SRI LANKA

MINE ACTION REVIEW

CLEARING THE MINES 2026

KEY DATA

APMBC ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 JUNE 2028

Not on track to meet deadline

AP MINE CONTAMINATION: 21.61KM²

Heavy
(National authority estimate)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS

Release of AP mined area	Release in 2025 (km²)	Release in 2024 (km²)
Clearance	3.55	5.98
Technical Survey	1.23	1.00
Non-Technical Survey	0.18	0.20

Destruction of AP mines during clearance, survey, and spot tasks	2025	2024
AP Mines destroyed	11,938 (incl. 98 destroyed in spot tasks)	16,510 (incl. 45 destroyed in spot tasks)

MAIN AP MINE SURVEY AND CLEARANCE OPERATORS IN 2025:

- Sri Lanka Army Humanitarian Demining Unit (SLA HDU)
- Delvon Assistance for Social Harmony (DASH)
- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
- Skavita Humanitarian Assistance and Relief Project (SHARP)

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Sri Lanka's land release outputs decreased significantly in 2025 compared to the previous year, but it still met its annual target by releasing almost 5km² of anti-personnel (AP) mined area. This was achieved partly thanks to a review of national mine action standards (NMAS) that allowed for more efficient release. The discovery of new contamination held back progress and Sri Lanka expects to submit an Article 5 deadline extension request by March 2027.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- **Sri Lanka should continue its national Completion Survey and use its findings as the basis for setting a realistic Article 5 deadline.**
- **Sri Lanka should continue the revision and adoption of all outstanding NMAS, and review all operator standard operating procedures (SOPs) in line with the updated NMAS without further delay, as was planned to have occurred in 2023 according to its Completion Strategy 2023–2027.**
- **Sri Lanka should continue efforts to strengthen data accuracy in its national database.**
- **Sri Lanka should finalise and publish its long-awaited resource mobilisation strategy, with clear funding targets to at least the end of 2027.**

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2025)	Score (2024)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	7	7	Sri Lanka's national Completion Survey continued to improve understanding of the contamination baseline. By April 2026, the Completion Survey had been conducted across all 1,389 Grama Niladhari Division (GNDs) – the smallest administrative unit at the village level in Sri Lanka. Of these, 1,111 GND have been recommended for declaration as mine free. Nearly 3km^2 of AP mine contamination was identified through the same process during 2025.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	7	7	Sri Lanka's national mine action programme is nationally owned. The government has been increasing its national budgetary contributions to the programme by LKR10 million (approximately US$30,000) every year since 2023, and plans to sustain a 10% increase by the end of 2027. Sri Lanka had planned to adopt a resource mobilisation strategy in 2023 to increase both national and international funding, but as at July 2026, the strategy was yet to be finalised.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	7	7	Sri Lanka's reviewed National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027 includes gender and diversity as a cross-cutting issue. The proportion of women in mine action workforce increased by 15% in 2025, mostly thanks to The HALO Trust increasing the number of women managerial staff.
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION (10% of overall score)	5	5	Sri Lanka does not have a dedicated NMAS or policy on environmental management. While seasonal and climate-related risks are factored into operational planning, extreme weather conditions (e.g., Cyclone Ditwah) have disrupted clearance, highlighting the need to integrate mine action more explicitly into national climate and disaster frameworks.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	5	5	Sri Lanka uses the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core and IMSMA New Generation in parallel as it was decided a full migration to IMSMA Core was not an efficient use of resources. NMAC continued database clean-up, correction of polygons and duplicate-record errors, and maintained a weekly Completion Survey Dashboard. Sri Lanka submitted a detailed and coherent APMBC Article 7 report covering 2025, albeit with some delay.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	7	7	In 2025, Sri Lanka conducted a mid-term review of its Completion Strategy. The findings, presented at a high-level donor event, reaffirmed Sri Lanka's commitment to partnership. While all known remaining tasks have been allocated to operators, a realistic revised completion deadline has yet to be formally determined.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (10% of overall score)	7	7	Updated NMAS on non-technical survey (NTS), land release, and quality management (QM) were formally endorsed in 2025. The review of land release criteria supported greater use of evidence-based survey and reduced unnecessary clearance. Other NMAS and operators' SOPs are still being reviewed.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	7	7	Sri Lanka's land release output decreased by around 30% in 2025 compared to the previous year, but IT exceeded its annual land release target of 2025 by 0.2km^2. Clearance fell by 40% in 2025 compared to 2024, though more land was released by survey. Given the worsening funding prospects, land release outputs are likely to decline further, leaving Sri Lanka off track to meet its Article 5 deadline of June 2028.
Average Score	**6.6**	**6.6**	**Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE**

AP MINE SURVEY AND CLEARANCE CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Ministry of Housing, Construction, and Water Supply
- National Mine Action Centre (NMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Delvon Assistance for Social Harmony (DASH)
- Skavita Humanitarian Assistance and Relief Project (SHARP)
- Sri Lankan Army (SLA) Humanitarian Demining Units (HDUs)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

As at the end of 2025, NMAC reported total mined area in Sri Lanka at 21.61km² across 795 mined areas: 17.12km² across 605 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and 4.49km² across 190 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) (see Table 1).[1] This is a decrease from the almost 23.2km² across 840 mined areas reported at the end of 2024.

Table 1: Mined area (at end 2025)[2]

Province	District	CHAs	Area (m²)	SHAs	Area (m²)	Total SHAs and CHAs	Total area (m²)
Northern	Jaffna	8	539,817	2	45,057	10	584,874
	Kilinochchi	65	1,473,609	1	0	66	1,473,609
	Mannar	175	2,093,452	50	802,338	225	2,895,790
	Mullaitivu	290	12,122,750	48	1,596,684	338	13,719,434
	Vavuniya	38	520,009	31	1,340,356	69	1,860,365
North Central	Anuradhapura	2	26,596	1	4,410	3	31,006
	Polonnaruwa	0	0	4	27,631	4	27,631
Eastern	Ampara	2	11,134	17	295,435	19	306,569
	Batticaloa	13	97,764	17	264,078	30	361,842
	Trincomalee	12	236,350	19	114,357	31	350,707
Totals		**605**	**17,121,481**	**190**	**4,490,346**	**795**	**21,611,827**

The Government of Sri Lanka mandated a National Completion Survey process which involved operators conducting survey at each GND – the smallest administrative unit at the village level in Sri Lanka. The survey was launched in the second half of 2023.[3] As at April 2026, the completion survey had been conducted and validated across all 1,389 GNDs. Of these, 1,111 GNDs had been recommended for declaration as mine-free, while 278 GNDs required further follow-up.[4]

In 2025, Mines Advisory Group (MAG) conducted completion surveys in 7 districts across 703 GNDs, of which 563 were recommended for declaration as mine-impact-free and 140 required follow-up.[5] Skavita Humanitarian Assistance and Relief Project (SHARP) implemented completion surveys in 6 GNDs within the Mullaitivu and Puthukudiyiruppu districts.[6] HALO was allocated the survey of 611 GNDs, of which, 493 GNDs were recommended for declaration, and 118 GNDs required follow-up.[7]

A total of 3.1km² of AP mined area (2.6km² across 101 CHAs and 0.5km² across 33 SHAs) was discovered in nine districts and added to the database in 2025.[8] Of the new contamination discovered, Delvon Assistance for Social Harmony (DASH) identified 1.3km², HALO 0.4km², and MAG and SHARP 0.3km² each.[9]

