

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

MINE
ACTION
REVIEW

CLEARING THE MINES 2024

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2025
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: LIGHT

NATIONAL AUTHORITY ESTIMATE

350,667m²

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2023

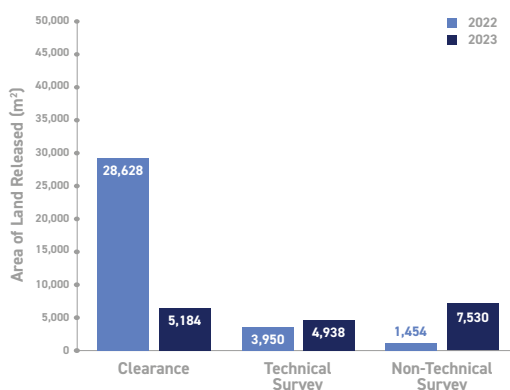
5,184m²

(NATIONAL ESTIMATE)

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2023

0

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): NONE

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) has issued a ten-year national mine action strategy and work plan for 2023 to 2032. Officially signed by the Vice Prime Minister in March 2024, the strategy aims to ensure all mined areas are cleared by the end of 2025; that survey of cluster munitions remnants (CMR) and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) is completed rapidly; and that a decentralised explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) capacity is established to tackle residual contamination. However, the security situation worsened throughout 2023 and into 2024, with intense fighting in several provinces, particularly North Kivu and Ituri. This unrest hindered clearance operations and reduced the presence of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). Despite these challenges, the Congolese Mine Action Centre (CCLAM), the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), and other stakeholders sought to manage the escalating threat of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including improvised mines, which are increasingly being used by armed groups in Beni and south Ituri.

A new director was appointed in early 2023 to coordinate CCLAM. DR Congo submitted two Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 7 reports in 2024, which declared release of eight hazardous areas by DanChurchAid (DCA) between April 2022 and December 2023 in Tanganyika and Kasai provinces. Remaining contamination was reported to cover 350,667m² across 29 hazardous areas. The long-delayed survey in the territory of Aru in Ituri province finally started in early 2024, with no new hazardous areas having been identified by April. International operator The Development Initiative (TDI) resumed mine action activities in 2023. It is developing the capacity of the national operator SYLAM so it can become an additional operator with explosive hazard capability alongside AFRILAM.

FIVE-YEAR OVERVIEW

In 2019, after nearly two decades of mine action in the country, it was expected that DR Congo would soon fulfil its Article 5 obligations. In 2020, however, it sought and received an 18-month extension. Less than a year later, it submitted a fourth extension request, asking for 42 more months to complete clearance and extending the deadline to the end of 2025. The request was soon overtaken by new data that tripled the estimate of contamination. The national strategy and work plan for 2023–32 took on board the new estimates of mined area, but surprisingly retained the deadline of 2025. DR Congo will once again fail to meet this legal deadline although there are signs that the mine action programme has turned a corner.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- DR Congo should complete the necessary survey to identify all mined areas.
- DR Congo should ensure the accuracy of its mine action information management system and its consequent reporting under the APMBC, regularly updating its database and disaggregating reported contamination by type of ordnance and by suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) and confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs).
- DR Congo should improve the designation of hazardous areas differentiating battle areas and mined areas.
- DR Congo should urgently conduct the delayed survey in Dungu territory (Haut-Uele Province).
- DR Congo should further detail its plans for sustainable capacity to tackle previously unidentified hazards.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2023)	Score (2022)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	6	5	DR Congo's anti-personnel mined area appears to be small, but estimates of its extent have fluctuated sharply in recent years. At the end of 2023, contamination was estimated to cover 29 hazardous areas covering 350,667m ² across nine provinces, although operators pointed that the list of hazardous areas maintained by the CCLAM is not up to date and includes areas already cleared. The long-delayed non-technical survey was finally under way in Aru territory early 2024, but was still pending in Dungu. No new mined areas had been identified as at April 2024. Since 2021, DR Congo has been facing a new and rapid expansion of the use of IEDs by non-State armed groups in the eastern provinces, primarily Ituri and North Kivu, and extending into Tanganyika, resulting in both military and civilian casualties.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	7	6	CCLAM coordinates mine action with financial support from the government but it depends on the United Nations and international donors to fund operations. It receives technical support from UNMAS and other international organisations. In 2023, in line with the National Mine Action Work Plan 2023–32, CCLAM started a decentralisation process, opening seven provincial offices to coordinate mine action and ensure quality management. UNMAS and CCLAM signed a cooperation agreement that started in February 2024, with a focus on improving the accreditation process, quality control, and information management, and for the conduct of post-clearance impact assessment in Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu. In 2023, UNMAS started supporting the national authorities in formulating a roadmap to address the threat from IEDs.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	6	6	CCLAM has a "gender unit" located within its advocacy department, which aims at increasing the participation of women in mine action and implementing gender-sensitive policies. DR Congo's latest Article 5 deadline extension request had pledged to encourage operators to employ up to 30% women in operations teams and at least half of the risk education teams. CCLAM recognised the significance of gender in the 2023–32 national mine action strategy. All activities are required to take account of the situations of different age groups and genders.
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION* (10% of overall score)	3	Not Scored	Among the Congolese Mine Action Standards issued by CCLAM in 2022 is one on "Occupational Health and Safety and Environment Management", which is said to highlight measures to minimise the environmental harm of demining. However, official reports do not make explicit reference to environmental considerations in planning and tasking survey or clearance.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	5	4	CCLAM took over responsibility for information management from UNMAS in 2016 but, despite capacity building over many years, still lacks the capacity and resources (equipment and funding) to manage effectively the national Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database. The database (IMSMA New Generation) is accessible by only one user at a time. In early 2024, UNMAS conducted an information management capacity development assessment in Kinshasa for CCLAM. In 2024, DR Congo submitted two Article 7 reports: one covering April to December 2022 and the other covering 2023. DR Congo shared updates in accordance with land release methodology but did not disaggregate data by SHA and CHA.

