LAO PDR

KEY DATA

NO APMBC ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE:

State not party to the APMBC

AP MINE CONTAMINATION:

Extent unknown

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS

Release of AP mined area	Release in 2025 (m²)	Release in 2024 (m²)
Clearance	30,236 (INGO data)	86,863 (NGO data)
Technical Survey	0	0
Non-Technical Survey	0	0

Destruction of AP mines during clearance, survey, and spot tasks	2025	2024
AP Mines destroyed	114 Incl. 55 destroyed in spot tasks (INGO and UXO Lao data, some of which was not disaggregated by mine type but believed to consist mainly of AP mines)	162 (NGO data)

MAIN AP MINE SURVEY AND CLEARANCE OPERATOR IN 2025:

- The HALO Trust (HALO)

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

One operator, HALO, conducted systematic area clearance of landmines in 2025, working in Savannakhet province, underscoring the priority the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) gives to survey and clearance of cluster munition remnants (CMR). Most of the other mines destroyed by operators were tackled in explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) spot tasks that responded to hotline calls from the community or items located in the course of risk education sessions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- **Lao PDR should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.**
- **In the meantime, Lao PDR should submit voluntary Article 7 reports annually under the APMBC.**
- **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 National Regulatory Authority (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 as suspected or confirmed hazardous area (SHA or CHA).**
- **The NRA, taking advantage of the relevant training provided by UNDP, should accredit operators for mine clearance, including international NGOs.**

AP MINE SURVEY AND CLEARANCE CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

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

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- UXO Lao
- Humanitarian teams of the Lao People's Army (Unit 58, but renamed in November 2025 as Centre 523)
- 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

By far the greatest contamination in Lao PDR is from explosive remnants of war (ERW), in particular CMR[1] but it 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.[2]

A 1997 survey by Humanity & Inclusion (HI) found mines in all 15 provinces it surveyed, contaminating a total of 214 villages.[3] AP mines it discovered included United States (US)-manufactured M7, M16, and M14 mines; Vietnamese MBV-78A1 mines; and Soviet POMZ mines.[4] In 2023, HI also found M2A1 bounding fragmentation mines.[5] Houaphanh province's Houamuang district, which was fiercely contested by Royal Lao Army and Pathet Lao forces during the 1960s, appears to be among the most heavily mined districts with "many" areas where mines were laid defensively around military posts.[6] Prior to relocating to Phongsaly province, HI identified 54 mined areas in 22 Houamuang villages.[7]

The NRA has reported that AP "gravel mines" dropped by the United States across Lao PDR had all degraded, but remaining mine types included M14 blast mines, M16 bounding fragmentation mines, M18 claymore mines, and M15 and M19 AV mines, as well as Soviet or Chinese PMN blast AP mines, POMZ fragmentation mines, and TM41, TM46, and TM57 AV mines.[8] 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.[9] 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.[10] In 2023, HALO found and destroyed a DH-10 fragmentation mine during battle area clearance (BAC) in Phin village, Phin district, Savannakhet province.[11]

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."[12] 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.[13] 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 21 mines from the area (15 in 2024 and 6 in 2025).[14]

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 Interview with Lt. Col. Phetsamay Kommasit, Political and Policy Chief, Centre 523, in Vientiane, 29 May 2026.
7 Email from Yvon Le Chevanton, HI, 8 May 2024.
8 NRA website, "UXO types: Mines", 9 March 2020 (page no longer online).
9 Email from Alexandra Letcher, HI, 6 April 2023.
10 Email from William Hunter, Programme Manager, HALO, 23 September 2025.
11 Email from William Hunter, HALO, 30 May 2024.
12 NRA website, "UXO types: Mines", 9 March 2020 (page no longer online).
13 Email from Julien Kempeneers, HI, 25 March 2020.
14 Emails from William Hunter, HALO, 5 September 2025; and Emmelyne van Hooijdonk, HALO, 12 October 2026.

