



Norwegian People's Aid
Vietnam

Annual Report 2020



Friends and supporters,

In 2020, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) Vietnam continued to grow. The programme saw its highest financial turnover ever – NOK 69 million or over USD 8 million – and the activities implemented by our 365 staff members are the most diverse and productive they have ever been.

Through the year, our teams found and destroyed over 10,000 explosive items, equalling 23% of all items found by NPA globally. Our mine action activities directly supported 6,164 people (including 1,572 women, 1,514 girls, 1,527 men and 1,551 boys). NPA teams identified over 78.5 million sqm of contaminated land through CMRS and cleared over 4 million square metres of contaminated area.

Some of our greatest achievements in 2020 include the establishment of NPA operations and a capacity development project in Quang Binh province, which is a new operational area for NPA. We also successfully concluded the first phase of the NPA-

VNMAC operational support project in Thua Thien Hue province, progressed the clearance of the historic Hamburger Hill in the A Luoi Valley, and began trialling new environment activities.

This achievement is remarkable, particularly considering the economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Vietnam, normal operations were prevented by COVID-19, with periods of operational stand down enforced, limited possibilities for domestic travel and international meetings, and closed borders for much of the year.

NPA's area of operations in Central Vietnam were also heavily impacted by an unprecedented series of typhoons and tropical weather systems in October and November, which caused historic levels of flooding, disastrous landslides and enormous humanitarian and economic impact, and NPA was able to provide emergency support to some of the worst-affected communities.

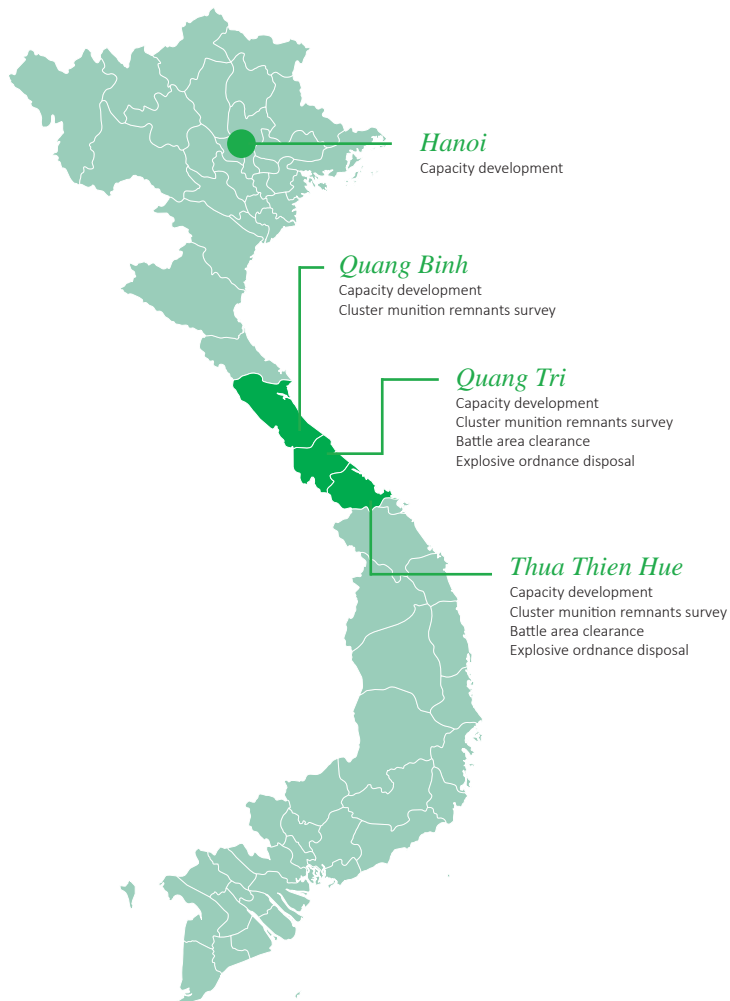
Despite the difficulties we faced in 2020, together NPA Vietnam managed to deliver great results, and in many cases delivered more than expected. Our staff's dedication to making Vietnam safe from the threat of explosive ordnance is what made NPA Vietnam's results in 2020 possible, and I'm very proud to present these results to you in this Annual Report.

