

Annual Project Review Report

DATE: 25 November 2007

Award ID: 00041585, Project 00047488

Description: Clearing for Results; A Partnership for Landmine Action in Cambodia

Implementing Partner: UNDP, with CMAA and CMAC

Period Covered: Year 2007

Author: Steve Munroe, UNDP Project Manager-Clearing for Results

1. Project Issues:

<p>Status of Project Risks & Risk Management Strategy:</p> <p>Cluster Munitions Treaty detracts attention and funding from land mine clearance</p> <p>With encouragement from UNDP, Cambodia has been an active participant in the Oslo Process to ban Cluster Munitions. While this represents a good opportunity for longer term resource mobilization to support the ERW strategy, it may discourage donors from making commitments to MA as they are waiting to support cluster clearance. This is a fairly low risk to the project but could affect longer term strategic planning.</p> <p>Medium risk of CMAA not being able to recruit appropriate staff for monitoring functions. This would jeopardize capacity development and monitoring objectives for the project.</p> <p>Positions required for additional capacity in QA (two additional teams of two each) to be recruited in Q3 2007 are being advertised and the recruitment process will be monitored by UNDP. Additional staff in the SEPD department will be recruited starting Oct 2007, with expected deployment dates of 01 February 2008. CMAA budget submission process being monitored to try to ensure that funds will be available to pay salaries in 2008, so there is less risk of staff turnover.</p>	<p>Open Project Issues & Issue Management Strategy:</p> <p>A competitive bidding model for mine clearance resources may not be tenable in lines with that envisioned in the project document.</p> <p>The primary objective of introducing this model, besides a desired increase in cost effectiveness which no longer seems likely, was to ensure that mine clearance resources are being used in a way that promotes greater accountability and transparency, and support development priorities and the local level. Ways to ensure that the Clearing for Results fund contributes to this are being explored in the context of assisting the RGC to develop an evidence-based action plan to accelerate clearance of high priority land.</p> <p>Lack of coherent approach of partner organizations related to working with CMAA may pose longer term issues</p> <p>Serious and sustained dialogue with NPA has been undertaken to attempt to bring them more inline with other partners in mine action. While this has not been altogether successful, the lines of dialogue are much improved and greater coherence is expected in the future. The UNDP Programme Manager will work part time out of the CMAA office to ensure that there is better coordination and communication amongst development partners within the Authority.</p>
---	--

2. Project Performance

OUTPUT 1:

Description: Improved mechanism for funding mine clearance that promote efficiency, accountability and the targeting of mine clearance resources on development priorities established at the national, provincial and local levels.

2007 targets: At least US\$ 3 million mobilized in 2007, leading to the clearance of at least 5,000,000 square metres of priority areas. CMAC work plan targets met. Data available on the portion of cleared land that has effectively been put under productive use. Quality assurance (QA) capacity developed and teams made mobile to increase coverage area. Socio-economic (SE) Teams fully competent to support the implementation of the Operational Guidelines on SE Management of Mine Clearance, and to conduct post-clearance monitoring.

2007 Achievements:

The project had total disbursements of US\$ 5 million in 2007, including US\$ 4.12 million directly for mine action operations on the ground. Altogether, 7,805,981 million sqm were cleared during 2007 with funding from Clearing for Results. Average clearance is thus circa 42 cents per square meter, a very low cost compared to those reported by other accredited operators in Cambodia. A total of 7,548 anti-personnel landmines were found and destroyed, along with 118 anti-tank mines and 3,757 pieces of UXO.

CMAC reported that 11% of the land cleared was by its quick response teams; the remaining 89% was cleared for specified development purposes. Of the intended land use for areas cleared by CMAC in 2007, the dominant categories were Agriculture (35%), Resettlement (18%), mixed Agriculture and Resettlement (18%), Access Roads (11%), Canal/Irrigation (12%) and community resources such as schools, pagodas, ponds and others (7%).

This year the SE Team of CMAA accompanied by UNDP staff visited 41 mine fields cleared during 2006 under the Clearing for Results project, representing approximately 1/3 of area cleared. The findings were generally positive: 11 sites were listed as having typically minor technical issues, meaning that land use did not exactly mirror the plan. This includes cases where land was used for Resettlement and Agriculture while the plan was for straight resettlement, or there was some discrepancy between beneficiary information. Four were listed as having a land use problem, including the land not being used, the land being partly used, and one case of half of a clearance task being done inside a military compound (no beneficiaries). These have been taken up by the CMAA to follow up with Mine Action Planning Units (MAPU) and relevant authorities for corrective action.

