

CAMBODIA



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SUPPORT TO MINE CLEARANCE IN CAMBODIA



An expert of HALO Trust at work - photo by SDC

In the past 30 years, Cambodia has cleared over 1,900 km² of minefields, benefiting approx. 5.6 million people. However, an area of approx. 860 km² is still heavily contaminated. Cambodia aims to be a mine - free country by 2025. Switzerland's contribution will clear 12.2 km² of mine affected areas in northwestern Cambodia that will provide safe access to land and livelihood development for 25,000 rural households.

BACKGROUND

As a result of past internal and regional conflicts, Cambodia is still one of the most mine-affected countries in the world, which poses serious adverse socio-economic impacts on rural communities including human loss and disabilities as well as restrictions on access to agricultural land, forests, and water resources. Poor people and women are particularly affected.

In the past 30 years, Cambodia has cleared over 1'900 km² of minefields, benefiting approx. 5.6 million people and improving livelihoods of thousands of rural people. Annual casualty numbers decreased from 2'070 in 1993 to under 60 in 2018. In the first half of 2019

landmine and unexploded ordnances (UXO) accidents have increased due to progressive land use of previously uncultivated land along the Cambodian-Thai border, the so-called K5 mine belt, which has the highest number of minefields. Clearance of these minefields along the border becomes an increasingly high priority and the requirement for good planning and task prioritization is crucial to stay ahead of population growth.

The government launched the National Mine Action Strategy (NMA) 2018-25 and announced its own local Sustainable Development Goal 18 on mine action with the goal to make Cambodia a mine-free country by 2025. The government estimates that USD 406 million are required to complete the task. The mine action operators in Cambodia work under the coordination of CMAA. Negotiations are underway with the Cambodian army to deploy up to 2'000 soldiers on humanitarian demining from 2020 onwards. This would be a significant boost to the sector's efforts.

HALO Trust (HALO) is an international operator with an excellent reputation and a well-established SDC partner in various countries for many years. HALO started to work in Cambodia in 1991 and quickly became a major operator.

APPROACH

Removing the threat of landmines will release land back to communities, allowing economic development and ensuring that the rural poor are not risking injury when cultivating contaminated areas. Whilst contamination exists, providing mine risk education will raise awareness of hazards and promote safe behavior among impacted communities.

Switzerland's support to mine clearance contributes to the release of mine-free land, allowing rural communities to grow crops, collect non-timber forest products and access

PROJECT AT THE GLANCE:

Project Duration

January 2020 to December 2022

Budget

Overall Budget - USD 7.5 million
SDC contribution - USD 3.5 million

Implementing agencies:

HALO Trust, CMAA

Other partners

German Federation Foreign Office,
Irish Aid, US Department of State,
UK Department for International
Development

Imprint

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water sources. The integration of mine action planning with local development plans and the focus on women and marginalized groups as key beneficiaries are contributing to the overall strategic priority of poverty reduction. Switzerland's support to Cambodia's mine action aligns with the Maputo Declaration 15+ commitment and Cambodia's local SDG 18. It is consistent with the Swiss Humanitarian Mine Action Strategy 2020-2023, which on one hand advocates for a mine-free and safe planet for all, and on the other hand emphasizes achieving this goal through local capacity building of national mine action authorities.

HALO will prioritize clearance directly with impacted communities and provincial Mine Action Planning Units (MAPU), based on the threat posed to nearby populations, and their development requirements. The annual work plan is based on priority criteria (number of accidents in each minefield, proximity to population, type of threat). HALO will consult and validate mine clearance plans with LICHADO (Cambodian Human Rights NGO working on land rights and cancellation of economic land concessions) to ensure that the project does not use donor funding for the clearing of concession land or commercial land owned by private companies. Before any clearance activities take place, a non-technical survey will be carried out which establishes or confirms the type of mine threat, and delineates the boundaries of the mined area. This is followed by a socio-economic survey which records the number of beneficiaries and their socio economic position. These two initial surveys allow prioritization to ensure that the communities which are most deserving of mine clearance are addressed first.

KEY RESULTS OF THE PREVIOUS PHASE

Since 2013, Switzerland has supported the mine action sector of Cambodia with USD 7 million through the UNDP-led mine clearance project. By end of 2019, the project has cleared 120 km2 of minefields in poor rural communities. This represents about 10% of the nation-wide mine-cleared area in the country. Over 1 million people (49% women) benefit from safe access to land and water sources, which has helped to increase income opportunities in the most mine-affected provinces of Pailin, Battambang and Banteay Meanchey. Switzerland, together with the technical expertise of the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining, supported the government to develop and launch the NMAS 2018-2025 and the NMAS resource mobilization strategy. ARMAC received support to organize several regional events for ASEAN

countries including the regional workshop on gender participation in mine action in Vientiane.

OVERALL GOAL AND EXPECTATIONS

Impact: Improved livelihood opportunities for men and women, enabling wider economic development and casualty reduction in vulnerable rural communities in Cambodia (K5 mine-belt).

Outcome: 25,000 rural households in north-western Cambodia are able to safely use released land and are at less risk of accidents. In line with Cambodia's local SDG 18 on mine action and the National Mine Action Strategy, the objectives are:

Objective 1: To make safe land available for agriculture and infrastructure development in poor rural communities, in particular border communities expanding through internal migration.

Objective 2: To reduce casualties by provision of risk education and removing mines and other ERW where they pose the greatest threat.

Objective 3: To support participatory planning and prioritization of mine clearance activities to ensure effective mine clearance and post-clearance land use.

Target groups: HALO does not list target villages but prioritises clearance at minefield level. This ensures that priority tasks are cleared and communities derive the biggest benefit from HALO's clearance resources. The nature of minefields implies that only the poorest families live and work near or in these minefields – mines and poverty are inextricably linked. Therefore, HALO's work inevitably focuses on the poorest communities. The implementation is conducted in a gender-equitable manner (50% female demining staff) and results in significant multiplier effects in local communities, stimulating growth and development.



Mine Action HALO Trust - photo by SDC