Both HALO and MAG consider Sri Lanka's baseline of AP mine contamination to be accurate and evidence-based, largely due to the systematic application of Completion Survey. The use of common SOPs by all operators has helped ensure a coherent methodology and access to hard-to-reach communities. The process includes the review of historical records, on-site inspections, re-survey of previously identified areas, community liaison integrating women as key informants, and quality management (QM) embedded at each stage. Some data-management challenges remain though, including discrepancies in historical records in the current database. While the baseline is yet to be fully established, operators believe that Sri Lanka is on track to form an accurate and reliable understanding of its contamination.[10]

Sri Lanka has long been extensively contaminated by mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW). After a major clearance operation, most remaining contamination is located in the five northern districts, the focus of almost three decades of armed conflict between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which ended in 2009. Both sides made extensive use of mines, including belts of P4 Mk I and Mk II AP blast mines laid by the Sri Lankan Army (SLA), and long defensive lines with a mixture of mines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including AP mines of an improvised nature, laid by the LTTE.[11] Indian peacekeeping forces also used mines during their presence from July 1987 to January 1990.[12]

1 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026.
2 Article 7 Report (covering 2024), Form D.
3 Ibid.
4 Article 7 Report (covering 2025), Form D.
5 Email from Ziggy Garewal, Country Director, MAG, 6 May 2026.
6 Email from Lt.-Col. Sarath Jayawardhana, Director/ Programme Manager, SHARP, 4 May 2026.
7 Email from Hannah Picton, Programme Manager, HALO, 7 May 2026.
8 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026.
9 Emails from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 4 May 2026; Hannah Picton, HALO, 8 May 2026; Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026; and Lt.-Col. Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 4 May 2026.
10 Emails from Hannah Picton, HALO, 8 May 2026; and Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026.
11 Interviews with demining operators, Colombo, 29 March–2 April 2010; and with Maj. Pradeep Gamage, Officer-in-Charge, North Jaffna Humanitarian Demining Unit (HDU), Jaffna, 3 April 2007.
12 Ministry of Prison Reforms, Rehabilitation, Resettlement, and Hindu Religious Affairs, Sri Lanka National Mine Action Strategy 2016–2020, May 2016, p. 6; and Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form 1.

The SLA used both AP and anti-vehicle (AV) mines. Previously it was thought that all its minelaying had been recorded[13] and made available to the national mine action programme.[14] However, operators are continuing to find previously unrecorded minefields through ongoing Completion Survey efforts.[15] In Jaffna, where minefields were laid by the SLA, HALO, in coordination with NMAC, its Regional Mine Action Office (the RMAO) and the SLA, is addressing all the known minefields in Jaffna district, including those which were located in the Jaffna High Security Zone, which is being made accessible by the Sri Lankan Government for survey and clearance. In 2025, HALO was assigned 14 tasks covering 606,038m² in the Jaffna High Security Zone.[16]

Minefield maps and information on mine-laying strategy are not readily available for the LTTE-laid minefields, which therefore pose more of a challenge to clear.[17] Typically, LTTE minelaying was less predictable and more sporadic, and many of the minefields are in jungle areas with limited human activity.[18] Operators have encountered a wide range of LTTE devices, including AP mines with anti-tilt and anti-lift mechanisms. Tripwire-activated Claymore-type mines and, to a lesser extent, AV mines have been found, along with a number of forms of improvised devices to act as fragmentation mines, bar mines, electrical and magnetically initiated explosive devices, and mines connected to detonating cord to mortar and artillery shells.[19] The LTTE manufactured almost all the mines their forces used.[20]

While estimates of total contamination have been rising since 2021, they have fallen sharply from a high of 506km² at the end of 2010. A district-by-district re-survey in 2015–17 of all registered SHAs in the national database resulted in cancellation of more than 42km² of mined area and helped provide greater clarity on the extent of remaining contamination.[21] In September 2021, NMAC initiated comprehensive NTS across all conflict-affected districts to identify previously unknown mined and ERW-contaminated areas. This survey has led to the discovery of significant mined area.[22] The newly found mined areas are often in forests, in areas to which communities have only recently returned. Additionally, some previously registered CHAs were found to be larger than expected.[23] The survey's findings have contributed to the development of Sri Lanka's National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027.[24]

NMAC said the current baseline of AP mine contamination has been established through inclusive consultation with women, girls, boys, and men, including, where relevant, from minority groups.[25] According to Sri Lanka, all areas known or suspected to contain AP mines have been marked and warning signs in Sinhala, Tamil, and English prominently displayed.[26]

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Aside from mines, Sri Lanka remains contaminated with a wide range of ERW, including unexploded air-dropped bombs (although these are very rarely discovered), artillery shells and missiles, mortar bombs, hand-held anti-tank projectiles, and rifles and hand grenades. Large caches of abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO) also exist, particularly in the north.[27] These are being tackled at the same time as mined areas.[28]

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

NMAC has responsibility for priority setting, information management, quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC), coordination with demining organisations and cooperation partners, and the establishment of policy and standards.[29] NMAC suffers from frequent leadership and institutional changes, including under which ministry within the Sri Lankan government the centre sits,[30] while the Director of NMAC is appointed by the Ministry housing NMAC and also serves as the secretary of that Ministry. Currently, the NMAC Director is an Officer of the Sri Lanka Engineering Service.[31]

13 Ibid.; and interview with Rob Syfret, Operations Manager, HALO, in Kilinochchi, 12 September 2016.

14 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form 1.

15 Emails from Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 8 October 2025; and Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 11 August 2026.

16 Emails from Nadine Lainer, Deputy Programme Manager, HALO, 13 April 2023; and Hannah Picton, HALO, 16 August 2026.

17 Email from Belinda Vause, HALO, 3 April 2020; and Statement of Sri Lanka, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Oslo, 29 November 2020.

18 Email from Belinda Vause, HALO, 3 April 2020.

19 Email from Valon Kumnova, HALO, 11 April 2014; and Sri Lanka National Mine Action Strategy 2016–2020, May 2016, p. 6.

20 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form 1.

21 Emails from Belinda Vause, HALO, 3 April 2020; Valentina Stivanello, MAG, 6 April 2020; and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), 13 May 2020.

22 Statement of Sri Lanka on clearance, Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties (19MSP) (virtual meeting), 15–19 November 2021; emails from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 2 August 2022; and the GICHD, 13 April 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form C; and email from Stephen Hall, Programme Manager, HALO, 5 September 2022.

23 Email from Asa Massleberg, GICHD, 30 August 2022.

24 Statement of Sri Lanka on clearance, 19MSP (virtual meeting), 15–19 November 2021; emails from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 2 August 2022; and the GICHD, 13 April 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form C.

25 Email from V. Premachanthiran, NMAC, 25 August 2020.

26 Statement of Sri Lanka on clearance, 19MSP (virtual meeting), 15–19 November 2021.

27 Sri Lanka National Mine Action Strategy 2016–2020, p. 6; and Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form 1.

28 Email from Matthew Hovell, Regional Director, HALO, 30 September 2018.

29 Article 7 Report, submitted in 2019, p. 12.

30 Emails from Asa Massleberg, GICHD, 30 August 2022; and Stephen Hall, HALO, 5 September 2022.

31 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 11 August 2026.

