

## KEY DATA

### NO APMBC ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE:

State not party to the APMBC

### AP MINE CONTAMINATION:

Unknown

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS

Release of AP mined area	Release in 2024 (m²)	Release in 2023 (m²)
Clearance	86,863 (NGO data)	26,773 (NGO data)
Technical Survey	0	0
Non-Technical Survey	0	0

  

Destruction of AP mines during clearance, survey, and spot tasks	2024	2023
AP Mines destroyed	162 (NGO data)	68 (National Authority data not disaggregated by mine type but believed to be almost all AP mines)

### MAIN AP MINE SURVEY AND CLEARANCE OPERATOR IN 2024:

- The HALO Trust (HALO)

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2024, two teams from The HALO Trust continued mine clearance in Savannakhet province. However, the government's priority continues to be on addressing cluster munition remnants (CMR) and the only other mines found and destroyed by humanitarian operators in 2024 were during explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) spot tasks or occasionally during CMR survey or clearance. In 2024, the National Regulatory Authority (NRA) was supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to develop its capacity for quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) of mine clearance, and by June 2025 the NRA reported it could accredit and oversee such operations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Lao PDR should clear anti-personnel (AP) mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.
- Lao PDR should commission or undertake and publish a detailed assessment of mined areas.
- The NRA should ensure that its Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database can easily disaggregate AP mines from anti-vehicle (AV) mines and that a mechanism exists whereby humanitarian clearance operators can report mined area in IMSMA.
- In light of clearance operators continuing to discover AP mines during CMR survey and clearance, the NRA should consider convening a sector-wide meeting to discuss national standards, accreditation, and procedures for addressing mine contamination.

## AP MINE SURVEY AND CLEARANCE CAPACITY

### MANAGEMENT

- National Regulatory Authority (NRA) Board
- National Regulatory Authority (NRA) Office

### NATIONAL OPERATORS

- UXO Lao
- Humanitarian teams of the Lao People's Army (Unit 58)
- Commercial operators

### INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Humanity & Inclusion (HI)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- Commercial operators

### OTHER ACTORS

- ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC)
- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Tetra Tech

## UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

While by far the greatest contamination in Lao PDR is from explosive remnants of war (ERW), in particular CMR,<sup>1</sup> Lao PDR is also contaminated by both AP and AV mines. The extent of the contamination is not, however, known. During the Indochina conflicts of the 1960s and 1970s, all sides in the war laid AP mines, particularly around military installations and patrol bases. Mined areas also exist in some border regions as a legacy of disputes or tensions with or within neighbouring countries.<sup>2</sup>

A 1997 survey by Humanity & Inclusion (HI) found mines in all 15 provinces it surveyed, contaminating a total of 214 villages.<sup>3</sup> AP mines it discovered included United States (US)-manufactured M7, M16, and M14 mines; Vietnamese MBV-78A1 mines; and Soviet POMZ mines.<sup>4</sup> In 2023, HI also found M2A1 bounding fragmentation mines.<sup>5</sup> In total during its operations in Houaphanh province, and prior to relocating to Phongsaly province, HI identified 54 mined areas in 22 villages in Houamuang district.<sup>6</sup>

Across Lao PDR as a whole, the NRA has reported that "gravel mines" (US air-dropped AP mines) had all degraded, but remaining mine types included M14 blast mines, M16 bounding fragmentation mines, M18 claymore mines, and M15 and M19 blast AV mines, as well as Soviet or Chinese PMN blast AP mines, POMZ fragmentation mines, and TM41, TM46, and TM57 AV mines.<sup>7</sup> HI has found increasing evidence that

few of the M16 mines are still functioning. Most were exposed to fire, or the expelling charge is missing, or the tripwire was no longer present.<sup>8</sup> HALO's assessment of more than 100 M16 mines located since 2019 in Savannakhet province supports this finding. However, two landmine accidents in 2024 indicate that M14 and PMN mines are likely to still be functional.<sup>9</sup> In 2023, HALO found and destroyed a DH-10 fragmentation mine during battle area clearance (BAC) in Phin village, Phin district, Savannakhet province.<sup>10</sup>

