

# Progress Report

*(01 July – 30 September 2017)*

## “Capacity Support to Albanian Mine & Munitions Coordination Office (AMMCO)”



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## List of Acronyms

AAF	Albanian Armed Forces
ALB – AID	Albanian Association for Integration and Development
AMMCO	Albanian Mines and Munitions Coordination Office
APMBC	Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
ARC	Albanian Red Cross
ASS	Ammunition Storage Sites
AXO	Abandoned Explosive Ordnance
CCM	Convention on Cluster Munitions
CCW	Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
FFE	Free from Explosives
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
ESH	Explosive Store Houses
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
GICHD	Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining
ICRC	International Committee of Red Cross
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action
ITF	International Trust Fund Enhancing Human Security
MoD	Ministry of Defense
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
QA	Quality Assurance
QC	Quality Control
QM	Quality Management
RE	Risk Education
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US DoS	United States Department of States
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance

## 1. Executive Summary

This is the second progress report of the project **“Capacity Support to Albanian Mine & Munitions Coordination Office (AMMCO)”**, funded by the Government of the United States through ITF Enhancing Human Security for implementation period of January 2017-December 2017. The report provides a description of activities and progress for the period July – September 2017.

By the end of September 2017, the current number of dangerous UXO hotspots is reduced to **4 from initially 19 ones identified in 2011**.

Overall goal is to contribute in achieving that Albania is safe from ERW/UXO and to the fulfillment of the Albanian Government commitment to eliminate the ammunition risk by 2017.

*The specific objectives of the project are:*

- *Survey/Clearance and certification of four remaining contaminated areas Sinanaj-Tepelene, Jube Sukth Durres, Qafe Shtame and Suç Burrel in full compliance with international humanitarian standards.*
- *Inspection and certification as safe and free from ammunition of three former military ammunition depots in Borizane Kruje, Vertop Berat and Berzhite in Tirana.*
- *Community liaison, public awareness and risk education of local communities living around the affected areas in Gjirokaster, Tepelene, Durres, Burrel, Skrapar and Librazhd.*

AMMCO continues to provide technical assistance to the Government of Albania, in complying with the Disarmament Treaties such as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBT) and Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) obligations.

### 1.1 Land cleared and released

During the reporting period 01 July – 30 September 2017, AMMCO was carrying out the Coordination and Quality Management activities during the clearance operations form NPA Teams in UXO hotspots in Jube – Sukth Durres and from the EOD team in Qafe Shtame (Selixe)-Burrel, respectively;

- I. **87,022 square meters** of contaminated land was cleared by Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA) and the EOD teams of AAF, while AMMCO QM Team provided quality assurance/control in the UXO hotspot of Jube Sukth Durres (**86,892 square meters**) in Durres region and (**130 square meters**) in Qafe Shtame (Selixe) Burrel.
- II. **14,254** items of unexploded ordnance (**UXO**) and **383,322 items of small arms and ammunitions** (SAA≤ 23 mm and bullets) are found during this reporting period in UXO hotspots of Jube Sukth Durres and Qafe Shtame (Selixe) Burrel.

The main items found included fuzes, grenades and electronic detonators, as well as larger items such as mortars, shells and projectiles. All classified “red” items found, are destroyed in situ from the EOD team of AAF and others considered as “Safe” to transport are collected, transported and stored in the designated military depot for further destruction on the demolition range in Biza from the EOD AAF, coordinated from AMMCO.

### 1.2 Application of international standards and Quality Management

AMMCO and clearance organizations (NPA and EOD unit of AAF) are operating in full compliance with National and International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) developed for UXO hotspot clearance programme. NPA has already developed the UXO clearance SOPs, based on their previous experience and EOD of AAF manual. This document is reviewed, update as needed and approved by AMMCO along with AMMCO’s work to ensure that clearance activities are carried out safely and in full compliance with national and international Humanitarian Standards. No accidents are recorded during the reporting period. The AMMCO Quality Management

(QM) Team carried out regular monitoring visits and is also weekly liaising with the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) to request and supervise the demolitions conducted by AAF in the NPA UXO hotspot clearance sites in Jube Sukth and Qafe Shtame (Selixe) Burrel. During the reporting period, the AMMCO QM Team has performed Quality Assurance (QA) visits and has conducted the Quality Control in the cleared areas by NPA. The QM Team has conducted **34** Quality Management's visits.