Prior to 2022, NMAC had been subject to near-yearly changes in its Ministry affiliation. Following a government reshuffle in August 2022, it was placed under the Ministry of Urban Development, Construction and Housing.[32] In 2025, that Ministry was split into two newly-created ones: the Ministry of Housing, Construction and Water Supply, under which NMAC now operates, and the Ministry of Transport, Highways and Urban Construction. The former NMAC Director came under the latter Ministry, while the new Director, the Secretary of the Ministry of Housing, Construction and Water Supply, was officially appointed in October 2025. The restructuring created an administrative vacuum, including delays in securing authorisations such as customs clearance. The new Director reportedly did not engage substantively with mine action until January 2026, initially due to the transition into the new role, and subsequently because the Ministry's attention shifted to the humanitarian response following Cyclone Ditwah. Since January 2026, however, the new director has been actively engaging with operators and providing support to the sector.[33]

Clearance operations are coordinated, tasked, and quality managed by an RMAO in Kilinochchi, working in consultation with District Steering Committees for Mine Action. The Committees are chaired by government agents heading district authorities.[34] The RMAO also suffers from high turnover of staff with many military personnel, who are seconded, rotating at regular intervals.[35]

The Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines Act (No. 3 of 2022), which focuses on the prohibitions in Article 1 of the APMBC rather than on regulation of the mine action programme, was certified in 2022.[36]

Operators reported that Sri Lanka continued to provide a generally enabling environment for mine action, despite some administrative constraints. Visas were approved in a timely manner with no restrictions on the number of international staff. HALO reported some delays in the signing of the annual memorandum of understanding (MoU) although operations continued uninterrupted thanks to being granted a temporary accreditation. MAG signed an MoU in February 2025 covering operations through to December 2025.[37]

Some constraints related to bureaucracy around the importation of equipment and vehicles persisted. HALO reported ongoing challenges in importing of vehicles and spare parts, while MAG faced delays for several weeks in custom clearance resulting in significant demurrage costs. Both HALO and MAG have submitted requests to import tax-free vehicles, including ambulances, since September 2025, but the requests have not been granted, which is said to be largely due to the change of NMAC leadership.[38]

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) supported the development of Sri Lanka's National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, and continues to support implementation of the strategy through facilitation of meetings and workshops.[39] The National Mine Action Strategy was reviewed in July 2025 where findings from the Completion Survey and an analysis of the current funding indicated that it was very unlikely that Sri Lanka meets its current APMBC deadline of June 2028. This finding was presented to donors and key stakeholders.[40] In 2025, 19 Sri Lanka army personnel received trainings on Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core modules, information management, and Geographic Information System (GIS), including refresher training in January 2026. In addition, one army officer attended an advanced overseas IMSMA Core programme. Officers from NMAC and RMAO also participated in GICHD-supported senior management, NTS, and Land Release courses.[41]

In 2025, HALO supported NMAC in information management and the continued transition to IMSMA Core. HALO also trained the newly appointed QA officers of NMAC at the end of 2025.[42] MAG has been planning to deliver an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) Level 3 training for NMAC staff since 2024, but the training has seen repeated delays due to visa and legal issues. The training is still planned for 2026, pending the issuance of visas for the attendees from NMAC. MAG also has allocated funding for capacity building of the national authorities in 2026, and is currently identifying the training needs jointly with NMAC.[43]

In 2025, Sri Lanka held regular coordination and technical working groups (TWG) meetings to support the implementation of its mine action programme and Article 5 obligations. Combined operations and information management coordination meetings were held twice a month under the chairmanship of the Director of Mine Action, with participation from operations and information management managers, Sri Lanka Army Humanitarian Demining Unit (SLA HDU) representatives, operators, and relevant officers. Coordination and review meetings were also held every three months, chaired by the Director of Mine Action and attended by programme managers, country directors of mine action organisations, and other relevant stakeholders. National Steering Committee meetings were held quarterly, chaired by the Secretary of the relevant Ministry, with participation from relevant ministries, mine action operators, donors, and other stakeholders. The meetings addressed policy, implementation challenges, and priorities related to Article 5 obligations. In addition, two donor meetings and two victim assistance coordination meetings were conducted during 2025.[44]

32 Ibid.

33 Email from Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026.

34 Sri Lanka National Mine Action Strategy 2016–2020, p. 9.

35 Email from the GICHD, 13 May 2020.

36 Statement of Sri Lanka on cooperative compliance, 19MSP (virtual meeting), 15–19 November 2021; Associated Press, "Sri Lanka approves law implementing anti-land mine treaty", *AP News*, 10 February 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form A.

37 Emails from Hannah Picton, HALO, 8 May 2026; and Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026.

38 Ibid.

39 Email from the GICHD, 2 May 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023), p. 16.

40 Email from Hannah Picton, HALO, 8 May 2026.

41 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026.

42 Email from Hannah Picton, HALO, 8 May 2026.

43 Email from Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026.

44 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026.

The National Steering Committee, a coordination body established by NMAC bringing together representatives from key ministries with the objective of strengthening coordination on setting priorities, resettlement, and development of released land, was fully functional in 2025. It continued to provide high-level policy direction and oversight for mine action activities in Sri Lanka. The Committee was chaired by the Secretary of the relevant Ministry, with participation from key ministries and institutions including the Ministries of Defence, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Environment, Justice, Public Security, the Sri Lanka Army, and other relevant stakeholders. According to NMAC, the National Steering Committee strengthened national-level coordination and facilitated inter-ministerial decision-making on priority mine action matters. It also supported resolution of operational and policy issues requiring government-level approval, including matters related to land access and clearance in environmentally sensitive or State-controlled areas, such as coordination with the Department of Forest Conservation.[45]

FUNDING FOR AP MINE SURVEY AND CLEARANCE

In 2025, the total funding allocated for mine action through international assistance to Sri Lanka amounted to US$15.8 million.[46] The government of Sri Lanka provided approximately US$208,000 (LKR70 million) in funding for mine action through the Sri Lanka Army, of which, 70% was used for operational and capacity development activities. The government increased its allocation to approximately US$447,000 (LKR150 million) in 2026.[47] Sri Lanka has been increasing the national budgetary contribution to its mine action programme by approximately US$30,000 (LKR10 million) every year since 2023, and plans to sustain a 10% increase by the end of 2027.[48]

Survey and clearance in 2025 was funded by the United States (US) Office for Weapon Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) and the US Humanitarian Demining Research and Development (HDRD), the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO), the Government of Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP), the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA), the United Kingdom (UK), Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the Peace and Stabilization Operations Programme (PSOP), the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), For World Without Mines (FWWM), and the Trimble Foundation. Apart of the UK funds which were discontinued in March 2025, Sri Lanka expected to continue receiving support from the US, Germany, Japan, Australia, Norway, and the Trimble Foundation. However, projections indicate a potential decline in international donor support in 2026. As at August 2026, GFFO funds were confirmed for HALO, MAG, and DASH until the end of the year, while the continuation of Norwegian funding was under discussion. At present, no major new donors were confirmed for 2026, creating a potential funding gap for the Sri Lanka's mine action programme.[49]

In line with Oslo Action Plan Action Point 43, Sri Lanka, with the support of the GICHD, initiated development of the National Mine Action Resource Mobilisation Strategy providing clear targets until the end of 2027. In 2026, the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA), in coordination with mine action stakeholders, began implementing the resource mobilisation plan. Efforts focused on strengthening donor engagement, identifying new funding opportunities, and improving sustainable financing for operational activities. Discussions were also ongoing with the Ministry of Finance on possible mechanisms to use national budget allocations not only for the SLA HDU, but also to support operational activities of humanitarian demining organisations.[50]