This was made possible with support from the United States Department of State, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the United States Department of Defense and the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office - and I thank them for their continued support for NPA in Vietnam.

Jan Erik Støa
Country Director, NPA Vietnam



Left: A technical survey team member searches for unexploded cluster submunition remnants in Quang Tri province. *Above:* A cluster submunition remnant, found by a technical survey team, is marked for demolition. *Cover (clockwise from top left):* A non-technical survey team member interviews a community member to identify potential explosive ordnance in her village. A cluster submunition remnant found by a clearance team. Staff in Thua Thien Hue province supporting the distribution of emergency items following devastating flooding. A technical survey team member investigates a signal. The all-female battle area clearance team member at work.



Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) has worked in Vietnam since 2007, and implements four key activities:

Cluster munition remnants survey (CMRS)

CMRS is the use of non-technical and technical survey to identify a confirmed hazardous area (CHA) from cluster munition remnants.

Battle area clearance (BAC)

BAC is the systematic and controlled clearance of confirmed hazardous areas defined through CMRS.

Explosive ordnance disposal (EOD)

EOD is the identification and demolition of explosive ordnance outside of a CHA, usually in response to an item reported by the community.

Capacity development (CD)

CD is a long-term cooperative partnership to strengthen the ability of national and provincial partners to monitor, manage, regulate and coordinate the mine action sector.

In 2020, NPA Vietnam achieved the following results:



93

villages covered by NTS



110

CHAs created, totalling over 78.5 million sqm



4 million

square metres of CHA cleared



930

EOD spot tasks responded to



10,000+

items of explosive ordnance destroyed



30%

of NPA staff are female (109 of 365)



Quang Tri

5 NTS teams
8 TS teams

2 EOD teams
2 CD project

8 BAC teams
2 R&D teams

Support to the Quang Tri Mine Action Centre continued, while an increased number of clearance teams allows for quicker follow-on clearance after survey is completed.

“I know how deadly this weapon is, because dozens of bombies have been found in this area since I started using the land many years ago.”

Le Ba Tong found a bombie, the local term for a cluster munition remnant, when he was building a fish pond. The item was destroyed by NPA's EOD team.



Support to the Quang Tri Mine Action Centre

NPA continued its long support to the Quang Tri Mine Action Centre (QTMAC) through the development of a quality management (QM) standard operating procedure, prioritisation guidelines and a manual on the integration of mine action with socio-economic development plans. QTMAC's two QM teams also received full training and accreditation, and are ready to implement quality management of field operations from 2021. NPA also continued to support the information management capacity of QTMAC's Database Unit.



Left: QTMAC's newly-recruited Quality Management teams participate in a field demonstration of a large loop detector, conducted by an NPA battle area clearance team. *Top right:* Ho Thi Vung (right), an ethnic minority farmer, reports explosive ordnance to NPA NTS team member Le Quang Ngoc. *Bottom right:* A member of a technical survey team searches for explosive ordnance.

Increasing operational efficiency

NPA is working towards conclusion of cluster munition remnants survey (CMRS) in Quang Tri province, to ensure all confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) are identified for follow-on clearance. In response to the successful progression of survey, operational restructuring in early 2020 reduced the number of NTS and TS teams to allow for a better balance between CMRS and follow-on clearance activities.

In 2020, NPA continued implementing CMRS with five NTS and eight TS teams, focusing on newly-accessible villages where no mine action activities have taken place. As a result of the reduced CMRS capacity, NPA was able to retrain staff and deploy six new BAC teams in May 2020. These teams are working to clear CHAs created by NPA's survey teams.