The remote location of many mined areas means that mine impact is negligible. The NRA, however, had formerly observed that "with a steady expansion of land use 'mined areas' will become areas for growing concern."<sup>11</sup> Demographic pressures regarding land could lead to people accessing remote places that could be mined. HI believes that action on locating and recording mined areas needs to occur before the older generations that know about the presence of landmines disappear.<sup>12</sup> In 2024, there were two incidents involving landmines in Savannakhet province. One involved children playing with a PMN mine they had found in an uncleared part of an ongoing HALO clearance task. Another involved a woman stepping on an M14 AP mine while cutting vegetation behind her house. HALO opened a new task at the site of the second accident and has since cleared a further 24 mines from the area.<sup>13</sup>

1 See Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2025* report on Lao PDR for further information.

2 NRA website, "UXO types: Mines", accessed 9 March 2020 (page no longer online).

3 HI, "Living with UXO, National Survey on the Socio-Economic Impact of UXO in Lao PDR", Report, Vientiane/Brussels, 1997, p. 7.

4 Emails from Julien Kempeneers, Humanitarian Mine Action Coordinator, HI, 27 August 2019, and 25 March and 29 June 2020.

5 Email from Yvon Le Chevanton, Technical Survey/Clearance Operations Manager, HI, 10 August 2023.

6 Email from Yvon Le Chevanton, HI, 8 May 2024.

7 NRA website, "UXO types: Mines", 9 March 2020 (page no longer online).

8 Email from Alexandra Letcher, HI, 6 April 2023.

9 Email from William Hunter, Programme Manager, HALO, 23 September 2025.

10 Email from William Hunter, HALO, 30 May 2024.

11 NRA website, "UXO types: Mines", 9 March 2020 (page no longer online).

12 Email from Julien Kempeneers, HI, 25 March 2020.

13 Email from William Hunter, HALO, 5 September 2025.

## NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The NRA, created by government decree in 2004 and active since 2006, has an inter-ministerial board composed of representatives from government ministries. Since September 2023, the NRA has been chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), having previously been chaired by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW).<sup>14</sup> The move to bring the NRA under MoFA was part of measures taken by the Lao government in 2023 to strengthen coordination systems among various agencies including government and operators.<sup>15</sup> In June 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, who chairs the NRA, led a special session of the UXO Sector Working Group, demonstrating the high-level commitment of the Lao government to clearance.<sup>16</sup>

A 2018 decree, "On the Organisation and Operations of the National Regulatory Authority for UXO in Lao PDR" defines the position, role, duties, rights, organisational structure, and working principles and methods of the NRA.<sup>17</sup> A further national decree on UXO management was endorsed by the government in 2022.<sup>18</sup> The NRA acts as the coordinator for national and international clearance operators and serves as the national focal point for the sector. This includes overall management and consideration of policy, planning, projects, accreditation, quality management (QM), and coordination of the implementation of the national strategy nationwide, as well as NRA planning and coordination functions at provincial and district levels.<sup>19</sup>

UNDP provides programmatic and technical support to the NRA focusing on areas such as QM, policy, and support with national standards and treaty compliance. UNDP also supports UXO Lao as well as the Lao People's Army demining teams (Unit 58) with funding and capacity building support.<sup>20</sup> Further capacity development in information management (IM), QM, operations support and EOD training is provided, primarily to UXO Lao, and to a lesser extent the NRA, through a US-funded contractor, Tetra Tech.<sup>21</sup> Japan, through the Japan International Cooperation System (JICS), is also supporting survey and clearance as well the administration of training in EOD to UXO Lao.<sup>22</sup>