### **1.3 Risk Education and public awareness**

Risk education (RE) and community liaison activities were ongoing as part of UXO hotspots clearance programme. Meetings and awareness raising sessions with local inhabitants were conducted in Sinanaj and Jube - Sukth UXO hotspots and Suç and Selixe Burrel to inform them about the potential risk. Awareness raising activities targeted 5,200 inhabitants, including men, women, boys and girls without any discrimination due to their involvement in risky activities, such as scrap metal collection and farming or animal husbandry in contaminated areas. Awareness sessions together with NPA teams delivering appropriate messages are held with inhabitants of Jube Sukth, Suç and Qafe Shtame in support of the clearance operations.

### **1.4 Victims Assistance**

There are at least 1002 UXO casualties (151 killed and 851 injured) all over Albania. The last accident with unexploded ordnance was registered on 25 March 2017.

A "Needs Assessment of Social-Economic and Medical needs of marginalized Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) victims in Albania" supported by the Austrian and US Government, has been completed during 2013-2016. The focus of the assessment was to review the status of the survivors, identifying their specific needs and drafting due recommendations for assistance to the Government and donors. Based on the above Needs assessments, US Department of State through ITF Enhancing Human Security funded two projects in Victim Albania during 2016-2017.

### **1.5 Disarmament Treaty support**

Albania is a State Party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and Cluster Munitions Convention. As such, it has reporting obligations deriving from the respective Articles of each of these Conventions on yearly basis. AMMCO is providing its technical support and expertise to the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and have prepared six the convention annual transparency reports during this reporting period on: (i) Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), (ii) the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), (iii) the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBT) and (iv) the OSCE questionnaire for the year 2016. The reports of CCM and APMBT and CCW are made available on the respective websites of each convention.

## **2. The UXO/ERW hotspots problem in Albania**

The ammunition contamination of the territory is a problem in Albania. Among the causes of such contamination are the accidental explosions at Ammunition Storage Sites (ASS) across the country during the civil unrest in 1997, the unexploded remains of the WW I & II as well as former army ammunition demolition areas that need to be cleared of explosive remnants. Ammunition hotspots have also been created in few former army demolition areas and shooting or firing ranges polygons (former shooting & training sites), which have been closed recently by the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF). Most of these areas need a full subsurface clearance at a depth of 20 to 50 cm, before being used by the army or being released for further use.

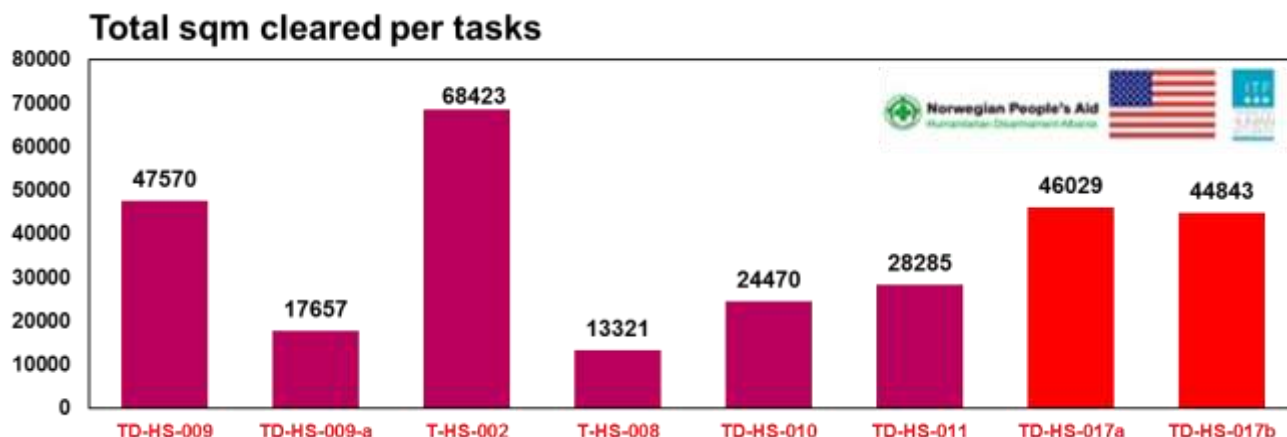
In order to respond to the ammunition contamination situation, the Albanian Government, supported by the international community, embarked on a consolidation reform, focusing mainly on the reduction of storage depots, the destruction of a considerable number of SALWs and ammunition stockpiles and the clearance of the existing UXO hotspots by 2018.