The Regulation and Monitoring department continues to grow in capacity and confidence, greatly increasing its ability to provide credible QA services by basing its teams in the field. Two additional teams have been recruited and are undergoing training during the last quarter 2007, and should be deployed to the field during 2008. One of these teams will have a greater focus on the East, meaning that some of the less-monitored Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) clearance going on there can be more adequately tracked by the CMAA.

Activity 1:**Deliverable Description for 2007:**

Negotiate and supervise CMAC contract. Advise on the feasibility of introducing a competitive approach and present options to the PEG, if any.

Start and End Date: Throughout year 2007

Achievements

An initial work plan was negotiated and signed with CMAC during Q1, followed by revisions in July and August 2007 to reflect additional funding received and additional activities. The work plan included support to clearance activities in Banteay Meanchey, Pursat and Battambang provinces for a total of 103 minefields, all approved through the PMAC/MAPU process. In addition, the project also supported CMAC's work in the area of Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD, community-based risk reduction networks, technical surveys and mine risk education. CMAC has exceeded its target at a very low cost for donors (CMAC also benefits from large-scale donations of equipment from the Government of Japan, which allows them to operate at a comparatively low cost).

Assessing the feasibility of a competitive bidding system has been ongoing throughout the year as additional considerations came to light. At this stage, it does not seem appropriate to pursue a purely competitive tendering system (as done in the Balkans), as there are several intervening variables in the Cambodian context, particularly if reduced costs are the primary motivator. These are:

- 1) Neither MAPU nor CMAA have the technical capacity or staffing to define tasks with enough detail to make it possible for companies to bid on them. Currently, MAPUs identify tasks in a general way, while for tendering purposes they would have to be able to populate the bidding documents with technical survey info, exact boundaries, asset requirements, soil type, topographical information, maps,

vegetation descriptions, expected density and types of mines, etc. Without an extremely rigorous and accurate detailing of the task, contract management becomes nearly impossible and litigation becomes a very real possibility. Getting MAPU up to this point would be time consuming and costly, and would force them to detract from their main purpose.(facilitating community involvement in prioritization, SE analysis, etc). Considering that mine action in these areas is a finite activity, there is little justification to expend the resources required. While contracting out the surveying is an option, it would likely be prohibitively expensive and would no longer make the tendering process cost effective.

- 2) Of the three accredited operators, it is unlikely that MAG or HALO Trust would be able to compete strictly on a cost basis with CMAC due to the latter's advantage of free equipment. MAG and HALO have both expressed the opinion that they would not compete on a square meter basis with CMAC; therefore, there is little reason to go through the cost and effort (for all involved) of a bidding process if the outcome is largely predictable. The suggestion has been made that the bidding evaluation process could be structured in such a way as to negate CMAC's inherent pricing advantage. However, this does not make financial sense as a tendering process should ignore extraneous factors and look to the lowest possible cost option which can provide the stated quality requirements.
- 3) Currently a positive relationship exists between the three main operators which has been built up over the past 15 years, as well as with the five existing MAPU's. A competitive bidding system could significantly alter this, changing the relationship to one where secrecy and antagonism replace collegiality and a sense of a common purpose.
- 4) There is unlikely to be any cost benefit for the project to incur the costs and risks of introducing a competitive tendering process, as current clearance costs (less than \$0.45/sqm during 2006/7) under the project are very low and unlikely to decrease further.
- 5) While the introduction of this system may encourage other operators to enter the country, there are currently only three full accredited operators. This is not a sufficient pool to guarantee a competitive environment, and is more likely to result in an oligopoly.

At this point, UNDP cannot realistically justify the introduction of a competitive tendering process in the hopes of gaining greater cost effectiveness. Given the capacity issues that would need to be addressed, the current distortion in the market due to CMAC's flow of free equipment from the Government of Japan, and the already low cost of clearance the project has achieved, there is no reason to believe that costs would decrease.

However, the need to improve the existing funding mechanisms articulated in the project document focuses on the need to promote the "targeting of mine clearance resources on development priorities established at the national, provincial and local levels." There still remains a significant opportunity for improvement in this regard, both for the Clearing for Results funds as well as generally in mine action in Cambodia. As discussed in various meetings, including most recently on the National Conference on Mine Action in November, there is a need for a more clearly defined strategy on how mine action resources are to be allocated over the next several years to accelerate progress towards national targets and international obligations. Efforts in 2008 should be directed to developing an evidence based plan for more targeted clearance, which increases national stewardship and promotes greater accountability of operator activities. Currently a disproportionate amount of influence on prioritization and task defining lays with the operators, leaving the government to rely on their goodwill and good intentions. Once a more robust plan is articulated, the financial resources of Clearing for Results could be used as a tool to support the system by funding clearance in line with the strategy. In the meantime, it is recommended that CMAC be contracted to conduct mine clearance on behalf of the project as is the current practise.

