

Observations and Comments of the CCM Article 4 Analysis Group on the Extension Request submitted by Afghanistan in accordance with Article 4.5 of the Convention

The Analysis Group notes with disappointment the need for the submission of an extension request by Afghanistan as it had previously reported to be on track to meet its deadline of 1 March 2022. Nevertheless, the Group acknowledges the transparency exhibited and the efforts made by Afghanistan to fulfil its obligations under Article 4 of the Convention. The Group, therefore, commends Afghanistan for its prompt notification of the need to request a deadline extension following the discovery of previously unknown contaminated areas and inability to comply with Article 4 by the deadline.

While the Analysis Group agrees that the request submitted by Afghanistan is of a high quality and meets all the criteria set out by Article 4.6 of the Convention, additional information or clarification could further enlighten States Parties in their consideration of Afghanistan's request. In this regard, the Group requests additional information or further clarification from Afghanistan by **Wednesday 11 August 2021** on the following points:-

1. More information on the **remaining cluster munition contaminated areas** to be addressed:
 - (a) What is the actual area still to be addressed? Based on the Analysis Group's calculations, 10.25 km² remains to be addressed. However, the request indicates that the total area is only 9.9 km². Kindly clarify this discrepancy.
 - (b) Please clarify of all remaining CM hazards, which are ready for clearance and which require further survey or resurvey.
 - (c) More details on the type of contamination expected in the "new" areas would also help clarify the information provided (e.g. on p. 10 and/or table in Annex C) as the kind of CMs/submunitions may affect the productivity rate (and therefore funding needs and clearance schedule).
 - (d) Information on quality management would be very useful (under methodology);
 - (e) The request informs that there are challenges in accessing the southeast province of Paktya due to the presence of Anti-Government Elements (AGEs). Are there any additional cluster munition contaminated areas (including any areas suspected to contain submunitions), beyond those already set out on page 10 of the Request, which Afghanistan has not yet surveyed, including areas where security conditions currently prevent access?

2. Clarification on the **work plan** included in Annex D of the extension request :
 - (a) When would clearance operations take place in the province of Samangan, which has 2 recorded CM hazards? The 'CM clearance work plan' table provided is blank on that area.

- (b) The work plan shows that clearance operations are expected to be completed in October 2025. Additional information on what activities will be undertaken in the four months 1 November 2025 and 1 March 2026 would help States Parties better understand the need for this extra time.
 - (c) Adding a more detailed EORE plan would further strengthen the Request particularly indicating how the risk education messages will be tailored according to gender and diversity considerations; any plan for needs assessments to inform EORE planning and implementation, and if there are any specific challenges foreseen regarding EORE during the extension period. These could be included in the EORE work plan that is currently missing from annex D.
3. **Work plan funding:** The request indicates that the US State Department (PMRWA) is the main donor for the clearance of CM contaminated areas in Afghanistan and that it has agreed to cover funding for all remaining cluster munition clearance operations identified in the Request. Could Afghanistan confirm that there is secured funding to cover all of cluster munition clearance operations to be undertaken during the extension period?
 4. Annex C - the use of universally understood terminology in the identification of hazards (HazardName) in the table on page 19 could enhance State Party understanding.
 5. There is no mention of residual risk in the Request. How does Afghanistan plan to address the residual risk of submunitions discovered after completion?