an area of around 2,500,000 square meters, there are various types of UXO. Furthermore, in former military depots in Kraljevo, Vranje, Novi Pazar, Leskovac, Kragujevac, an area of around 18,500,000 square meters has been contaminated with various types of UXO following explosions.
- On the border with Romania, in the Djerdap gorge on the Danube River, in 1944, German war vessels were sunk, containing large quantities of anti-ship mines and other explosive ordnance, which now pose a threat to people, ships and the environment. In 2006, in this location, a survey was conducted establishing that in the territory of the Republic of Serbia 23 war vessels were sunk, 4 of which contain anti-ship mines and other UXO.

Cluster Munitions	Mines	AirBombs - Rockets	Inner Waterways	Other UXO
1999 bombing	From the period 2000-2001 during conflict situations along the administrative line with Kosovo and Metohija	1999 bombing	1999 bombing and World War II	Former military depot explosions
~ 900.000 M ²	~ 560,000 M ²	~ 150 locations suspected to contain air bombs	12 locations on the Danube and Sava rivers	~ 17.600.000 M ²

Type and origin of the overall contamination in the Republic of Serbia

Nature and extent of the Article 5 challenge at the beginning of the previous request

In its previous request Serbia indicated that their remaining challenge totalled 12 suspected hazardous areas measuring **2,354,540 square metres** in the Municipality of Bujanovac.

Nature and extent of progress made: quantitative aspects

Since the previous request, which was granted at the 17MSP

Table showing Remaining challenge 2018

<i>Table: Summary of areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines as of March 2018</i>							
Municipality	Village	Number of areas known to contain anti-personnel mines	Number of areas suspected to contain anti-personnel mines	Total number of areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines	Amount of area known to contain anti-personnel mines(square metres)	Amount of area suspected to contain anti-personnel mines(square metres)	Total amount of area known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines(square metres)

Bujanovac	Ravno Bučje	/	3	3	/	575,020	575,020
	Končulj	/	5	5	/	1,181,820	1,181,820
	Dobrosin	/	1	1	/	248,000	248,000
	Đorđevac	/	1	1	/	145,100	145,100
	Lučane	/	1	1	/	73,200	73,200
	Turija	/	1	1	/	131,400	131,400
Total	6	/	12	12	/	2,354,540	2,354,540

2018

5 projects were implemented resulting in the clearance 623,020 square metres in 2018 in the Municipality of Bujanovac. The funds for 4 projects have been donated, through ITF Enhancing Human Security, by the US the Republic of Korea. For one project, funds have been provided by the Republic of Serbia and matched through ITF with the US donation and the donation by the Republic of Korea

2019

In 2019, 3 projects by the SMAC were implemented in the Municipality of Bujanovac, addressing a total area of 606.210 square metres. The funds for one project were provided by the Serbian Government which were matched, through ITF, by the US donation and the donation of the Republic of Korea. One project was funded by Japan, with the support of the U.S., through ITF. One project was financed by the Joint Stock Company "Elektromreža Srbije" - Transmission System Maintenance Division, Belgrade.

2020

In 2020, one project by the SMAC was implemented in the Municipality of Bujanovac, total area of 269.280 sqm. The funds for the project were provided by the Serbian Government which were matched, through ITF, by the US donation.

2021

In 2021, one demining project was implemented, total area of 294.230 square metres. The funds for the project were provided by the Serbian Government which were matched, through ITF, by the US donation and the donation by the Republic of Korea.

Table: Areas contaminated with anti-personnel mines released during the previous extension request (March 2018 up to March 2022)

Municipality	Cancelled area (square metres)	Reduced area (square metres)	Cleared area (square metres)	Total area released (square metres)	Number of anti-person nel mines destroyed	Number of other explosive items destroyed
Bujanovac	/	/	1,792,740	1,792,740	61	2,952
Total	/	/	1,792,740	1,792,740	61	2,952

The following table highlights the total mine clearance progress to date:

Year	Cleared area (square metres)	Cancelled area (square metres)	Total area released (square metres)	Number of anti-personnel mines destroyed	Number of other explosive items destroyed	Size of newly identified/suspect hazardous areas
2018	623,020	/	623,020	29	1,347	/
2019	606,210	/	606,210	22	15	*
2020	269,280	/	269,280	1	1,586	/
2021	294,230	/	294,230	9	4	*
Total	1,792,740	/	1,792,740	61	2,952	*

*The data on the scope of the contamination of the newly identified suspect hazardous areas are not available at the time of writing this request.



AP mines and UXOs found on a demining project in Bujanovac

Areas containing cluster munitions

In the period March 2018 – March 2022, cluster munitions have been cleared from the area of 1,766,747 square meters, detecting and destroying in the process a total of 49 pieces of cluster munitions and 179 UXO. Cleared land has been returned to safely use.

Table: Areas contaminated with cluster munitions released during the previous extension period (March 2018 up to March 2022)

Municipality	Cleared area (square meters)	Number of cluster munitions destroyed	Number of other explosive items destroyed
Niš	253,623	4	17
Bujanovac	210,929	2	2
Sjenica	596,836	26	/
Raška	190,359	7	67
Tutin	515,000	10	93
Total	1,766,747	49	179

The following table highlights the total cluster munitions clearance progress to date:

Year	Cleared area (square metres)	Number of cluster munitions destroyed	Number of other explosive items destroyed
2018	/	/	/
2019	141,624	4	/
2020	297,660	7	83
2021	1,327,463*	38	96
Total	1,766,747	49	179

* COVID-19 affected cluster munition remnant clearance operations in 2020, in a sense that cluster munition remnant clearance projects started in 2020, due to lack of available deminers and operations suspended, were continued and completed in 2021.

Other contamination

In addition to progress in clearing mined and cluster munitions areas, Serbia has addressed a number of different areas affected by other UXO (former military depot related contamination), including the following:

Table: Areas contaminated with UXO (former military depot related contamination) released during the previous extension period up (March 2018 up to March 2022)

Municipality	Cleared area (square meters)	Number of unexploded ordnance destroyed
Paraćin/Ćuprija	606,000	116
Total	606,000	116

The following table highlights the total former military depot related contamination clearance progress to date:

Year	Cleared area (square metres)	Number of UXO destroyed
2019	606,000	116
Total	606,000	116

ERW Clearance projects

As of 2019, there has been the intensification of the interaction of mine action and infrastructure development in the context of the current expansion of construction in Serbia and the need to create conditions for safe execution of infrastructure projects that are a prerequisite for future investments in Serbia. Demands for clearing the terrain from explosive remnants of war have been high. Taking

into account the fact that armed conflicts of different intensities took place in the territory of Serbia during the two World Wars, as well as the 1999 bombing, it can be reasonably assumed that the land and facilities in the affected areas were significantly polluted with different types of ERW.