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. A decision by the prime minister in September 2023 transferred chairmanship of the NRA from the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) as part of measures by the Lao government to strengthen coordination systems among various agencies, including government and operators.[15]

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 the working principles and methods of the NRA.[16] Government decree 166 issued on 4 March 2025 ratified the prime minister's decision transferring chairmanship of the NRA's 14-member inter-ministerial board to MoFA.[17]

The NRA acts as 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 the provincial and district levels.[18]

During the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit in 2016, Lao PDR launched sustainable development goal (SDG) 18, "Lives Safe from UXO", which focuses on freeing the country from unexploded ordnance (UXO). The inclusion of UXO as a specific output in the National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) for 2021–2025, and inclusion in the NSEDP for 2026–30 demonstrated Lao PDR's commitment to removing UXO as a barrier to development.[19]

The United Nations Development Programme (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, with funding from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), also provides capacity development support to national operators UXO Lao and Lao People's Army Centre demining teams in what was formerly known as Unit 58 but renamed in November 2025 as Centre 523.[20] Tetra Tech, funded by the US, provides 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.[21] The US also supported the NRA delivering an 11-week Senior Explosive Ordnance Disposal (SEOD) Technicians course in 2025 which qualified 14 technicians, including four from Centre 523 at the highest EOD level available in Lao PDR. The United States planned to support two SEOD refresher courses in 2026 for technicians who qualified before 2024.[22]

Operators also supported development in the sector. Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) continued to provide extensive support through an Information Management Capacity Development programme. Mines Advisory Group (MAG) held jointly with the NRA an IM workshop.[23] The HALO Trust, supported by Ireland, started drone-pilot training for the NRA and handed over a number of drones to the NRA.[24]

COORDINATION

Operators unanimously reported close cooperation and coordination with MoFA and the NRA, which was enhanced by MoFA's replacement of MoLSW as chair of the NRA secretariat. Historically, MoU procedures have been lengthy, complex, and labour-intensive, posing a major challenge at all levels and causing significant delays to survey, clearance, and procurement and importation of equipment.[25] Good support from NRA and MoFA at national and provincial levels contributed to smoother, more efficient implementation of the MoUs setting out their terms of operation and their work plans.[26] In 2025, NRA's director played a key role in helping operators affected by the US Stop Work order obtain short-term funding.[27] Operators also reported quicker conclusion of MoUs, previously a process that took so long it deterred smaller donors.[28] MoFA said it remains open to suggestions on further steps to improve the process.[29]

Coordination is strengthened by meetings of a Sector Working Group, co-chaired by the Minister or Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, UNDP and a donor country, most often the

15 CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form J.

16 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, Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Eighth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 3 September 2018.

17 CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2025), Form A.

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

19 Email from Olivier Bauduin, US Embassy Vientiane, 6 July 2021.

20 Emails from Rupert Leighton, Chief Technical Advisor, UNDP, 14 August 2023; and Viengdalat Somphet, Head of Planning and Cooperation Unit, 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.

22 Email from Olivier Bauduin, US Embassy in Lao PDR, 13 July 2026.

23 Email from Isabelle Urumath, Grants & Communications Manager, MAG, 27 April 2026.

24 Email from Craig Guwuriro, Programme Manager, HALO, 9 May 2026; and interview, Vientiane, 26 May 2026.

25 Emails from Aubrey Sutherland, NPA, 18 May 2024; William Hunter, HALO, 30 May 2024; and Katherine Harrison, MAG, 8 May 2024.

26 Emails from Craig Guwuriro, HALO, 9 May 2026; Reinier Carabain, Country Manager, HI, 27 April 2026; Isabelle Urumath, MAG, 27 April 2026; Nguyen Linh, Deputy Country Director, NPA, 4 May 2026; and Vilaivanh Thongmanivong, Head of Planning and Cooperation, UXO Lao, 27 April 2026.