DASH submitted a funding proposal to the Sri Lankan government, through MAG's mediation, to obtain funds for mine clearance under the post-Cyclone Ditwah "Rebuilding Sri Lanka" programme. DASH's survey and clearance programme was funded by GGP Japan, PM/WRA, GFFO, and FWWM. All donors will continue funding DASH in 2026, except for GFFO, which ended in January 2026. DASH had approached other donors and was awaiting responses.[51]

In March 2026, the NMAC Director invited operators to submit proposals under the post-Cyclone recovery programme "Rebuilding Sri Lanka" to fund clearance and risk education in areas where mines had reportedly been displaced by mudslides and floodwater. The financing for the programme would be allocated from 2025 budget.[52] In response, the four operators, DASH, HALO, MAG, and SHARP submitted a joint proposal.[53] For more information on funding, please see the country profile on Sri Lanka on the *Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor* website.[54]

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The National Mine Action Completion Strategy for 2023–2027 contains a specific section on gender and diversity. It recognises that mine action should be tied to the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda and Sustainable Development

45 Emails from Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 23 June 2025 and 6 May 2026.
46 Article 7 Report (covering 2025), Form I.
47 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026.
48 Sri Lanka reviewed National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, p. 20.
49 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026; and Article 7 Report (covering 2025), Form D.
50 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026.
51 Email from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 4 May 2026.
52 Email from Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026.
53 Email from Hannah Picton, HALO, 4 August 2026.
54 https://the-monitor.org.

Goal (SDG) 5 on Gender Equality. Noting the benefits and importance of offering employment opportunities in mine action to women, it includes the findings from a 2020 GICHD study which revealed that half of all female deminers were the sole income earners in their households, and that more than one third of women employed as deminers had no prior income.[55]

Table 2: Gender composition of operators in 2025[56]

Operator	Total staff	Women staff	Total managerial or supervisory staff	Women managerial or supervisory staff	Total operational staff	Women operational staff
NMAC	23	5 (22%)	4	1 (25%)	19	4 (21%)
DASH	397	85 (21%)	90	18 (20%)	307	67 (22%)
HALO	809	299 (37%)	116	63 (54%)	633	268 (42%)
MAG	686	165 (24%)	133	18 (14%)	621	134 (22%)
SHARP	183	38 (21%)	17	6 (35%)	154	32 (21%)
Totals	**2,098**	**592 (28%)**	**360**	**106 (29%)**	**1,734**	**505 (29%)**

NMAC increased the participation of women in its workforce, with three women officers assigned to the RMAO to support information management and QA.[57]

International operators HALO and MAG have gender policies in place.[58] HALO continued to implement its staff livelihood transition strategy which supported female staff participation in leadership and empowerment training. To support working mothers, HALO provides a monthly childcare stipend, baby boxes containing essential supplies for newborns, hygiene kits, and nutritional packs for pregnant and breastfeeding women. HALO also conducted a "Gender and Power Analysis" to further improve its understanding of how to improve gender mainstreaming within its demining operations.[59]

In 2025, following a roll out in 2024, MAG implemented a menstrual leave policy in 2025 and continued to provide maternal aprons for expectant mothers and overcoats for all female community liaison staff. MAG also provides menstrual hygiene products for female staff and light-duty work arrangements for expectant mothers during the first and final three months of pregnancy. In September 2025, MAG reviewed its policy on personal conduct and implemented it as code of conduct to strengthen the established safeguarding frameworks.[60] SHARP focused on increasing female representation during regular recruitment drives. Its job announcements regularly call for females to join the organisation.[61]

The United National Development Programme (UNDP) Sri Lanka has secured a project in 2026 for "Gender Responsive Advancement and Operational Enhancement of Women Deminers in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka". The project includes trials of lighter-weight personal protection equipment (PPE) designed for women deminers and gender-responsive infrastructure, including sanitary facilities targeting women deminers.[62]

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Sri Lanka does not have a dedicated national standard or policy on environmental management, but environmental considerations are incorporated within its Completion Strategy, particularly for clearance in environmentally sensitive and forested areas. NMAC has signed cooperation arrangements with the Forest Department to ensure mine clearance in forest areas is conducted in accordance with national environmental guidelines, and demining personnel are briefed by the District Forest Department officials regarding local ecosystems and environmental sensitivities prior to operations. NMAC said it also integrates environmental and climate considerations into its mine action planning, and that most operators apply International Mine Action Standard (IMAS) 07.13 during survey and clearance.

Sri Lanka is vulnerable to climate change-induced hazards, including tropical cyclones and flooding, which impact the mine action programme and operational planning. Despite facing moderate disaster risk levels, climate change projections predict long-term alterations to the monsoon pattern and ecological regions. In response, Sri Lanka has a detailed normative framework, including national policies, strategies, and action plans on climate change and sustainable development, aligned with its obligations as a State Party to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).[63] However, it is unclear whether mine action is mentioned in any of these documents.

55 Statement of Sri Lanka on Victim Assistance, 19MSP (virtual meeting), 15–19 November 2021.

56 Emails from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026; Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 4 May 2026; HALO; Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026; and Lt.-Col. Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 4 May 2026.

57 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026.

58 Emails from Belinda Vause, HALO, 9 August 2019 and 3 April 2020; Beth Lomas, MAG, 26 July 2019; and Valentina Stivanello, MAG, 6 April 2020.

59 Emails from Hugh Baker, HALO, 21 June 2025, and Hannah Picton, HALO, 8 May 2026.

60 Emails from Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 8 October 2025 and 6 May 2026.

61 Emails from Lt.-Col. Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 23 June 2025 and 4 May 2026.

62 Email from Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026.

63 Sri Lanka National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, p. 16.

Sri Lanka adjusts its operations in response to heavy rainfall, flooding, and extreme weather conditions. Where necessary, clearance tasks are temporarily suspended, and teams are reassigned to safer areas under the guidance of NMAC. Flexible working arrangements are also implemented during periods of extreme heat and adverse weather conditions in line with government advisories. In 2025, the severe Cyclone "Ditwah" caused significant flooding in northern and eastern mine-affected areas, resulting in inundation of certain hazardous areas and concerns regarding possible displacement of mines and explosive ordnance. In response, NMAC used IMSMA Core to map and visualise flood areas together with known mine-affected areas to support risk assessment, planning, and investigations by mine action organisations.[64]

In January 2025, Sri Lanka's Eastern province suffered heavy flooding. This, in addition to Cyclone Ditwah that hit Eastern and Northern provinces in December 2025, resulted in the loss of 18 working days for MAG. Extreme summer heat was also an issue which resulted in changes to working hours.[65]

DASH's Module 5 of the SOPs describes the requirement for environmental management. DASH's environmental focal points are within the NMAC and RMAO's who further liaise with relevant authorities, including the Department of Forests, Wildlife, Irrigation, and line ministries.[66]

When working in contaminated forests, permissions must be obtained from the National Forestry and Wildlife Commissions and the Archaeology Department, which conduct routine visits to help ensure no harm is done to wildlife, forests, and land of archaeological value.[67] In 2022, HALO, on behalf of NMAC and other operators, organised a Wildlife & Forestry Commission TWG to establish a collaborative, efficient, and environmentally sensitive approach to jungle/forest clearance, including the use of small mechanised assets. HALO and MAG have since received ad-hoc authorisation to use mechanised assets for certain forested tasks.[68]