In the period 2019-2021, 24 ERW clearance projects, totaling 26,478,950 developed by SMAC were implemented which contributed, among other to: safe execution of earthworks and construction works on the gas pipeline route; safe construction of tire factory; safe construction of a port; safe construction of water supply and sewerage lines and roads, etc.

All these projects have been funded by relevant Serbian ministries (Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure),

Year	Cleared area (square metres)	Number of UXO destroyed
2019	20,600,273	130
2020	3,056,959	374
2021	2,821,718	1,227
Total	26,478,950	1,731

Nature and extent of progress made: qualitative aspects

The clearance of anti-personnel mines has resulted in qualitative positive impacts on the humanitarian and socio-economic factors, as given below.

Humanitarian and socio-economic progress enablement of demining operations

Demining of mine contaminated areas in the Municipality of Bujanovac has had a number of qualitative benefits including the following:

- Clearance has contributed and will contribute to the safety of the local population;
- Conditions for safe exploitation of forest, picking of mushrooms and development of cattle breeding have been created;
- Safe and stable electricity supply;
- Improvement of interethnic relations in a multi-ethnic environment suchh as the Municipality of Bujanovac (Serbs, Albanians, Roma)
- Environment protection and protection against fire have been significantly increased;
- Given that these municipalities are the most underdeveloped municipalities in Serbia, for the purpose of their development and prevention of migration of their inhabitants due to economic reasons, demining will enable implementation of development projects, such as for example construction of solar plants, development of wood industry, namely exploitation and processing of wood.



Areas containing cluster munitions, air bombs – rockets, other UXO

Despite the complexity of mine related problems Serbia is facing, significant results have been achieved in the field of cluster munitions clearance, and other UXO demining including:

- Industrial objects have been repaired on cleared areas;
- Residential buildings constructed;
- Užice airport runway reconstructed and other objects constructed on it;
- Ski cables reconstructed and new ones constructed and ski paths constructed;
- Reconstruction and construction of electricity transmission network has been enabled;
- Safe execution of earthworks and construction works on the gas pipeline route;

- Safe construction of tire factory;
- Safe construction of a port;
- Safe construction of water supply and sewerage lines and roads.

Resources made available to achieve the progress in implementation

National

As regards **national** inputs, in 2015, the funds (100,000 EUR) for demining operations have been allocated from the **Serbian State Budget for the first time**, which corresponded to the decision of the States Parties in granting the first request, when it was noted that Serbia should cover part of the demining cost and that demonstrating national ownership in such a manner could help facility cooperation and assistance efforts.

In 2018, the funds from the Serbian State Budget were doubled (200,000 EUR) for demining operations, which SMAC matched with donor funds and used for the implementation of our demining projects.

In 2019, the national funds were significantly increased and amounted 350,000 EUR, which SMAC matched with donor funds and used for the implementation of our demining projects.

Furthermore, one project was financed by the Joint Stock Company "Elektromreža Srbije" – Transmission System Maintenance Division, Belgrade.

In 2020, the Serbian Government initially allocated 350.000 EUR for demining operations, but due to the COVID-19 crisis and government measures in the fight against consequences of the crisis, the demining budget was decreased to 260.000 EUR, which SMAC matched with donor funds and used for the implementation of our demining projects.

In 2021, the national funds for demining operations amounted 260,000 EUR, which SMAC matched with donor funds and used for the implementation of our demining projects.

International

As regards to **international** inputs, in 2018, the funds in the amount of 659.184,95 US\$ for demining operations have been donated, through ITF, by the US State Department and the Republic of Korea.

In 2018, Republic of Korea allocated funds for demining operations in Serbia for the first time.

In 2019, the funds in the amount of 601.336,33 US\$ have been donated, through ITF, by the US State Department, the Republic of Korea and Japan.

In 2019, Japan allocated funds for demining operations in Serbia for the first time.

In 2020, the US State Department, through ITF, donated 187.932,77 US\$.

In 2021, the US State Department and the Republic of Korea, through ITF, donated 739.314,44 US\$.

Year	National Input for Demining Operations (EURO)	International Input for Demining Operations (USD)
2018.	200,000 EUR	659.184,95 US\$

Year	National Input for Demining Operations (EURO)	International Input for Demining Operations (USD)
2019.	350,000 EUR	601.336,33 US\$
2020.	260,000 EUR	187.932,77 US\$
2021.	260,000 EUR	739.314,44 US\$
Total	1,070,000 EUR	2.187.768,49 US\$

The funds from the **Serbian State Budget** have been also provided to support the ongoing work of the SMAC – salaries of the staff, running costs (electricity, water, heating), office and consumption material costs, fuel costs, maintenance of vehicles, costs of the SMAC staff insurance – as well as survey activities, development of adequate project tasks for demining/clearance of locations confirmed to be contaminated by mines, cluster munitions and other UXO, follow-up of the implementation of project tasks and conduct of demining quality assurance and quality control.

As of 2019, on an annual basis, from the Serbian State Budget is allocated around 350,000.00 EUR for the work of the SMAC. In previous years the budget amounted around 150,000.00 EUR

As regards the **cluster munitions clearance**, in the period 2018-2021, the funds in the amount of **1.558.461,29 US\$** provided by **the US State Department and the Republic of Korea through ITF**.

For several cluster munitions clearance projects, funds have been provided by the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure. Several projects were funded through International Civil Defence Organization (ICDO), from the donation of the Russian Federation. The funds were, also provided by the Airports of Serbia Ltd. Niš.

In 2021, the US State Department donated Serbian Mine Action Centre, through ITF, two terrain vehicles, detectors, multifunctional device, and protective equipment in the amount of 204,871.32 \$US.