Activity 2:

Deliverable Description for 2007:

Establish and maintain partnerships with interested donors; ensure adequate reporting and project management.

Start and End Date: Throughout year 2007

Achievements

In addition to Canada's multi-year agreement signed in 2006, Australia also made a multi-year commitment to the project to mark International Mine Awareness Day in April 2007. Australia pledged A\$12 million for 2007-2010, which is in addition to the A\$2 million contributed in 2007.

Spain contributed EUR 300,000 during 2007, is providing an additional EUR 500,000 which will be utilized in 2008. UNDP has maintained close communication and strong partnership with the Adopt-a-Minefield campaign, with US\$250,000 transferred during 2007 and a similar or higher amount could be expected next year. Finally, UNDP increased its contribution for 2007 from a planned US\$576,000 to US\$1,056,285.

Therefore, the total project budget for 2007 was nearly US\$5.1 million, well over the target of US\$3 million and serving as an indication that there is growing interest in a coordinated, harmonized approach.

The Mine Action Support Group (MASG), a high level contact group of donors, had its annual field trip in Cambodia in March 2007, organized by UNDP. During the five days with representatives of Italy, France, Germany, the US, Japan, Australia, Canada, UNMAS and UNDP HQ, UNDP Cambodia advocated for continued or increased funding levels for mine action in Cambodia, and explaining the advantages of the harmonized approach offered through Clearing for Results.

Other potential bilateral donors have been approached, including the UK, Japan, the US, Germany and the EC., and some encouraging discussion with the latter three indicate that the possibility of future funding and/or a more harmonized, less isolated approach exist. Beyond looking for additional funding, UNDP has sought to reengage some of the large but less involved Development Partners. Through some direct advocacy, both the US and Japan have started attending the Technical Working Group (TWG) meetings after a long absence and the EC will be attending future meetings. This should be seen as a small but important development to bring the larger donors into direct coordination with the government and other partners in a constructive manner,

In addition, UNDP accompanied the delegation of Cambodia to the Vienna Conference on Cluster Munitions from 5-7 December at the request of the Government, to support proactive advocacy and resource mobilization efforts under the Oslo process.

Quarterly reports have been provided to all board members, including Government and donor representatives. Reports on specific issues have been provided upon request to both donors and Government, and the project manager has presented on project progress to the wider sector during all TWG meetings.

Activity 3:

Deliverable Description for 2007:

Develop and implement a Quality Assurance Plan, including milestones for the development of an appropriate CMAA Quality Assurance capacity in the field and for further development of the regulatory framework (Cambodian Mine Action Standards).

Start and End Date: Throughout 2007

Achievements

This continues to be one of the more visible successful elements of the project during 2007. Through a competitive process, BACTEC was selected again as the preferred company and was awarded the 2 year contract through to Q1 2009. Working with the Research & Monitoring (R&M) Department and UNDP, BACTEC developed a two year plan for themselves and the Department to significantly strengthen/solidify the regulatory system in Cambodia and CMAA's capacity to enforce it through strict accreditation processes, technical advisory board meetings to review standards, and Quality Assurance to monitor adherence to Cambodian Mine Action Standards (CMAS). The following specific results should be noted:

- 1) Despite lengthy delays due to a lack of availability of the CMAA budget, the two QA teams were deployed to Battambang and Siem Reap in July to allow them to get closer to the clearance activities.

This proximity has allowed them to visit over 150 sites from the three accredited humanitarian operators. Feedback from the operators has generally been positive; the QA teams are seen as professional and contributing to safer and more efficient sites.

