



VIETNAM

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

For 2015

For 2014

Problem understood	5	5
Target date for completion of mine clearance	2	2
Targeted clearance	5	4
Efficient clearance	3	3
National funding of programme	5	5
Timely clearance	4	4
Land release system in place	4	4
National mine action standards	5	5
Reporting on progress	5	5
Improving performance	5	5
PERFORMANCE SCORE: POOR	4.3	4.2

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Vietnam should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Vietnam should provide a detailed assessment of remaining mine contamination.
- The Vietnam National Mine Action Centre (VNMAC) should draw up a strategic plan for completing clearance of mined areas.

CONTAMINATION

Vietnam's mine problem is small compared with its explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination but the extent is unknown. Most mines were left by conflicts in the 1970s with neighbouring Cambodia and China, and affect areas close to its borders with those countries.¹ Some mines have also been found around former United States (US) military installations.²

Vietnam cleared an area up to 1km deep along its northern border under an agreement with China, but areas further inland from the border are still contaminated with mines emplaced by the military of both countries. Since 2004, military engineers have reportedly cleared around 95km² of contaminated land in the northern provinces of Cao Bang, Ha Giang, Lai Chau, Lang Son, and Quang Ninh bordering China under a project known as "Programme 120", destroying mainly Type 72, K58, and PPM-2 anti-personnel mines.³

Cambodian border areas were affected by randomly placed mines reflecting the more irregular nature of the fighting there,⁴ but Engineering Command reported in 2013 that the problem had been eliminated.⁵ Many ports and river deltas were mined extensively during the war and were not completely cleared when it ended and some sea mines have been found on the coast.⁶

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Vietnam has transferred oversight of mine action from the military to civilian government oversight but operations continue to depend largely on the armed forces. A Prime Minister's Decision in 2006 assigned the Ministry of National Defence to manage mine action at national level with clearance undertaken by the Army Engineering Corps of the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN).⁷ BOMICEN, part of the Ministry of Defence, has acted as a central coordinating body for clearance and survey by national operators.⁸

In 2013, Vietnam announced a Prime Minister's decision to establish a national mine action centre (VNMAC) to strengthen the direction of mine action and provide a focal point for mine action operations.⁹ VNMAC was given responsibility to propose policy, draw up plans, serve as the focal point for international cooperation, lead fundraising, and "preside over" mine action information management. It is also responsible for organising and implementing quality assurance.¹⁰ The government appointed VNMAC's director and two deputy directors in 2014 and the centre became officially operational in February 2015.¹¹ International operators conclude agreements to work in Vietnam with the People's Aid Coordinating Committee but negotiate their programme of operations separately with the authorities of each province.

1 Interview with Sr. Col. Phan Duc Tuan, Deputy Commander, Military Engineering Command, People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN), in Geneva, 30 June 2011.

2 Landmine Action, *Explosive remnants of war and mines other than anti-personnel mines*, London, March 2005, p. 181.

3 Information provided by Sr. Col. Phan Duc Tuan, PAVN, in email received from Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFA), Hanoi, 24 September 2012; and in interview in Geneva, 30 June 2011.

4 Interview with Sr. Col. Phan Duc Tuan, PAVN, in Geneva, 30 June 2011.

5 Interview with Sr. Col. Nguyen Thanh Ban, Head of Bomb and Mine Department, Engineering Command, Hanoi, 18 June 2013.

6 Landmine Action, *Explosive Remnants of War and Mines Other than Anti-personnel Mines*, London, March 2005, p. 181.

7 Prime Minister's Decision No. 96/2006/QĐ-TTg, 4 May 2006.

8 Email from Col. Nguyen Trong Dac, Ministry of National Defense, 6 August 2006.

9 Interview with Maj. Gen. Pham Quang Xuan, Director, VNMAC, in Geneva, 31 March 2014.

10 Prime Minister's Decision 319/QĐ-TTg, 4 March 2014.

11 Information provided by Do Van Nhan, Deputy Director General, VNMAC, received by email from VVAFA, 19 June 2015.

Operators

Most clearance in Vietnam is conducted by the PAVN Army Engineering Corps, whose officials have previously reported operating some 250 mine/UXO clearance teams, including the teams of around 50 military companies.¹²

International humanitarian operators active in survey and clearance operations in 2015 included Danish Demining Group (DDG), Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), which also managed clearance operations for Project Renew, and PeaceTrees Vietnam.

LAND RELEASE

VNMAC reported that BOMICEN-managed demining teams continued to operate in Cao Bang and Lang Son provinces in 2015 and cleared 1km² but gave no details of what items were destroyed. The Ministry of Defence had announced a two-year VND74 billion (US\$3.5 million)¹³ project to clear a 6.6km² area of mines and ERW in Cao Bang and Lang Son provinces, starting in November 2013. VNMAC said mine clearance operations in the provinces would continue in 2016.¹⁴

No other systematic survey or clearance of mined areas was reported in 2015. International operators focused on tackling cluster munition remnants and other types of ERW and as part of those operations reported clearance of a total of 20 landmines in 2015.¹⁵

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Vietnam is not a state party to the APMBC. However, it has obligations under international human rights law, particularly by virtue of its duty to protect life, to clear anti-personnel mines as soon as possible.¹⁶

12 Interview with Sr. Col. Nguyen Thanh Ban, Engineering Command, Hanoi, 18 June 2013; and email from Executive Office of the National Steering Committee, 6 August 2012.

13 Exchange rate of US\$1 = VND21,129 on 1 January 2015, at <http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>.

14 Information provided by Dang Van Dong, Deputy Director, VNMAC, received by email from the International Centre, VVAF, Hanoi, 23 June 2016; T. Van, "Bomb and mine clearance starts in Cao Bang and Lao Song starts", VNMAC website, 13 March 2014, at: <http://www.vnmac.gov.vn/en/activites-of-national-steering-committee/chuan-bi-hoan-thanh-ban-do-o-nhiem-bom-min>.

15 Emails from Le Anh Thu, Project Officer, MAG, 9 May 2016; and Resad Junuzagic, Country Director, NPA, 26 May 2016.

16 Vietnam is a state party to the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 6(1) of which stipulates that: "Every human being has the inherent right to life".