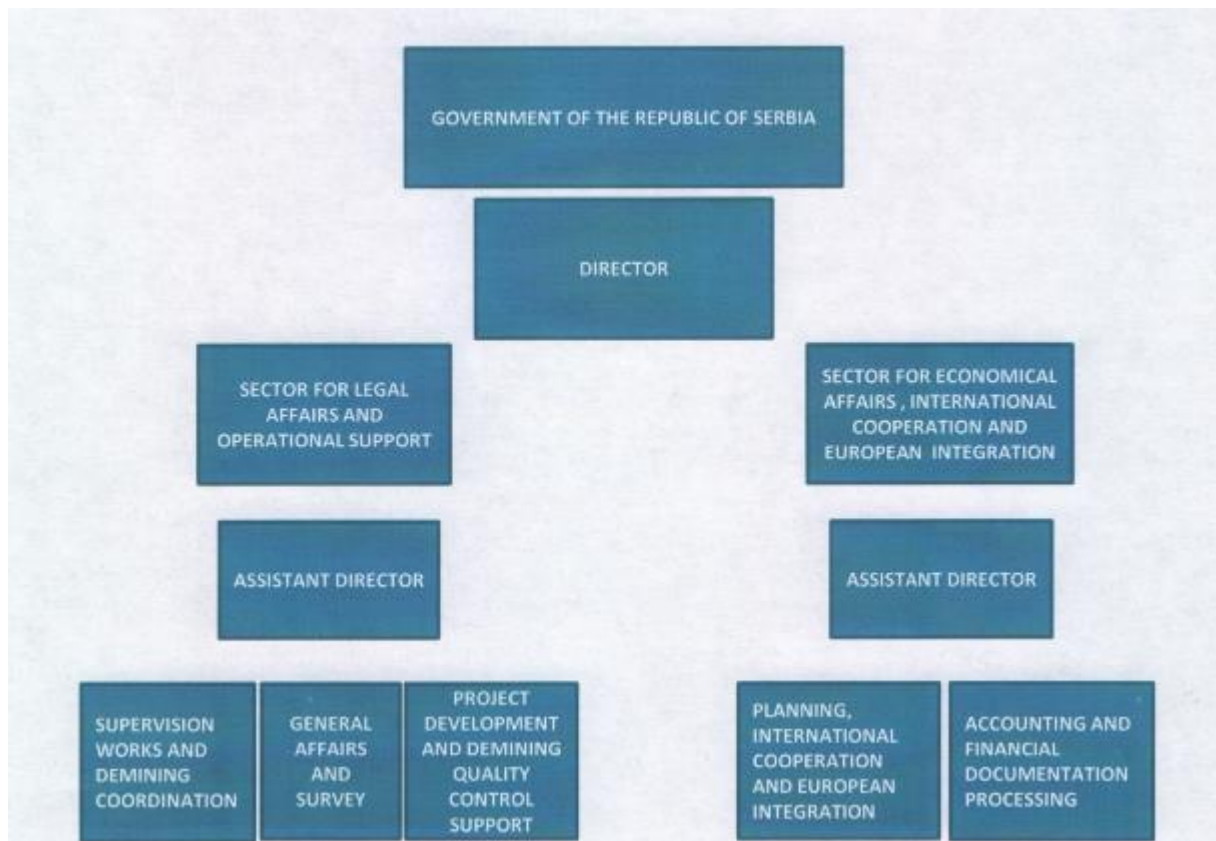
- **National demining structure**

In order to respond to contamination, the Mine Action Centre (SMAC) was established in 2002, initially as a federal body within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia until 2003 when, through a decision by the Government of the Republic of Serbia, it became the republic body, first as the Service of the Government and later on as a separate organization. The scope of the work of the SMAC has been determined by the Law on Ministries. The funds for its work are allocated from the Serbian state budget.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia adopts the Work Plan of the SMAC, as well as the Annual Report on the work of the SMAC. The Director is appointed by the Government and has the status of a civil servant holding position.

As at the end of 2019, 5 people were employed at SMAC. As of January 2020, when the Government approved the new Rule Book on Internal Organization and Systematization of Work Positions in

SMAC, there are 8 people employed at SMAC –Director plus 1 Assistant Director for Legal Affairs and Operational Support and 1 Assistant Director for Economic Affairs, International Cooperation and European Integrations plus 5 clerks.



The SMAC does not directly conduct demining, but conducts expert works in the field of humanitarian demining related to the following:

- coordination of demining/clearance in the Republic of Serbia;
- preparation of regulation in the field of demining/clearance;
- collecting, processing and storing of data and keeping records on the areas contaminated with mines, cluster munitions and other UXO, on demined/cleared areas;
- survey of areas suspected to be contaminated with mines, cluster munitions or other UXO;
- development of demining plans and projects and following their implementation;
- making of demining project tasks;
- issuing approvals to companies and other organizations for the conduct of demining/clearance operations;
- approving execution plans of a contracted company or organization for a particular area and issuing a certificate that the particular area has been demined/cleared of mines, cluster munitions and other UXO;
- quality control of demining operations;
- introducing population to mine/UXO risk; participation in training of personnel for a conduct of surveys and demining/clearance;
- following application of international contracts and standards in the field of demining, and;
- achieving international cooperation, as well as other works determined by the Law.

Demining operations in accordance with the SMAC projects and IMAS conduct specialized companies and other organizations registered for such works, and which are technically equipped and employ adequate staff, and as such accredited by the Ministry of Interior – Sector for Emergency Management.

As of 1 January 2014, according to a Government Decree on Protection against Unexploded Ordnance, the Sector for Emergency Management, under the Ministry of Interior is responsible for accrediting demining operators. Previously, the SMAC was responsible for accrediting demining operators.

The Ministry of Interior issues accreditations for demining companies/organizations.

Tender procedures for the selection of contractors for implementation of humanitarian demining /clearance projects funded from international donations through ITF is carried out by the ITF. Selection of contractors for demining operations that are funded in other manner conducts an investor and based on projects made by the SMAC. Later on the SMAC does an oversight of implementation of these projects, QA & QC, etc.

Demolition of mines, cluster munitions and other UXO in Serbia is done by the Sector for Emergency Situations of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia.

- ***Overview of the review and/or drafting of new mine action strategies.***

The report on the mine situation is regularly submitted to the Republic Headquarters for Emergency Management, which is adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

SMAC develops annual work plans and medium term plans, which are adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia

A new Decree on Protection against ERW is about to be adopted by the Government – it was developed by SMAC and Ministry of Interior. This decree will introduce the land release concept, not defined in the former decree, and also the need for development of national standards, which have not been developed in Serbia so far.

The report on the mine situation is submitted to the Republic Headquarters for Emergency Management, which is adopted by the Conclusion of the Government of the Republic of Serbia

In 2014, following the initiative of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Construction, Transportation and Infrastructure has **formed a Coordination Body for Gender Equality** as a national coordinating mechanism for gender equality in the Republic of Serbia. It recognizes the importance of improvement position of women, specially focusing on increasing the number of women entrepreneurs, as well as their equal participation in management bodies in education, science, culture, information, sports, agriculture, rural development, etc.

- ***Capacity Building actions of relevant mine action authority, Clearance Operators and related Ministries and Organisations***

In the period 2020-2021, SMAC staff attended the following courses:

- **Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining**

In the period from 16 to 27 August 2021 in Stans, Switzerland, the 70th Partnership for Peace (PfP) Global Course on Non-Technical Survey.

Regional Technical Survey Course, in the period 6-10 September 2021, in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, organized by the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) in partnership with Norwegian People's Aid (NPA).

Regional Quality Management Course in Serbia in the period 24 Nov - 1 Dec 2021.

Online IMSMA Core training course, from 6th to 17th December 2021.