- 2) An additional five staff were recruited through a competitive process, and highly qualified people were found. They will form an additional two, two-person teams (total four teams) to be deployed in Battambang to assist the existing team in covering such a large area, and Kampong Cham to cover operations in the East. UNDP/BACTEC is providing extensive classroom training on standards, Mine/UXO recognition, clearance tactics, mechanical tools and detectors, emergency medical trauma training, etc. They must pass a series of written and practical tests before proceeding to the two-month, field-based training, which is again supported by UNDP. It is anticipated that the teams will complete their training and be deployed to their field locations by 01 February 2008. The fifth staff member will be based in Phnom Penh to augment the ability of the department to support the field staff, respond to accreditation issues, etc. This increase in knowledgeable, well-trained staff puts CMAA in a position where it will be able to systematically ensure high-quality clearance is taking place, including in the East where operations are beginning to expand.
- 3) Five new chapters of CMAS were developed (Marking, survey [two], environment, and mechanical clearance) and given to CMAA for review, and approved by the Technical Advisory Board in November 2007 with some changes needing to be made in the Survey chapters. An additional five chapters have been drafted and submitted to CMAA for its review, and should be shared with the relevant stakeholders for discussion and approval in Q1 2008.

Activity 4:

Achievements

Ensure that clearance activities receive funding in time, and are fully in line with the PMAC/MAPU framework.

Start and End Date: Throughout year 2007

Achievements

During 2007, 7,805,981 was cleared in accordance with the PMAC work plans, and an additional 5,657,430 sqm were identified as low risk through area reduction techniques to be taken off the national contamination atlas. Similar to 2006, clearance focused on Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and Pursat due to the heavy contamination in these areas.

CMAC received timely transfers from UNDP upon receipt and acceptance of their progress reports. All of CMAC's clearance activities under the project are approved by PMAC/MAPU, although there are a significant number of minefields that were cleared which were not on their/PMAC's original plan (24) but which were added as the year went on. CMAC maintains that it is necessary to retain operational flexibility so that teams may be redeployed in response to poor weather/flooding. However, this large number of changes will be discussed with CMAC Senior Management as it may mean that a large number of PMAC prioritized minefields which were slated for clearance by CMAC have not been done by any operators.

OUTPUT 2:

Description: Strengthened capacities for mine action policy-making, strategy formulation and prioritization of mine clearance tasks in accordance with national and provincial priorities.

2007 Targets: Minefield prioritization procedures issued by CMAA and implemented by PMAC, data available on socio-economic impact of mine clearance, better CMAA communications with ministries and local authorities.

2007 Achievement:

The Operational Guidelines for the SE Management of Mine Clearance were launched in February 2007, with a series of trainings with MAPU staff following. This set of clear guidelines and reporting formats substantially increased the transparency of the prioritization process. MAPU understand the criteria and have a reference point in case of disputes, operators and other stakeholders have a clear picture of how decisions are being made, and there is more uniformity in their application across the provinces. In order to ensure that the guidelines remain a living document, a technical review meeting was held at CMAA in October 2007 to identify where discrepancies/difficulties were encountered in the Guidelines. A set of revisions or new instructions will be issued to address these new issues.

SE Team of CMAA supported and trained to be able to assist the MAPU/PMAC system to implement the SE Guidelines, and to conduct post-clearance monitoring of minefields to assess if they were being used for their intended purposes and by their intended beneficiaries. The team has expanded during the end of 2007, so that they will be able to substantially increase their monitoring capacity and ability to assist the (new) MAPU units.

An action plan for mainstreaming gender into national planning developed in partnership with UNDP, IWDA, MAG and CMAA, and woven into the CMAA Roadmap for 2008.

Activity 5:**Deliverable Description for 2007:**

Improved prioritization/planning methodologies for PMAC, develop tools for CMAA monitoring of land use post clearance, support the development of CMAA annual report on mine action achievements, support CMAA liaison with concerned line ministries, support the development of a CMAA monitoring capacity.

Start and End Date: Throughout 2007

Achievements

Objectives have been achieved on the planning side with the launch of the new guidelines for PMAC/MAPU, including a follow up review of these Guidelines in October 2007. The CMAA annual report on mine action achievements was produced in time for the Regional Conference on the Implications of Mine Action on Peace and Development (March 2007), including information on progress made by the various institutions/NGOs, analysis and CMAA recommendations.

Eight field missions were conducted by the CMAA SE Team (UNDP SE Officer accompanied them for five of these) to assess the current land use of areas cleared during 2006. After visiting over 100 sites for the year by all three operators, the SE Team collected a significant amount of information to assess how well the prioritization process is working and if the benefits are being reaped by the intended beneficiaries. A more robust analysis of this is planned for 2008, including from a gender perspective to see how the benefits of demining are being shared by women and men.