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and the NRA, funded by the US Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA), are jointly implementing the IM Capacity Development Project in 14 provinces (see section below, "Information Management").<sup>23</sup> Mines Advisory Group (MAG), in collaboration with the NRA and the provincial Department of Foreign Affairs (DoFA), and with UK government support, implemented a capacity-building project to strengthen national mine action management. Activities focused on IM, planning, and prioritisation. Quarterly coordination meetings facilitated continued exchange between MAG, UXO Lao, DoFA, and DoLSW, covering operational capacity, donor funding, and use of Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS) technology.<sup>24</sup>

## COOPERATION AND COORDINATION

Moving the NRA's line ministry from the MoLSW to MoFA has already borne fruit. In 2024, HI, NPA, HALO, and MAG all reported strong cooperation and coordination with the NRA at both national and sub-national levels. In 2022, Lao PDR established a Country Coalition under the existing "UXO Sector Working Group" (SWG), chaired by the Minister or Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and co-chaired by UNDP and rotating donor countries. Meeting twice a year, the SWG aims to improve the efficiency, transparency, and funding of mine action in Lao PDR.<sup>25</sup> The SWG consists of five Technical Working Groups (TWGs) covering survey and clearance, victim assistance, risk education, information management, and policy coordination and funding strategy.<sup>26</sup> None specifically addresses mine clearance.

## FUNDING FOR AP MINE SURVEY AND CLEARANCE

The Lao PDR government makes in-kind contributions to mine action including the salaries of the NRA staff (at provincial and district level) and the clearance teams of Army Unit 58, administrative support, and infrastructure in collaboration with funding from KOICA and coordination by UNDP.<sup>27</sup> Salaries of NRA personnel in Vientiane are paid by international donors, with funding channelled through UNDP.<sup>28</sup> In addition, the government provides in-kind contributions such as for UXO Lao facilities,

14 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form J.

15 Ibid.

16 Email from Olivier Bauduin, US Embassy Vientiane, 24 July 2024.

17 Government Decree No. 67, dated 12 February 2018; 2019 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, Part B, Detailed Narrative, p. 17; and Statement of Lao PDR on National Implementation Efforts, CCM Eighth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 3 September 2018.

18 Government Decree No. 210, dated 29 July 2022. Presentation by Chomyaeng Phengthongsawat, NRA, minutes of the UXO Sector Working Group meeting, 16 September 2022.

19 2019 CCM Article 4 deadline Extension Request, Part B, Detailed Narrative, pp. 14, 15, and 18.

20 Emails from Rupert Leighton, Chief Technical Advisor, UNDP, 14 August 2023; and Viengdalat Somphet, NRA, 17 June 2025.

21 Email from Viengdalat Somphet, NRA, 17 June 2025; and "US Renews Partnership with Lao PDR to Build Capacity in UXO Sector", US Embassy in Lao PDR, 31 January 2020, at: <http://bit.ly/2LzmG8J>.

22 Email from Viengdalat Somphet, NRA, 17 June 2025.

23 Email from Per Håkon Breivik, Country Director, NPA, 23 May 2025.

24 Email from Eli Mechanic, MAG, 12 June 2025.

25 CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form J; and email from Viengdalat Somphet, NRA, 17 June 2025.

26 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

27 2024 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, Part B, Detailed Narrative, p. 13; CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2023), Form I; and email from Chanmy Keodara, NRA, 13 July 2024.

28 Email from Olivier Bauduin, US Embassy Vientiane, 24 July 2024.

and through tax exemptions for equipment for humanitarian operators.<sup>29</sup> Clearance operators are, however, required to pay visa fees for expatriates and the previous tax exemption for international experts was removed from all MoUs after 2018.<sup>30</sup> In addition, changes to the law mean that international NGO staff have paid income tax since 2021.<sup>31</sup>

HALO is the only operator that has dedicated mine clearance teams. In 2024 and 2025, HALO's donors were the US PM/WRA, the UK government, and Ireland.<sup>32</sup>

## GENDER AND DIVERSITY

For details regarding gender and diversity in Lao PDR's survey and clearance programme, please see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2025* report on Lao PDR.

## ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Lao PDR has an NMAS on environmental management (Chapter 21), but this needs to be revised, to review both its compatibility with the second edition of International Mine Action Standard (IMAS) 07.13 on Environmental Management in Mine Action and with national environmental norms. As at June 2025, the NMAS was being revised as part of a review of all NMAS that was due to be complete by the end of the year.<sup>33</sup> The Safe Path Forward III strategy says that climate change is a challenge to addressing UXO and reiterates that mine

action activities have to comply with national standards and environmental protection laws.<sup>34</sup>

For more details on measures being taken by HALO, HI, MAG, NPA, and UXO Lao, to take the environment into consideration during the planning and tasking process for survey and clearance of explosive ordnance in Lao PDR, see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2025* report on Lao PDR.

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

There are currently no mechanisms in place in Lao PDR's national information management and reporting systems to enable humanitarian clearance operators to report mined area.<sup>35</sup> And as yet, no distinction is made in the NRA's reporting between AP mines and AV mines. The NRA records all mines as landmines. In the national IMSMA database, an item is first registered as a landmine (rather than as an AP mine or AV mine), and then the model type/number is recorded, from which it is then possible to extrapolate whether the mine is AV or AP.<sup>36</sup>

Lao PDR stated at the Fourth Review Conference of the APMBC in November 2019, that it was preparing a voluntary Article 7 report.<sup>37</sup> At the 2023 APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Lao PDR reported that the Department of

International Organizations would coordinate submission of an Article 7 report by 2024.<sup>38</sup> At the 2025 Intersessional Meetings, Lao PDR said it would submit a voluntary Article 7 report before the Meeting of States Parties in December 2025.<sup>39</sup> As at September 2025, a voluntary report had yet to be submitted. The only voluntary Article 7 report submitted previously by Lao PDR was in 2011.

For details regarding Information Management and Reporting in Lao PDR's survey and clearance programme more broadly, please see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2025* report on Lao PDR.

29 2024 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, Part B, Detailed Narrative, p. 13; CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2023), Form I; and email from Chanmy Keodara, NRA, 13 July 2024.

30 Emails from Katherine Harrison, NPA, 9 September 2020; Cameron Imber, Programme Manager, HALO, 11 June 2021; Julien Kempeneers, HI, 16 June 2021; and Rebecca Letven, MAG, 19 June 2021.

31 Emails from Cameron Imber, HALO, 11 June 2021; and Katherine Harrison, NPA, 19 June 2021.

32 Email from William Hunter, HALO, 22 June 2025.

33 Email from Viengdalat Somphet, NRA, 17 June 2025.

34 Lao PDR, "Safe Path Forward III", pp. 12 and 17.

35 Email from William Hunter, HALO, 13 August 2024.

36 Email from Rupert Leighton, UNDP, 14 August 2023.

37 Statement of Lao PDR, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Oslo, 29 November 2019.

38 Statement of Lao PDR, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

39 Statement of Lao PDR, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 17–20 June 2025.

## PLANNING AND TASKING

The National Strategy for the UXO Sector (2021–30), “Safe Path Forward III”, was developed under the leadership of the NRA and adopted in January 2023.<sup>40</sup> The target, by 2030, is to have identified 2,500km<sup>2</sup> of CHA and cleared 1,000km<sup>2</sup> of land for agricultural and development purposes.<sup>41</sup> The Safe Path Forward III strategy and the Ninth National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2021–2025, set intentionally aspirational targets for survey and clearance (which have not been met), and which were revised in 2025.<sup>42</sup> At the time of writing, the NRA was conducting a mid-term evaluation of the Safe Path Forward III strategy to assess its effectiveness, efficiency,

sustainability, impact, relevance, and coherence within the current context and national planning for the next five years.<sup>43</sup> While Safe Path Forward III refers to landmines, it does not set out any specific strategy or targets for the survey or clearance of mined areas.