Additionally, NPA continued to deploy two EOD teams to respond to items found by community members in Quang Tri, which are reported to QTMAC's provincial hotline.



Quang Binh

4 NTS teams
4 TS teams

1 CD project

NPA established activities in Quang Binh province for the first time in 2020, under a cooperative project with the Mines Advisory Group and Peace Trees Vietnam.



Capacity development

NPA established a project with the Quang Binh Department of Foreign Affairs to recruit and train a new Database and Coordination Unit (DBCUs), to ensure provincial capacity to implement information management systems and coordinate mine action operations. This is done through formal workshops, on-the-job training, provision of equipment and sharing of experience between the DBCUs and other mine action centres in Vietnam. Supporting capacity development in Quang Binh will ensure all mine action data is recorded, analysed and safely stored by the province; and that operations are efficiently coordinated to support the most at-risk people in Quang Binh province.



Above: Staff from the Quang Binh DBCU participate in in-field training on the ArcGIS and Survey123 reporting system, conducted by an NPA technical survey team leader. Left: DBCU members receive IMSMA Administration certification from VNMAC and NPA at a ceremony in Quang Binh.

Cluster munition remnants survey

NPA implemented NTS from July 2020, with four teams working with local authorities and community members in Quang Binh to identify potential hazardous items. Four technical survey teams were also recruited and trained during October and November 2020, ready for deployment from January 2021.

Right: A farmer in Bo Trach district, Quang Binh shows an NTS surveyor the location of an item he found in his rubber plantation. *Below:* Vo Cong Anh, a survivor of an EO accident, shares his story with an NTS team member.



“I feel relieved that finally this deadly item has been safely removed and destroyed.”

Mr Vo Van Tho, a 50-year-old farmer in Tay Thanh Village, found a projectile in his cassava plantation. He was able to show the item to NPA’s NTS teams, who identified it for safe demolition.



Thua Thien Hue

2 BAC teams
1 EOD team

2 NTS team
1 CD project

As well as clearing the historic Hamburger Hill in A Luoi district, NPA also provides technical monitoring and follow-on clearance for VNMAC's technical survey team.



“During the past years, I have always feared I would hit another bomb while planting trees but now I feel so relieved and safe with the presence of the NPA team.”

Like most Pa Ko ethnic minority families who live in Ka Cú village, Trần Xuân Kiên has lived most of his life with a constant fear of explosive ordnance. Kiên lost his right hand in an accident with an unexploded cluster munition remnant when he was young.

Historic clearance task

In 2020, NPA began clearance of the Hamburger Hill in A Luoi district, the location of a historic infantry battle in 1969. The potential rehabilitation of this area and its development into a tourism destination to benefit the local community rests on successful clearance of explosive ordnance and accurate marking of the cleared area, to ensure its safe use into the future.



Support to VNMAC TS

In Thua Thien Hue province, the Vietnam National Mine Action Centre (VNMAC) has four teams conducting TS, supported by an NPA monitoring team. This technical capacity development project allows VNMAC to trial the implementation of newly-revised SOPs with close support from experienced NPA personnel.

This operational support complements the technical advisory given to the VNMAC management team in Hanoi.

NPA also has one EOD team conducting follow-on clearance of CHAs created by the VNMAC TS team. This helps to create the critical feedback loop between survey and clearance, whereby clearance verifies the results of TS and can be used to further improve the quality of TS.

Left: Supporting the restoration of the unique historical area at Hamburger Hill an important task for NPA in Thua Thien Hue. *Right (top):* Le Van Phuc speaks to NTS team members Nguyen Thanh Tuan, during an NTS interview in Phong Dien district. *Right (bottom):* VNMAC's technical survey team conducting a task briefing in Thua Thien Hue province, closely supported by NPA personnel.