- **French Embassy in Belgrade**

Explosive Ordnance Disposal - Level 1 Training Course held in the period 21 September 2020 - 10 October 2020 in Belgrade in the expanded business capacities, i.e. teaching premises with a ground and site for training of deminers within SMAC in a compound 40 km south of Belgrade. French trainers – program in accordance with IMAS. Trainees, apart from SMAC staff, member of the Sector for Emergency Management of the Ministry of Interior of Serbia, as well as representatives of domestic demining companies, and demining companies from the region.

- **EU Delegation to the Republic of Serbia**

In the period 25 October to 19 November 2021, implementation of the Project - Training of trainers for conducting explosive ordnance disposal training course level 1 and 2 (EOD Level 1 and EOD Level 2). The project was implemented within the cooperation of SMAC with the Serbian Ministry of Defense and the financial support of the EU Delegation in Belgrade, aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Republic of Serbia in the field of demining and UXO destruction. Trainees were SMAC and MoD staff.

Methodologies for addressing the Article 5 challenge

The following methods have been employed in Serbia to release areas known or suspected to contain mines:

- Manual demining
- Mechanical demining
- Canine demining

In Serbia, an initial survey which includes collection of data and analysis of available documentation on mine emplacement is employed, as well as a general survey which follows after an analysis of previously collected data, conditions in the field, statements by local population, hunters, foresters, people dealing with exploitation of wood, representatives of Civil Protection and Police, amongst others. One significant indicator has been data on accidents that have occurred. Unfortunately, in Serbia there is no systematically and centrally kept database on mine accidents and mine victims. SMAC and the Ministry of Labour, Employment, War Veterans and Social Affairs Government Working Group will be tasked to respond to these issues in the forthcoming period.

The use of the above methods has enabled the defining of risk area for which the SMAC develops corresponding project tasks to commence demining operations. Critical to this is the cancellation of areas registered as mine suspected areas that through a survey are confirmed not to contain mines (in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards -IMAS).

Demining has been conducted in accordance with the IMAS. Search of the terrain on completed projects tasks has been done by a manual method at the depth of 20 cm, of which on several project tasks, apart from a manual method, dogs were used. The productivity per a deminer, depending on mine situation, terrain configuration, land characteristics and vegetation, was up to 150 square meters.

The SMAC as well as its partner operators carry out a number of efforts to ensure the quality of tasks carried out in mine, cluster munitions and other UXO affected areas. The SMAC has conducted quality control operations on all completed demining projects to date. Upon completion of a demining project, the SMAC awards a Certificate of completion indicating that demining operations have been conducted in accordance with the IMAS.

Quality assurance and control is carried out at all levels of operations and could be summarised in the following activities:

- **Execution plan review:** Once an organization has been selected through the tender to carry out clearance in a specific site, it is required that the organization submits an Execution Plan to the SMAC which provides details concerning who will carry out clearance, with what means, protective equipment, in what manner, with what medical team and equipment, how will it organize the site, deadlines of when it intends to begin demining in a specific location, among other issues. Once the SMAC approves the organization's execution plan, it gives permission to the organization to begin work on the task.
- **Ad hoc controls:** During the execution of work, the SMAC conducts ad hoc visits to the site to ensure the proper arrangement and marking of a site, functioning of devices for search of terrain and detection of mines and UXO, whether and how daily records are kept on the performance and progress for each deminer, among other. The SMAC pays special attention to the manner of work of deminers, whether they act in accordance with operation and safety procedures requested by the project documentation.

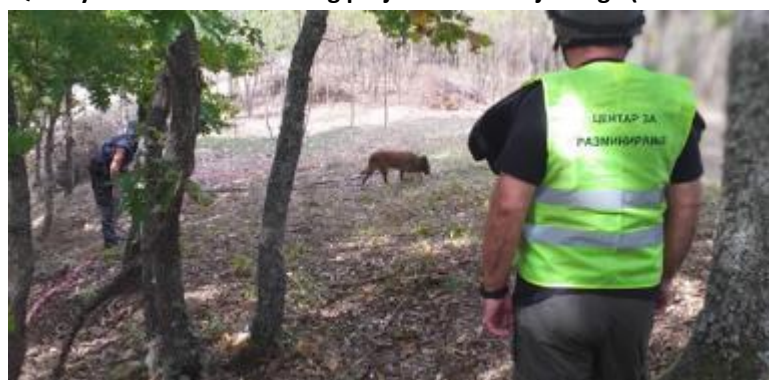


Introduction into works – check up of operator's equipment

- **Final control:** After receiving information from the contractor that the operations on a concrete site have been concluded, the SMAC commences the final control through an analysis of all previous completed controls, documentation on found mines and UXO and their destruction, documentation on executed works etc. Along with the SMAC, the contractor signs minutes with representatives of future land users (most relevant representative of local authorities) by which they confirm that they are familiar with borders of demined areas. The contractor and the SMAC sign minute to handover the site which has been demined in accordance with a concrete project task, which identifies the exact location, project, contractor, period of works, used methods and findings. Finally, the SMAC issues a certificate on completed demining of a concrete location in which, apart from stating relevant data, is stated that demining has been done in accordance with the IMAS, which guarantees clearance of 99.65%.



Quality control on a demining project in Končulj Village (manual method)



Quality control on a demining project in Končulj Village (MDD)

Serbian Mine Action Centre develops projects for clearance of the areas which directly affect the local population, such as those close to settlements where local people have abandoned their houses and stopped cultivating land due to fear of landmines/ERW.

Please note that prioritisation of hazardous areas takes place between Serbia, SMAC and donors according to agreed criteria.

Efforts undertaken to ensure the effective exclusion of civilians from mined areas

The whole area suspected to be contaminated with various types of mines has been visibly marked with “STOP UXO” signs in Serbian and Albanian languages, given that it is an area with multi-ethnic population. Areas contaminated with cluster munitions, air bombs – rockets and other UXO, have been also marked correspondingly. Marking is conducted by the SMAC and within its regular activities the SMAC periodically visits contaminated locations making sure that these signs remain emplaced.



Suspected Hazardous Area in Končulj Village, Bujanovac Municipality



Suspected Hazardous Area in Dobrosin Village, Bujanovac Municipality

- ***Information on changes to reports of new mine victims, (use sex and age disaggregated data where possible)***

The Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs is the competent authority in the Government of the Republic of Serbia in charge of ensuring protection, rights and financial support to disabled civilian veterans, family members of disabled civilian veterans and family members of civilian war victims.

This Ministry has been designated, from November 2012, as the focal point of victim assistance. Until 2012, the health aspect of these matters was dealt with by the Ministry of Health.

The Ministry of Labour, Employment, War Veterans and Social Affairs initiated in December 2013, the setting up of a Government Working Group tasked to deal with questions and problems relating to victims assistance, i.e. implementation of the Convention.

On February 15th 2015, the Government adopted the Decision on establishment of the Work group on application of the Ottawa Convention.

