



Cambodian Mine Action Sector Briefing Paper Series

Planning and Prioritization Process



Contents

Introduction.....	2
Definitions	3
Mandate.....	3
The Planning and Prioritization Process.....	4
Monitoring and Accountability	7
Challenges	8
Conclusion	8
References	9

2021 | 1

Clearing for Results IV
Mine Action for Human
Development

Briefing Paper:

Planning and Prioritization Process for the Mine Action Sector in Cambodia

Introduction

Humanitarian mine clearance operations in Cambodia started in 1992 with the support of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) to clear transportation routes to enable the repatriation of hundreds of thousands of Cambodian refugees living in camps in Thailand back to Cambodia. When clearance of the routes was completed, clearance operations shifted to clear land to support the housing of the refugees. Due to the magnitude of the landmine contamination, the clearance was then extended to clear land for agriculture and productive use to support local reconstruction and development projects.

In the early days, clearance operators selected and prioritized minefields for clearance in direct consultation with the local authorities. However, following substantiated allegations of misuse of authority which saw some rich and powerful officials claiming land for themselves, the Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMAC), who at the time acted as mine action sector regulatory body and clearance operator, established the Land Use Planning Unit (LUPU) in 1998. The LUPUs were located in the provinces of Battambang and Banteay Meanchey where the majority of clearance activities were being conducted to test the new process that entrusted the provincial authority to manage and coordinate the planning and prioritization for mine clearance.

The LUPU pilot was deemed a success and following the recommendation of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA), which was established by Royal Decree No. 160 on 4 September 2000 to regulate, coordinate and monitor the mine action sector in Cambodia, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) established the Provincial Mine Action Committee (PMAC) and Mine Action Planning Unit (MAPU) - which is similar to the LUPU - through the issuance of a Sub-Decree No. 70¹ in October 2004. The Sub-Decree allows the Provincial Governor to establish the PMAC and the MAPU as requested by the CMAA.

¹ Sub-Decree #70 entitled Socio-Economic Management of Mine Clearance Operations.

Since 2004, the PMAC and the MAPU authorities have gained knowledge and experience from their work and the national planning and prioritization guidelines have been reviewed and updated over time to meet the needs and development of the mine action sector.

The purpose of this paper is to provide the reader with an understanding of the mine clearance planning and prioritization process that is being implemented by the mine action sector in Cambodia.

Definitions

PMAC is the abbreviation of Provincial Mine Action Committee that is established by the Provincial Governor based on Sub-Decree No. 70. PMAC is the highest Committee in charge of mine action work in the province and is established by the Provincial Governor. The composition of the PMAC is relatively the same from one to another province. PMAC is headed by Provincial Governor or their Deputy with heads of provincial departments as members.

MAPU is the abbreviation of Mine Action Planning Unit that is established by the Provincial Governor based on Sub-Decree No. 70. The MAPU is a permanent technical support unit of the PMAC and is established by the Provincial Governor based on PMAC's recommendation. The number of MAPU staff is different from province to province based on the scale of mine clearance activities in the province.

Mandate

The CMAA was established by the Royal Decree No. 160 in September 2000 with the mandate to regulate, coordinate and monitor the mine action sector in Cambodia. With regard to planning and prioritization, the CMAA is responsible for developing the guidelines on the socio-economic management of mine clearance operations (known as MAPU guidelines), monitoring their implementation and endorsing annual clearance workplans submitted by the PMAC.

The PMAC is responsible for directing the work of the MAPU, approving annual clearance workplans coordinated and developed by the MAPU, and resolving any disputes on cleared land.

The MAPU is responsible for the coordination and the development of annual clearance workplans in consultation with the clearance operators, local authorities, and the affected communities to ensure transparency and that the needs of the affected communities are prioritized and addressed.