Criterion	Score (2023)	Score (2022)	Performance Commentary
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	4	4	The 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request included a calendar for operations with monthly targets for clearance and cost projections but these were overtaken by the discovery of further contamination, tripling the baseline only a year later. Nevertheless, the ten-year national work plan has retained the deadline of the end of 2025. The mine action programme remains dependent on international donors. Tasking continued to be challenged by the remote location of many hazardous areas and database weaknesses, including misidentification of ERW as mines and the addition of hazards to the database without firm evidence of the presence of explosive ordnance.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM** (10% of overall score)	6	5	DR Congo has 24 national standards (Normes nationales congolaises de la lutte antimines) developed with support from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). The current standards were last reviewed in January 2022. DR Congo initiated a process to begin revising them in 2024.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	4	3	Under Article 5 of the APMBC, DR Congo is required to destroy all AP mines by the end of 2025. It will not meet this deadline and will need to seek a further extension, its fifth. This should be its last.
Average Score	5.1	4.6	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

* New criterion introduced in 2024 to assess performance.

** The weighting of this criterion was previously 20% of overall performance score, but is now given a 10% weighting.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Commission Nationale de Lutte Antimines (CNLAM)
- Centre Congolais de Lutte Antimines (CCLAM)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC)
- Police Nationale Congolaise (PNC)
- Afrique pour la Lutte Antimines (AFRILAM)
- Synergie pour la Lutte Antimines (SYLAM)

- National NGOs conduct non-technical survey and/or mine risk education (ACOLAM, ADIC, BADU, SYOPADI)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- DanChurchAid (DCA)
- G4S
- The Development Initiative (TDI)

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

DR Congo is believed to have very limited anti-personnel (AP) mined area of less than 0.4km² but the precise extent has been obscured by fluctuating official accounts and incomplete survey. The contamination is the legacy of decades of conflict with neighbouring States, non-State armed groups (NSAGs), and militias since independence in 1960. Due to the history of the mine action programme, multiple past and present armed conflicts, the size of the country, and the poor state of the road infrastructure, CCLAM has acknowledged that “the coordination, monitoring, and reporting of mine action activities have not always been optimal”.¹

The last nationwide survey was carried out between May and December 2013 by four international and five national

operators. It identified 130 hazardous areas covering an estimated total area of 1,823,292m².² At the end of 2016, UNMAS reported that DR Congo still had 54 hazardous areas covering a total of 851,228m², but subsequent re-survey found that a number of areas were contaminated by the (more prevalent) problem of unexploded ordnance (UXO), leading to a sharp fall in the estimate of contamination.³ In 2021, with 33 hazardous areas covering around 117,031m² remaining, DR Congo submitted a fourth Article 5 deadline extension request, asking for 42 additional months to complete clearance and extending the deadline to the end of 2025.⁴ This request was soon overtaken by new data that tripled the baseline.⁵

1 “Plan Stratégique National de Lutte contre les Mines Antipersonnel et les REG en RDC 2023–2032”, CCLAM, March 2024 (“National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2023–32”), p. 21.

2 “National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2023–32”, CCLAM, March 2024, pp. 21 and 32–34.

3 Email from Steven Harrop, Chief of Operations, UNMAS, 20 September 2017.

4 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 8 and Table 1, p. 42.