In line with the actions of the Maputo Action Plan-namely, actions to assess the needs of mine victims, the availability and gaps in services, requirements for disability, health education, employment, development and poverty reduction activities and with objectives to be realized through the implementation of national policies, plans and legal frameworks-tasks of the Working Group shall be as follows:

- Proposing measures to enhance the position of the victims of anti-personal mines;
- Proposing measures to enhance the legislative framework for the protection of the anti-personal mine victims;
- Monitoring alignment with the applicable legislation regulating the protection of the APM victims with international legislation and national law;
- Proposing special programmes and measures to promote and make the APM victims capable for public life;
- Cooperation with the association of the APM victims and civil society organizations involved in enhancement of the position of the APM victims;
- Cooperation with relevant institutions from abroad, international organizations and national working groups of the equivalent or similar profile with view to experience and good practice sharing;
- Monitoring progress regarding the provision of assistance to the APM victims within wider national plans and legal framework;
- Mapping all the existing services.

According to the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs database on the number of civilian victims affected by ERW. as of December 2021, the situation is as follows:

- 696 civilian war invalids,
- 218 family members of deceased civilian war invalids and family members of civilian war victims, i.e. 125 deceased civilian war invalids, as well as 93 family members of civilian war victims.

The Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs is the focal point for mine victim assistance reporting in the Republic of Serbia.

- ***Information on Risk Education actions taken during the previous request, (including updates to materials, activities, and strategies).***

The following section includes Serbia's efforts to provide Risk education actions during the extension period, including its efforts under Action #28-32 of the Oslo Action Plan.

Pursuant to Article 35 of the Law on Ministries, SMAC conducts expert works in the field of humanitarian demining related, among others, to educating populations of mine/ERW risk.

In line with Oslo Action Plan, Action #28, and noting that SMAC is the only institution responsible for conducting training in RE, SMAC has developed its own program for recognizing explosive remnants of war in accordance with IMAS and submitted it to the Ministry of Education for verification, which verified it in March 2021.

In line with Action #31 of the Oslo Action Plan, the purpose of the SMAC training is to build national capacities to educate trainees (members of local self-governments, civil protection, hunters and construction workers engaged in excavation works in the ERW contaminated areas) in the field of mine action and to enable them to improve knowledge and ability to recognize ERW in the Republic of Serbia. In addition to SMAC staff, who will be engaged as trainers, experts from the Ministry of Interior will also be engaged, so that different aspects and training modules, among others, the basics of ERW recognition, international mine action standards, medical aspect, etc. will be covered. In relation to that, the SMAC coordinates activities with local authorities, school authorities and other relevant state bodies (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Transport), local media means in communities where demining operations are conducted.

In line with Action #29, local at-risk populations are being informed about demining activities through a number of means and media. Mine risk education was conducted in schools and local communities. In accordance with the IMAS, during demining operations, evacuation of people from houses, shops and other communal locations located within the zone of demining works is conducted. Suspension of traffic on the roads within the zone of demining operations is conducted. Accordingly, given that in Serbia, the areas suspected to be contaminated with mines are located in the Municipality of Bujanovac, which is an area with multi-ethnic population, the whole area has been visibly marked with "Stop Mines" signs in Serbian and Albanian languages. During survey and community liaison activities, women, men and children are consulted. In addition, there is equal access to employment for qualified women and men in survey and clearance.

In the forthcoming period, SMAC is planning to conduct MRE project for the newly discovered mine contaminated areas in Bujanovac, which will imply engagement of mixed Serbian and Albanian staff.

There have been no new mine victims in the period between the submission of the previous request and the present day.

On 15 August, 2019, with the expert support of the Bujanovac Municipality Authorities and the Bujanovac Municipality Emergency Situations Headquarters, the Mine Action Center held presentation on explosive remnants of war (ERW), in the Bujanovac Municipality Assembly Hall.

The aim of the presentation was to raise awareness about:

- presence of ERW suspected locations;
- work of ERW clearance teams;
- activities of ERW destruction teams;
- medical assistance to ERW injured.

The presentation was attended by representatives of local self-government, public companies and institutions founded by the Municipality of Bujanovac, relevant institutions for protection and rescue (Red Cross Bujanovac, Forest Section, Veterinary Station Bujanovac, Hunting Association), Presidents of Local Communities - Commissioners of Civil Protection.

Nature and extent of the remaining Article 5 challenge: quantitative aspects

As of March 2022, there are 3 areas in the Republic of Serbia suspected to contain anti-personnel mines totalling 561,800 square metres, plus, the newly identified suspect hazardous areas of which date are not available at the time of writing this request.

In the period 2-3 October 2019, in the territory of the Municipality of Bujanovac (Village of Đorđevac), at the request of representatives of local self-government, the Mine Action Centre of the Republic of Serbia conducted survey and marking of locations suspected to be contaminated by mines. These are locations where fires occurred in August 2019, and according to eyewitnesses, explosions could be heard in several places after the fire broke out, indicating the existence of mines in these areas.

SMAC representatives and Chief of the Emergency Management Staff of the Municipality of Bujanovac, visited the sites and interviewed local residents, local community representatives, firefighters, as well as police and military representatives.

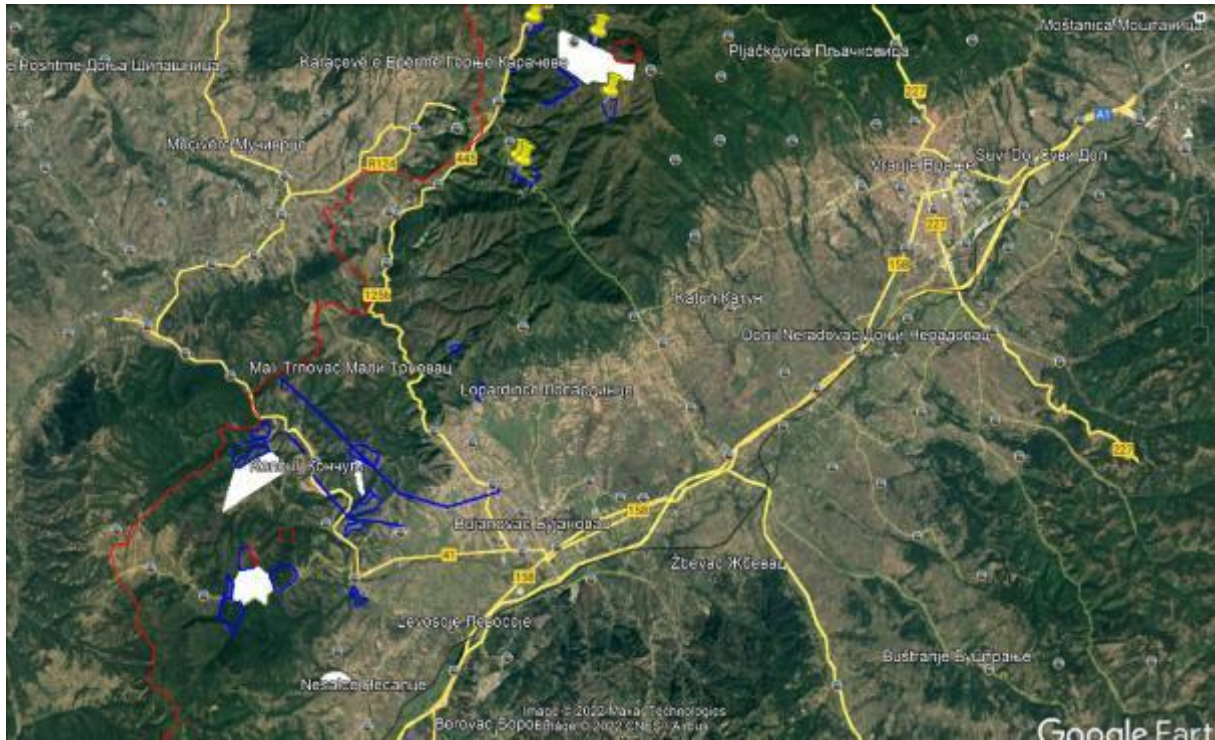
The mine incident questionnaires have been completed in accordance with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).

