
**Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention
on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,
Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel
Mines and on Their Destruction**

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Consideration of requests submitted under Article 5

**Analysis of the request submitted by Thailand for
an extension of the deadline for completing the
destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance
with Article 5 of the Convention**

**Submitted by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation
(Chile, Costa Rica, Switzerland and Zambia)**

1. Thailand ratified the Convention on 27 November 1998. The Convention entered into force for Thailand on 1 May 1999. In its initial transparency report submitted on 10 November 1999, Thailand reported areas under its jurisdiction or control containing, or suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines. Thailand was obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines under its jurisdiction or control by 1 May 2009. Thailand, believing that it would be unable to do so by that date, submitted on 3 April 2008 to the President of the Eighth Meeting of the States Parties (8MSP), a request for an extension of its deadline. On 14 April 2008, the President of the 8MSP wrote to Thailand requesting additional information and clarity on key areas of the request. Thailand provided a response to the President's questions on 7 August 2008. Thailand's request was for 9.5 years, until 1 November 2018. The Ninth Meeting of the States Parties (9MSP) agreed unanimously to grant the request.

2. In granting the request in 2008, the 9MSP noted that 9.5 years was ambitious and contingent upon maintaining a sizeable increase in State funds dedicated to implementation and obtaining external support at a level that is at least 10 times greater than Thailand's recent experience in acquiring such support. The 9MSP further noted that significant progress was expected, through Thailand's "Locating Minefields Procedure" to overcome impeding circumstances, such as the manner in which the Landmine Impact Survey in Thailand had hindered implementation efforts.

3. On 30 March 2017, Thailand submitted to the Chair of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation (the Committee) a request for extension of its 1 November 2018 deadline. On 30 June 2017, the Chair of the Committee wrote to Thailand requesting further information and clarity on key areas of the request. On 8 September 2017, Thailand submitted to the Committee a revised request for extension incorporating additional information provided in response to the Committee's questions. Thailand's request is for 5 years, until 31 October 2023.

4. The request indicates that during its first extension period Thailand addressed a total of 154,836,328 square metres with a total of 125,236,339 square metres cancelled,



13,104,889 square metres reduced and 9,745,819 square metres cleared. The request indicates that an additional 6,749,281 square metres was addressed through “survey” during the pilot project. The request indicates that in the process Thailand identified and destroyed 16,410 anti-personnel mines. The request further indicates that through survey efforts and community engagement, Thailand identified an additional 49,091,500 square metres of previously unknown mined area. Of this 234,257 square metres were later deducted due to a database error.

5. The request indicates that during the extension period Thailand shifted its methodology which invested heavily in clearance towards introducing methodologies which allowed Thailand to cancel suspected areas, with confidence, in a shorter time such as Locating Minefield Procedure (2007-2008) and Non-Technical Survey being implemented since 2011.

6. The request indicates that Thailand in coordination with Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA) implemented a pilot project to resurvey suspected contaminated some areas considered to have been overestimated by the Landmine Impact Survey (2000-2001). The request indicates that in areas where the pilot project took place, Thailand was able to reduce the size of its hazardous areas in some cases by 90%. The request indicated that in an effort to further address its remaining challenge Thailand will continue to expand the pilot project to remaining suspected areas.

7. The Committee noted with satisfaction that Thailand is making use of the full range of practical methods to release, with a high level of confidence, areas suspected of containing anti-personnel mines, in accordance with the IMAS. The Committee encourages Thailand to continue seeking improved land release techniques which could lead to Thailand fulfilling its obligations in a shorter time frame. In this regard, the Committee noted the importance of Thailand reporting on its progress in a manner consistent with IMAS by providing information disaggregated by release through clearance, technical survey and non-technical survey.

8. The request further indicates that the Thailand Mine Action Centre (TMAC) is in the process of updating the National Mine Action Standards in line with the latest version of IMAS. The Committee noted the importance of Thailand ensuring as soon as possible that the most relevant land-release standards, policies and methodologies, in line with IMAS, are in place and applied for the full and expedient implementation of this aspect of the Convention in accordance with Action 9 of the Maputo Action Plan.