For details regarding Planning and Tasking in Lao PDR’s survey and clearance programme more broadly, please see Mine Action Review’s *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2025* report on Lao PDR.

## LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

### STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Lao PDR’s National Standards separate UXO clearance from mine clearance, with manually emplaced mines excluded except for the “disposal of ‘one-off’ mines located during EOD roving tasks.”<sup>44</sup> According to Lao PDR’s National Standard on Mine Clearance Operations (Chapter 12), systematic mine clearance is not commonly conducted. “However, it is known that mined areas exist in Lao PDR and at some stage in the future these areas will have to be cleared.”<sup>45</sup> If mines are found during UXO work, operations must stop, the case assessed by the clearance supervisor, and reported to the NRA.<sup>46</sup> According to the National Standards, mine clearance is considered more dangerous than UXO clearance and must only be undertaken by accredited organisations with specialised training, equipment, and procedures.<sup>47</sup>

The NRA contracted a specialist to undertake a review of the national standards in 2024, with support from UNDP and input from operators and stakeholders. The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) conducted a one-week training course on national standards.<sup>48</sup> At the time of writing, the approval of the English version of the standards was expected in August 2025. The standards were then to be translated into Lao for final approval and shared with operators later in the year.<sup>49</sup>

With respect to landmines, the national standards are in need of being brought up to date in accordance with the latest

IMAS. In June 2025, the NRA reported ongoing technical discussions on revising the national standard on landmines and on training for mine survey and clearance.<sup>50</sup>

HALO and HI have both proposed amendments to the national standards on mine survey and clearance to NRA.<sup>51</sup> While the current standards do allow for mine clearance and set parameters for safe distances and other relevant issues, there is a need to strengthen national institutional knowledge on mine clearance, including in relation to QA and training.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, and as previously mentioned, no mechanisms are currently in place in Lao PDR’s national information management and reporting systems to enable humanitarian clearance operators to report mined area.<sup>53</sup> Nor is there a mechanism in place for cancellation of mined area through non-technical survey (NTS) or the reduction of mined area through technical survey (TS). However, a process to review and remedy this was said to be in progress as at the time of writing.<sup>54</sup>

With Canadian funding, UNDP began a project in January 2024 to train the NRA’s QM department in QA/QC of mine clearance.<sup>55</sup> In June 2025, the NRA reported having the capacity to accredit and conduct QA/QC of mine clearance operations. The government, with donor support, aims to strengthen national operators, including Unit 58 and UXO Lao, to build mine clearance capacity.<sup>56</sup>

40 Statement of Lao PDR on National Implementation Measures, Second CCM Review Conference (Part 1, virtual meeting), 25–27 November 2020; email from Chomyaeng Phengthongsawat, NRA, 21 June 2021; and Lao PDR, “Safe Path Forward III”, p. 2; Statement of Lao PDR on victim assistance, CCM Tenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 30 August–2 September 2022; and Lao PDR, “Safe Path Forward III”, p. 2.

41 Lao PDR, “Safe Path Forward III”, p. 14.

42 Email from Olivier Bauduin, US Embassy Vientiane, 4 August 2025.

43 Email from Viengdalat Somphet, NRA, 29 July 2025.

44 Lao PDR National UXO/Mine Action Standards (NS), “Chapter 0: Introduction and Glossary”, accessed on NRA website on 29 July 2021, p. xi.