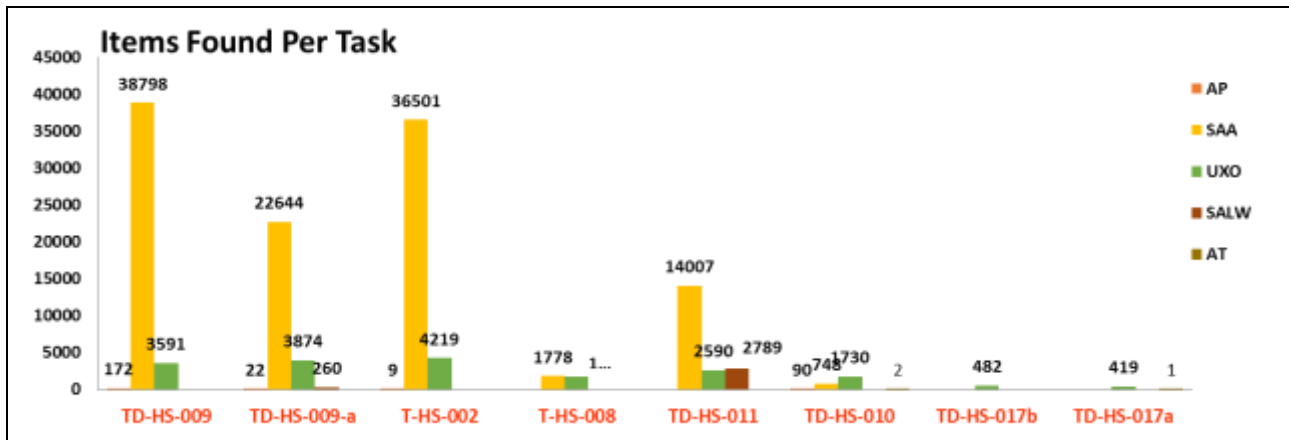
According to our database, there are 1002 abandoned explosive ordnance casualties (151 killed and 851 injured) recorded all over Albania during the period from 1997 until to date. The last accident registered in Albania is on 25 March 2017.

At the end of September 2017, the current number of dangerous UXO hotspots is at present reduced to 4 from initially 19 ones identified in 2011.

**Table 1: Updated List of UXO hotspots as of 30 September 2017**

<b>NO</b>	<b>UXO Hotspots</b>	<b>Originally suspected Hazard in 2014 (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>Total area cleared as of 30 September 2017, (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>Clearance Plan for 2017-2018 (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>
1	Gjеровен-Berat	63.000	<b>68.423</b>	Completed
2	Sinanaj – Tepelene	200.000	<b>0</b>	<b>200.000</b>
3	Picar – Gjirokaster	62.000	<b>62.000</b>	Completed
4	Kordhoc – Gjirokaster	2.400	<b>24.470</b>	Completed
5	Jube Sukth – Durres	1.326.714	<b>92.512</b>	<b>1.234.202</b>
6	Klos – Burrel (1 tunel)	180	<b>180</b>	Completed
7	Mbreshtan – Berat	30.720	<b>65.227</b>	Completed
8	Palikesht – Berat	12.000	<b>13.321</b>	Completed
9	Laç (1 tunel)	1.117	<b>350</b>	Completed
10	Suç-Burrel	84.000	<b>75.650</b>	<b>8.350</b>
11	Qafe Shtame -Burrel (2 tunele)	0	<b>130</b>	<b>230</b>
12	Gerdec – Vore	368.000	<b>368.000</b>	Completed
13	Ura e Gjadrit-Shkoder	91.000	<b>93.295</b>	Completed
14	Otlake-Berat	3.000	<b>3.000</b>	Completed
15	Gryke e Manatise-Lezhe	6.000	<b>6.000</b>	Completed
16	Rreshen-Lezhe	10.000	<b>10.000</b>	Completed
17	Brezhdan-Peshkopi	30.000	<b>30.000</b>	Completed
18	Pilure-Vlore	12.000	<b>12.000</b>	Completed
19	Shen-Vasil, Vlore	0	<b>0</b>	Completed
<b>Total</b>		<b>2.302.131</b>	<b>924.558</b>	<b>1.442.782</b>





