

Mid-Term Review: Clearing For Results IV (CfRIV): Mine Action For Human Development (March 2023)

DFAT Management Response

Recommendation 1: Continuation of CfRIV

Independent Evaluation: CfRIV is a strong and sound project which represents the culmination of many years of partnership. All stakeholders are to be commended for their commitment and professionalism. CfR is highly recommended to continue in the coming years.

UNDP: Fully Accepted. The CfRIV project is highly effective and the result of many years of strong collaboration and cooperation. As there remain large land areas of minefields, the CfR project should continue until Cambodia has reached a residual phase.

DFAT: Fully Accepted. DFAT acknowledges the success and ongoing need for CfRIV. Strong collaboration with UNDP has resulted in considerable progress in landmine clearance, however much work remains. While DFAT is not in a position to commit future funding at this stage, DFAT believes there is a strong case to be made for continuation, but also adaptation and evolution towards sustainability.

Next Steps: CMAA will develop a National Mine Action Policy 2026-2035 and National Mine Action Strategy 2026-2030, which are expected to be completed in early 2025. Among other things, they will aim to clear all anti-personnel and anti-tank mine contaminated land, all cluster munitions contaminated land, and establish a sustainable national capacity to respond to residual threats. DFAT is following closely and expects a CfR Phase 5 (CfRV) proposal to align with the new strategy.

Recommendation 2: Continued Use of Non-Technical Surveys

Non-Technical Survey (NTS) is highly effective and efficient. Some stakeholders lack enthusiasm for NTS, but many areas identified as being at risk pose no evidence of current threat. Landmine clearance poses many development benefits, but manual operations are extremely expensive. NTS should be embraced as enhancing the cost-effectiveness of Cambodia's landmine sector, and ultimately enables operators to focus on minefields that threaten lives and livelihoods.

UNDP: Fully Accepted. While it is noted that some stakeholders do lack enthusiasm for NTS, CMAA and UNDP agree that NTS is crucial to support land release and ensure clearance efforts are targeted to the areas of greatest and actual need. CMAA and UNDP will continue to promote the implementation of NTS.

DFAT: Fully Accepted. DFAT acknowledges the cost-effectiveness and efficiency gains through the use of NTS in identifying and prioritising minefields. Despite stakeholder reluctance, NTS ensures that clearance efforts are targeted to areas of greatest need, maximising the impact of resources.

Next Steps: DFAT will continue to support CMAA to promote and implement NTS-based approaches and will ensure NTS remains a core component of CfRIV land release strategies.

Recommendation 3: K5 Belt Border Demining

Recent statements by Prime Minister Hun Sen which imply re-opening of the K5 belt (the northwestern regions bordering Thailand) to landmine clearance are welcome. The vast majority of landmines and casualties in Cambodia are along this belt, but it has largely been off-limits in recent years, due to security/border considerations. It will be impossible for Cambodia to meet its landmine clearance goals unless K5 is tackled quickly and systematically. All parties are encouraged to engage in high-level advocacy and practical planning to address K5 as a matter of priority.

UNDP: Fully Accepted. CMAA and the Royal Cambodian Army (RCA) has agreed to establish a task force to identify minefields along the border that be cleared by humanitarian operators and those to be cleared by the RCA.

DFAT: Fully Accepted. DFAT agrees that the reopening of the K5 belt will be crucial for Cambodia to meet its landmine clearance goals. High-level advocacy and systematic planning will be required to address this difficult challenge.

Next Steps: DFAT will seek regular updates from UNDP on the taskforce and the on-the-ground reality of the complex politics of border access.

Recommendation 4: Enhanced Environmental Safeguarding

Cambodia's new CMAS draft chapter has the potential to guide more effective environment safeguarding within the landmine sector. However, environmental considerations deserve higher priority and awareness among national stakeholders. For example, the draft chapter focuses on minefields themselves (e.g., damage to topsoil), but one of the chief risks is that clearing pathways through forest and other natural environments to reach potential mines opens the pathway for deforestation. UNDP should revisit and improve its risk management and safeguarding strategy and protocols, which do not adequately recognize the harmful 'side effects' that landmine removal poses for the environment.

UNDP: Partially Accepted. The safeguarding of the environment management in mine action is the responsibility of the CMAA and operators and as such sits outside the scope of CfRIV. The CMAS Chapter on Environment has been finalized and operators have developed Environmental SOPs. The project will apply and address environmental considerations within its influence and support the CMAA to advocate further on the matter.

DFAT: Partially Accepted. DFAT agrees on the importance of environmental considerations. Noting varying accountability and limitations of scope, DFAT believes that it is crucial that this issue is fully considered in UNDP's risk and safeguards strategies as per the review's recommendation.

Next Steps: DFAT will support CMAA's collaboration with the Ministry of Environment to minimise the environmental impact of clearance activities and promote sustainable demining and land release practices.

Recommendation 5: Integrate Demining and Development Planning

Global trends in mine action increasingly emphasize approaches which coordinate demining with development planning, in order to fully realize the development benefits of mine action. UNDP embraces this in principle, but in Cambodia there is a mismatch between the ambitions stated in the UNDP ProDoc preamble, and the more narrow scope of action within CfRIV. There have been missed opportunities for integrated approaches. On the other hand, it is arguable that as Cambodia transitions to a residual risk context, it is not the right moment for UNDP to expand the scope of its support to Cambodia's landmine sector. UNDP and its partners are encouraged to more consistently articulate and operationalize its ambitious vis a vis coordination with development programming, and with it the expected CfR budget, workplan, and partners for "area" programming.