Sector support

NPA's fulfilled an important coordination role as co-chair of the Landmine Working Group, and closely supported the Vietnam National Mine Action Centre (VNMAC).



Technical support to VNMAC

Capacity development of national authorities remained a high priority for NPA Vietnam in 2020, to increase national capacity to manage, coordinate and regulate the mine action sector.

At national level, NPA co-chaired three out of four national working groups that supported VNMAC to update national technical regulations (QCVNs) and technical standards. NPA also supported the translation of twelve IMAS chapters to support and inform the revision of these key documents.

VNMAC was also supported with one truck with a crane and one vehicle, for use by their mobile bomb cutting team and database unit.

Above: End-of-year meeting of the Landmine Working Group. NPA co-chaired this working group with the International Center in 2020. *Left:* Handover ceremony for a truck to support VNMAC's mobile bomb cutting project.

Extension of advisory support

NPA facilitates two senior technical advisors to VNMAC, who provide support to national database unit and VNMAC's senior management team. In 2020, NPA and VNMAC committed to continuing this project for an additional three years, 2020-2022.

Recognition of NPA's contribution

NPA's influence on the mine action sector and important contribution to humanitarian and socio-economic development in Vietnam were recognised by Vietnam Union of Friendship Organisations (a standing agency of the Committee for Foreign Non-Governmental Organization Affairs) with an award in recognition of NPA's significant contributions to the sustainable development of Vietnam in 2020. NPA are very proud to contribute to the socio-economic development of Vietnam.

Right: NPA Country Director Jan Erik Støa and VNMAC Director General Tran Trung Hoa, at an MOU signing ceremony on the coordination and provision of Senior Technical Advisor to VNMAC for the period 2020-2022.



Gender and diversity

Gender and diversity mainstreaming remained a core priority for NPA in 2020, particularly during recruitment of new operational teams.



Increased recruitment of women

In 2020, NPA recruited 94 new staff in operational and support roles, and saw the highest ever rate of female applicants for all roles. This resulted in women being appointed to 30% of all recruited positions in 2020. Half of the senior management team are women, including three Provincial Programme Managers: Nguyen Thi Dieu Linh in Quang Tri, Do Thi Thanh Nhan in Thua Thien Hue and Nguyen Thuy Trang in Quang Binh. These women are responsible for all NPA Vietnam activities in their respective provinces.

Left: NPA Vietnam Country Director Jan Erik Støa (centre) with Nguyen Thi Dieu Linh (left) and Do Thi Thanh Nhan (right), Provincial Programme Managers of Quang Tri province and Thua Thien Hue province. *Right (top):* Nguyen Thi Hai Van, Team Leader of the all-female BAC team. *Right (bottom):* The all-female BAC team at a task site in Quang Tri province.

Women, Peace and Security

NPA Vietnam proudly supported the launch of the ASEAN Women, Peace and Security agenda in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the landmark United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, through participation in two high-level conferences and contribution of a photo essay depicting women working in mine action teams in Vietnam.

All-female BAC team

NPA's all female BAC team- the first of its kind in Vietnam- continued to work to clear CHAs throughout 2020. These women cleared 740,000 sqm of land and safely destroyed 688 items in 2020. This is an enormous achievement for the mine action sector, and the team continue to prove that women are a strong and capable force in mine action.



Research and development —●



In Quang Tri and Thua Thien Hue provinces, NPA trialled the use of a Bearcat multi-tool for ground preparation, and Scorpion deep search detection technology.

During this extended trial, the Bearcat has proven to be a useful tool for increasing the speed of clearance in areas with dense vegetation. The Scorpion detector is used as a quality control tool to verify the results of battle area clearance teams and to gather data on the depth of different types of explosive ordnance.

NPA is using the results of these trials to support the revision of standard operating procedures, and has shared the results with provincial and national authorities to inform discussions on revision of national technical standards.



Left (top): The Scorpion team on a task site in Quang Tri province. *Left (bottom):* The Bearcat tool clearing vegetation in Quang Tri province.