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

28 Emails from Craig Guwuriro, HALO, 9 May 2026; Reinier Carabain, HI, 27 April 2026; Isabelle Urumath, MAG, 27 April 2026; Nguyen Linh, NPA, 4 May 2026; and Vilaivanh Thongmanivong, UXO Lao, 27 April 2026.

29 Interview with Venephet Philathong, Director of the Division of the UN Political and Security Affairs, Department of International Organizations (NRA Chair Secretariat), MoFA, Soudachanh Darounphanh, Deputy Director, NRA, and Chanmy Keodara, Deputy Head of Planning and Cooperation Unit, NRA, in Vientiane, 28 May 2026.

United States. Meeting twice a year, the SWG aims to improve the efficiency, transparency, and funding of mine action in Lao PDR.[30] Although it has a different name, the SWG is the equivalent of a Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Country Coalition. Sector coordination is also reinforced by quarterly Technical Working Groups (TWG) meetings covering five main thematic areas: survey and clearance, victim assistance, risk education, information management, and policy coordination and funding strategy.[31] Operators reported that TWGs were more effective in 2025, organising smaller group meetings that enabled participants to have more detailed discussions.[32]

FUNDING FOR AP MINE SURVEY AND CLEARANCE

NRA reported that the total budget for the UXO sector amounted to US$51.7 million in 2025.[33] This exceeded the $50 million or so a year Lao PDR says it needs for clearance and risk education.[34] It was a modest increase from US$48.9 million received the previous year but the NRA saw the possibility of a downturn in 2026.[35]

The Lao PDR government pays the salaries of the NRA staff (at provincial and district level) and the Army's Centre 523's deminers as well as providing administrative support and infrastructure in collaboration with funding from KOICA and coordination by UNDP.[36] Salaries of NRA personnel in Vientiane are paid by international donors, with funding channelled through UNDP.[37] The government also provides in-kind contributions such as UXO Lao facilities, and through tax exemptions for equipment for humanitarian operators.[38] HALO is the only operator that has dedicated mine clearance teams. In 2025, HALO's donors were the US PM/WRA, the UK government, and Ireland. UK funding expired in March 2026.[39]

For more information on funding, please see the country profile on Lao PDR on the *Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor* website.[40]

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The NRA has integrated gender into all core policy and strategy documents for the UXO sector. The Safe Path Forward III's 10-year strategy for 2021–30 says that gender mainstreaming is important for the national programme and that women must be involved in both work planning and project implementation.[41] MoFA appointed a gender coordination committee for the sector in 2024 and the NRA appointed gender focal points for each of the sector's four technical working groups (addressing Survey and Clearance, Risk Education, Victim Assistance and Information Management).[42]

MoFA also approved a Gender and Inclusion Code of Conduct for the NRA and UXO Lao in 2024, establishing overall standards of professional behaviour with core principles such as respect, safeguarding, and gender equality. A supporting Human Resources Policy Supplement was also approved, providing practical guidance for integrating gender and inclusion into HR systems, including recruitment, team composition, and staff development.[43]

International operators have all reported having gender and diversity policies in place. HALO, exceptionally, has exceeded gender parity across all levels of the operation with an unusually high figure of 53% employment in its operations. It identified ensuring employment that reflected the ethnic composition of provincial communities as a key driver of its recruitment policy.[44]

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

The Safe Path Forward III strategy identifies climate change as a challenge to addressing UXO and reiterates that mine action activities have to comply with national standards and relevant laws, which include an environmental protection law introduced in August 2024.[45]