UNDP: Partially Accepted. Cambodia's mine action sector has in place a strong process for selecting minefields for clearance tasks and land use post clearance, i.e minefields cleared

for a health clinic or school or agricultural production etc. Post clearance assessments are carried out to monitor the land use post clearance through the CMAA Performance Monitoring System, which was strengthened with support from CfR to capture both output and outcome data. Within CfRIV, the ambition within the amended ProDoc, signed 7 October 2022, seeks to build on the support to mine/ERW clearance and land release, which are strongly supported by partners, and leverage off this to ensure that safe land is complemented by improved land use planning and diversified livelihood opportunities to make any headway on poverty reduction, particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable households. Linking MA and development is being considered to create an opportunity for integrated area-based approaches and to link mine action to livelihood improvement and other development interventions.

DFAT: Fully Accepted. DFAT supports the integration of mine action with development planning but acknowledges the current investment's limited scope. As Cambodia transitions to a residual risk phase, DFAT encourages exploration of alternative approaches to linking mine clearance, spatial planning, diversified livelihood opportunities, and poverty reduction.

Next Steps: DFAT will encourage UNDP to align mine action efforts with livelihood improvement and development initiatives, exploring opportunities for integrated area-based approaches in Phase 5.

Recommendation 6: Residual Risk Phase – Handover and Sustainability

As the sun sets on the landmine sector in Cambodia, it is imperative for the next phase of the project to prioritize sustainability and handover, including through the design of a practical transition strategy. This will include managing highly diverse and, in some cases, unrealistic expectations among stakeholders. While arguably outside the scope of CfR and UNDP's sphere of control, it will be important to consider sensitive issues, such as whether current national institutions and structures fit a residual risk context, and if not, how to 'rightsize' them.

UNDP: Fully Accepted. CMAA is currently undertaking a study to develop a policy to manage residual phase. The next phase of the CfR project will focus on clearance of landmine and cluster munition contamination and development of national capacity to manage the residual phase.

DFAT: Fully Accepted. Ensuring sustainability and effective handover to appropriate national authorities will be essential as Cambodia's landmine sector downsizes. DFAT agrees that the next investment phase should focus on managing residual risks and ensuring realistic stakeholder expectations.

Next Steps: DFAT will support CMAA and UNDP's development of a transition strategy that includes policy adjustments and capacity building to effectively manage the residual risk phase.

Recommendation 7: Mine-Free By 2025 Aspiration vs Reality

Landmine clearance operations in Cambodia have been highly effective, and CfR targets were met despite the exigencies posed by COVID-19. Nevertheless, Cambodia is not on track to be mine-free by 2025. While many stakeholders acknowledge this, it is clear that the commitment to be mine-free by 2025 is confounding realistic planning. All parties are encouraged to distinguish between aspirational and operational aims, and to consider implications of various scenarios.

UNDP: Partially Accepted. The aspiration to achieve a mine-free Cambodia by 2025 has been strongly articulated through statements of Samdech Prime Minister on various occasions. The RGC's contribution of US\$ 30 million for clearance in 2023 and about the same level for 2024 and 2025 reinforce this aspiration. The recent review of progress made in 2021 and 2022 and the calculation of remaining work suggests that 2025 target is achievable if required resources are mobilized.

DFAT: Fully Accepted. DFAT acknowledges the RGC's ambitious goal of achieving mine-free status by 2025 but recognises the considerable challenges and stresses the need for realistic planning and associated resource mobilisation.

Next Steps: DFAT will support CMAA in revising mine clearance workplans, advocating for additional resources, and promoting strategies to maintain progress.

Recommendation 8: Capacity Building Across All Staff Levels

Efforts should continue to ensure that capacity building and institutional strengthening are properly reaching technical, middle-level, and provincial staff.

UNDP: Fully Accepted CMAA and UNDP work closely together on training for capacity building at all levels, within CMAA and UNDP and to stakeholders at technical, middle and provincial level

DFAT: Fully Accepted. DFAT agrees to the importance of comprehensive capacity building across all levels. Ensuring that technical, mid-level, and provincial/local staff receive adequate training is essential for effective mine action management.

Next Steps: DFAT will continue to support training initiatives, knowledge-sharing exercises, and language proficiency programs to strengthen CMAA and stakeholder capacities.

Recommendation 9: Enhanced GEDSI Focus

CfR should consolidate and further build upon its work to strengthen gender, disability, and social inclusion programming. To ensure buy-in and independence of the gender work in particular, UNDP should ensure sufficient resources are directed toward CMAA for their work in this area, including building sufficient capacity and buy-in. The VA workstream adds strong value to CfR and balances the portfolio, and the 'whole household' approach is to be commended.

UNDP: Fully Accepted. CfRIV has consistently worked on strengthening Gender, Disability and Social inclusion into programming and raised resources towards this effort. Moreover, CMAA will promote economic inclusion of landmine victims.

DFAT: Fully Accepted. DFAT remains a strong supporter of gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) integrating throughout CfRIV programming. Promoting economic inclusion and ensuring appropriate resources for gender and related work will be critical to support balanced and inclusive development.

Next Steps: DFAT will work with CMAA and UNDP to enhance GEDSI-based initiatives, including capacity building for the CMAA Gender Team, skills training for victims/survivors and their families, and comprehensive reporting on gender-disaggregated data.