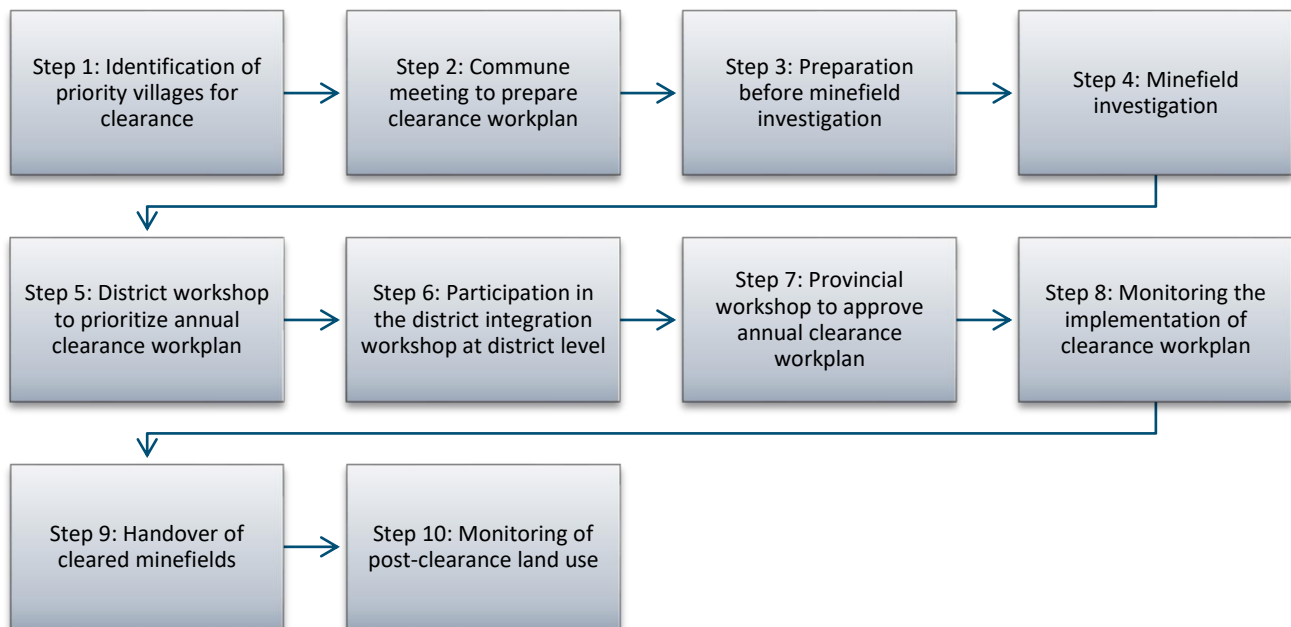
Mine clearance should address the needs and priorities of the affected communities, rather than just taking mines out of the ground.

Mine action is driven by the needs of the people it is serving.

The Planning and Prioritization Process

The planning and prioritization process applied in the mine action sector in Cambodia is a ‘top-down and bottom-up approach’ to ensure that clearance resources are directed to the most impacted communities and clearance itself addresses the needs/priorities of the affected communities. This is in line with the principle of ‘needs-driven, people-centered’. On the ground level, the MAPU coordinates activities with affected communities, development organizations, demining organizations, and related provincial departments to ensure a coordinated planning and the needs of affected men, women, boys, and girls are taken into considerations.

The following chart illustrates the planning and prioritization process that is aligned with the subnational development planning process.



Step 1: Identification of priority villages for clearance (January-February)

The CMAA in consultation with the provincial MAPU, clearance operators and key partners, identify and decide the priority villages where clearance resources should be directed to. Data on population, socio-economic status, mine-related casualties, contamination levels and MAPU local

knowledge are used to identify the priority communities (villages for mine clearance and communes for cluster munitions clearance). This is the top-down approach.

Step 2: Commune meeting to prepare clearance workplan (March-May)



When priority villages have been decided and issued by the CMAA, the MAPU works together with affected villages and clearance operators to identify minefields to be cleared in the priority villages based on the needs/priorities of the communities. This step repeats annually, and it is called a ‘bottom-up approach’ to planning and prioritization. This discussion is held at commune meetings, where Chiefs of the villages and other key village members present the minefields they want to be cleared and operators who want to clear that minefields, if any, can nominate their support to the MAPU who coordinates and facilitates the meeting. At this meeting, and as stated in the MAPU guidelines, MAPU ensures the voices of female meeting participants are heard and considered accordingly. The MAPU then takes stock of all minefields requested for clearance and other information related to the minefields, for example, what the cleared land will be used for and how many families and people will benefit from the clearance, etc. At this meeting, the MAPU use contamination maps to identify locations of the minefields requested for clearance.

Step 3: Preparation before minefield investigation (May)

After the commune meetings, the MAPU consolidates the minefields requested for clearance and verifies the data to ensure that none of them are already included on the current year’s workplan or have not been released through land reclamation non-technical survey. After this, the MAPU prepares a minefield investigation plan and informs key stakeholders (relevant operators and village Chiefs) about the plan, inviting them to participate accordingly.

Step 4: Minefield investigation (May-September)

During the minefield investigation in the field, the MAPU interviews the village Chief, landowners, and relevant people to understand post-clearance land use and the number of beneficiaries and their families. In addition, the MAPU discusses with the identified clearance operator the indicative time to clear the minefield and completes the minefield investigation form accordingly.



Step 5: District workshop to prioritize annual clearance workplan (October-November)

When the minefield investigation is completed, the MAPU organizes district workshops. At the district workshops, the MAPU presents the list of minefields investigated and allows village Chiefs and operators to prioritize minefields to be cleared in the following year under coordination and facilitation of the MAPU. It should be noted that the number of the minefields requested for clearance usually exceeds the capacity of the clearance operators. As such, the requesters (the village Chiefs) and the service providers (the clearance operators) must discuss which minefields to clear first. A documented prioritization criteria and weighting is used to assist in the minefield prioritization. Resulting from this workshop, a list of minefields prioritized for clearance in the following year is developed.

Step 6: Participation in the district integration workshop at the district level (October-November)



The district integration workshop is organized by the district authority and MAPU and involves the participation of the clearance operators. At this integration workshop, the commune councilors present to the district authority their communes development plan and the minefields that need to be cleared to support their development plan. The minefields presented by the commune councilors are the minefields consolidated from villages within the commune. At this workshop, the clearance

operators will sign an agreement with the commune Chiefs to clear the minefields prioritized by the village Chiefs at the first district workshop (Step #5).