5 Article 7 Report (covering 1 January 2019 to 31 March 2022), Form C.

In June 2022, DR Congo informed States Parties at the intersessional meetings about several incidents that had occurred between October and December 2021 in Kasai and Kasai Central provinces – in areas not previously thought to be hazardous. Other hazardous areas were discovered during a survey in Tanganyika province in April 2022. The additional contamination of 328,726m² raised the total contamination to 40 hazardous areas covering 421,557m².⁶

In 2024, DR Congo submitted two Article 7 reports: one covering April to December 2022 and the second for 2023. These reports indicated that six areas totalling 31,650m² were released in Tanganyika province in 2022 (five in Kabolo and one in Kalemie territories),⁷ and two areas totalling 17,652m² were released in Kasai in 2023 (one in Tshikapa

and the other in Dekese). No new hazardous areas were reported, with the result that the total number of hazardous areas dropped to 29 at the end of 2023 (in 4 SHAs and 25 CHAs). The remaining contamination was reported to cover 350,667m² across nine provinces (see Table 1).

DCA noted, however, that the list of hazardous areas held by the CCLAM requires updating with the latest information provided by clearance operators. Additionally, CCLAM should remove areas that have already been cleared from the list. This would prevent non-technical survey (NTS) teams from having to reconfirm areas that have been cleared. The list of hazardous areas also includes battle areas and mined areas without distinction.⁸

Table 1: Suspected and confirmed AP mined area (at end 2023)⁹

Province	SHAs	Area (m ²)	CHAs	Area (m ²)
Ituri	0	0	4	6,100
Kasai	0	0	1	1,088
Kasai Central	0	0	4	283,686
Maniema	0	0	2	4,752
North Kivu	0	0	9	12,760
North Ubangi	4	35,417	0	0
South Kivu	0	0	2	851
Tanganyika	0	0	2	4,693
Tshuapa	0	0	1	1,320
Totals	4	35,417	25	315,250

The latest surveys did not include contamination in Aru in Ituri province or in Dungu in Haut-Uele province. These areas were not part of the national survey in 2013 due to insecurity, and survey has been long delayed because of lack of access and funding.¹⁰ In early 2024, however, NTS was conducted in Aru by national operator SYLAM. CCLAM indicated that no hazardous areas had been identified as at April 2024, but that it was awaiting the final report.¹¹ According to the National Mine Action Work Plan 2023–32, the survey in Dungu territory was due to be conducted in the course of 2024.¹²

DR Congo has been facing a rapid increase in the use of IEDs by NSAGs since 2021. The national strategic plan indicated

that IED contamination has been confirmed in the eastern provinces, primarily Ituri and North Kivu, but also extending into Tanganyika. This has caused both military and civilian casualties, including of women and children.¹³ UNMAS reported a surge in IED incidents in the second half of 2021.¹⁴ The Islamist Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) uses IEDs as mines and booby-traps.¹⁵ Initially targeting DRC soldiers and police, attacks have increasingly been aimed at civilians.¹⁶ Although the number of IED incidents decreased in 2023, the overall number of casualties has increased. A single IED incident on 15 January 2023, at a church in Kasindi, North Kivu, caused 78 casualties, of whom 14 were killed.¹⁷

6 Statement of DR Congo, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20 June 2022.

7 Article 7 Report (covering 1 April to 31 December 2022), p. 3.

8 Email from Jacob Payton, Operations Manager and Head of Mine Action Operations EOD 3, DCA, 8 August 2024.

9 Email from Emmanuel Lokinu Omanga, National Coordinator, CCLAM, 8 May 2024; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023), p. 3.

10 Statement of DR Congo, Fourth APMB Review Conference, 25–29 November 2019.

11 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), p. 2.

12 "Plan de Travail Pluriannuel de Lutte contre les Mines Antipersonnel et les REG en RDC 2023 – 2032" ("National Mine Action Work Plan 2023–32"), CCLAM, March 2024, p. 18.

13 "National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2023–32", CCLAM, March 2024, p. 21; and "National Mine Action Work Plan 2023–32", CCLAM, March 2024, p. 17.

14 Emails from Erly Munoz, Programme Officer, UNMAS, 16 August 2023; and UNMAS DRC team, 30 April 2024.

15 "National Mine Action Work Plan 2023–32", CCLAM, March 2024, pp. 17 and 18. See also "Alarming IED proliferation in eastern DR Congo", 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3LF9uy6>; and "Report of the Secretary-General on MONUSCO", UN doc. S/2024/251, 21 March 2024, p. 4.

16 Email from UNMAS DRC team, 30 April 2024.

17 Ibid. See also "L'Etat islamique revendique l'attaque à la bombe en RDC", *All Africa*, 16 January 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3y2Ldy0>; and "Beni: la nouvelle explosion d'une bombe relègue du 'terrorisme', selon le député Kiro", *Radio Okapi*, 26 January 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3y8bSu1>.