45 Lao PDR NS, “Chapter 12: Mine Clearance Operations”, accessed on NRA website on 29 July 2021, p. 5.

46 Lao PDR NS, “Chapter 7: UXO Clearance Operations”, p. 13.

47 Lao PDR NS, “Chapter 12: Mine Clearance Operations”, accessed on NRA website on 29 July 2021, p. 5.

48 Email from Viengdalat Somphet, NRA, 29 July 2025.

49 Email from Viengdalat Somphet, NRA, 17 June 2025.

50 Ibid.

51 Emails from Cameron Imber, HALO Laos, 31 March 2022; and Julien Kempeneers, HI, 30 March 2022.

52 Email from Rebecca Letven, MAG, 26 March 2021.

53 Email from William Hunter, HALO, 13 August 2024.

54 Email from Rupert Leighton, UNDP, 26 August 2024.

55 Ibid.

56 Email from Viengdalat Somphet, NRA, 17 June 2025.

NGO clearance operators in Lao are not formally accredited for mine clearance, and permission for EOD is given on a case-by-case basis when mines are found.<sup>57</sup> HALO drafted a mine clearance standard operating procedure (SOP) and submitted it for approval to the NRA in 2021.<sup>58</sup> As at May 2024, HALO had yet to receive any feedback on the SOP, although it had tacit approval from the NRA to start mine clearance with two teams in 2024.<sup>59</sup>

HI stressed the need to strengthen reporting on landmines, noting that areas should be classified as suspected mined areas until survey confirms otherwise.<sup>60</sup> It observed that determining whether mines form part of a larger minefield is difficult, particularly without trained or equipped personnel, and that mines may have been moved, washed away, or left behind, leading to misreporting.<sup>61</sup> HI recommended gathering additional evidence, such as the location of wartime military sites and whether mines discovered by communities had been moved.<sup>62</sup>

During NTS and risk education, HI interviews older residents about wartime activity; and collects information on mine incidents, inaccessible areas, and accidents involving people or animals. It found cases where villagers had collected or moved mines.<sup>63</sup> HI suggested that specific markings should be displayed where the mine was found/an accident happened.<sup>64</sup>

In response to mines found during Cluster Munition Remnants Survey (CMRS), HI developed a “clearance

while surveying” (CWS) approach to safely release cluster munition-contaminated areas where random mines are reported but there is no evidence of systematic mine-laying or the presence of minefields. CWS involves full clearance from the evidence point.<sup>65</sup> While CMRS remains valuable for planning, HI argues CWS is faster and requires less paperwork, particularly where full clearance of the CHA is required.<sup>66</sup> In remote, high-risk areas such as Houaphanh, where mines and anti-handling fuzes (M83 submunitions) have been found, and focuses on the highest priority areas over village-wide CMRS, citing safety and efficiency as the reasons.<sup>67</sup> In early 2024, HI developed a mine clearance SOP, and received positive feedback from UNDP’s QA/QC specialist.<sup>68</sup> However, the Lao government has continued to prioritise and focus efforts on implementing its clearance obligations under the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), aligned with its national socio-economic development plans.<sup>69</sup>

With respect to spot tasks, HI only destroys mines that are clearly identifiable and safely accessible. If mines are found during CMR survey and clearance operations, work stops and HI’s operations manager conducts a risk assessment. Non-emplaced mines in agricultural land are destroyed, while emplaced mines in undeveloped areas lead to suspension, data collection, and reporting to the NRA.<sup>70</sup> Mines in Houaphanh province were laid more than 60 years ago, the extent to which they could still detonate is unknown. An ageing analysis of ordnance could help clarify the threat.<sup>71</sup>

## OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Land release operations in Lao PDR are conducted by a range of implementing partners, which includes humanitarian operators such as national operator UXO Lao; international NGOs, HALO, HI, MAG, and NPA; commercial clearance operators; and humanitarian teams of the Lao People’s Army (Unit 58).

Survey and clearance by the humanitarian operators focus almost exclusively on addressing contamination from CMR and other ERW. HALO does, however, have two teams with

34 operational staff (including team leaders) conducting clearance in mined areas and in addition, HALO’s EOD team and one of its survey teams retain the capacity to conduct landmine-specific NTS.<sup>72</sup>

For further details on CMR survey and clearance capacity of humanitarian operators, see Mine Action Review’s *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2025* report on Lao PDR.