### 3. UXO hotspots clearance operation activities

During the reporting period, UXO hotspots clearance operations were ongoing in Jube - Sukth Durres carried out by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) funded by US Government through ITF Enhancing Human Security and in Qafe Shtame (Selixe) Burrel by the EOD unit of Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) funded by Albanian Government.

AMMCO team was continuously coordinating, monitoring and conducting Quality Management of the cleared land on those areas of operation.

#### 3.1 UXO Hotspot Jub Sukth Durres

This former AAF (Albanian Armed Forces) training area and later ammunition demolition area (OBOD) lies on beach North of Durres which is used regularly by the local community. Fisher nets are pointing to fishing activities in the area. Ammunition metal scrap collectors are collecting metal pieces in the water for selling them on the market. This activity contains a certain threat and should be stopped.

Numerous demolition pits scattered over the area are witnessing OBOD activities. The last demolition happened in April 2011. The Albanian MoD closed this demolition range and intends to handover the area to local authorities.

The AAF carried out a surface clearance but the area will need a sub-surface clearance according International Standards (IMAS) before the land can be released to the local communities.

During the assessment, no explosive containing items could be found and no accident involving an explosive containing item was reported during the last years.

On 2 February AMMCO send the Technical Assessment reports for TD-HS- 017 (Jube-Sukth UXO Hotspot) to NPA.

On 8 May 2017, AMMCO issued a task dossier to do Technical Survey of UXO Hotspot of Jube- Sukth (TD HS 017) to Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), based on the MoD action plan and priorities. NPA deployed two clearance teams to the UXO hotspot of Jube- Sukth.

The total figures of the clearance progress for this task are: (i) clearance progress, (ii) items found in this UXO hotspot are respectively:

- I. **86,892** square meters of contaminated land in the UXO Hotspot of Jube Sukth Durres is cleared by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) respectively; July 47,116 square meters, August 16,834 square meters and September 28,562 square meters.
- II. **868** items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) were found in total during clearance process. The main items found included fuzes, grenades, electronic detonators, as well as larger items such as mortars and projectiles.





### 3.2 UXO Hotspot Qafe Shtame(Selixe) Burrel

The ammunition contamination of the Qaf- Shtame(Selixe) tunnel is related with the 1997 appraisal in Albania. Local people including children went inside the tunnels in Qaf Shtame and started to take ammunition out of the tunnels to sell for scrap. Due to this, there was an explosion and 23 people are burned/dead inside the tunnels. The entrance to the two tunnels that exploded is “blocked” by the Albanian army, but locals have managed to open some parts of the tunnels to go inside. Qafe Shtame village is part of the Komsj Commune, district of Burrel. There is road access in the village, and the car must be in good condition (4X4 vehicle only). The distance from Burrel to Selice village is around 35 kilometers. The EOD Team of AAF started the clearance operations at UXO Hotspot Qafe Shtame Burrel on 10 July 2017, based on the MoD plan for 2017 and Support Command task order. Based on the Support Command request the AMMCO QM Team provided the quality control of cleared land and quality assurance visits to this UXO hotspot. The figures of the clearance progress for the reporting period follows: (i) clearance progress, (ii) items found in this UXO hotspot are respectively:

- I. **130** square meters of contaminated land in the UXO Hotspot of Qafe Shtame is cleared by EOD unit of AAF.
- II. **13,386** items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) and **383,322** items of small arms and ammunitions (SAAs  $\leq$  23 mm and bullets) were found in total during clearance process. The main items found included fuzes, grenades, electronic detonators, SALW, as well as larger items such as mortars and projectiles.