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Contamination by ERW is present in all areas that have experienced armed conflicts since the country's independence, making it widespread. To date, no systematic national survey has been conducted. The National Mine Action Strategy 2023–32 indicates that while AP mined area is relatively limited, the country faces a significant level of ERW contamination due to the presence of UXO, abandoned munitions, CMR, and IEDs.¹⁸ DR Congo has a small amount of CMR contamination but the precise extent is not known. The latest available data recorded six CHAs containing CMR in four provinces, affecting a total of 161,523m².¹⁹ (See Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Cluster Munition Remnants 2024* report on DR Congo for further information.)

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The 2011 law implementing the APMBC also established the formal structures of the Mine Action Programme in the DR Congo, namely the National Mine Action Committee ("Commission Nationale de Lutte Antimines", CNLAM), and the Congolese Mine Action Centre ("Centre Congolais de Lutte Antimines", CCLAM).²⁰ CNLAM oversees the mine action sector. It is a multisectoral body that is supposed to meet twice a year and is composed of deputies from both parliamentary chambers, officials from four ministries, and representatives from five civil society organisations involved in mine action.²¹ However, national decrees governing the operation of the CNLAM still need to be officially adopted.²²

CCLAM, established in 2012 with support from the UN Mine Action Coordination Centre (UNMACC) and UNMAS, serves as the technical coordinating body for all mine action activities. It is responsible for setting strategy, accrediting operators, managing information, budgeting, and resource mobilisation. In early 2016, CCLAM took over from UNMAS as the national focal point for demining, overseeing accreditation, issuing task orders, conducting quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC), and managing the national database. However, operators have continued to express concern about its limited capacity.²³ The government has provided funding for CCLAM's operating expenses but not operations. The annual support is said to amount to US\$600,000.²⁴

In early 2023, CCLAM underwent a change in leadership with Mr Emmanuel Lokinu Omanga appointed as the new "Coordonnateur National", replacing the previous coordinator who had been arrested on suspicion of corruption.²⁵ At the end of 2023, CCLAM employed 168 personnel of whom 46 were women. In line with the National Mine Action Work Plan 2023–32, CCLAM initiated a decentralisation process, opening seven provincial offices to coordinate mine action and ensure quality management.²⁶

UNMAS began working in DR Congo in 2002, establishing the UN Mine Action Coordination Centre (UNMACC) as part of MONUSCO, with offices in Kinshasa and five other cities. In 2013, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2098, humanitarian mine action was removed from MONUSCO's mandate, although financial support to the sector continued.²⁷ In late 2022, UNMAS signed an agreement with the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) for capacity building support to mine action, with implementation to take place between 1 December 2022 and 30 November 2024. The agreement was granted a no-cost extension through to June 2025.²⁸

In 2023, UNMAS and CCLAM negotiated a Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA), which began in February 2024. The agreement focuses on enhancing the accreditation process and QC, improving information management, and conducting post-clearance impact assessments in North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri. UNMAS also began assisting national authorities in developing a draft roadmap to address and mitigate the threat posed by IEDs.²⁹

In 2024, UNMAS is preparing for a shift in approach based on the phased withdrawal of the MONUSCO, which was due to conclude its operations in South Kivu by June 2024, but which remains fully operational in Ituri and North Kivu provinces.³⁰ Currently funded by the MONUSCO Assessed Budget and the KOICA via the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action, UNMAS is actively engaging with MONUSCO and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that mine action remains a priority and that national counterparts continue to receive substantial support.

18 "National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2023–32", CCLAM, March 2024, p. 21; and "National Mine Action Work Plan 2023–32", CCLAM, March 2024, p. 17.

19 Voluntary CCM Article 7 Report (covering the period 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2021), Form F.

20 "National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2023–32", CCLAM, March 2024, p. 54.

21 Ibid., p. 6. The government ministries represented in CNLAM include defence, health, interior, and humanitarian affairs.

22 "National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2023–32", CCLAM, March 2024, p. 29.

23 Emails from Jean-Denis Larsen, Programme Manager, NPA, 5 March 2018; Bill Marsden, MAG, 11 May 2018; and Guillaume Zerr, Country Director, Humanity & Inclusion (HI), 24 May 2018.

24 Email from Laure Ngoie, Head of Information Management Department, CCLAM, 21 August 2024.

25 "Le CCLAM annonce l'arrestation de son ex-coordonnateur", *Le Mag*, 22 June 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/4cW8y4d>.