Furthermore, mine suspected area has been marked in order to clearly and visually warn of mine danger, as well as to ban the entry of population into mine suspected area. Mine warning signs have been posted in the areas of possible access to mined areas (roads, paths and other areas where movement of people is expected).

Given that the population is multi-ethnic, the wording on the signs has been written in Serbian and Albanian.

***In addition to 561,800 sqm, please note that the data on the scope of the contamination of the newly identified suspect hazardous areas are not available at the time of writing this request.**

Google Map of Bujanovac Municipality with confirmed hazardous areas and newly identified suspected hazardous areas (shown in white). Please note that these white polygons shown on the map represent a rough illustration of the sites where fire forest broke out and explosions could be heard. No survey has yet taken place.



Areas suspected to contain anti-personnel mines remain in 3 villages in the Municipality of Bujanovac as follows:

Table: Summary of areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines as of March 2022

Municipality	Village	Number of areas known to contain anti-personnel mines	Number of areas suspected to contain anti-personnel mines	Total number of areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines	Amount of area known to contain anti-personnel mines(square metres)	Amount of area suspected to contain anti-personnel mines(square metres)	Total amount of area known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines(square metres)
Bujanovac	Ravno Bučje	/	1	1	/	390,300*	390,300*
	Končulj	/	1	1	/	143,500	143,500
	Dobrosin	/	1	1	/	28,000	28,000
Total	3	/	3	3	/	561,800*	561,800*

Other Contamination

As of March 2022, there are 3 municipalities in the Republic of Serbia suspected to contain cluster munitions totalling 997,636 square metres. The areas suspected to contain cluster munitions are as follows:

Table: Summary of areas known or suspected to contain cluster munitions as of March 2022

Municipality	Village	Number of areas known to contain cluster munitions	Number of areas suspected to contain cluster munitions	Total number of areas known or suspected to contain cluster munitions	Amount of area known to contain cluster munitions (square metres)	Amount of area suspected to contain cluster munitions (square metres)	Total amount of area known or suspected to contain cluster munitions (square metres)
Užice	Bioska	/	1	1	/	584,567	584,567
Tutin	Istočni Mojstir	1	/	1		131,900	131,900
Bujanovac	Borovac	1	/	1	281,169	/	281,169
Total	3	2	1	3	281,169	716,467	997,636

Nature and extent of the remaining Article 5 challenge: qualitative aspects

The remaining contamination by mines is located on mostly hilly and mountainous terrain.

These groups of mines have been emplaced without being registered and without a specific pattern.

Mine action operations will also face challenges due to the fact that operations cannot be carried out throughout the whole year, but only when weather conditions permit it, namely in accordance with the IMAS, the temperature for demining works to be carried out needs to be over 5C⁰, and in case of Serbia it is the period March – early December.

Furthermore, most of the suspected area is not appropriate for the use of mine detection dogs or machinery.



Suspected Hazardous Area in Dobrosin Village, Bujanovac Municipality



Suspected Hazardous Area in Ravno Bučje Village, Bujanovac Municipality

The remaining contamination by mines is located on mostly hilly and mountainous terrain, with a slope of 5 to 10%, and on several places of up to 40%. Access to most of contaminated sites is aggravated due to poor macadam roads, particularly in the rain period.

This terrain/land is of an utmost importance to the population of nearby villages from the aspect of cattle breeding, exploitation of woods, mushroom picking, and tobacco production. Additionally, suspected mined areas are in an immediate vicinity of settlements, thus posing a constant threat to safety of local population.

Mine action operations will also face challenges due to the fact that operations cannot be carried out throughout the whole year, but only when weather conditions permit it, namely in accordance with the IMAS, the temperature for demining works to be carried out needs to be over 5C⁰, and in case of Serbia it is the period March – early December.



Suspected Hazardous Area in Ravno Bučje Village, Bujanovac Municipality



Newly identified suspected hazardous area in Nesalce



Suspected Hazardous Area in Končulj Village, Bujanovac Municipality

Circumstances that impeded implementation during previous extension period

There are a number of circumstances that present challenges for Serbia in complying with its Article 5 deadline. Particular issues faced by Serbia are as follows:

-Unregistered mine contaminated areas (groups of mines): The remaining areas contaminated by mines do not have registries and have not been planted in specific patterns, which aggravates demining efforts, namely survey results are subject to alterations.

-Newly discovered mine suspected areas in Bujanovac, in October 2019 and in August 2021. However, the data on the scope of the contamination of the newly discovered areas are not available at the time of writing this update.

-Climactic conditions: Contaminated areas are inaccessible during some periods of the year causing operation delays.

-Contamination other than mines: Specificity and complexity of the problem presents the fact that apart from mines still remaining in the territory of Serbia, Serbia also encounters with numerous challenges related to clearance of the areas contaminated with unexploded cluster munitions, air bombs – rockets and other UXO, as well as residual contamination and clearance operations triggered by infrastructure development projects.

-COVID-19 crisis: In 2020, the Serbian Government initially allocated 350.000 EUR for demining operations, but due to the COVID-19 crisis and government measures in the fight against consequences of the crisis, the demining budget was decreased to 260.000 EUR.

Humanitarian, economic, social and environmental implications of remaining mined areas

The remaining mine contamination presents a severe socioeconomic impact on the municipality of Bujanovac. Municipality of Bujanovac, where the remaining contamination by mines is located, is characterized by population of mixed national background (Serbs, Albanians, Roma, etc.). It is one of the most underdeveloped municipalities in Serbia. The territory of the Municipality covers the area of 461 km². There are 43 302 inhabitants, namely 94 inhabitants per km². Since the remaining contamination by mines is located on mostly hilly and mountainous terrain which is of an utmost importance to the population of nearby villages from the aspect of cattle breeding, exploitation of woods, mushroom picking, and tobacco production, suspected hazardous areas being in an immediate vicinity of settlements pose a constant threat to safety of local population.

