

REQUEST FOR AN EXTENSION OF THE DEADLINE FOR COMPLETING THE DESTRUCTION OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 5 OF THE CONVENTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Submitted by Cambodia

Introduction

1. The landmine and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) problem in Cambodia is the result of a series of internal and regional conflicts that affected the country from the early 1960s until the end of 1998. The contamination problem is concentrated, but not limited to, the northwestern provinces bordering Thailand, and it remains one of the densest areas of contamination in the world. Other parts of the country, mainly in the east, are affected by ERW, including cluster munitions.
2. Landmines and ERW have killed and injured over 65,000 people in Cambodia since 1979. Annual casualties have decreased from 4,320 in 1996 to 49 in 2024. However, mines and ERW continue to kill, injure, and traumatise people and communities and severely impede social and economic recovery and sustainable development in affected areas. Throughout Cambodia, an estimated one million people still live and work in areas contaminated by mines, cluster munitions, and other ERW.
3. Cambodia signed the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) on 3 December 1997 and ratified it on 28 July 1999, becoming a State Party on 1 January 2000. Although Cambodia only became a State Party to the APMBC in 2000, it has been actively releasing areas contaminated by anti-personnel mines since 1992. Due to the magnitude and nature of the anti-personnel mine problem in the country, Cambodia was granted two extension requests: the first from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2019, and the second from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2025.
4. Mine action is a critical element of Cambodia's National Strategic Development Plan of the Seventh Legislature of the National Assembly. It supports Cambodia's objectives of economic growth, social equity, sustainability, and international cooperation. A 2021 study by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining highlighted that mine action in Cambodia directly and indirectly contributes to 13 of the 17 Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Cambodia also established Mine Action as one of Cambodia's SDGs (SDG 18): "End the negative impact of Landmines/ERW and promote victim assistance."
5. Mine action in Cambodia is aligned with the Royal Government of Cambodia's (RGC) broader national objectives, as outlined in the Political Platform of the Seventh Legislature of the National Assembly for Nation Building and Defence (2023–2028) and the Pentagonal Strategy-Phase I of the RGC of the Seventh Legislature of the National Assembly. Cambodia's commitment to mine action reflects its dedication to global peace and prosperity. It aims to create a safer environment for its citizens and contribute to efforts to eliminate landmines and explosive hazards worldwide.
6. Anti-personnel mines and ERW impede safe access to agricultural land, housing, water resources, forests, markets, etc. The location of national development projects, including hydropower plants, irrigation projects, and roads, must also be deemed safe before the project commences. Although the number of accidents has declined, field observations reveals that farmers are still taking risks by accessing their land before it has been cleared, driven by the need for access or the pressure to expand agricultural activities.

Remaining Challenge at the beginning of the previous request

7. At the time of Cambodia's previous request in 2019, Cambodia had a remaining challenge of 9,804 suspected hazardous areas measuring 890,437,236 square metres located in 24 Provinces.

Nature and extent of progress made since the previous request

8. During the current extension period, from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2025, Cambodia has cleared/released a total of 1,294,701,191 square meters of land contaminated by all types of explosive ordnance including the following:

- 923,087,530 square meters of area containing anti-personnel landmines,
- 52,171,882 square meters of area containing anti-tank landmines,
- 224,859,380 square meters of area containing cluster munitions, and
- 94,582,399 square meters of area containing ERW.

9. Operations found and destroyed 508,413 items of explosive ordnance including the following:

- 121,835 anti-personnel mines ,
- 1,495 anti-tank mines,
- 32,782 cluster munitions, and
- 352,301 items of ERW.

10. In total, from 1992 to 30 June 2025, Cambodia has cleared/released a combined total of 3,418,525,179 square meters of land contaminated by all types of explosive ordnance including the following:

- 2,501,792,912 square meters containing anti-personnel mines,
- 123,866,017 square meters containing anti-tank mines,
- 448,517,955 square meters containing cluster munitions
- 240,164,319 square meters containing ERW, and
- 104,183,976 square meters cleared for administrative sites and risk reduction purposes.

11. Operations found and destroyed 4,447,052 items including the following:

- 1,202,657 anti-personnel mines,
- 26,681 anti-tank mines,
- 73,377 cluster munitions, and
- 3,144,337 items of ERW.

Circumstances impeding compliance within the period of the extension request

12. The magnitude of the challenge hindered Cambodia's efforts to achieve its socio-economic development goals concerning the clearance of explosive ordnance. The magnitude of the problem is compounded by the need to address diverse threats, including anti-tank mines, cluster munitions, and other ERW. A significant complication is the discovery of previously unknown mined areas, evidenced by the fact that nearly half of all mine accidents in the last decade have occurred outside of recorded areas, especially along the Cambodia-Thailand border, which requires a new comprehensive survey. Clearance operations are further complicated as they move into more geographically challenging mountainous and forested terrain and are stalled by unresolved border demarcation issues that prevent access to contaminated lands.