26 Email from Emmanuel Lokinu Omanga, CCLAM, 8 May 2024.

27 UN Security Council Resolution 2098, 28 March 2013, accessible at: <https://bit.ly/3SHjUks>, para. 18.

28 Email from UNMAS DRC team, 30 April 2024.

29 Ibid.

30 "MONUSCO ending its mission in South Kivu after more than 20 years of service", *MONUSCO News*, 25 June 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/4ckAJcW>.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

In its 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request, DR Congo emphasised that gender considerations are integral to its mine action programme. CCLAM has a gender unit within the advocacy department which seeks to integrate and mobilise women into mine action, implementing national policies to ensure more participation (in “reasonable proportions”), and promoting the inclusion of women in both administration and operations.³¹

The national mine action strategy for 2023–32 stipulated that all mine action, particularly those related to risk education and victim assistance, must reflect the different needs of individuals according to age and gender and in a non-discriminatory manner. It also stated that women should be involved in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of mine action, with activities taking into account the special needs of women and girls.³² CCLAM had previously reported that mine action survey teams were already gender balanced and that efforts were undertaken to ensure that all sections of the community are consulted. It

also noted, however, the need to continue raising awareness on gender equality in certain communities as local customs can discriminate against women undertaking certain categories of work.³³

The extension request said CCLAM would work closely with operators to integrate women deminers into mine action so that women make up 30% of the staff in operations teams and at least half the members of risk education teams. It said risk education task orders would focus on increasing the participation of women in outreach sessions.³⁴ At the end of 2023, CCLAM reported that 27% of its staff were women (46 of a total of 168 staff),³⁵ while in UNMAS the figure was just over 30% (13 from a total of 42 staff), with only one woman holding a management position.³⁶ UNMAS said that promoting gender and inclusion is a priority and it has a gender and diversity work plan to ensure it is mainstreamed across the programme.³⁷ Of AFRILAM’s 32 personnel across four multi-task teams, five (16%) were women.³⁸

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Among the Congolese Mine Action Standards issued by CCLAM in 2022 is a chapter titled “Occupational Health and Safety and Environment Management”, which is said to highlight measures to minimise the environmental harm of demining operations.³⁹ However, official reports do not make explicit reference to environmental considerations in planning and tasking survey or clearance operations.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

CCLAM took over responsibility for information management from UNMAS in 2016. Despite extensive capacity building by UNMAS over the years, CCLAM still lacks the necessary capacity and resources—both in terms of equipment and funding—to manage the national Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database effectively. The data are not considered up to date or reliable, and the national database operates on IMSMA New Generation technology, which allows access by only one user at a time.⁴⁰ UNMAS maintains its own internal mine action database, which focuses exclusively on activities conducted by its implementing partners. This database is regularly updated and uses ArcGIS Survey 123 software.⁴¹

The National Mine Action Strategic Work Plan 2023–32 highlighted the need to build staff capacity, improve data collection, update the database on a regular basis, and provide data disaggregated by age and gender.⁴² Persistent issues have included gaps in data, lack of maintenance, non-compliance with international terminology in land release reporting, misreporting of UXO as mines, and a lack of verification of data in incoming reports.⁴³ In 2024, operators pointed out that the current list of hazardous areas is still outdated; it does not include the latest information provided by clearance operators, while including areas that have already been cleared. Designation of hazardous areas also needs improvement as clearance teams are operating in areas that are clearly BAC, but were designated as minefields.⁴⁴

31 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 27.

32 “National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2023–32”, CCLAM, March 2024, pp. 28 and 29.

33 Email from Maître Sudi Alimasi Kimputu, CCLAM, 3 June 2019.

34 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 30–31.

35 Email from Emmanuel Lokinu Omanga, CCLAM, 8 May 2024.

36 Emails from UNMAS DRC team, 30 April and 6 August 2024.

37 Email from UNMAS Headquarters, 24 July 2023.

38 Email from Yannick Malamba, Operations Manager, AFRILAM, 7 August 2024.

39 Email from UNMAS DRC team, 30 April 2024.

40 Ibid.

41 Emails from Jean-Denis Larsen, Chief of Mine Action Programme, UNMAS, 31 May 2022; and Erly Munoz, UNMAS, 16 August 2023.

42 “National Mine Action Work Plan 2023–32”, CCLAM, March 2024, pp. 21, 22, 28, and 29.