30 CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form J; and email from Viengdalat Somphet, NRA, 17 June 2025.
31 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2025), Form D.
32 Email from Craig Guwuriro, HALO, 9 May 2026.
33 Email from Chanjaleurn Rasphone, Deputy Head of Explosive Ordnance Risk Education & Victim Assistance NRA, 24 June 2026.
34 CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2025), Form I.
35 Email from Chanjaleurn Rasphone, NRA, 24 June 2026; CCW Protocol V Article 10 Reports (covering 2024 and 2025), Forms A and E.
36 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.
37 Email from Olivier Bauduin, US Embassy Vientiane, 24 July 2024.
38 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.
39 Emails from William Hunter, HALO, 22 June 2025; and Craig Guwuriro, HALO, 9 May 2026.
40 https://the-monitor.org.
41 Lao PDR, "Safe Path Forward III", p. 17.
42 Email from Chanmy Keodara, NRA, 13 July 2024.
43 Emails from Eli Mechanic, Country Director, MAG, 10 July 2025; and Viengdalat Somphet, NRA, 17 June 2025.
44 Email from Craig Guwuriro, HALO, 9 May 2026.
45 Lao PDR, "Safe Path Forward III", pp. 12 and 17.

The NRA released a new International Mine Action Standards (IMAS)-compliant standard on the environment in December 2025 as part of a wider upgrade of national standards. It calls for environmental screening and assessments of proposed projects with a view to establishing an environmental baseline that makes it possible to evaluate project impacts and develop appropriate mitigation measures. It encourages operators to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases that cause global warming and climate change by reviewing energy use and supply, transport and travel, waste, procurement and supply chains.

Camp sites are to be chosen with environmental and community input to avoid disrupting economic activities or social and cultural values, and to ensure compliance with national and local regulations. Waste disposal sites are to be selected to avoid harm to property, infrastructure, or cultural areas, must consider shocks and noise, and are to be refurbished according to community needs. Vehicle maintenance must occur in designated areas with soak pits to prevent water pollution; oil dumping is prohibited; and waste must be properly contained.[46]

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 2026* report on Lao PDR.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Lao PDR is implementing a major overhaul and upgrade of its information management, building on a sustained effort by the NRA and operators in recent years to tackle data quality challenges and a three-year IM Capacity Development Project funded by the US PM/WRA and implemented jointly by the NRA and NPA from mid-2023 to August 2026. A second phase of the project is under consideration.[47]

The NRA, supported by NPA, has also drawn up an Information Management Strategic Plan 2026–2030, prepared with extensive consultation with stakeholders in technical working group meetings and with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). The plan, due to be released in 2026, aims to provide the sector with modern, sustainable, user-oriented systems that will strengthen evidence-based planning, prioritisation, survey and clearance. The plan is presented as the "operational engine for Safe Path Forward III".[48]

The NRA manages an IMSMA national database which was made accessible to all operators in 2023 via a dedicated virtual private network (VPN), enhancing data entry and verification. It introduced real-time data collection using ArcGIS Online and supports an operations dashboard displaying data on CHAs, survey, clearance and victim assistance. The database functions inefficiently due to the volume of data and technical limitations and the NRA is preparing to upgrade it to IMSMA Core.[49] Data migration to the new system was expected in 2026–27 and installation to be completed in 2028.[50] The NRA and the GICHD held a workshop in Vientiane in June 2025 to discuss arrangements for the upgrade.

The NRA and operators have prioritised tackling a long-standing challenge posed by inaccurate and incomplete historical data, particularly from UXO Lao between 2004 and 2010. Errors included incorrect coordinates, use of wrong GPS formats or map datums, and misfiled reports. Many records were stored only as hard copies and were never fully digitised, leaving gaps during the migration to the IMSMA database.[51] These continue to pose challenges for operators on tasks overlapping with UXO Lao's past activities.[52] Data analysis in 2003 estimated more than 11,000 task records required action and by May 2026 operators had corrected more than 10,000 records. Most of the remaining task records will require field verification requiring a significant commitment of time and resources.