Since exploitation of woods, development of cattle breeding and mushroom picking, happen to be the main source of income of locals, presence of mines additionally impoverish them. In addition, road communications are blocked, environment affected, and fire risks increased.

Presence of mines prevents construction of solar plants, primary tobacco processing facilities, etc, as well as the development of the region through an increased flow of people, goods, services and opening of new work positions. Demining would prevent trend of locals moving out from this region, which, in the past years, have been massively moving to either bigger towns or cities in Serbia, or in Western Europe countries.

-Lack of funds: Funding from donors for mine action activities have severely diminished through the years, with donors preference to provide funds for cluster munitions clearance.

III. The Remaining Challenge

1. Amount of time being requested

Serbia's current deadline for completing their Article 5 obligations is 1 March 2023. However, Serbia is in no position to meet their deadline and will need a 2-year extension period to complete their obligations. Accordingly, Serbia requests their deadline to be extended to 1 March 2025. The global goal of a mine free world by 2025 remains our objective.

2. Rationale for the time requested

As of 1 March 2022, in the Republic of Serbia there are 3 areas suspected to anti-personnel mines estimated to measure 561,800 square metres in the Municipality of Bujanovac, **plus newly discovered mine suspected areas in the Bujanovac Municipality. The data on the scope of the contamination of the newly discovered areas are not available at the time of writing this request.**

The Republic of Serbia will put maximum effort into clearing known areas totaling 561,800 sqm in 2022. National and international funds for 2022 clearance operations have been secured.

As regards the newly discovered mine suspected areas, there is the need for recruitment of survey teams, training, survey of Bujanovac municipality – input of all data – identification of confirmed and suspected areas – analysis and creation of prioritised plan for clearance, Serbia will need time and funds to complete these tasks.

Starting from the fact that due to difficult economic situation, demining/clearance operations in Serbia are funded mostly from international donations, and given that there is an evident trend of a reduction of financial participation of international donors for demining/clearance operations in the South East European countries, including Serbia, and in a situation when some donors are exclusively interested in funding clearance of cluster munitions that still, as well as air bombs – rockets, contaminate the territory of the Republic of Serbia, but also for clearance of other UXO caused by fire and explosion in military depots, we believe that a 2 year period is a realistic period in which Serbia could fulfill its obligations, that is Serbia could be cleared of mines by 2025.

However, if funds are available and at disposal, Serbia would be able to finish its obligations before this period.

3. Assumptions

If the funds for demining operations are provided, namely if international funding is made available for clearance of anti-personnel mines, national funding continues to flow for the implementation of the programme and no additional mine areas are discovered ahead of completion, Serbia intends, by the use of methods such as cancellation and reduction through non-technical and technical survey, manual demining, mechanical demining (where applicable) to complete clearance in Serbia well before 2025 deadline.

IV. Detail work plan for the period of the requested extension

1. Institutional, human resource and material capacity available to implement the work plan

The SMAC is a state authority in charge of coordination and managing of projects in the field of humanitarian demining. It employs 8 clerks.

The SMAC does not directly conduct demining.

Demining operations in accordance with the SMAC project tasks and IMAS conduct and will conduct specialized companies and other organizations registered for such works, and which are technically equipped and employ adequate staff, and as such accredited by the Ministry of Interior – Sector for Emergency Management.

As of 1 January 2014, according to a Government Decree on Protection against Unexploded Ordnance, the Sector for Emergency Management, under the Ministry of Interior is responsible for accrediting demining operators.

The Ministry of Interior issues accreditations. In 2021, valid accreditation was processed for 11 companies/organizations – 6 from Serbia, and 5 from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Depending on the type of contamination (mine, cluster munitions, other ERW), land configuration and soil mineralization, the number of survey and clearance teams ranges from 1 to 4, with 8 to 40 deminers.

When it comes to mine contamination (Bujanovac Municipality), the number of teams ranges from 1 to 4 plus 2 MDD teams, up to 28 deminers and daily productivity 150 m².

Tender procedures for the selection of contractors for implementation of humanitarian demining projects funded from international donations through the ITF conducts the ITF.

Selection of contractors for demining operations that are funded in other manner conducts an investor.

Namely, if and when the funds are provided, commercial companies and/or non-governmental organizations accredited by the relevant Serbian authorities, which will be selected on public tenders for selection of contractors, will carry out demining operations in accordance with the project and QA and QC of the SMAC, which will issue a clearance completion certificate.

Destruction of mines and other unexploded ordnance in Serbia is done by the Sector for Emergency Situations of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia.

2. Financial / Institutional Capacities

Since 2015, the funds for demining operations have been allocated from the Serbian State Budget and this trend has been continued on an annual basis and we expect the Serbian Government to continue to allocate the funds for demining operations in the future.

In 2022, the Serbian Government allocated around 260.000 EUR for demining operations and we expect the funds for demining operations to be allocated by the Serbian Government throughout the requested extension period, too. This proves Serbia's strong commitment to full implementation of the Ottawa Convention. We are aware that the national funds are not sufficient to completely resolve the mine problem, therefore, at the same time, we urge donors to support our efforts throughout the requested extension period by providing substantial funds for demining operations.

Please note that at the time of writing this draft, we do not have confirmation by potential donors of the funds available for Serbia in the period to follow, either for mine clearance or cluster munitions clearance.

In addition to funds from national budget (1,040,000 EUR), we estimate that we would need around 2,000,000 EUR secured by international donors.

Price of demining of 1sqm of mine contaminated area ranges from 0.8 to 1.3 EUR depending on land characteristics and terrain configuration. Please note that the prices are the matter of the market, namely the SMAC cannot influence the prices the bidders offer at tenders.

The funds from the Serbian State Budget will be provided to support the on-going work of the SMAC – salaries of the staff, running costs (electricity, water, heating), office and consumption material costs, fuel costs, maintenance of vehicles, costs of the SMAC staff insurance – as well as survey activities, development of adequate project tasks for demining/clearance of locations confirmed to be contaminated by mines, cluster munitions and other UXO, follow-up of the implementation of project tasks and conduct of demining quality assurance and quality control.

In addition to funds to deal with mine contamination, Serbia also needs funds to address the contamination related to unexploded cluster munitions, air bombs – rockets and other UXO. We estimate that in the forthcoming 2-year period we will need additional 20 million EUR to clear these areas.

In addition to approaching potential donors, SMAC will continue to raise awareness of the funding problem lobbying with state authorities, public enterprises and local authorities to fund clearance from contaminated areas for which they are directly interested.

