SLOVENIA’S EXPERIENCE IN REMOVING MINES AND EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR

Key messages
Through its implementing institution, Slovenia supports several countries around the world in the removal of landmines and explosive remnants of war. Demining requires long-term engagement and works better when coupled with economic and psychosocial assistance to mine victims.

Keyword
• Crises, fragility and humanitarian assistance

Key partner
Slovenia

Challenge
When the Dayton Peace Agreement was reached in 1995, demining the land in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a key challenge. In conflict and post-conflict settings alike, mines and explosive remnants of war impede freedom of movement and limit livelihood capacity by keeping large portions of land from being developed and cultivated. This, in turn, hinders sustainable economic recovery and the rebuilding of society and adds to community fragility and psychosocial risks.

Approach
To address this challenge, in 1998 Slovenia created the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance (ITF) as a humanitarian, non-profit organisation to help Bosnia and Herzegovina in the implementation of the peace agreement and provide assistance and support for post-conflict rehabilitation.

Building on this experience, Slovenia now supports countries around the world with demining assistance and post-conflict rehabilitation. Slovenia dedicates a significant part of its official development assistance (ODA) to demining, notably in Ukraine and several countries in the Middle East and Asia. In 2021, Slovenia allocated the highest portion (20.2%) of its peace ODA to the removal of landmines and explosive remnants of war, significantly more than the DAC average (2.1%).

ITF, Slovenia’s implementing institution, has also significantly expanded its thematic and geographic scope. In 2012, ITF changed its name to ITF Enhancing Human Security to address a broader range of challenges...
beyond the physical removal of landmines, including risk education, surplus arms reduction and capacity building.

**Results**

- **Increased resources and scope:** In 2023 alone, ITF Enhancing Human Security raised more than USD 55 million in donations and operated in 19 countries and regions addressing the threats to human security.

- **Efficient demining:** The organisation cleared over 4 million square metres and found and destroyed over 3,900 mines and unexploded ordnance.

- **Enhanced risk education and assistance to mine victims:** Over 11,800 people received risk education messages and over 7,500 people received mental health and psychosocial support. Over 1,900 children received psychosocial and/or medical support.

**Lessons learnt**

- **Demining requires long-term engagement and investments.** Demining is a complex operation that includes survey, clearance and support services. The time and resources required for demining operations can vary based on factors such as terrain, type of mines and accessibility. After the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was estimated that 4,200 km² of land were mine contaminated. Three decades after the end of the war, there are still mines and unexploded ordnance remaining. The average price of mine clearance in Bosnia and Herzegovina is USD 2 per square metre.

- **Demining works better when coupled with economic and psychosocial assistance to mine victims.** Many mine-affected individuals lose their ability to work due to injuries or fear of encountering mines. Initiatives such as small-scale farming, handicrafts and microenterprises empower victims to earn a living. Survivors often experience trauma, anxiety and depression. Psychosocial programmes offer counselling, group therapy community reintegration activities and coping mechanisms to help them heal emotionally. Educating communities about the impact of landmines fosters empathy and understanding. It also encourages safe behaviour and risk reduction.

**Further information**


**OECD resources**


To learn more about the Slovenia’s development co-operation, see:

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More In Practice examples from Slovenia are available here: https://www.oecd.org/development-cooperation-learning?tag-key+partner=slovenia#search.

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