The NRA planned to establish a Task Force in July 2026, involving management, operations, and IM staff from the NRA, HALO, MAG, NPA, Tetra Tech, and other operators, to develop criteria, requirements, and a methodology for a comprehensive assessment of the scope of data correction issues, as well as to define the data-correction and reporting process. The Task Force will also determine which tasks require field verification and which records are not correctable.[53]

Among other steps to strengthen information management and prepare for the upgrade to IMSMA Core, the NRA adopted a revised and updated national standard in late December 2025 which includes the latest amendments to international standards in IMAS 05.10 and provides the binding regulatory framework for IM. The NRA also introduced adjustments to reporting procedures in 2025 that were intended to improve data quality and consistency, including standardised reporting formats, clearer submission timelines, and stronger requirements for data completeness and validation prior to entry into the national database.[54]

Limited IM capacity at the provincial and district level and the high turnover of staff in some areas is also a challenge. Under the capacity development project, NPA delivered IM equipment in 14 provinces/89 districts and provided IM training to staff in nine provinces/62 districts. UNDP is supporting IM capacity development in five other provinces and 27 districts.[55]

46 National Standard 07.13, Environmental Management.

47 Email from Olivier Bauduin, US Embassy Vientiane, 4 June 2026.

48 Draft IM Strategic Plan 2026–30, pp. 7, 9.

49 Interview with Venephet Philathong, MoFA, Soudachanh Darounphanh, NRA, and Chanmy Keodara, NRA, in Vientiane, 28 May 2026.

50 Interviews with Venephet Philathong, MoFA, Soudachanh Darounphanh, NRA, and Chanmy Keodara, NRA, in Vientiane, 28 May 2026; and with Abdulkarim Main, Senior Technical Adviser, NPA, 25 and 29 May 2026; Information Management Strategic Plan 2026 – 2030 (Draft), pp. 16, 33.

51 Emails from Bouala Thongsavanh, NRA, on behalf of Phoukhieo Chanthasomboune, NRA, 30 April 2018; Aubrey Sutherland, NPA, 25 March 2019; and Nguyen Linh, NPA, 4 May 2026. Also "Data errors on IMSMA", Nigel Orr, Technical Adviser, Sterling International, 26 April 2017.

52 Email from Craig Guwuriro, HALO, 9 May 2026.

53 Interview with Abdulkarim Main, Senior Technical Adviser, NPA, 25 and 29 May 2026.

54 Emails from Isabelle Urumath, MAG, 27 April 2026; and Nguyen Linh, NPA, 4 May 2026.

55 Email from Per Håkon Breivik, NPA, 18 July 2025.

PLANNING AND TASKING

The National Strategy for the UXO Sector (2021–30), "Safe Path Forward III", developed under the leadership of the NRA and adopted in 2023,[56] set a target of identifying 2,500km^2 of CHA and releasing 1,000km^2 of land for agricultural and development purposes by 2030.[57] This ambitious target was more than double existing clearance output. In 2025, the NRA decided to scale that back to what was considered the more realistic target of releasing 750km^2.[58] 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 2026* report on Lao PDR.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

The NRA has reviewed and updated 24 chapters of national mine action standards (NMAS), including standards for environmental management and information management, aligning them with IMAS. After consultations with operators, it formally adopted the revised NMAS at a UXO sector working group meeting in December 2025. The 24 chapters were undergoing translation into Lao in 2026, including the need to develop the official Lao vocabulary of technical terms.

Lao PDR's National Standard on Mine Clearance Operations describes mine clearance as "considerably more dangerous than UXO area clearance" and stipulates that it must only be undertaken by accredited mine clearance organisations with appropriate training, equipment, and specific mine clearance operating procedures.[59] If mines are found during UXO work, operations must stop, the team withdrawn and non-technical survey conducted to determine the extent of mine contamination. If survey results are not definitive, the area is to be considered a minefield.[60]

UNDP trained the NRA's QM department in QA/QC of mine clearance under a project started in January 2024[61] and in June 2025, the NRA reported it had the capacity to accredit and conduct QA/QC of mine clearance operations. The government, with donor support, aims to strengthen national operators, including Centre 523 and UXO Lao, to build mine clearance capacity.[62]

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Land release operations in Lao PDR are conducted by a range of implementing partners, which include 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 in Centre 523. For more details see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2026* report on Lao PDR.

