

Humanitarian Mine Action Support

“Landmine survey and clearance to facilitate community development in Cambodia”

Project Report Q1: April-June 2021



**MAG (Mines Advisory Group)
CAMBODIA**

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Picture: mechanical operators operating the remote control on Digger-250 to undertake the minefield clearance in Koas Krala district, Battambang province in May 2021.

Project Overview

Since establishing operations in Cambodia in 1992, MAG has released over 95 million square meters of land back to the mine-impacted communities and destroyed more than 350,000 of dangerous items for the direct benefit of more than 1.9 million women, girls, boys and men. In a country where 80% of the population live in rural areas and are highly vulnerable to economic shocks, the presence of mine contamination continues to impede poverty reduction and development initiatives in mine-affected communities. MAG work in support of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) to put land back into safe and productive use, and in support of the Landmine Free 2025 initiative.

With the generous 12-month funding from Terra Renaissance for the project 'Landmine survey and clearance to facilitate community development in Cambodia' MAG has deployed a Mechanical Operations Unit (MOU) to conduct technical survey and clearance of prioritized areas.



GOAL

To contribute to sustained poverty reduction and socio-economic development in landmine affected communities in rural Cambodia, through the release of safe land.

OBJECTIVE

To support mechanical survey and clearance of suspected contaminated areas, in order to maximize community livelihood opportunities.



Project Update

MAG Cambodia currently has three offices; the support office in Phnom Penh and the operations offices in Battambang and Ratanak Kiri provinces. Ratanak Kiri is known as one of the most cluster contaminated areas whereas Battambang is one of the most landmine contaminated areas in the country. MAG has been working in Ratanak Kiri province over the past few years to define and clear cluster munition contamination and provide explosive ordnance risk education to the impacted communities. More recently, survey activities have identified a number of minefields within the province and no action has been taken to clear these minefields so far due to a lack of capacity in the province. As a result, MAG decided to deploy one Mine Action Team and one Mechanical Operation Unit (MOU) to undertake clearance on these areas, thus reducing the threat of injury and death, while providing new opportunities for mine-impacted communities to safely return this land to productive use. Based on the nature of minefields in Ratanak Kiri, Digger 250 seemed the only suitable mechanical asset available in MAG, and MAG decided to reallocate this MOU with Digger 250 from Battambang to Ratanak Kiri province from July 2021.

MAG understands that current support from Terra Renaissance is mainly to support MOU to undertake the clearance in Battambang province, and we would be grateful if this support continues instead of a Digger MOU team, which moved to Ratanak Kiri, to our similar MOU team in Battambang, but using another, although very similar, machine - Medium Mine Wolf (MMW) which is currently conducting the clearance on minefield in Koas Krala district, Battambang province. MAG is always very grateful for the support and flexibility of Terra Renaissance.

Summary of Project Outputs

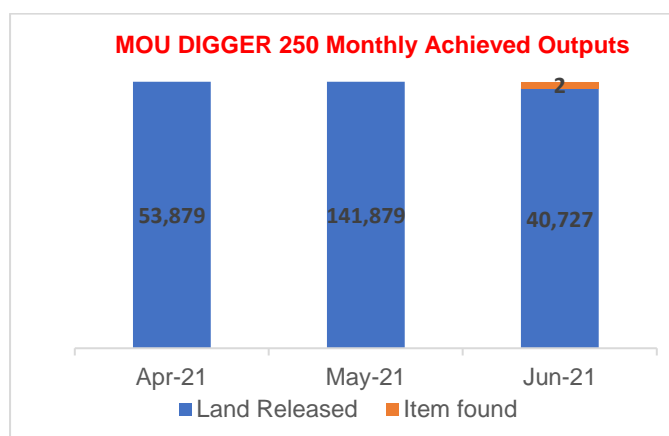
Activity	Total Expected Outputs	Q1 Achieved Outputs	Total Achieved Outputs	Overall Percentage (%)
Land released through survey and clearance activities conducted by DIGGER D-250 Mechanical Operations Unit	380,000m ²	236,485m ²	236,485m ²	62%
Safe removal and destruction of 100% of landmines and other explosive remnants found within tasked areas	N/A	2 Anti-personnel mines	2 Anti-personnel mines	N/A
Direct and indirect beneficiaries (People)	2,805	7 direct and 1,399 indirect beneficiaries	1,406 direct and indirect beneficiaries	50%

Project Implementation

During this reporting period (Q1), MAG deployed MOU to conduct the clearance activities on one minefield in Prey Totueng village in Koas Krala district of Battambang province as show in the map below. The team released 236,485m² of contaminated land, achieving 62% of total project target on land released, and found and destroyed two anti-personnel mines, type 72A.

The significant overachievement of land released during this reporting period is primarily due to the output of land released through technical survey conducted by MOU. Team was able to reduce 135,360m² of contaminated land through technical survey, representing 57% of land released outputs (236,485m²) during this reporting period.