13. The RGC acknowledges that information on remaining contamination is incomplete, as earlier surveys were unable to identify all affected areas due to limited infrastructure and the absence of nearby settlements. Over the past ten years, socio-economic and national infrastructure have significantly developed, people have moved into new areas, and landmine incidents were recorded outside surveyed areas. In this regard, the RGC commissioned a new comprehensive survey, conducted by the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) in collaboration with the Royal Cambodian Army (RCA) under the coordination of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA), to acquire a comprehensive picture of remaining landmine and ERW contamination. The comprehensive survey commenced in November 2024 and was initially planned to be completed by late June 2025. Unfortunately, the rising border tensions and armed conflicts affected the survey process, thereby delaying the completion of the comprehensive survey. Despite these difficulties, 8 out of 21 districts have been surveyed. In comparison, survey in the remaining 13 districts has been completed in approximately 55 percent of the initially planned areas, and the results have been incorporated into the extension request. Cambodia is committed to completing the survey in the remaining areas in the 13 districts once the border situation returns to normalcy. When the comprehensive survey is completed, Cambodia will have a clear picture of the remaining anti-personnel mine contamination, supporting the preparation and submission of an updated work plan.

Humanitarian, economic, social, and environmental implications

14. Since 1979, mines and ERW have killed over 65,000 people in Cambodia and continue to be a hazard, especially in rural areas along the country's border with Thailand. Beyond the immediate threat to human life, this contamination seriously impairs the country's socioeconomic progress by obstructing access to forests, water supplies, and agricultural land. Contamination impedes farming, infrastructure development, and economic expansion, which in turn affects the achievement of 13 of the 17 Global SDGs. The strong need for land pushes many individuals, especially adult male farmers, to risk entering contaminated areas, resulting in 255 casualties despite reducing accident rates between January 2020 and mid-2025. Survivors sometimes face financial difficulty and lifelong disability.

Remaining Challenge

15. As of the submission date of the request, Cambodia still has 524,280,410 square meters of land contaminated by anti-personnel mines in the national database. Based on this, Cambodia has developed a clearance work plan for the extension period.

Requested time for extension

16. Cambodia seeks a five-year extension from 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2030.

Rationale for the time requested

17. During the extension period Cambodia will be able to fulfil its APMBC commitments, protect communities, and carry out its comprehensive mine-clearing efforts. In order to give communities safer access to land and resources necessary for sustainable development and economic progress, Cambodia seeks to eradicate the threat posed by APM by addressing the remaining contamination. This commitment underscores Cambodia's dedication to a mine-free future, aligned with its national development priorities and the global objective of a world free of anti-personnel mines.

Summary work plan

18. Cambodia is committed to maintaining its effective, decentralized planning and prioritization framework throughout the requested extension period. This community-centric approach has been widely recognized for its positive impact, as it empowers affected populations by giving them a central role in decision-making regarding mine action activities. By directly involving local communities, the process ensures that clearance efforts are precisely aligned with their immediate needs and long-term priorities, fostering a powerful sense of ownership and inclusiveness. The CMAA will continue to closely monitor the implementation of this process to ensure it remains responsive and effective.

19. To address the remaining contamination, Cambodia has established a detailed work plan to release a total of 524,280,410 square metres of land between July 2025 and December 2030. This target will be achieved using a strategic combination of land release methodologies based on historical data: Non-Technical Survey (16%), Technical Survey (30%), and Clearance (54%). The annual release schedule is structured as follows:

- July – Dec 2025: 80,206,882 square metres
- 2026: 130,000,000 square metres
- 2027 – 2030: 78,518,382 square metres

Clearance of Minefields Along the Border with Thailand

20. Cambodia recognizes that border areas remain among the most heavily contaminated by landmines in Cambodia's territory from the past conflict along the border between Cambodia and Thailand. Clearance in these areas, however, must be undertaken in a manner consistent with the frameworks of the General Border Committee (GBC) and the Joint Boundary Commission (JBC). This ensures that humanitarian demining advances parallel with the survey and demarcation process, upholding the principles of peace, transparency, mutual respect, and shared responsibility.

21. Cambodia has recently proposed that Cambodia and Thailand explore priority border areas for humanitarian mine clearance, particularly areas where people are living and where clearance would directly serve socio-economic needs, protect civilian lives on both sides, and support regional stability.

