



“For 20 years, we have found bombs in our rice fields,” says Mrs. Bounme from Chaling Village, Dakcheang District, Sekong Province. “NPA’s removal of the unexploded ordnance brought immense relief to our family.” - 16 August 2026

CONTEXT

Lao PDR holds the unfortunate distinction of being the most heavily bombed country per capita in history and remains among the five States most heavily contaminated by cluster munition remnants (CMR) in the world. Between 1964 to 1973, over two million tonnes of ordnance were dropped during 580,000 bombing missions – equivalent to one planeload of bombs every eight minutes, 24 hours a day, for nine years.

While a reliable estimate of CMR and other explosive ordnance (EO) contamination in Lao PDR is not available yet, the level of contamination is classed as ‘massive’. CMR contamination poses significant risks to livelihoods, socio-economic development, and quality of life in affected communities.

According to the current national mine action strategy, “Safe Path Forward III” (2021–2030), there have been at least 50,000 confirmed casualties caused by explosive ordnance since the 1964 to 1973 Indochina war ended. Of these, 30,000 were fatal.

Lao PDR is a state party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), being not only one of the convention’s first signatories but also an early champion of it. Under CCM’s Article 4, which requires clearance of all areas known to be contaminated by cluster munitions, the country has a completion deadline set to 2030.

According to the Mine Action Review, in 2025, Lao PDR cleared 67 km² of CMR-contaminated land and destroyed 55,808 submunitions, representing the highest annual clearance and destruction output recorded by any State Party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

PROGRAMME

The programme in Lao PDR was one of the biggest in the NPA’s Mine Action and Disarmament portfolio, with an expenditure of USD \$13,716,113 for 2025 and employing over 1,000 national staff as of 31 August 2026.

NPA has been operating in Lao PDR since 1997. For the first 10 years, NPA supported the national clearance operator, UXO Lao, with technical assistance and quality assurance, before starting its own operations in Saravane province in 2009.

In August 2023, NPA launched its first explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) activities, working with local communities, particularly children, to raise awareness of EO contamination, associated risks, safe behaviour, and reporting procedures.

By the end of 2023, NPA had doubled its operational capacity, supported by increased funding from the Government of the United States and continued support from the Government of Norway.

As of 31 August 2026, NPA was one of the largest mine action operators in Lao PDR, with eight survey teams, 40 clearance teams, four EORE teams, and one mechanical vegetation cutting team operating across Champasak, Sekong, Attapeu, and Saravane provinces.

NPA continues to support the National Regulatory Authority (NRA) in strengthening Information Management (IM) capacity through staff training, development of key documents, improvements to the IM system, and efforts to enhance the quality of historical UXO data.

With funding from the Government of Canada, NPA is also supporting the Lao Presidency in planning and delivering the Third Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, to be held in Vientiane in September 2026, including through the engagement of consultants.

Following the introduction of new U.S. funding requirements earlier in 2026, NPA will be unable to enter into new contracts with the Government of the United States. As a result, from 1 November 2026, NPA Laos will significantly scale down its operations in Lao PDR, reducing its workforce from more than 1,000 national and international staff to approximately 30 personnel, including two multi-task teams.

NPA remains committed to supporting Lao PDR’s national UXO priorities. With expected continued support from the Government of Norway in 2027, NPA aims to maintain a small, efficient operational capacity in southern Laos while seeking new funding opportunities from other donors.



OVERALL RESULTS

Since the start of the programme from 9 September 2009 until 31 August 2026, NPA's Lao PDR programme has:

69 km²

of contaminated land
cleared in 1,100 tasks



3,059

EORE sessions conducted in 191 villages,
reaching 386,712 beneficiaries



176,268

UXO items destroyed through
survey and clearance operations



658 km²

of land surveyed, identifying more than
4,712 contaminated tasks covering a
total size of over 323 km²

666,355

persons both direct and indirect
benefitting from safe access land



2026 RESULTS

4.8 km²

surveyed and 16 CHAs identified,
covering more than 1.4 km²



5,651

items of explosive ordnance
(EO) found and safely destroyed



746

EORE Sessions conducted in
40 target villages



6.5 km²

of land previously contaminated with
UXO and CMR cleared over 110 tasks



5,304

persons directly benefiting from
safe access to land



141,023

persons attended the EORE
sessions



DONORS AND FUNDING

2026 FUNDING
USD \$11,160,000

NPA would like to sincerely thank its donors—the Governments of the United States, Norway, and Canada—and the generous contributions of private citizens in the Kingdom of Norway for supporting our efforts to protect civilians from explosive weapons in Lao PDR and to help the country fulfill its obligations under Article 4 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

MORE INFORMATION



NPA Lao PDR Webpage
<https://shorturl.at/QhOtX>



NPA Lao PDR on Facebook
<https://shorturl.at/ZZ4WD>



Lao PDR Profile in the Mine Action Review
<https://shorturl.at/F3H34>



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