Step 7: Provincial workshop to approve annual clearance workplan (December)

When the district integration workshops are completed, the MAPU produces operator clearance workplans for signature between the PMAC Chief and the representative of each clearance operator. This workplan consolidates the workplans that each clearance operator signed with the commune Chiefs at the district integration workshops (Step #6). After the provincial workshop, the MAPU sends the signed workplans to CMAA for endorsement. Once endorsed, the workplan becomes the official provincial annual clearance workplan.



Step 8: Monitoring the implementation of clearance workplan (all year round)

During the year, the MAPU must monitor the implementation of the clearance workplan by visiting the minefields and/or verifying information received from the clearance operators. The purpose of the monitoring is to ensure that the operators are clearing the minefields that have been approved for clearance and to address any issues that prevent effective implementation of the clearance workplan.

Step 9: Handover of cleared minefields (all year round)



When minefields have been cleared, the clearance operator organizes the handover of the cleared minefields to the local authority in the presence of the MAPU, village Chief and key village members. During the handover, the clearance operator details the size of the cleared minefield and boundaries, number of items found and destroyed, and methods used to clear the minefield land. For

land that was cleared for housing and/or agriculture, representatives from the beneficiary families will also attend the handover. The handover documentation is signed by the operator's representative and the District Governor with the MAPU Chief as a witness.

Step 10: Monitoring of post-clearance land use (all year round)

Between 6 to 12 months after the handover of the cleared minefields, the MAPU conducts post-clearance monitoring. The purpose of the monitoring is to understand the post-clearance land use, the beneficiaries, and the disputes on the cleared land, if any. The monitoring process includes interviewing the village Chief, key village members and members of the families who benefited from the cleared land. During the post-clearance monitoring, the MAPU official uses the post-clearance monitoring form to record information obtained.



Monitoring and Accountability

The CMAA is responsible for preparing the guidelines on socio-economic management of mine clearance operations, monitoring their implementation, and taking the lead in revising or improving them when needed. The MAPU is mainly responsible for implementing them and

providing feedback should there be a need to improve them. Clearance operators are also involved in contributing to the implementation of the guidelines. As such, they can provide feedback to CMAA or the MAPU should they identify any area for improvement.

In addition, the MAPU is responsible to ensure that priority minefields identified by the affected communities are considered to ensure that clearance is addressing the needs and priorities of the affected communities.

The CMAA, through the Socio-Economic Planning Department (SEPD), collects and reports on sex and age disaggregated data (SADD) to capture gender related data on land released under the MAPU guidelines. This information is captured and analyzed through CMAAs Performance Monitoring System (PMS) which seeks to collect and provide quality evidence of mine action contributions to poverty reduction and national development.

Challenges

Although there is a documented process on planning and prioritization to follow, it has been observed that some clearance operators are prioritizing the clearance of minefields based on donors or their own priorities rather than following the process. This negates the affected communities' rights to determine the minefields they want to be cleared to support their needs and priorities.

The work of the MAPU requires proper financial support to ensure that the entire planning and prioritization process is being followed. A lack of financial support will force the MAPU to shortcut the process which could lead to potential problems down the track.

Another challenge is accessibility to the minefield. In rural areas, the road to the minefields is rough and difficult to travel for both MAPU and the operators, especially during the wet season.

From a gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) standpoint, additional efforts could be made to improve the ability and opportunity of women, persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups to participate on an equal basis with others during the planning and prioritization process. This could include targeted consultations or alternate outreach mechanisms being established which facilitate GESI across the process and contribute to the value received by the beneficiaries.

Conclusion

Mine clearance planning and prioritization process in the Cambodian mine action sector has evolved and matured from an ad-hoc approach which saw clearance operators select the

minefields by themselves to a coordinated and facilitated approach striving to direct clearance resources to the most affected areas (top-down) and managed by the provincial authority to ensure that the needs and priorities of the affected communities are addressed effectively (bottom-up).

As the service providers, clearance operators should ensure that their work is as safe as possible for their employees and the cleared land users. They should attempt to clear minefields requested by the affected communities and coordinated and facilitated by the MAPU, rather than pursuing their own clearance priority.

Mine clearance is not just about taking mines out of the ground - it is about addressing the needs and priorities of the affected communities to whom we are serving.

References

- Decree No. 160 on establishment of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA).
- Sub-Decree No. 70 on the Socio-Economic Management of Mine Clearance Operations.
- Guidelines on the socio-economic management of mine clearance operations, version #3 dated March 2018.

UNDP Cambodia have been proud partners of the RGC in the mine action sector through the multi-donor funded flagship project Clearing for Results (CfR) since 2006. Now in its fourth and final phase, the CfRIV: Mine Action for Human Development (2020-2025) project is the transition project aimed at supporting the RGC, through the CMAA, to reach the RGCs goal of a mine free Cambodia by 2025 and strengthen broader national capacities to address residual threats post 2025. CfRIV is supported by contributions from Australia, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, UNDP and the RGC.