43 Skype interview with Jean-Denis Larsen, NPA, 24 April 2019; and email, 24 May 2019.

44 Email from Jacob Payton, DCA, 8 August 2024.

In early 2024, UNMAS conducted an information management capacity development assessment in Kinshasa for CCLAM. Following this assessment, CCLAM's information management officer received training in Switzerland in May 2024 and a workshop was held in June during which UNMAS also began preparations for migration to a digitised database. Three other staff are registered for the upcoming Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) information management training in Senegal. Additionally, UNMAS planned to develop a "data collection strategy" to address the challenges arising from the MONUSCO withdrawal. This strategy aims to ensure continuity in information management support while also reducing costs for CCLAM.⁴⁵

In 2024, DR Congo submitted two Article 7 transparency reports: one covering April to December 2022, and another covering all of 2023. These reports provided information

on remaining contamination and progress in Article 5 implementation, allowing for comparability with data from the 2021 extension request and the 2022 Article 7 report. DR Congo shared updates in accordance with land release methodology, indicating areas cancelled by NTS, reduced by technical survey (TS), and released by manual clearance. However, the reports did not specify the related geographical areas, nor did they disaggregate data by type of contamination or by SHA versus CHA.⁴⁶

In 2023, CCLAM hosted three national Mine Action Working Group meetings – in June, September, and December. These meetings focused on discussing the accreditation process, CCLAM decentralisation, and information management. In April 2024, CCLAM nominated a new focal point to resume its coordination role of the Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR) within the protection cluster approach.⁴⁷

PLANNING AND TASKING

In its Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in July 2021, DR Congo included a costed work plan with monthly clearance targets that would provide for tackling 4,371m² in December 2022, 55,273m² in 2023, 37,864m² in 2024, and 20,973m² in 2025. This made for a total of 118,848m², slightly exceeded the 117,030m² that the request has identified as remaining contamination.⁴⁸ The estimated three-and-a-half-year budget was US\$3.9 million, with US\$1.7 million required to clear the 33 hazardous areas, US\$568,270 to conduct the surveys in Aru and Dungu, and an astonishing US\$1 million set for risk education. A total of US\$600,000 was earmarked for coordination, to which the government pledged to contribute US\$272,271.⁴⁹ The request allowed a year for the conduct of NTS, TS, clearance, and/or land release in Aru and Dungu.⁵⁰

DR Congo's newly discovered hazardous areas between the end of 2021 and early 2022 tripled contamination estimates. In early 2022, DR Congo developed a 10-year national mine action strategic plan tackling all types of explosive ordnance, including AP mines and ERW, and a work plan covering 2023 to 2032. The work plan sets out general objectives for the coming decade, including completing clearance of the mined area (then estimated at 386,822m²) by 2025 and of CMR by 2032. The strategy also aims to ensure that a decentralised EOD capacity is created to tackle residual contamination.⁵¹ The 76-page strategy sets out a detailed budget, with a total

cost estimated at an absurd US\$91.3 million.⁵² This budget is 23 times higher than the one set for clearance of all AP mined area in DR Congo's 2021 extension request. The new strategy followed the 2018–19 National Mine Action Strategy, which focused on seeking to fulfil DR Congo's Article 5 mine clearance obligations by 2020, one year ahead of its previous extended 2021 deadline.⁵³ In its Article 7 report covering 2023, DR Congo did not submit a detailed updated work plan with annual projections of which areas remained to be addressed and by which organisations, as requested by the Committee on Article 5 implementation.⁵⁴

Task orders are rarely made available to operators, preventing them from developing implementation plans and properly planning operations in intervention areas. When information is requested from CCLAM, it is either unknown or unreliable, often requiring new surveys to obtain credible information. Operators do not have access to the CCLAM database.⁵⁵ CCLAM needs to improve the designations of hazard areas. DCA currently has teams working in areas that are clearly BAC, yet CCLAM has designated them as minefields. This difference in designation significantly impacts how the areas are approached and cleared. This discrepancy may stem from a lack of training and knowledge.⁵⁶

45 Emails from UNMAS DRC team, 30 April and 6 August 2024.

46 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary observations", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18–20 June 2024.

47 Email from UNMAS DRC team, 30 April 2024.

48 2021 Article 5 Extension Request, Table 6, p. 54.

49 Ibid., Table 13, p. 64.

50 Ibid., Table 14, p. 65.

51 "National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2023–32", CCLAM, March 2024, p. 11.

52 Ibid., p. 12.

53 "Stratégie Nationale de Lutte Antimines 2018–2019", November 2017, p. 4.

54 Committee on Article 5 implementation, "Preliminary observations", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18–20 June 2024.

55 Emails from Germain Apanane Bawala, Project Manager, AFRILAM, 14 May 2024; and Miroslav Skoumal, Country Director, DCA, 23 April 2023.