In order to promote the inclusion of gender considerations in national planning, a Cambodian delegation was formed and funded to attend the International Workshop on Gender and Mine Action in Nairobi, Kenya, in September 2007. The UN organized workshop was a practical working meeting helping to guide countries to develop tenable action plans for mainstreaming gender more effectively. The delegation from Cambodia comprised the Deputy Secretary General of CMAA and the Project Coordinator from the International Women's Development Agency (the two Co-Chairs of the Technical Reference Group on Gender and Mine Action) and the UNDP Programme Manager. The meeting led to an ambitious yet realistic action plan through to the end of 2008, which was reflected in the CMAA Road Map for 2008 and was to be presented to the sector through the Mine Action Coordination Committee meeting in November 2007 but this meeting was postponed.

Activity 6:

Deliverable Description for 2007: Consultancy window to support TWG and/or CMAA needs for independent research, studies, evaluations or policy advice. Promote joint donor initiatives in this regard.

Start and End Date: Throughout 2007

Achievements

No studies or evaluations were conducted through this mechanism in 2007. Discussions were held with CIDA (who proposes to fund this facility) on possible management mechanism, timelines, etc. It was agreed that the idea would be presented to the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) through the PEG meeting, and then further at the TWG to the wider sector if there was agreement on the principle.

The main function of the fund would be to provide the TWG and/or CMAA with the funding and means to access high quality independent data to inform critical policy decisions and shape national strategy. While the exact mechanism has yet to be worked out, some kind of forum for the submission of proposed topics would be set up and each would be evaluated by an independent review process. Exact roles of the TWG, CIDA/CCO and/or UNDP if applicable would need to be discussed.

Given the repeated assertions that there is an appreciable need for data based plans and policies in the mine action sector, this facility has the potential to play an incredibly critical role in providing timely information to the RGC.

Activity 7:

Deliverable Description for 2007: Performance-based management systems introduced in two departments of CMAA (SE and R&M). Management advisory support to CMAA leadership.

Start and End Date: Throughout 2007

Achievements

Currently, the number of staff being supported through performance incentives has grown to 17, due to the significant expansion in both the Regulation and Monitoring and Socio-Economic Planning Departments. The system faced a set back when Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) introduced a parallel system with the Database Unit staff it began working with in 2007, which did not follow the same levels or procedures as what is being done by Clearing for Results (and is in line with Sub-Decree 98 and the TWG-Mine Action decision of December 2005). While repeated meetings were held with both the NPA and CMAA management about the implications, the system was initiated mid-2007. It removed any obligation on CMAA to pay the government staff and gave them the status of contract staff; salaries were paid on a scale established by NPA which amounted to significantly more than the combined government salary/UNDP performance incentive. Unfortunately, this had a negative effect on other CMAA staff who didn't feel it fair that they were being 'underpaid', and it undermined the sustainability of government structures.

Regular Senior Management Team meetings continue to be held with documented action points and follow up, although they are not always bi-weekly. However, they continue to play an important role in taking and communicating management decisions with wide participation.

A Canadian Junior Professional Consultant (JPC) was placed by UNDP in the Secretariat of CMAA to support its functioning through, *inter alia*, improving events management, contributing to the content and publishing of CMAA documents, scheduling of major mine action events, etc. Unfortunately, due to various reasons she was redeployed to support the UNDP Election Support project.

3. Lessons Learned

The CMAA budget continues to be a major problem and an obstacle to effective execution of proposed workplans. The first tranche was not received until July/August, meaning the QA deployment was delayed by months, new recruitments were delayed, staff salaries were not paid, etc. This poses a huge risk to the project as it is detrimental to staff morale and threatens retention as staff are forced to look elsewhere. Considering the technical nature of their work and the extensive training they have undergone, it would be devastating if they are lost because they are not being paid for months at a time.

For mine clearance to reach maximum effectiveness, and to ensure greater accountability of clearance dollars, it is imperative that a clear strategy for the next five years is articulated detailing where clearance should be taking place, why, by whom, by when and how much it will cost. Reorganizing the clearance resources (current/future operators) in a more systematic way to work toward clearly-stated targets would inject a sense of purpose that is currently lacking. UNDP should play a more proactive role in this strategic planning in the coming months, ensuring that the forest is not being missed because of an overly zealous focus on the trees.

There needs to be a more effective way to ensure that Development Partners/NGO's interested in supporting CMAA can coordinate their activities in a transparent way. AusAID suggested during the TWG in October 2007, that all support information (budget, activities, etc.) should be requested from CMAA so that it can be recorded and shared with the TWG Secretariat in the spirit of mutual accountability. A lot of time was lost this year on this issue for all involved, so a more proactive effort at real communication and coordination will be needed in 2008.

4. Financial Report (Attached)