57 Emails from Rebecca Letven, MAG, 30 March 2022; and William Hunter, HALO, 22 June 2025.

58 Emails from Cameron Imber, HALO, 14 March 2021; and William Hunter, HALO, 30 May 2024.

59 Emails from William Hunter, HALO, 30 May 2024 and 22 June 2025.

60 Email from Alexandra Letcher, HI, 6 April 2023.

61 Emails from Julien Kempeneers, HI, 27 August 2019 and 30 March 2022.

62 Emails from Julien Kempeneers, on behalf of Yvon Le Chevanton, HI, 25 March 2020; and Minla Nanthavong, HI, 2 August 2021.

63 Email from Julien Kempeneers, on behalf of Yvon Le Chevanton, HI, 25 March 2020.

64 Email from Alexandra Letcher, HI, 6 April 2023.

65 Emails from Julien Kempeneers, HI, 25 March 2020; and Yvon Le Chevanton, HI, 13 July 2024.

66 Email from Yvon Le Chevanton, HI, 8 May 2024.

67 Emails from Julien Kempeneers, HI, 30 March 2022; and Alexandra Letcher, HI, 6 April 2023.

68 Email from Yvon Le Chevanton, HI, 8 May 2024.

69 Statement of Lao PDR, APMBIC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

70 Email from Yvon Le Chevanton, HI, 8 May 2024.

71 Email from Rupert Leighton, UNDP, 26 August 2024.

72 Emails from William Hunter, HALO, 30 May 2024 and 5 September 2025.

# LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2024

Table 1: Summary of land release outputs in 2024

Release of AP mined area	Release in 2024 (m²)	Comments
Clearance	86,863	Operator data
Technical survey	0	Operator data
Non-technical survey	0	Operator data
Destruction of AP mines during clearance, survey, and spot tasks	2024	
AP mines destroyed	162	Operator data

### SURVEY IN 2024

No area was cancelled through survey in 2023 or 2024. In 2024, HALO conducted survey of a minefield in Dongsavan village, following a reported landmine accident. This resulted in confirmation of one CHA totalling approximately 10,000m², which may be expanded. Desk assessment of wartime records and aerial photography suggest the original minefield may have been roughly 80,000m², although much of it has since been developed for housing and agriculture. HALO also identified a further suspected mined area in Tampong Village, Xonnbulu district, Savannakhet province, with confirmation ongoing in 2025.<sup>73</sup> In 2023, HALO conducted survey of a

former US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)/Royalist airstrip in Houei Mun village, Thapangthong district of Savannakhet, in October and November 2023. The survey resulted in confirmation of one CHA totalling 43,000m² and containing M18A1 directional fragmentation mines and tripwire flares. The survey was conducted by a HALO NTS team trained to address the threat from mines.<sup>74</sup>

None among HI, MAG, NPA, and UXO Lao surveyed any mined area in 2024 or 2023.

### CLEARANCE IN 2024

In 2024, HALO conducted clearance of 86,863m², of which 82,521m² was in the Phalanxai district of Savannakhet, the remaining clearance was conducted in Dongsavan village, Sepon district. A total of 130 AP mines were destroyed (including M16 bounding fragmentation mines and PMN and M14 blast mines). In addition, HALO found and destroyed six AP mines during EOD call-outs and survey.<sup>75</sup> In 2023, HALO cleared 26,773m² in manual clearance of three mined areas in Phalanxai district of Savannakhet, destroying 34 AP mines.<sup>76</sup>

HALO reported that the significant increase in clearance rates in 2024 was due to confirmation that large parts of the Kalong Nua minefield in Phalanxai district contained only M16 mines, with no plastic or minimum-metal AP blast mines. This allowed teams to use less sensitive detector settings, reducing interference from metal clutter. By contrast, clearance in Dongsavan, Sepon district, progressed very slowly, as the area lay on a main artery of the Ho Chi Minh Trail and was heavily bombed, requiring sensitive settings to detect M14 mines amid millions of fragments of bomb debris.<sup>77</sup>

With the exception of HALO, none of the other humanitarian demining organisations (HI, MAG, NPA, and UXO Lao) conducted any clearance of mined area in 2024 or 2023. However, NPA, UXO Lao and MAG discovered a small number of AP mines during CMR survey, clearance, or EOD spot tasks in 2024 (see Table 2). According to operator data, a total of 162 AP mines and 2 AV mines were discovered and destroyed in 2024. This excludes mines found and discovered by the Lao People's Army (Unit 58).