56 Email from Jacob Payton, DCA, 8 August 2024.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

DR Congo has 24 national mine action standards (Normes nationales congolaises de la lutte antimines) developed with support from the GICHD.⁵⁷ The current standards were last reviewed in January 2022.⁵⁸ DR Congo began a new revision in 2024. CCLAM planned to submit them to the GICHD before the end of 2024 for amendment, organisation of a workshop, completion, and dissemination.⁵⁹

DR Congo is a member of the GICHD Francophone Regional Cooperation Programme and attended its annual workshop that took place in October 2023 at the "Centre de Perfectionnement aux Actions de Déminage et de Dépollution" (CPADD) in Benin. It covered three topics: IEDs, risk education, and ammunition management.⁶⁰

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2023, UNMAS supported mine action in DR Congo with 42 staff (20 international, 17 national, and 5 in-kind contributions), distributed across offices in Goma (the headquarters), Kinshasa, Beni (in North Kivu), Bukavu (in South Kivu), and Bunia (in Ituri),⁶¹ as well as three staff in the supply office in Entebbe in Uganda which supports procurement, logistics, human resources, finance, and contracting.⁶²

UNMAS is mandated to provide EOD and IED disposal services in support of MONUSCO, for which it contracted three clearance operators: national operator AFRILAM and two international companies – G4S and TDI. The latter is affiliated with national operator SYLAM (see Table 2). UNMAS also contracted national organisations to conduct NTS and risk education, namely ACOLAM, BADU, and SYOPADI.⁶³

Table 2: Mine action capacity under contract to UNMAS 2023⁶⁴

Capacity	Location	Coverage areas	No. of personnel
AFRILAM Management	Goma	Management and support	5
AFRILAM Multitask Team 1	Goma	North Kivu	8
AFRILAM Multitask Team 2	Bukavu	South Kivu	8
AFRILAM Multitask Team 3	Beni	North Kivu and Ituri	8
G4S IEDD team	Beni	North Kivu	5
SYLAM Management	Bunia and Goma	Management and finances	3
TDI Management	Goma	Management, and QA	6
TDI-SYLAM Multitask Team 4	Rotational basis	North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri	11
TDI-SYLAM Multitask Team 5	Rotational basis	North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri	11
TDI-SYLAM Multitask Team 6	Rotational basis	North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri	11

AFRILAM had 37 staff at the end of 2023, with four multi-task teams (MTTs) totalling 32 personnel of whom five were women (one EOD Level 3 deminer, three EOD Level 2 deminers, and a medic). UNMAS contracted three MTTs of a total of 24 operations personnel and 5 management and support staff in Bukavu, Beni, and Goma engaged in a range of tasks in support of MONUSCO's operations in North and South Kivu and Tanganyika. This included battle area

clearance (BAC), bulk demolition, and EOD spot tasks. The Swiss Foundation "Monde Sans Mines" funded an additional MTT of eight people in Kalemie, Tanganyika province.⁶⁵ UNMAS's contract with AFRILAM was a three-year agreement due to expire in June 2024. Continuation is contingent on funding being secured under the MONUSCO Assessed Budget for 2024–25.⁶⁶

⁵⁷ Statement of DR Congo, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 2 July 2020.

⁵⁸ "National Mine Action Work Plan 2023–32", CCLAM, March 2024, p. 18.

⁵⁹ Email from Laure Ngoie, CCLAM, 25 June 2024.

⁶⁰ Email from Jérémy Repond, Programme Officer, GICHD, 14 June 2024.

⁶¹ Email from UNMAS DRC team, 30 April 2024.

⁶² Emails from Erly Munoz, UNMAS, 16 and 17 August 2023.

⁶³ Email from UNMAS DRC team, 30 April 2024.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Email from Germain Apanane Bawala, AFRILAM, 14 May 2024.

⁶⁶ Email from UNMAS DRC team, 30 April 2024.

In 2021 and 2022, DCA was the sole international mine action NGO operating in DR Congo following the closure of programmes by NPA in 2019 and TDI in February 2020. As of 2024, DCA was employing a total of 126 staff, including 35 personnel (3 international and 32 national staff) dedicated full time to its humanitarian demining programme funded by the US State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM/WRA). The country office is located in Goma, with four additional support offices in North Kivu, and field camps in Moba (Tanganyika) and Munkamba (Kasai Central), both of which are dedicated to the demining programme. In 2023, DCA expanded its demining programme by adding nine more staff members, including a seven-strong MTT, to address significant SHAs in Kasai Central province that CCLAM added to the national database in 2022. As at August 2024, DCA was in the process of adding 16 local staff to its demining contingent, which will allow deployment of a third MTT.⁶⁷