9. The request indicates that, since 2015, Thailand has continued to strengthen its information management system by building the capacity of its information management team, systems and processes to enable more precise information on survey and clearance operations to be collected and displayed. The Committee noted that Thailand indicated the difficulties encountered with its database, in particular the difficulty in disaggregating previous progress by province. The Committee noted the importance of high quality data for planning and operation purposes as well as for reporting in accordance with Article 7 of the Convention and encouraged Thailand to continue its efforts in strengthening its data management capacity and systems.

10. The request indicates that the remaining challenge amounts to 305 mined areas totalling 422,605,172 square metres remain to be addressed in 30 districts of 13 provinces. The request indicates that of the remaining challenge a total of 244 areas measuring 358,890,132 square metres in 12 provinces and bordering 3 countries are classified as Areas to be Demarcated (AD); these include 7 areas measuring 32,906,607 square metres on the Thai-Myanmar border, 24 areas measuring 69,581,893 square metres on the Thai-Lao border, and 213 areas measuring 256,320,632 square metres on the Thai-Cambodian border. The request also indicates that Thailand will work closely with all three neighbouring countries to expedite the boundary survey and demarcation process.

11. The request indicates that the following factors have acted as impeding circumstances:

- lack of precision and gross overestimation of the magnitude of the challenge by the Landmine Impact Survey;

- pending survey and demarcation of land boundaries with neighbouring countries;
- security issues along border areas;
- environmental circumstances such as rough terrain and steep inclines;
- financial constraints due to limited budget allocated to mine action and limited external support;
- unforeseen emergency which diverted resources; and
- political instability.

12. The request indicates that landmines and UXO block access to, or restrict use of four major resources -forest, cropland, pasture, and water - with forested areas being the resource most affected by the presence of mines due to the fact that the armed conflict took place in forested border areas. The request indicates that clearance efforts have had a number of benefits including an area in Surin Province in Eastern Thailand which was cleared in order to establish a strategic border crossing between Thailand and Cambodia for trade and leisure border crossing which sees locals crossing daily. The request further indicates that humanitarian mine action activities have also lead to a decrease in the number of victims from a height of 23 in 2010 to 5 victims having been reported in 2017 (as of July 2017). The Committee noted that completion of Article 5 implementation during the requested extension period had the potential of making a significant contribution to improving human safety and socio-economic conditions in Thailand.

13. As noted Thailand's request is for 5 years, until 31 October 2023. The request indicates that this has taken into account the reality of the situation including the capability of TMAC, the need for consultation with all stakeholders, including various government agencies, local community and neighbouring countries and using all possible mechanism such as diplomatic mechanism, to help gain access for demining.

14. The request indicates that Thailand will address its remaining contamination in 2 phases:

- Phase 1: to be completed by Thailand's 31 October 2018 deadline, addressing 61 hazardous areas measuring 63,796,040 square metres, in 7 provinces. The request indicates that during this phase, Thailand will also start to prepare for the second phase (the extension period) to ensure proper continuation. The request includes milestones for implementation of phase 1 as follows: 34,744,589 square metres to be addressed in 2017 and 29,051,451 square metres to be addressed in 2018.
- Phase 2: to be carried out from 1 November 2018 to 31 October 2023 consists of ADs. The request indicates that during this phase the remaining 358,809,132 square metres will be addressed. The request includes milestones for implementation of phase two as follows: 72,116,482 square metres addressed in 2019, 72,062,020 square metres addressed in 2020, 73,233,510 square metres addressed in 2021, 74,536,729 square metres addressed in 2022 and 66,860,391 square metres addressed in 2023.

15. The request indicates that given the results of the pilot project, Thailand forecasts that 13.5 percent of the suspected areas resurveyed are likely to be contaminated, meaning more than 86.5 per cent of the suspected areas could be cancelled. The request further indicates that if the Pilot Project results are accurate and applied nationwide, in all remaining ADs, only 48,439,232 square metres will remain for technical survey and clearance. The Committee noted the importance of non-technical survey in ensuring that Thailand is able to meet completion during its requested extended deadline. The Committee further noted that in spite of the amount of area that could be cancelled, Thailand would still need to address an average of 9,690,000 square metres through technical survey and clearance which is greater than progress recorded on an annual basis by Thailand. In this sense the Committee noted the importance of the expansion of the programme to ensure completion.