During HALO operations, each minefield is environmentally assessed before clearance, and a strict procedure is applied to vegetation removal. HALO is implementing a project restoring mangrove ecosystems in cleared wetland areas. It is also developing an environmental management plan for its Sri Lanka programme, which was expected to come into force in 2026. HALO recruited an Environmental Support Manager and an Environmental Support Officer in October 2025.[69]

MAG's approach to environmental management is based on systematically identifying, assessing, and reducing environmental impacts across its demining operations, rather than relying on isolated mitigation measures. This includes use of environmental screening tools, such as the Environmental Aspects and Impact Register (EAID) and site-level assessments, to identify potential environmental impacts. In Sri Lanka and globally, MAG has taken steps to reduce its environmental footprint through fleet optimisation, improved maintenance, driver training, and the continued solarisation of bases.[70]

MAG's Board approved the Global Climate and Environment Policy (v1.0) in November 2025, a central part of MAGs broader Environmental Management Framework. The policy is designed to operate alongside national-level policies adapted to local legal and operational contexts. MAG strengthened its SOPs by streamlining into the wider Environmental Management Framework. MAG embeds environmental considerations into clearance planning, asset use, waste management, and site-level decision-making, supported by tools such as the Environmental Aspects and Impacts Register (EAIR), Environmental Management Plans (EMPs), and Site Environmental Screening Tool (SEST). MAG's Head of Support Services facilitated a training on green finance and logistics, and plans to do green human resource management.

Table 3: Environmental policies and action[71]

Operator	Environmental policy in place	Environmental assessments conducted to support planning and delivery of survey and clearance	Environmental focal point at country-programme level
MAG	Yes	Yes	No – Head of Support Services leads environment activities
SHARP	No – SOP in place	Yes	No
HALO	No – but under development. Environmental action plan in place	Yes – environmental screening checklist; environmental impact assessment	Yes
DASH	No – SOP in place	Yes	No

64 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026.

65 Email from Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026.

66 Email from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 4 May 2026.

67 Emails from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 11 April 2023; Cristy McLennan, MAG, 12 April 2023; Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023; and Lt.-Col. Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 30 April 2023.

68 Emails from Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023; and Cristy McLennan, MAG, 16 August 2023.

69 Email from Hannah Picton, HALO, 8 May 2026.

70 Email from Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026.

71 Emails from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 4 May 2026; Hannah Picton, HALO, 8 May 2026; Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026; and Lt.-Col. Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 4 May 2026.

In 2025, HALO commissioned the Lanka Environment Fund to deliver an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and workshops. The EIA surveyed sites in Muhamalai, Kokkuthoduwai, and the Jaffna Bay islands – the three most environmentally diverse areas within HALO's area of operations, where both manual and mechanical clearance is underway. Recommendations from the EIA covered areas of soil restoration and land productivity; biodiversity conservation; habitat and land use planning; monitoring and adaptive management; health and safety for demining staff; and community engagement and capacity building, which are now informing HALO's operational practices.[72]

MAG established its first organisation-wide carbon footprint baseline in 2024, covering all operations under an operational control boundary in line with the Green House Gas (GHG) Protocol. The baseline for Sri Lanka totalled 2,203.66 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO_2e), of which 50.6% is a result of direct fuel consumption across operations, 46.4% value-chain activities, and 3% from purchased electricity. MAG has set a target of 45% of absolute reduction of its CO_2 emissions by 2030.[73]

SHARP's SOPs contain a section on environment protection, and SHARP only carries out manual clearance which has a lesser impact on the environment. Briefing of deminers at the daily muster parades and regular refresher trainings include the need to protect the environment and prevent environmental damage.[74]

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

With support from the GICHD, a full migration of Sri Lanka's IMSMA database to IMSMA Core had been scheduled to take place in 2023. However, it was decided that, rather than a full migration, IMSMA NG and IMSMA Core will be used in parallel, with Survey123 being used for Sri Lanka's completion survey. This was in recognition of Sri Lanka's limited resources and the time and effort a full migration would require.[75]

Sri Lanka has long suffered from poor-quality data, with significant differences in reported land release between operators and NMAC. Challenges to information management and the establishment of a sustainable national information management capacity stem in part from a lack of resources but also from the high level of staff turnover at NMAC and the RMAO.[76]

A significant database clean-up took place in 2022 and 2023. In 2023, the GICHD, with funding from the US Department of State, recruited an information management (IM) advisor based in Sri Lanka with the aim of providing IM support to NMAC and RMAO.[77] Further data clean-up was planned and expected to improve data quality and reduce the disparities between operator and national authority data. As at July 2026, the data clean-up was still ongoing. Major identified data issues, including polygon errors and duplicate records, have been reviewed and corrected. Regular verification of operational data, particularly clearance data, is conducted through bi-monthly IM coordination meetings with operators to ensure alignment with national records. Further improvements continue through the Completion Survey Dashboard, which integrates IMSMA NG data and supports visualisation and verification of operational information.

Field data were being migrated into IMSMA Core on a weekly basis while NMAC continued to implement mobile data collection through Survey123. Several digital field data collection forms were already operational, while additional forms were under testing and expected to be gradually introduced for broader field-level data collection during 2026.[78] Following discussions with NMAC and GICHD, MAG formed a technical evaluation Team to systematically review the previous older generated tasks.[79] HALO also worked with NMAC to resolve some discrepancies with historical data.[80]

Sri Lanka submitted a detailed and coherent Article 7 report to the APMBC, albeit two months past the deadline.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Sri Lanka had annual work plans for survey and clearance of AP mined areas in 2025 and 2026, which were being implemented by operators with oversight of NMAC.[81] The RMAO based in Kilinochchi, is responsible for coordinating, tasking, and conducting QM.[82]

In March 2023, Sri Lanka launched its National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, developed with the support of the GICHD. In July 2025, the strategy was reviewed and its targets updated based on the progress made during the first term. The reviewed strategy sets four main goals:

72 Emails from Hugh Baker, HALO, 21 June and 12 September 202; and Hannah Picton, HALO, 8 May 2026.
73 Email from Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026.
74 Email from Lt.-Col. Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 4 May 2026.
75 Email from the GICHD, 2 May 2023.
76 Email from the GICHD, 13 May 2020.
77 Email from the GICHD, 2 May 2023.
78 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026.
79 Email from Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026.
80 Email from Hannah Picton, HALO, 8 May 2026.
81 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026.
82 Sri Lanka Reviewed Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023-2027, p. 1.

1. Land release and explosive ordnance risk education
2. Coordination and national ownership
3. Management of residual contamination
4. Capacity strengthening and staff transition[83]

As part of the land release and risk education strategic objective, NMAC, with the support of the GICHD and in collaboration with the operators, has developed a "completion process" – the framework for the Sri Lankan government to document and demonstrate compliance with Article 5. This involves NTS to identify previously unknown contamination, ongoing survey and clearance of recorded hazardous areas, and the Completion Survey. The Completion Survey allows the government to declare GNDs as "complete", confirming its confidence that, at the time of signing the completion documents, there is no further evidence of mines in the GND. Each village officer in a district has to confirm they are not aware of any explosive ordnance contamination. When all GNDs within a district are complete, the district authority signs it off as "mine free".[84]