In 2023, DCA conducted manual clearance, NTS, TS, and risk education activities in Ipoka, Kasai. In 2024, DCA cleared the Kyomba battlefield near the city of Kelema, Tanganyika province, covering over 15,278m² and destroying four submunitions. This area was handed back to CCLAM at the end of June. Additionally, DCA conducted BAC and risk education in Mpoyi, Kasai Central province, clearing an area

of 1,800m² thus far. Three EOD spot tasks resulted in the destruction of an OG-7 rocket and three MK2 hand grenades. DCA contracted ADIC to perform all risk education activities, supported by a community liaison officer from DCA.⁶⁸

Since 2022, G4S has been contracted by UNMAS for IED disposal and EOD training. In 2023, UNMAS contracted a four-person IED disposal team (three for operations and one for training), along with one national staff for logistics support, all based in Beni, North Kivu province. UNMAS also stationed two operational officers in Beni.⁶⁹

TDI resumed its mine action programme in 2023 and was contracted by UNMAS to provide capacity-building training and mentoring to the national operator SYLAM. TDI entered into a teaming agreement with SYLAM, which involved deploying personnel for three MTTs as well as three personnel for project manager, operations manager, and logistic manager. The aim is to accredit SYLAM for explosive hazard capabilities so it can eventually take over and manage the mentored teams.⁷⁰ TDI-SYLAM MTT initiated manual mine clearance on 15 December 2023 in the Lirunga area of Aru. Land release outputs from these operations were expected to be made known in the course of 2024.⁷¹

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2023

DCA appears to have conducted the only AP mine clearance in DR Congo in 2023. It released a total of 17,652m² through survey and clearance in two territories of Kasai province, resulting in destruction of one item of UXO but no AP mines (see Table 3). This marked a drop from 28,628m² released and 4 AP mines destroyed by DCA in 2022, and 43,139m² released and 13 AP mines destroyed in 2021.⁷²

Table 3: Land release in 2023⁷³

Province/ territory/locality	Area cancelled (m ²)	Area reduced (m ²)	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Kasai/Tshikapa/ Tshivunde	7,530	0	0	0	0
Kasai/Dekese/ Ipoka	0	4,938	5,184	0	1
Totals	7,530	4,938	5,184	0	1

AFRILAM undertook 669 EOD spot tasks in 2023, which resulted in release of 108,146m² through TS and the destruction of 17,304 items of UXO, 21 submunitions, and 44,328 small-calibre ammunition rounds. It did not destroy AP mines as operations focused on ERW.⁷⁴ G4S conducted 14 tasks, disposing of 11 IEDs and 13 other UXO items. TDI conducted three tasks, disposing of two items of UXO.⁷⁵

67 Email from Jacob Payton, DCA, 8 August 2024.

68 Ibid.

69 Email from UNMAS DRC team, 30 April 2024.

70 Emails from Howard Barnes, Project Manager, TDI, 15 June 2024; and UNMAS DRC team, 30 April and 13 June 2024.

71 Email from UNMAS DRC team, 30 April 2024.

72 Email from Miroslav Skoumal, DCA, 23 April 2023.

73 Article 7 Report covering 2023, p. 3; and email from Emmanuel Lokinu Omanga, CCLAM, 8 May 2024.

74 Email from Germain Apanane Bawala, AFRILAM, 14 May 2024.

75 Email from UNMAS DRC team, 30 April 2024.

DEMINER SAFETY

No accidents were reported in the course of demining or EOD operations in 2023. Insecurity, however, was a persistent challenge. With the worsening security situation in late 2023 in eastern provinces when the M23 armed group extended its area of control closer to Goma, and as the presidential elections approached, MONUSCO downsized its presence in Goma, relocating non-essential personnel. UNMAS operational staff continued to perform critical duties.⁷⁶

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the 42-month extension granted by States Parties in November 2021), DR Congo is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2025. It will not meet this deadline.

The lack of clear or consistent data released by CCLAM has prevented a clear determination of DR Congo's operating results or progress towards its Article 5 targets. But the situation has improved recently. In April 2024, DR Congo submitted Article 7 reports that estimated remaining contamination at 350,667m² across 29 hazardous areas.

Table 4: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (m ²)
2023	5,184
2022	*28,628
2021	43,149
2020	10,562
2019	146,761
Total	234,284

* DR Congo submitted a delayed Article 7 report covering 2022 where it provided a smaller surface of 12,070m² cleared in Kabolo territory, Tanganyika province, and four AP mines destroyed. Mine Action Review did not use this estimate as it only covered the period April to December, whereas operator data (DCA) covered the entire year.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

The National Mine Action Work Plan 2023–32 aims to strengthen national ownership by setting up a Government Humanitarian Demining Service ("Service Gouvernemental de Déminage Humanitaire", SGDH) to address residual contamination. Teams will consist mainly of personnel from the DR Congo armed forces, the police, and civilians qualified in EOD.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ "National Mine Action Work Plan 2023–32", CCLAM, March 2024, p. 7.