

GICHD remarks on APMBC Article 5 extension request submitted by the Bosnia and Herzegovina

18MSP of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
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The GICHD would like to congratulate the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the development and submission of their recent Article 5 extension request.

In the interests of time I will keep my comments brief.

In general terms the request is clearly structured and articulates the tremendous amount of work that has been put in to improving the Mine Action Programmes understanding of AP contamination by conducting a country wide assessment of all its tasks, completed in 2020.

The fact that BHMAC has recently developed and adopted three new chapters in its National Standards on non-technical survey, technical survey and land release, and that all three have been developed in accordance with International Mine Action Standards is encouraging and commendable.

In several places the extension request makes explicit use of the IMAS-compliant terms Suspected Hazardous Area (SHA) and Confirmed Hazardous Area (CHA) when referencing its AP contamination. This is a positive development, and though the request also uses the term Mine Suspected Area (MSA), which is not used in the IMAS, the glossary included does clarify that this is a more general term used in country to describe defined areas which consist of both CHA and SHA. It will of course be important to ensure that this messaging remains consistent to avoid any unnecessary confusion throughout the extension period. The transition to IMSMA CORE also indicates that BiH are making significant efforts to work in line with international good practice and will ensure an ongoing adherence to IMAS minimum data requirements.

The fact that the request makes a number of references to Bosnia and Herzegovina's obligations under the 2020–2024 Oslo Action Plan (OAP), coupled with the fact that in several places the thematic sections are framed in terms of specific Actions, demonstrates tangible commitment to the Plan and sets a welcome precedent from one of those States submitting an extension request in the first year after the OAP was adopted.

It is also positive to note that in general terms the request is gender and diversity sensitive, and that this is especially true with respect to its references to accident patterns, direct/indirect victims, MRE (EORE) and risk-taking behaviour.

Finally, it is important to mention that the new national strategy, which is annexed to the extension request, is now in place to help guide the mine action programme as it works towards completion during the extension period.

The GICHD would like to again commend the BHMAC and its Mine Action Programme for the articulation this extension request, and to reaffirm its commitment to supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina in its path to completion.