Sri Lanka had planned to address all its SHAs by the end of 2027, and release 12.9km^2 between 2025–27: 4.8km^2 in 2025, 4.3km^2 in 2026, and 3.8km^2 in 2027.[85] Sri Lanka exceeded its annual land release target of 2025 by 0.2km^2. While Sri Lanka previously stated that completion by 2028 was technically feasible if sufficient resources were mobilised promptly, it recognised that such completion is contingent to sustaining sufficient funding and remained cautious about the likelihood of securing the resources required. In view of the declining funding, and the possibility of discovery of more contamination, Sri Lanka assessed by the mid-term review that completion has become increasingly challenging. In its reviewed strategy, it said it will continue the Completion Survey until the end of the strategic period, which should provide a clearer understanding of contamination, and inform the extension request that Sri Lanka considers submitting by March 2027.[86] All operators assessed that Sri Lanka will not be able to meet its Article 5 deadline of June 2028.[87] MAG assesses that Sri Lanka requires six more years to fully address the contamination, i.e. by the end of 2032, provided operational capacity is maintained at current levels and no significant new contamination is identified.[88]

With Sri Lanka addressing the high-priority areas, efforts are moving towards moderate- and lower-priority contaminated areas. Since approximately 65% of the remaining contamination is located in forests, prioritisation has focused on areas with direct humanitarian and socio-economic impact, including access routes, villages, community-use areas, and economically productive land such as paddy cultivation fields adjacent to hazardous areas. NMAC and operators reviewed previously open tasks against land cancellation and release criteria where appropriate, enabling the release of land back to communities following verification and assessment processes.[89]

Sri Lanka conducted a formal review of Article 5 progress in August 2025, and at a donor engagement event during which it assessed that 1,118 of the 1,400 GNDs (80%) would be declared mine-free by the end of 2026.[90] All known remaining tasks have now been allocated to operators.[91]

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

A review of Sri Lanka's National Mine Action Standards (SL NMAS), taking into account the local context, was carried out in 2017 with the input of all operators and support from the GICHD. But the NMAS were never approved. An NMAC Board of Inquiry (BoI) investigation, following a fatal incident in Trincomalee at the end of 2021 on land that had been released, made recommendations that included the updating of SL NMAS. SL NMAS 04.10: NTS; SL NMAS 04: Land Release; and SLNMAS 08: Quality Management were updated in 2024 and approved by the Government of Sri Lanka in 2025. The revisions included strengthening survey methodologies, updating land release and cancellation criteria, and improving QM procedures[92] Alongside the updates to SL NMAS, all operator SOPs were to be reviewed in line by the end of 2023.[93] By August 2026, HALO confirmed having reviewed and updated its SOPs in line with the SL NMAS,[94] while MAG has completed the approval and accreditation of its quality management SOP, submitted its mechanical SOPs for NMAC's accreditation, and was working on the clearance SOP.[95] NMAC agreed to expand the use of technical survey (TS) and reduce the requirements for full clearance, enabling operators to focus clearance on confirmed contamination.[96]

83 Ibid., pp. 12–23.
84 Ibid., p. 20.
85 Ibid., p. 16.
86 Ibid., p. 7; and email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026.
87 Emails from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 4 May 2026; Hannah Picton, HALO, 8 May 2026; Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026; and Lt.-Col. Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 4 May 2026.
88 Email from Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026.
89 Emails from Belinda Vause, HALO, 3 April 2020; and Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026.
90 Email from Hannah Picton, HALO, 8 May 2026.
91 Email from Asa Massleberg, GICHD, 29 August 2023.
92 Emails from Stephen Hall, HALO, 16 May 2022; and Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026.
93 Sri Lanka National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, p. 22.
94 Email from Hannah Picton, HALO, 4 August 2026.
95 Email from Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 4 August 2026.
96 Email from Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 23 June 2025.

HALO recommends a review and clarification of the SL NMAS reasonable effort criteria for technical survey to support land release efforts. For example, the requirement of fade-out for subsurface mines only as part of reasonable effort, and not when only unexploded ordnance (UXO) items are found. Furthermore, some termite clearance and clearance around bunkers require a review based on evidence which could improve efficiency. According to HALO, the Completion Survey process that was introduced in 2023 is highly efficient and is reviewed annually, but bureaucracy surrounding the process for EOD call-outs is delaying the official declaration of hazardous areas.[97]

According to MAG, the SL NMAS are broadly appropriate and generally support evidence-based land release. The land release framework is aligned with the principle of "all reasonable effort". The standards recognise that TS is not always required when NTS evidence is sufficiently strong. Yet, efficiency of land release can still be affected where legacy standards or older SOPs remain in use, or where revised NMAS are not yet fully adopted and reflected in operator SOPs. In particular, fixed clearance-depth requirements, and delays in updating standards for TS, mechanical clearance, and QM can reduce flexibility and efficiency when a more context-specific, risk-based approach would be appropriate.[98]

The SLA HDU introduced the Raking Method in 2025 to improve manual clearance productivity. In 2026, HALO is expected to introduce additional technologies and operational innovations, including micro-excavators, LiDAR survey applications, new detection systems, and digital task books to improve operational management and survey efficiency. In addition, under a UNDP initiative supported by Japan, new technologies were introduced to strengthen mine action capacities, including the DMRobot-7SR demining robot and the Advanced Landmine Imaging System (ALIS), a portable dual-imaging sensor system designed for humanitarian demining operations.[99]

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2025, demining operations were conducted by the SLA HDU; national NGOs, DASH and SHARP; and international NGOs, HALO and MAG. The local and international NGOs are entirely funded by international donors.

Table 4: Operational NTS capacities deployed in 2025[100]

Operator	NTS teams	NTS personnel
DASH	2	N/R
HALO	4	4
MAG	7	15
SHARP	0	0
SLA HDU	4	8
Totals	**17**	**27**

N/R = Not reported.

Table 5: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2025[101]

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers	Dogs and handlers	Machines	Comments
DASH	12	244	0	0	Clearance teams also conduct TS
HALO	*47	364	0	28	Mechanical teams of an average size of 35 were also deployed. Clearance teams also conduct TS.
MAG	35	379	0	26	Clearance teams also conduct TS
SHARP	7	120	0	0	
SLA HDU	7	237	3 teams (20 dogs) and 17 handlers	2	MV4/ Bozena
Totals	**108**	**1,344**	**3 teams (20 dogs) and 17 handlers**	**56**	

* Average numbers for the year.

97 Email from Hannah Picton, HALO, 8 May 2026.

98 Email from Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026.

99 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026.

100 Ibid.; and emails from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 4 May 2026; Hannah Picton, HALO, 8 May 2026; Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026; Lt.-Col. Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 4 May 2026.

101 Emails from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026; Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 4 May 2026; Hannah Picton, HALO, 8 May 2026; Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026; Lt.-Col. Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 4 May 2026.

In 2025, Sri Lanka enhanced its national capacity for AP mine survey and clearance by increasing its operational demining personnel from 313 to 420, and its bomb disposal team from 55 to 77 personnel. A new operational base was established in Mullaitivu to improve coordination and deployment efficiency in the most heavily contaminated district. In addition to adopting the Rake excavation detection system to improve manual clearance efficiency, the SLA HDU also maintains 20 mine detection dogs (MDDs) for clearance and QA activities. Sri Lanka expects future reduction in operational capacity due to reduced funding.[102]

DASH lost one team compared to 2024 due to discontinued GFFO funding. DASH did not expect further reductions in 2026 if anticipated donor funding is received. HALO downsized from 1,105 staff at the end of 2024 to 810 at the end of 2025. Further reductions led to HALO making more staff redundant, reducing its working force to fewer than 600 staff members in 2026. MAG similarly reduced 12 teams of 144 deminers due to the end of Canadian funding in December 2024 and the end of UK funding in March 2025. MAG expected a 40% drop in funding which would further reduce its capacity in 2026.