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 mine-specific NTS.[63]

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2025

Table 1: Summary of land release outputs in 2025

Release of AP mined area	Release in 2025 (m^2)	Comments
Clearance	30,236	NGO data
Technical survey	0	NGO data
Non-technical survey	0	NGO data

56 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.

57 Lao PDR, "Safe Path Forward III", p. 14.

58 Interview with Venephet Philathong, MoFA, Soudachanh Darounphanh, NRA, and Chanmy Keodara, NRA, in Vientiane, 28 May 2026.

59 Lao PDR NS 09.10: Clearance requirements – mine clearance, December 2024, Introduction.

60 Lao PDR NS 09.11, Battle Aea Clearance, December 2024, p. 10.

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

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

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

Table 1 continued

Destruction of AP mines during clearance, survey, and spot tasks	2025	Comments
AP mines destroyed	114 (including 55 during EOD spot tasks or risk education)	NGO and UXO Lao data: 60 by HALO, 7 by HI, 20 by MAG, 6 by NPA, and 21 by UXO Lao

The NRA recorded a total of 263 mines destroyed in 2025, without disaggregating AP and AV mines. It attributed three-quarters of the destroyed items to area clearance by HALO but without specifying how much was through systematic clearance of mined areas (see Tables 2 and 3).[64] The data are not consistent with results reported by operators who reported destroying a total of 114 AP mines in 2025.

Table 2: AP and AV mines destroyed in 2025 by province (NRA data)[65]

Province	Technical Survey	Area Clearance	Roving Tasks	Total
Attapeu	1	0	1	2
Bolikhamxai	0	0	1	1
Houaphanh	0	0	15	15
Khammouane	1	0	13	14
Luang Prabang	0	0	2	2
Savannakhet	3	199	7	209
Vientiane	0	0	8	8
Xekong	0	0	3	3
Xiengkhouang	0	0	9	9
Totals	**5**	**199**	**59**	**263**

HALO conducted the only recorded area clearance of AP minefields in 2025, clearing 25,969m^2 of Savannakhet's Phalanxai district and 4,267m^2 of Xepon district for a total of 30,236m^2. HALO reported destroying a total of 52 AP mines in its dedicated mine clearance operations and one AP mine during UXO clearance. It destroyed a further seven AP mines in spot EOD operations, all in Savannakhet.[66]

HI, responding to hotline call-outs, destroyed 7 AP mines in Houaphanh province, including M14 and M16 AP mines and the M71A AP/AV mine.[67] MAG destroyed 1 AP mine in the course of technical survey and 19 in EOD spot tasks in Khammouane (13) and Xiengkhouang (6).[68] NPA destroyed six M16A AP mines located in the course of risk education programmes, finding two mines in each of Champassak, Saravan, and Xekong provinces. In Champassak, it also destroyed an M15 AV mine.[69] UXO Lao, which does not disaggregate AP and AV mines, reported destroying 21 mines, 14 in the course of spot tasks in Luang Prabang (2), Houaphanh (8), Xiengkhouang (3) and Champassak (1).[70]

Table 3: AP and AV mines destroyed by operator in 2025 (NRA data)[71]

Operator	Technical Survey	Area Clearance	Roving Tasks	Total
Centre 523	0	0	9	9
HALO	3	199	7	209
HI	0	0	7	7
MAG	1	0	19	20
NPA	0	0	2	2
UXO Lao	1	0	15	16
Totals	**5**	**199**	**59**	**263**

64 NRA database, accessed 4 September 2026.
65 Ibid.
66 Email from Craig Guwuriro, HALO, 9 May 2026.
67 Emails from Reinier Carabain, HI, 27 April 2026.
68 Email from Isabelle Urumath, MAG, 27 April 2026; NRA database, accessed 4 September 2026.
69 Email from Nguyen Linh, NPA, 4 May 2026.
70 Email from Vilaivanh Thongmanivong, UXO Lao, 27 April 2026.
71 NRA database, accessed 4 September 2026.

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.