According to the NRA, however, 57 mines were found and destroyed in 2024, of which 10 were found during CMR clearance and 47 during spot tasks.<sup>78</sup> In Lao PDR's CCM Article 7 report, 58 mines were cleared in 2024, with no disaggregation made between AP and AV mines.<sup>79</sup> Lao PDR reported the same number in its CCW Protocol V Article 10 transparency report.<sup>80</sup> The discrepancy between HALO's and the NRA's figures stems from reporting procedures as items found during clearance are only reported to the NRA once a task is completed. Mines from HALO's ongoing tasks are therefore not yet included. HALO has raised this issue with the NRA, and as of 2025 steps are being taken to update the figures.<sup>81</sup>

73 Email from William Hunter, HALO, 23 September 2025.  
74 Email from William Hunter, HALO, 13 August 2024.  
75 Emails from William Hunter, HALO, 22 June and 5 and 23 September 2025.  
76 Emails from William Hunter, HALO, 30 May and 13 August 2024.  
77 Email from William Hunter, HALO, 23 September 2025.  
78 Email from Viengdalat Somphet, NRA, 17 June 2025.  
79 CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2024), Form F.  
80 CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2024), Form A.  
81 Email from William Hunter, HALO, 23 September 2025.



Table 2: Mines discovered in 2024 (based on humanitarian operator data)<sup>82</sup>

Operator	AP mines	AV mines	Comments
HALO	136	1	<b>Clearance:</b> 69 M16 bounding fragmentation mines, 43 PMN blast mines and 18 M14 blast mines. <b>Survey:</b> 2 M16 mines. <b>EOD spot tasks:</b> 2 M16 mines, 2 M18 Claymore mines, 1 M15 AV mine.
MAG	4	0	<b>EOD spot tasks:</b> 4 AP mines
NPA	5	1	<b>Risk education:</b> 1 M16 mine <b>EOD spot tasks:</b> 1 69 Chinese mine, 2 M16 mines <b>CMR clearance:</b> 1 Minh/Vietnamese mine
UXO Lao	*17	*0	<b>Survey:</b> 5 mines <b>CMR clearance:</b> 2 mines <b>EOD spot tasks:</b> 10 mines
<b>Totals</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>2</b>	

\*UXO Lao does not disaggregate AP from AV mines.

## PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Lao PDR is not yet a State Party to the APMBC. Nonetheless, it has obligations under international human rights law to clear landmines as soon as possible.

Lao PDR has not set a deadline for completion of AP mine clearance. The full extent of contamination remains unknown, though AP and AV mines are present alongside widespread ERW, in particular CMR. Mine clearance is not a national priority, and progress is limited: HALO is the only operator with dedicated mine clearance teams, while other organisations encounter mines only during CMR survey, clearance, or EOD tasks.

Institutional capacity is gradually improving. With Canadian funding, UNDP supported the NRA to develop a QA/QC capacity for mine clearance, and by the middle of 2025, the NRA reported being able to accredit and oversee such operations. However, systematic survey of mined areas has yet to be undertaken, and no timeframe for addressing mine contamination has been established.

82 Emails from Vilaivanh Thongmanivong, Chief of Programme Office and Public Information (PO-PI) Unit, UXO Lao, 27 May 2025; Eli Mechanic, MAG, 12 June 2025; Per Håkon Breivik, NPA, 23 May 2025; and William Hunter, HALO, 22 June 2025.