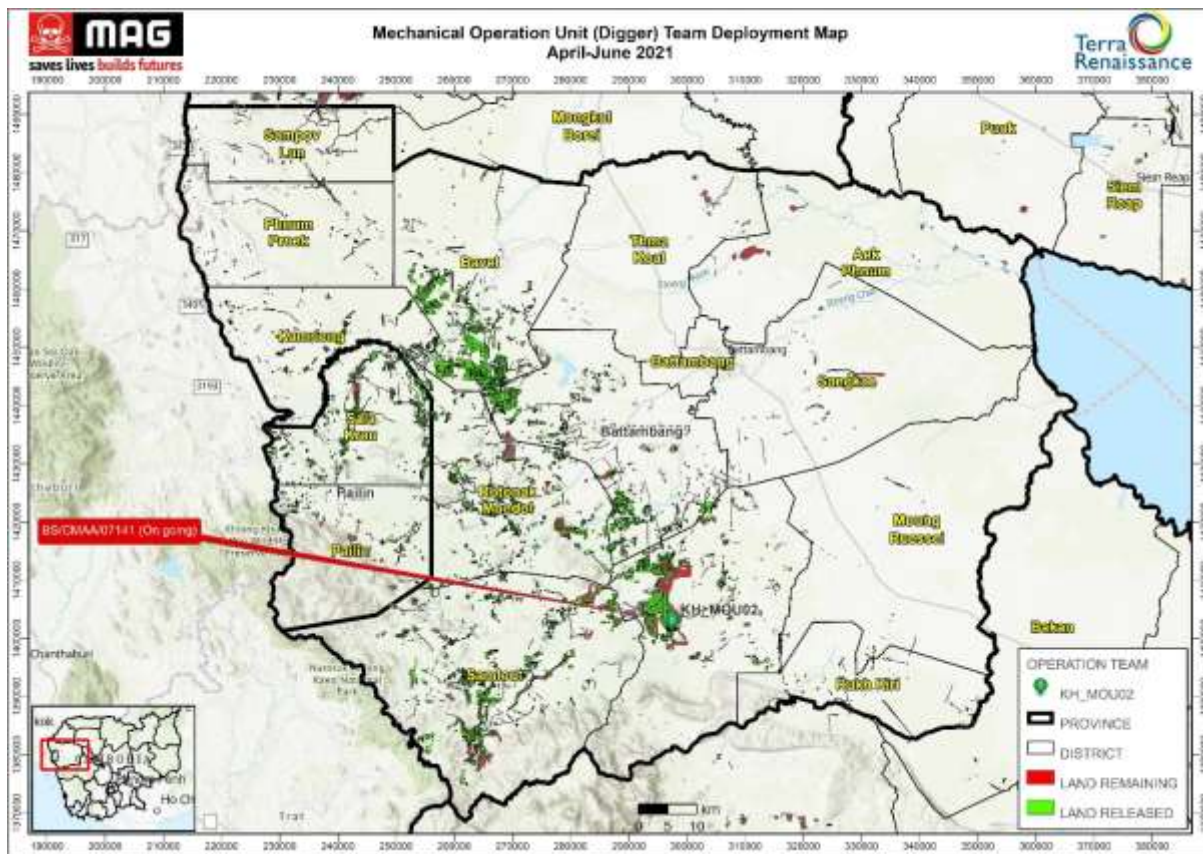
MOU started clearance on a minefield (BS/CMAA/07141) in Prey Totueng village on the 1st April 2021 which expected to finish the clearance in July 2021. This minefield is owned by seven people from two households (two women, four men and one boy). The completion of this minefield will indirectly benefit a further 1,399 people from 322 households (432 women, 402 men, 270 boys and 295 girls). This contributes to achieving 50% of total project target on land beneficiaries.




Released
236,485m² of mine-
contaminated land


Destroyed **two**
anti-personnel
mines


Directly benefitted **seven**
women, men, boys and girls
from **two** different families



Project Outcomes and Impacts

Battambang remains the most mine-affected province in Cambodia, as well as one of the poorest, with an estimated 135km² of land contaminated (as of 29 June 2021) by landmines. The majority of those benefitting from MAG's clearance operations are dependent on subsistence agriculture (the cultivation of rice, cassava, beans, maize, mango, cashew, corn and pepper) and collection of non-timber forest products as their primary livelihood activities. Communities live predominantly in remote areas with poor infrastructure, and have therefore very limited access to services. Restricted availability of agricultural land due to the presence of mine and explosive remnant of war contamination further impedes poverty reduction and development initiatives.

A new national cassava policy has been set since January 2021 aiming to boost the production and export of Cambodian cassava. The policy was launched by the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and recognised as the landmark national policy running until 2025. Cassava products tend to be a key to securing jobs and livelihoods for thousands of Cambodians and is a significant cash crop for farmers. Yet, it's obviously safe to say that without safe land, the national cassava policy might be difficult to achieve and it might hinder the development of any livelihood initiatives within the communities. MAG clearance remains significant for the impacted communities across Cambodia, particularly in Battambang province and plays an important role in the national cassava policy. As mentioned elsewhere in the report, the support from Terra Renaissance is allowing MAG to deploy MOU to undertake clearance in Koas Krala district where majority of community members is heavily dependent on the cassava farm.

During this reporting period, a total of 236,485m² of contaminated land in Koas Krala district was released, directly benefitting seven ordinary people from two households. According to MAG's pre-clearance impact assessment conducted by non-technical survey team, the released land will be used 100 percent to plant cassava.

Additional Information

Cambodia reported 51,384 confirmed COVID-19 cases with a total of 628 deaths attributable to the virus as of 30 June 2021, escalated from 2,477 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 14 deaths as of 1 April 2021. The most confirmed COVID-19 cases have been reported in Phnom Penh, where Battambang represented one of the least confirmed cases. Although, Battambang province where MAG is currently operating the clearance activities under FCDO is not highly impacted by the COVID-19, MAG remains vigilant and acts proactively to curb and prevent the spread of the COVID-19 within the operations and the communities where MAG works with.

The Royal Cambodian Government commenced the rolling out the COVID-19 vaccine in late February and as of 30 June 2021, around 3.05 million people, representing 18.5% of total population are fully vaccinated. While MAG staff at head office in Phnom Penh have fully vaccinated, MAG members in Battambang are currently following the government vaccination plan indicating that the COVID-19 vaccines is planned to distribute to Battambang province in October and November 2021.

Project Photos

The images below show activities undertaken by the MOU team in Koas Krala district of Battambang province during this quarter.

