

GICHD comments to the article 5 extension request submitted by Thailand

APMBC Intersessional Meetings, June 2022

Thailand has made significant and commendable progress in meeting APMBC obligations to date and indeed foresees completing clearance of accessible areas within the deadline of the current extension. The present request of 3 years and 2 months concerns areas still to be demarcated along the border with Cambodia, on which discussions are ongoing. In this context, difficulties in providing details on the foreseen workplan and timeline are understandable.

Nonetheless, to facilitate the assessment of this request, the GICHD would invite Thailand to provide more information on the following points:

- First, whether a resurvey of the areas to be demarcated will be necessary, or whether the estimated total of around 36,9m sqm to be addressed is definitive.
- Second, whether the estimated timeline and goals are based only on access considerations or also on other factors, such as past clearance rates and available resources. More information would also be useful on contingency planning in case the expected accessibility into specific border areas does not materialize.
- Third, whether the positive experience of the pilot project for joint demining operations with Cambodia will be replicated in other border areas.
- Finally, whether contingency activities relating to the placement of warning signs and risk education will also be conducted in areas to be demarcated, are also included in discussions with Cambodia and potentially considered for joint activities.

Thailand provides no indication of expected costs or available resources for the requested extension. So far significant domestic resources have been dedicated to mine action, and more details would be helpful on whether and to what extent such support will continue. The request also mentions recent funding reductions, without indicating their possible impact on foreseen planning.

We commend Thailand for seeking to strengthen its commitments towards risk education and community engagement and for providing information on risk education efforts deployed under the previous two extension requests. Several positive points are also included concerning gender and diversity mainstreaming.

In line with **OAP #24**, we encourage Thailand to add an evidence-based, detailed and costed plan for risk education in the requested new extension. We also recommend including the issue of risk education in bilateral, cross border and regional initiatives outlined in the new work plan.

In line with **OAP #3**, we also encourage Thailand to provide further information on the disaggregation of beneficiary and victim data, by sex, age and, where possible, by disability, as well as on ways in which victim assistance and community engagement projects will respond to the different needs of affected persons relating to their age, gender, disability, and other factors.

Overall, Thailand's request is solid but could be strengthened with the further information indicated above. In addition, as the border demarcation is the object of ongoing discussions, it will be important for Thailand to keep APMBBC States Parties apprised of relevant developments and to continue engaging in a dialogue with the art. 5 Committee on how best to address related challenges.