

# CAMBODIA



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC

## MINE CLEARANCE IN CAMBODIA (PHASE III)



HALO Swiss funded deminer, Try Phal  
Photo@ SDC

### BACKGROUND

Cambodia is still one of the most mine-affected countries in the world, which poses serious adverse socio-economic impacts on rural communities including loss of human life and disabilities as well as restrictions on access to agricultural land, forests, and water resources. Since 1979, over 65,000 Cambodian men, women and children have been recorded as killed or suffering from life-changing accidents involving mines and unexploded ordnances (UXO).

Over the past 30 years, Cambodia has cleared over 2,538 km<sup>2</sup> of minefields, benefiting approx. 7.5 million people (women: 50%) and improving livelihoods of thousands of rural people.

The casualty numbers have decreased significantly from 2,069 in 1993 to under 60 in 2022. However, one million people still live in areas contaminated by UXOs and there are about 648 km<sup>2</sup> of land that is recorded as mined and will necessitate full clearance using manual demining. Some of the land will not require clearance because it can be declared mine-free by surveys.

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) launched the National Mine Action Strategy (NMAS) 2018-2025 and announced the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goal 18 to make Cambodia a mine-free country by 2025. In 2022, the RGC raised over USD 20 million from the general public, the wealthy and the private sector and established a national foundation. On top of that, the RGC allocated an additional USD 30 million and deploys 2,600 mine-clearing soldiers. With this, the mine-free goal by 2025 is within reach. However, there are still an estimated over 1,000 km<sup>2</sup> of land contaminated with other explosive remnants of war (ERW) that will need to be cleared after the 2025 deadline.

### OBJECTIVES

The main objective of Switzerland's support to mine clearance in Cambodia is to improve livelihood opportunities in particular for young people, women and disadvantaged groups while fostering human security, economic conditions and resilience, as well as safe access to natural resources

The four outcomes of the project are:

**Outcome 1:** Fewer landmine/ERW casualties, and people in affected communities feel safer following land release;

**Outcome 2:** People's livelihoods are improved through a.) Safe, productive and sustainable land use, particularly through agriculture in vulnerable areas and b.) Better access to natural resources and basic services;

**Outcome 3:** Environmental actors in Cambodia have better access to environmental data on mine cleared land and can use it for their work;

**Outcome 4:** Improved coordination in the Mine Action sector and local economic empowerment of women.

**PROJECT AT A GLANCE:**

**Duration**  
 Previous Phases:  
 Nov 2013 - Dec 2022  
 Phase III: Jan 2023 - Dec 2025

**Budget**  
 Total budget:  
 USD: 14,600,000  
 Swiss contribution:  
 CHF 4,000,000

**Implementing Agency**  
 HALO Trust

**Other partners**  
 - Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA)  
 - Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)  
 - Co-Donors (Germany, USA, UK and Ireland)

**EXPECTED RESULTS**

- Land mine clearance in 5.4 km<sup>2</sup> of heavily mined areas in north-western Cambodia will provide safe access to land and livelihood development for 9,800 poor rural households of which 40 % of people are considered as vulnerable.
- 400 environmental surveys of mine cleared land will be done and shared with environmental actors to potentially use cleared land not only for livelihoods but also for nature.
- Rural communities’ safety to grow crops, collect non-timber forest products and access water sources is increased.

**APPROACH**

Declaring land mine free by clearance or surveying potentially contaminated land will free up land for communities, enabling for economic development and guaranteeing that poor rural people are not injured when cultivating invested areas. While contamination remains, mine risk education is provided to enhance awareness of dangers and encourage safe behaviour by at-risk communities. Depending on the threat posed to local people and development demands, HALO plans and prioritizes clearance in both a top-down and bottom-up way, working closely with impacted communities and provincial mine action planning units (MAPU) all under the guidance on current government priorities from Cambodian Mine Action and victim assistance Authority (CMAA). To ensure that donor funds are not utilized to clear commercial land owned by private firms, HALO maintains strict protocols for monitoring and validating mine clearance programme.

**KEY RESULTS AND INSIGHTS OF PREVIOUS PHASE**

Switzerland has been supporting Cambodia’s mine action sector since 2013. Initially through the UNDP-led Clearing for Results project, then, from the beginning in January 2020, by supporting the HALO Trust. From November 2013 until the end of 2022, the Swiss contribution enabled the detection and destruction of 10,273 Anti-Person landmines, 160 Anti-Tank mines, and 8,214 other Explosive Remnants of War, clearing nearly 32 km<sup>2</sup> of contaminated land. Over 1.5 million people (49% women) now have safe access to land and water sources, contributing to an increase in economic opportunities in the mine-affected provinces of Preah Vihear, Pailin, Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Pursat, and Koh Kong. Switzerland,

through the Peace and Human Rights Division, also directly supports the CMAA’s coordination and planning with funding to the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). Furthermore, support has been provided to the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC), based in Cambodia, to organise a number of regional events for ASEAN member countries, including a regional workshop on gender participation in Vientiane and two workshops on mine awareness for youth and residual mine risk management in Phnom Penh.

**TARGET GROUP AND PROJECT LOCATION**

Vulnerable rural families (9,800 households) living in heavily contaminated areas in the most mine-affected areas of the K5 mine belt provinces: Preah Vihear, Oddar Meanchey, Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, Pailin, Pursat, Koh Kong, and Siem Reap. The project will directly benefit 49,000 people who live in affected communities of which an estimated 20,112 are at risk of being left behind.



Target provinces highlighted in green colour

**Imprint**  
 Swiss Cooperation Office and Consular Agency SDC  
 50, Street 334, Boeung Keng Kang, Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
 Email: phnompenh@eda.admin.ch  
 Web: www.eda.admin.ch/cambodia  
 May 2023