HALO Sri Lanka has begun to implement a Technology Strategy, which it hopes will deliver transformational gains in its programme focusing on the most complex remaining tasks in the country. HALO is considering the use of LiDAR-equipped drones, which would reduce over-clearance and zero-yield tasks, and is planning to trial advanced detection systems such as MRead, with the potential of reducing false alarms in highly mineralised soils. The programme also plans to trial micro-excavators, which can reduce manual digging by up to 75%. HALO currently deploys digital tools such as tablets, DGPS units which enables live mapping and real-time monitoring.[103]

The UNDP project "Gender Responsive Advancement and Operational Enhancement of Women Deminers in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka" (See 'Gender and Diversity') is set to pilot new technologies including Demining robots (DMR), advanced surface measurement technologies, and micro excavators.[104]

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2025

Table 6: Summary of land release outputs in 2025

Release of AP mined area	Release in 2025 (m²)	Comments
Clearance	3,551,864	National authority data
Technical survey	1,230,474	National authority data
Non-technical survey	179,022	National authority data
Destruction of AP mines during clearance, survey, and spot tasks	**2025**	
AP mines destroyed	11,938	(Including 98 during spot tasks) National authority data

SURVEY IN 2025

According to NMAC data, a total of 1.4km² was released through survey in 2025, of which 0.2km² was cancelled through NTS (see Table 8) and 1.2km² was reduced through TS (see Table 9).[105] This is an increase on the 1.2km² released through survey in 2024.[106]

NMAC reported adding 3.1km² of previously unrecorded mined area to the database in 2025 –2.6km² across 101 CHAs and 0.5km² across 28 SHAs. The new contamination was found in Kilinochchi, Vavuniya, Mannar, and Mullaitivu districts (northern province); Polonnaruwa, Anuradhapura (North central); and Ampara, Batticaloa, and Trincomalee (Eastern province).[107]

Table 7: Area cancelled through NTS in 2025 (national authority data)[108]

District	Operator	SHAs cancelled through NTS	Area cancelled (m²)
Batticaloa	MAG	9	71,753
Jaffna	HALO	2	8,091
Kilinochchi	HALO	4	11,663

102 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026.

103 Email from Hannah Picton, HALO, 8 May 2026.

104 Email from Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026.

105 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026.

106 Article 7 Report (covering 2024), Form D.

107 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026.

108 Email from NMAC. In response to Mine Action Review questionnaire, HALO reported having cancelled one SHA (partially) of 7,709m², and MAG reported having cancelled 17 SHAs of 98,050m².

Table 7 continued

District	Operator	SHAs cancelled through NTS	Area cancelled (m²)
Mullaitivu	MAG	6	81,357
	SHARP	1	119
Trincomalee	MAG	4	6,039
Totals		**26**	**179,022**

Table 8: Area reduced through TS in 2025 (national authority data)[109]

District	Operator	SHAs or CHAs reduced through TS	Area reduced (m²)
Anuradhapura	DASH	1	1,183
Batticaloa	MAG	18	301,139
Jaffna	DASH	1	941
	MAG	1	29,684
	Sri Lanka Army	2	15,721
Kilinochchi	DASH	2	12,078
	HALO Trust	13	67,279
	MAG	5	96,660
	SHARP	5	56,170
Mannar	MAG	2	16,526
Mullaitivu	DASH	12	121,289
	HALO Trust	21	100,273
	MAG	6	39,293
	SHARP	6	84,148
	Sri Lanka Army	6	128,058
Polonnaruwa	MAG	1	150
Puttalam	MAG	1	19,572
Trincomalee	MAG	5	25,672
Vavuniya	HALO Trust	1	5,217
	MAG	7	109,421
Totals		**116**	**1,230,474**

CLEARANCE IN 2025

According to NMAC, a total of 3.55km² of mined area was cleared in 2025, with the destruction of 11,840 AP mines, 13 AV mines, and 2,657 items of UXO (see Table 10).[110] This is nearly a 40% decrease from the almost 6km² cleared in 2024 and where 16,510 AP mines were destroyed.[111]

In addition, 98 AP mines and 6 AV mines were destroyed in EOD spot tasks. These figures are included in Table 10. Of the total 11,983 AP mines destroyed, 67 were of improvised nature.[112]

A total of 658 tasks of 2.7km² were completed in areas suspected or confirmed to contain AP mines with no AP mines being found. Although these tasks were initiated before 2025, their clearance during 2025 did not yield any AP mines.[113]

The most common AP mine types (P4, Rangan and Type-72) can be lifted by operators and destroyed at central disposal sites through burning. All other AP mines are destroyed by the SLA HDU. As per national standards, humanitarian demining operators are not authorised to conduct EOD in Sri Lanka.[114]

109 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026. In response to Mine Action Review questionnaire, DASH reported having reduced 18 HAs of 139,190m²; HALO reduced 30 HAs of 158,485m²; MAG reduced 639,802m² across 60 HAs; and SHARP 152,983m² across 13 HAs.

110 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026.

111 Email from Sri Mallikarachchi, GICHD/NMAC, 21 October 2025.

112 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026. In response to Mine Action Review questionnaire, DASH reported that 1,730 out of the 2,051 AP mines it had destroyed were of an improvised nature; and HALO reported 33 of the 7,738 AP mines it had destroyed were of an improvised nature.

113 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026. Of the total tasks cleared without identifying AP mine contamination, HALO reported having cleared 1 task of 822m² and MAG 20 tasks of 437,751m².

114 Emails from Valentina Stivanello, MAG, 6 April 2020; and Hugh Baker, HALO, 10 October 2025.

Table 9: Mine clearance in 2025 (national authority data)[115]

District	Operator	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m²)	AP mines destroyed	AP mines destroyed in spot tasks	AV mines destroyed (incl. in spot tasks)	UXO destroyed
Ampara	MAG	4	15,583	0	1	0	1
Anuradhapura	DASH	1	7,500	148	0	0	4
Batticaloa	MAG	24	149,058	221	6	0	35
Jaffna	DASH	1	3,223	7	0	0	0
	HALO	3	16,218	32	6	1	38
	MAG	1	69,249	0	0	0	42
	SHARP	1	5,171	6	0	0	3
	SLA	3	5,554	22	0	0	3
Kilinochchi	DASH	7	90,614	194	6	5	40
	HALO	41	698,597	5,172	13	6	975
	MAG	6	160,689	32	0	0	48
	SHARP	7	81,508	324	0	0	44
Mannar	MAG	5	52,656	61	13	0	51
Mullaitivu	DASH	23	433,782	1,710	0	3	625
	HALO	46	631,944	2,491	33	2	214
	MAG	23	479,167	502	2	2	158
	SHARP	15	218,090	441	0	0	117
	SLA	9	144,156	75	0	0	46
Polonnaruwa	MAG	4	23,710	120	0	0	0
Puttalam	MAG	1	7,266	0	0	0	0
Trincomalee	MAG	15	58,619	31	5	0	12
	SLA	4	46,452	132	0	0	2
Vavuniya	DASH	4	67,398	0	0	0	105
	HALO	2	1,586	0	0	0	0
	MAG	12	84,074	119	13	0	94
Totals		**262**	**3,551,864**	**11,840**	**98**	**19**	**2,657**

While overall survey outputs remained nearly constant in 2025, NMAC attributed the 40% decrease in clearance output to reduced funding, which in turn limited the operational capacity deployed during 2025. MAG attributed the fall in its land release output mainly to disruptions to operational days and reductions in team capacity. Heavy rainfall affected operations in Eastern Province in January, while Cyclone Ditwah disrupted work in both Northern and Eastern provinces in November.[116]