22. All these humanitarian demining activities are without prejudice to the survey and demarcation of the land boundary between Cambodia and Thailand, nor shall they be used to create *faits accomplis* on the ground or boundary claims.

23. The GBC convened a special meeting in Koh Kong Province, Cambodia, on 10 September 2025, concluding at 11:15 AM. Led by Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister General Tea Seiha and Thai Acting Minister General Nattaphon Nakphanit, the GBC reaffirmed its commitment to key agreements by adopting and signing Agreed Minutes and delivering a Joint Press Statement. In this spirit, the Agreed Minutes stipulate the establishment of a Joint Coordinating Task Force within one week, comprising GBC Secretariats, CMAC, and the Thailand Mine Action Centre, demonstrating Cambodia's good faith. This task force will identify priority areas for humanitarian demining, develop Standard Operating Procedures, coordinate demining activities, and consider each side's criteria. The success and effective operationalization of this initiative, however, will depend on the genuine intention of Thailand to pursue humanitarian demining in good faith.

24. Cambodia emphasizes that effective and sustainable mine clearance and broader mine action are contingent upon peace and stability, as facilitated by the ceasefire agreement of 28 July 2025.

However, the continued fragility of the border situation undermines mine clearance operations and the safety of personnel.

25. In this context, Cambodia recognizes that new mechanisms will be required to ensure that humanitarian mine clearance in border areas can occur safely, be coordinated, and mutually agreed upon. To this end, Cambodia also underscores the importance of involving a credible third party whose presence and facilitation would help build trust, enhance transparency, and ensure the success of clearance operations along the border.
26. Strengthening the cooperation of border clearance operations will be made within this framework, ensuring that joint efforts enhance the safety of broader communities, contribute to socio-economic development, and uphold the principles of peace, rebuild mutual trust, and transform the shared border between the two countries into one of peace, cooperation, development, and shared prosperity.

Mine Risk Education

27. Mine Risk Education (MRE) is a key part of Cambodia's mine action plan. Its goal is to lower the number of accidents by encouraging safe behaviours among people who live in or near contaminated areas. From January 2020 to June 2025, MRE programs successfully reached 9,259,134 people through a variety of tailored activities, including mass media campaigns, community visits, and integration into the national school curriculum. Training local schoolteachers and police officers to deliver MRE is a key part of a long-term sustainability plan to keep people in the community aware of the risk. Cambodia will keep adapting MRE to meet the changing needs of the community and combining it with other mine action pillars and larger development projects during the requested extension period. The detailed work plan for July 2025 to December 2030 aims to deliver MRE to an additional 3,799,540 beneficiaries in ten high-priority provinces, further minimising risks and enhancing community safety.

Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming in Mine Action

28. Cambodia is making progress in making gender and diversity a part of all mine action efforts with the creation of the Cambodian Mine Action Standard (CMAS) on Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming in September 2024. Mine action operators in Cambodia are obliged to align their own Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) with this CMAS. The Gender Team of the CMAA will develop special monitoring tools and conduct field monitoring to ensure that the CMAS is adhered to. The team will make suggestions and work with everyone involved to ensure that gender and diversity are included in all mine action plans and activities.

Financial Resources (national and international)

29. Cambodia is requesting five years, from 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2030, to deal with the remaining anti-personnel mine challenge. The length of the requested extension is based on the magnitude of the areas contaminated by anti-personnel mines that needs to be released and financial resources expected to be available. Cambodia requires US \$146,798,515 to deal with the remaining challenge during the five-year extension period.
30. CMAA has developed a resource mobilisation strategy to address financial challenges and take advantage of new opportunities. Traditional donors remain the most essential and primary source of funding for the mine action sector. However, Cambodia is building strong relationships with donors and development partners based on years of trust and shared success. CMAA is also interested in working with other potential donors and the private sector.

Assumptions / Risks of the plan

31. There are a few major risks that could affect the progress of the work plan and the achievement of its goals. One of the most significant problems is geographical challenges. Minefields along the Cambodia-Thailand border are difficult to access due to rough, mountainous terrain and thick forests. Furthermore, incomplete border demarcation in this area is a big problem which could cause access problems, disputes, and operational restrictions that could slow down or halt demining activities. The plan also depends on the availability of financial resources. Delays in funding, budget shortfalls, or the reallocation of resources can complicate operational planning, disrupt ongoing clearance activities, and reduce the quality and efficiency required to achieve objectives within the requested extension period.
32. Cambodia has been committed to addressing all areas containing anti-personnel mines in the most effective and efficient ways possible. Cambodia will provide State Parties with regular updates on the progress of the implementation during the extension period.