3. Detailed Work Plan: Qualitative information

In 2022, demining operations are planned to be conducted for the projects developed by the SMAC totaling 561,800 square meters. Demining will contribute to an increase of safety of local

population, return to their homes and provide possibilities for safe exploitation of forest, cattle grazing and picking of mushrooms, which are one of main sources of an income of local population.

Serbian Government allocated 260,000 EUR for demining operations in 2022. At the time of writing this document, only national funds are available for these project tasks. SMAC intends to match the national funds through ITF Enhancing Human Security.

For one project area, technical survey will be used. It is conducted on the basis of an analysis of general survey, after data analysis and information collected by previously conducted general survey with a primary goal:

-verification of accuracy and authenticity of documents, data and information on mines and UXO contamination in cases when the general survey methods could not confirm accuracy and authenticity of stated documents, data and information. Namely, it will include analysis of data collected during previously surveys, conditions in the field, statements by local population, hunters, foresters, and people dealing with exploitation of wood, representatives of Civil Protection and Police, amongst others. One significant indicator has been data on accidents that have occurred.

The use of the above methods will enable the defining of risk area for which the SMAC has developed corresponding clearance project tasks. Critical to this is the cancellation of areas registered as mine suspected areas that through survey are confirmed not to contain mines (in accordance with the IMAS).

For newly identified suspect hazardous areas discovered in 2019 and 2021 during forest fires, mine assessment needs to be done, namely non - technical survey – the use of all non-technical means, including desk assessments, analysis of available data and a wide range of other information gathering and analysis functions, as well as physical visits to field locations. These elements will contribute to identifying, accessing, collecting, reporting and using information to help define where mines and ERW are to be found, as well as where they are not, and to support land cancellation, reduction and clearance decision making processes.

SMAC has tentatively provided donor funds to start a non-technical survey project, that will include 2 mixed survey teams (1 Serbian and 1 Albanian team of 2 surveyors each), which will be fully trained and equipped to conduct required tasks. These activities will be supervised and monitored by SMAC and in cooperation with the local authorities.

The project will take up to 1 year and will focus on the areas where fire forests occurred and explosions could be heard, but will also include all the other areas in Bujanovac where the existence of other mine indicators might be reported. During this period, technical survey projects will be developed, as well as land release projects for the assessed areas. Simultaneously with survey activities, MRE activities will be conducted in all 59 villages of the Municipality of Bujanovac.

Upon completion of this project, SMAC will have a clear picture of the contamination, which means that by November 2023 (21MSP) an updated work plan for the remaining period of the request, 1 March 2025, could be provided.

Demining operations in the period of the requested extension will follow upon securing of funding from donors or other sources of funding.

Namely, if and when the funds are provided, commercial companies and/or non - governmental organizations accredited by the SMAC, which will be selected on public tenders for selection of contractors, will carry out demining works on defined risk areas, in accordance with the project tasks, and QA and QC of the SMAC.

Priority will be to demine those areas which directly affect the local population. However, sometimes donors themselves, depending on availability and amount of their funds, influence the choice of the areas which will be demined first.

In the forthcoming period during a survey, demining, QA and QC the IMAS will be applied. Demining will be conducted primarily by manual method.

As it was previously mentioned, most of the suspected area is not appropriate for the use of mine detection dogs or machinery. Serbia preference is manual demining, nevertheless, Serbia is willing to conduct technical survey, where appropriate.

Despite the difficult economic situation in the country and modest funds from the National Budget, we will endeavor to secure funding of demining either by submitting projects to ITF applying for their funding, or lobbying with other foreign donors to provide funds for implementation of projects. The dynamics of implementation of our demining projects is affected by provision of funds, that is if the funds for implementation of our projects are not provided, our plan will be directly affected and hard to achieve. On the other hand, if more funds are provided, the work plan could be implemented in shorter period.

At the same time, Serbia has to deal with clearance of areas contaminated with cluster munitions, air bombs – rockets and other UXO, since they also block substantial resources and hinder implementation of development and infrastructure projects. For the implementation of these clearance operations, significant funds are also required.

Demining milestones:

The area of 561,800 square meters plus newly identified suspect hazardous areas will be land released as follows:

2022: An area of 561,800 meters, which will include:

- Municipality of Bujanovac, Villages of Ravno Bučje, Končulj and Dobrosin;

2023: Mine assessment of newly identified suspect hazardous areas:

- Municipality of Bujanovac

2024: Survey and Clearance of newly identified suspect hazardous areas, which will include:

- Municipality of Bujanovac

2025: Clearance and verification of newly identified suspect hazardous areas, which will include:

- Municipality of Bujanovac

Addressing mined areas in the Municipality of Bujanovac (2022-2025)

Year	Municipality	Village	Estimated mine suspected area to be subject to technical survey/clearance (square meters)	Source of funding and Amount*
2022		Ravno Bučje, Končulj, Dobrosin	561,800	National Budget (260,000 EUR) and international donations matched through ITF (500,000 EUR)**
2023		Subject to survey and assesment	Subject to survey and assesment	National Budget (260,000 EUR) and international donations matched through ITF or other sources of funding (500,000 EUR)**

2024	Bujanovac	Subject to survey and assesment	Subject to survey and assesment	National Budget (260,000 EUR) and international donations matched through ITF or other sources of funding (500,000 EUR)**
2025		Subject to survey and assesment	Subject to survey and assesment	National Budget (260,000 EUR) and international donations matched through ITF or other sources of funding (500,000 EUR)**
	Total		561,800*	1,040,000 EUR + and international donations matched through ITF or other sources of funding 2,000,000 EUR**

**In addition to 561,800 sqm, please note that the data on the scope of the contamination of the newly identified suspect hazardous areas are not available at the time of writing this request.

**Please note that at the time of writing this draft, we do not have confirmation by potential donors of the funds available for Serbia in the period to follow. In addition to funds from national budget (1,040,000 EUR), we estimate that we would need around 2,000,000 EUR secured by international donors.

Cluster Munitions Clearance and UXO Clearance (2022-2025)

Year	Municipality	Estimated mine suspected area to be subject to technical survey/clearance (square meters)	Source of funding and Amount*
2022	Bujanovac	281,169	International donations or other sources of funding*
	Vranje	672,300	
	Čačak	258,000	
	Paraćin	585,268	
2023	Vranje	492,050	International donations or other sources of funding
	Novi Pazar	363,208	
	Kraljevo	1,806,803	
	Paraćin	2,044,732	
2024	Kraljevo	2,449,166	International donations or other sources of funding
	Rakovica	1,818,525	
	Vranje	2,500,000	
2025	Leskovac	1,668,134	International donations or other sources of funding
	Kragujevac	592,400	

	Vranje	2,666,194	
	Total	18,197,949	International donations or other sources of funding around 20,000,000 EUR

*Please note that at the time of writing this document, we do not have confirmation by potential donors of the funds secured in the period to follow.