Even though overall land release outputs decreased year-on-year in 2025, both HALO and MAG saw an increase in the proportion of land released through survey compared to clearance. HALO noted that its area reduction and cancellation increased by 76% in 2025 compared to 2024. This was the result of the review of land release criteria in consultation with NMAC, with a QA training provided to ensure a clear understanding of land release principles. This has helped avoid unnecessary clearance with systematic and evidence-based clearance (fade-out) being applied. Additionally, several tasks where clearance had continued for more than two years and had been suspended multiple times due to weather and access constraints were reopened and successfully released in 2025.[117] For MAG, there was an increase in the proportion of area reduction compared to clearance in 2025 (37% was reduced and 63% cleared) compared to 2024 whereby 10% was reduced and 90% cleared.[118]

115 Email from NMAC. In response to Mine Action Review questionnaires, DASH reported having cleared 507,505m² of AP mined area and destroyed 2,051 AP mines in the process; HALO cleared 7,655m² and destroyed 7,738 AP mines; and SHARP cleared 202,983m² destroying 793 AP mines. This brings the total of reported clearance of AP mines by operators to 1,818,247m², with the destruction of 11,668 AP mines.

116 Emails from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026; and Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026.

117 Email from Hannah Picton, HALO, 8 May 2026.

118 Email from Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE

APMBC ENTRY INTO FORCE FOR SRI LANKA: 1 JUNE 2018

↓

ORIGINAL ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 JUNE 2028

NOT ON TRACK TO MEET ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE

Under Article 5 of the APMBC, Sri Lanka is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 June 2028. Sri Lanka is not on track to meet this deadline.

Sri Lanka's original target to complete mine clearance by the end of 2020 was overly ambitious and contingent on significantly increasing funding and capacity. The hoped-for increase in capacity of the SLA HDU did not materialise,[119] with expansion hindered by the army's focus on responding to the Easter Sunday terrorist attacks in April 2019 and by the subsequent COVID-19 pandemic. Progress towards the 2020 target was also hampered by the continued discovery of previously unknown mined area, adding substantially to the contamination baseline.

Table 10: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km²)
2025	3.55
2024	5.98
2023	*5.34
2022	5.27
2021	4.37
Total	**24.51**

* Revised 2023 data reported to Mine Action Review in October 2025. Previously reported as 4.83km².

Even though overall land release output decreased in 2025 compared to the previous year, Sri Lanka exceeded its 2025 land release target of 4.75km² by 0.2km². This is partly thanks to the enhanced efficiency resulting from reviewing land release criteria which increased operators' ability to conduct evidence-based survey and avoid unnecessary clearance.

Sri Lanka had been confident in its ability to identify and clear all AP mined areas by the end of 2027, in line with its national completion strategy.[120] However, a mid-term review of the strategy concluded that meeting the June 2028 original Article 5 deadline was no longer feasible.[121] As mentioned, with all known tasks now assigned to operators, MAG assesses that Sri Lanka requires six more years to fully address the contamination, i.e. by the end of 2032, provided operational capacity is maintained at current levels and no significant new contamination is identified.[122] According to Sri Lanka, scenario-based projections developed with support from the GICHD indicate that completion timelines are highly dependent on funding levels, and "under the current funding trends, may extend beyond 2028, reinforcing the need for sustained international support".[123]

Sri Lanka cites the major challenges to progress in meeting its Article 5 obligations as the significant reductions in donor funding, and the continued discovery of previously unknown contamination, along with the expansion of known hazardous areas (as many minefields are being found to be larger than originally estimated during clearance), economic disruptions, exchange rate fluctuations, and staff retention challenges. While Sri Lanka received US$15.8 million in 2025, only US$6.1 million was confirmed in 2026.[124] DASH added that declining funding has not only led to the redundancy of one demining team, but also created job security anxiety amongst its employees leading to staff seeking other jobs or migrating oversees.[125] Operators unanimously identified declining donor support as a principal challenge.[126]

MAG also highlighted the complexity of the remaining tasks, their wide geographic spread, the ageing equipment and vehicle fleets, and the high cost of vehicle rental and fuel as additional challenges.[127] Bureaucratic EOD call-out procedures at times delayed the safe removal of explosive ordnance from communities. In addition, some suspected contamination remains within military occupied areas and high-security zones and is not currently accessible for survey and clearance.[128]

Sri Lanka advanced its national ownership and strengthened strategic coordination within the mine action programme. The reviewed Sri Lanka Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–27 was formally presented to the President of Sri Lanka, which elicited political interest with relevant ministers and senior officials visiting mine-affected areas. Sri Lanka is also working on introducing new technologies and innovative approaches to support survey and clearance operations and enhance efficiency.[129] The year 2025 saw HALO pass the cumulative milestone of 300,000 AP mines safely removed, and complete the release of the northern section of Muhamalai, formerly Sri Lanka's largest and most densely contaminated minefield.[130]

119 Email from Belinda Vause, HALO, 9 August 2019.
120 Sri Lanka National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, p. 19.
121 Article 7 Report (covering 2024), Form J.
122 Email from Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026.
123 Article 7 Report (covering 2025), Form D.
124 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026; and Article 7 Report (covering 2025), Form J.
125 Email from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 4 May 2026.
126 Emails from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 4 May 2026; Hannah Picton, HALO, 8 May 2026; Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026; and Lt.-Col. Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 4 May 2026.
127 Email from Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026.
128 Email from Hannah Picton, HALO, 8 May 2026.
129 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 27 May 2026.
130 Email from Hannah Picton, HALO, 8 May 2026.

While the revision of the Mine Action Strategy, SL NMAS, and the completion survey are all positive indicators of a growing national ownership, Sri Lanka would do well to establish clear completion timelines and communicate them to donors, and continue efforts to sustain funding levels and seek new donors. Sri Lanka should also address weaknesses in information management, and review mine action SOPs to ensure that efficient land release procedures are consistently applied.[131]

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

The reviewed National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027 stipulates the management of residual contamination as its third strategic objective. Residual contamination will be managed by the SLA HDU, supported by the Police Special Task Force Bomb Disposal Unit for EOD call-outs.[132] The reviewed strategy provides for a staged transfer of the database from NMAC to the SLA HDU upon completion, alongside advanced IMSMA Core training for SLA HDU personnel and a gradual expansion of its survey and clearance capacity.[133]

The reviewed strategy's fourth objective focuses on workforce transition, prioritising staff development during employment and maintaining a long-term vision for sustainable transition. MoUs were signed with the Chief Secretaries of the Northern and Eastern Provinces for an initial two-year period, formalising government commitment to the workforce transition process.[134] Since 2022, all four operators have incorporated training intended to prepare deminers for employment outside the sector once clearance is complete. Although designed for the eventual completion of demining, the initiative has also supported personnel who left operational roles earlier than expected because of funding constraints.[135] Both HALO and MAG delivered women-only trainings to address the specific needs of female work force,[136] while awareness sessions and exposure visits on agriculture, animal production, and rural industries were also provided to help prepare staff for livelihood opportunities.[137]

131 Ibid.

132 Sri Lanka Reviewed National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, p. 21.

133 Ibid.

134 Ibid., p. 23.

135 Email from Ziggy Garewal, MAG, 6 May 2026.

136 Sri Lanka Reviewed National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, p. 23.

137 Email from Cristy McLennan, MAG, 20 September 2024.