Environment

Environment activities were a developing area of interest for NPA Vietnam, with the long-term goal of ensuring land released to communities after mine action activities can also be sustainably managed by the community.

In 2020, NPA Vietnam developed a comprehensive environmental impact assessment framework, focused on measuring, monitoring and reducing the programme's environmental impact, and worked with partners to develop pilot projects for implementation in 2021. The programme also supported Phuoc Tich heritage village in Thua Thien Hue province through the provision of solar-powered lights and other environmental management equipment as well as community environmental management training.

Right: Community environmental management training conducted in Phuoc Tich heritage village.



Emergency support

In late 2020, central Vietnam experience historic levels of flooding. With funding from NMFA, NPA was able to support the worst-affected communities.



Once-in-a-lifetime floods

From September to October 2020, a series of unusually close and intense storms and other weather systems hit central Vietnam. This included tropical storm Molave, which was the worst storm to hit Vietnam in over 20 years. Floodwaters exceeded historic levels in Quang Tri, Quang Binh and Thua Thien Hue provinces, and many areas were severely impacted by landslides. The humanitarian impact was enormous, with more than 190 people killed and an additional 57 still missing. Over 1,500 schools were submerged, 715,000 homes impacted and 50,000 hectares of crops were ruined. The economic loss is estimated to be around NOK 11 billion. Many of the areas impacted were areas where NPA conducts mine action activities.

Support from NPA

In response to requests for support received by provincial authorities, NPA provided emergency support packages, replaced household items and provided building supplies to people and communities adversely impacted by flooding. This included NPA staff members, survivors of EO accidents (including the families of those who have been killed by EO), families impacted by Agent Orange, and schools in ethnic areas. By working closely with local partners, commune representatives and provincial authorities, NPA was able to support 186 families and 19 schools, in 59 communes and 16 districts across three provinces. A total of 7,177 people were supported, including over 3,650 women and girls.

Top: Floodwater reached historic levels in central Vietnam. *Bottom:* Cu Dong sub-section of Huc Primary School in Quang Tri province, which was flooded with nearly 2 metres of water.

“The flooding was so strong and fast, and beyond the expectation of preparation of local people.”

Mr Hoang Phuc Thang is a member of an NPA's TS team in Quang Tri province. His family's house was flooded five times, with water levels reaching 1.8m. Luckily, his family's house has a second storey so they were able to reach safety. Mr Thang's mother was injured in the war when she was 12, when the family shelter was bombed. She lost one leg, one foot and her arm. His son has cerebral palsy. NPA was able to provide the family with household necessities that they lost during the flooding.

“This year, there was unprecedented flooding. I am now 75 years old, and this is the biggest flood. The water was too big... I had to drag my daughter upstairs. I just wanted to cry.”

Ms Le Thi Tao, mother of Tu Thi Dinh who is mentally and physically impacted by Agent Orange and cannot leave bed. Floodwater submerged her whole house, and rose quickly. The back wall of her house collapsed and nearly all of her furniture and belongings were swept away. In this photo she is pointing to the high water mark on her house, over 2.1 meters high. The family was supported with a water purifier and water tank as well as basic household supplies to replace what they had lost.

“All of the desks and chairs of the students were destroyed. Because of this, the students had to stay home for over one month.”

Mr Nguyen Van Sanh, teacher of 4th Grade at Cu Dong sub-section of Huc Primary School. The school, which has a high percentage of students of ethnic heritage, is located in one of the most remote and poorest villages in the commune, was submerged in over one metre of floodwater. All the desks and chairs were destroyed or swept away. Because of the level of damage to the school, the 69 students at the school could not attend school. NPA provided 20 new sets of tables and chairs, which helped students return to normal study.

This project was implemented with Project RENEW and other local partners.



The work of Norwegian People's Aid in Vietnam is made possible by our donors:



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