#### **4. Application of International Standard and Quality Management of UXO Hotspot Clearance Operations**

AMMCO and clearance organizations (NPA and EOD unit of AAF) are operating in full compliance with National and International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) developed for UXO hotspot clearance programme. NPA has already developed the UXO clearance SOPs, based on their previous experience and EOD of AAF manual. This document is reviewed, update as needed and approved by AMMCO along with AMMCO's work to ensure that clearance activities are carried out safely and in full compliance with national and international Humanitarian Standards. Thus, no accidents recorded during the reporting period.

The AMMCO Quality Management (QM) Team carried out regular monitoring visits and is also weekly liaising with the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) to request, coordinate and supervise the demolitions conducted by AAF in the NPA UXO hotspot clearance sites in Jube – Sukth Durres and Qafe Shtame Burrel. During the reporting, period the AMMCO QM Team has performed Quality Assurance (QA) visits and has conducted the Quality Control in the cleared areas by NPA and EOD unit of Albanian Armed Forces. The QM Team has conducted 34 Quality Management's visits.

During the visits, there were no irregularities. In general, the operations were conducted in compliance with the respective SOPs and the safety standards. The cleared areas qualities controlled by the AMMCO QM Team are found to be free of unexploded ordnance.



## **5. Operational Meetings**

The operational meetings are held on a monthly basis at the Norwegian People's Aid regional office in Durres and Tirana. The operational meetings provide a good basis for the discussions of the detailed operational issues; clearance productivity, clearance requirements, types and quantities of UXOs and other small arms and ammunitions (SAA) found and their categorization, cooperation with Albanian Armed Forces in the handover/demolitions of the items found, cooperation/community liaison with local authorities and inhabitants living around contaminated areas. The agenda and minutes of the operational meetings are filed and documented.

## **6. Risk Education and Community Liaison**

Risk Education activities are closely linked with the community liaison efforts. AMMCO through its community liaison activities in cooperation with NPA teams are directly involved in the handover of cleared land to communities and are assisting in building confidence on the quality of clearance in line with international humanitarian standards. Regardless of the life threat: children, women and men are often involved in scrap metal collection around UXO hotspots. Therefore, local inhabitants of Jub Sukth Durres and Suc and Qafe Shtame (Selixe) Burrel are met, and awareness-raising sessions were organized with local community members to inform them about the potential risks that UXO hotspots pose. Awareness raising activities targets 5,200 inhabitants, including men, women, boys and girls without any discrimination due to their involvement in risky activities, such as scrap metal collection and farming in contaminated areas.

## **7. Victims Assistance**

There are at least 1002 UXO casualties (151 killed and 851 injured) all over Albania. There is plan aiming to support the mine and UXO victims throughout Albania. The plan complies with several Disarmament International Treaties ratified by Albania, such as Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty, Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and Convention on Cluster Munitions Convention. The implementation of the National Plan is contributing to the emergency and continuing medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support, socio-economic reintegration, data collection, relevant laws and policies for all mine/UXO victims throughout Albania.

A "Needs Assessment of Social-Economic and Medical needs of marginalized Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) victims in Albania" supported by the Austrian and US Government, has been completed during 2013-2016. The focus of the assessment was to review the status of the survivors, identifying their specific needs and drafting due recommendations for assistance to the Government and donors. To this purpose, a national workshop with participation of all stakeholders including donors was held in Tirana to present the findings and more important the medical/rehabilitation and socio-economic needs of survivors and/or their families.

Based on the above Needs assessments, US Department of State through ITF Enhancing Human Security funded two projects in Victim Albania during 2016-2017. The first project is supporting the vocational training of 25 survivors. A selection process is done and 25 survivors have already completed the vocational training courses in Albania.

AMMCO is monitoring the project and continuously coordinating with relevant partners of the project. The second project supported with raw materials and components for the production and repair of prostheses at prosthetic Workshop in Kukes Hospital. Materials and components are delivered in Kukes regional Hospital in June 2017.

During the reporting period, at least 12 new prostheses and 31 major repairs are done to amputees in need at the Prosthetic Workshop in Kukes Hospital and at 280 physiotherapy sessions are done to 39 patients.



## **8. Disarmament treaties support**

Albania is a State Party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and Cluster Munitions Convention. As such, it has reporting obligations deriving from the respective Articles of each of these Conventions on yearly basis. AMMCO is providing its technical support and expertise to the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and have prepared six the convention annual transparency reports during this reporting period on: (i) Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), (ii) the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), (iii) the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBT) and (iv) the OSCE questionnaire for the year 2016. The reports of CCM and APMBT are made available on the respective websites of each convention, while three CCW's reports are in the process of being checked and approved.

## **9. Visits and meetings in AMMCO Office**

### **9.1 Visit of PM/WRA USA and ITF representative to Albania**

From 14 – 22 July 2017, the representatives of PM/WRA USA Government and International Trust Fund (ITF) Enhancing Human Security visited Albania, in order to be informed about the progress and future plans UXO hotspot clearance and demilitarization programmes in Albania. Visits to UXO Hotspots clearance programme aimed at acquiring updated information about the current situation and clearance operations in UXO hotspots, through discussions, formal presentations and on-site visit to Picar, Kordhoc Gjirokaster , Gjeroven and Mbreshtan Berat and Jube Sukth Durres.

During the visit in Kukes a visits and presentations were organized at the office of ALB AID and at Kukes regional hospital. Donors were able to see the rehabilitation capacities built for mine/UXO survivors. A meeting with hospital director and survivors is done at the rehabilitation unit in Kukes.

On **17 July 2017**, an official handover ceremony was organized in Picar and Kordhoc Hotspots with participation of Minister of Defense and local authorities in Gjirokaster Region.

Additionally, USA government and ITF representatives visited to the Vocational Training Center in Tirana, where 25 survivors or their family members are attending the vocational training courses. A meeting with the management of the vocational training center and survivors attending the courses were organized.

US Department of State through ITF Enhancing Human Security funded two projects in Victim Albania. The first project is supporting the vocational training of 25 survivors and their family members, while the second project provided raw materials and components for the production and repair of prostheses at prosthetic Workshop in Kukes Hospital.



## **10. Visibility**

AMMCO always ensures that the USA Government and ITF are clearly visible as donors for the project, in accordance with visibility guidelines. At all publications, meeting at the national and international level, various presentations and visits, donor support is mentioned. Donor logos and other visibility requirements are part of the promotion and awareness materials that are distributed at various events. The Handover Ceremony of cleared areas in Gjirokastra was covered by local and national media.

## **11. Planning for 01 October– 31 December 2017**

The MoD priorities and the demilitarization action plan focus on:

- Clearance of UXO hotspots contaminated areas in Jube –Sukth Durres by NPA under AMMCO coordination and monitoring.
- Clearance of UXO hotspots contaminated areas in Qafe Shtame (Selixe) Burrel by EOD of AAF under AMMCO coordination and monitoring.
- Inspection and certification of the remaining former military ammunition depots in Borizane-Kruje, Vertop-Berat and Berzhite Tirana.

Based on above MoD priorities and updated action plan for 2017, AMMCO in cooperation with the General Staff aims to conduct the following activities:

- Conduct Quality Management (Quality Assurance and Quality Control) on the UXO hotspots clearance operations above mentioned.
- Based on the MOD request inspect and certify the above mentioned former military depots, in cooperation with EOD AAF and the Support Command.
- Conduct informative meetings with local authorities in Tepelene, Burrel and Durres in order to inform them about clearance operations in this region and seek their collaboration.
- Develop and distribute awareness raising materials in UXO hotspots of Sinanaj Tepelene, Qafe Shtame and Suc Burrel and Jube Sukth Durres.
- Update IMSMA database with the relevant information on UXO hotspot clearance progress.
- Monitor the Risk Education and Victim Assistance activities in Albania.
- Assist Albanian Government to fulfill the reporting obligations of the disarmament conventions of CCW, APMBT, CCM and OSCE annual report.