16. The request indicates that in addressing ADs, Thailand and neighbouring countries are engaged with discussions through a number of different Committees. The request

indicates that Thailand has divided ADs into two categories: (1) areas that can be accessed immediately and (2) complicated area that needs to go through mechanisms to pave the way for access. The request indicates that work will begin with the first category including border areas with Laos which are demarcated (96% of the land boundary has been demarcated) with no security-related concern followed by areas with Cambodia which will likely be in later stages since demarcation and discussions are still ongoing. Work will then continue with the second category which will need to be determined in consultation with all relevant agencies to consider using the most appropriate mechanisms to work towards addressing these areas.

17. The request also indicates that Thailand will prioritise land to be addressed in Phase 2 with consideration given to five factors in the following order of priority:

- potential for post release development;
- demand from local community for access;
- proximity to local inhabitants;
- terrain and environmental challenges; and
- border and security concerns.

18. The request indicates that the estimated budget for Phase 1 totals THB 443,416,989 with THB 379,620,949 to be provided by the Government and an additional THB 25,500,000 to be mobilised by NPA and THB 23,000,000 by the Thai Deminers Association (TDA). The request indicates that the estimated budget for Phase 2 totals THB 1,208,601,183 with THB 1,006,101,183 to be provided by the Government and an additional THB 70,000,000 to be mobilised by NPA and THB 57,500,000 by TDA. The Committee noted that there is a minor discrepancy in figures given in the overall budget presented in Thailand's request.

19. The request further indicates that in May 2017, Thailand established the national Committee for Mine Action, chaired by the Prime Minister of Thailand, to foster policy direction and pull together all necessary assets to expedite efforts towards Thailand's strong commitment to meeting the obligations under the Convention. The Committee noted the importance of the political commitment of Thailand to see the implementation of its Convention commitments as soon as possible.

20. The request indicates that these activities will be carried out in cooperation with the Humanitarian Mine Action Units with the support of Norwegian People's Aid and TDA. The request indicates examples of how ADs could be addressed in cooperation with neighbouring countries including through joint operations on border areas with two demining teams from neighbouring countries working in their own territory but in parallel with each other along the border line sharing information, expertise, through a joint secretariat to facilitate cross communication. The request further indicates that a pilot joint operation between two NPA teams would be good start since NPA works in many countries with common mine problems with Thailand. The request indicates other measure that Thailand is carrying out to implement the plan including the reshuffling of personnel to expand NTS teams, employment of more efficient working methods including the progressing of survey teams ahead of clearance teams, the expanding of its civilian demining capacity including working closer with TDA and NPA. The Committee noted the importance of cooperation between neighbouring countries and other partners to find solutions to allow for the implementation of Article 5 as soon as possible. The Committee further noted the importance of Thailand exploring option to expand its demining capacity, in particular its efforts to expand the civilian demining capacity.

21. The request indicates other efforts put forth by Thailand to support greater international cooperation including on a bilateral and regional level including its cooperation with the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) and other agencies such as the Cambodian Mine Action Centre to discuss joint operations and the establishment of the Humanitarian Mine Action Group to promote cooperation among member countries in recovering from the aftermath of bombs, mines, and explosive left over from wars and conflict. The request further indicates TMACs effort to become an ASEAN Centre of Excellence in mine action.

22. The request indicates several factors that could positively or negatively impact the request's timeframe, including: outcomes from the process of boundary survey and demarcation, as well as other causes that are outside the control of the parties involved, such as natural disasters, change in terrain, political uncertainties, and major budget cuts due to the need for urgent reallocation of funds. The Committee noted Thailand's commitment to submit an updated work plan to the States Parties, following the completion of Phase 1.

23. The request indicates that Thailand would welcome capacity building and support in the area of non-technical survey and EOD as well as equipment such as all-terrain vehicles. Thailand also indicated that it plans to explore new technology such as drones or robots to help survey hard to access areas near the borders. The request further indicates that Thailand remains open and welcomes any kind of support toward mine action work.

24. The request contains other relevant information that may be of use to the States Parties in assessing and considering the request, including further information on remaining mined areas, terrain, together with photographs that provide greater clarity on the nature, extent and challenge in addressing the remaining anti-personnel mine contamination within Thailand.

25. In recalling that the implementation of Thailand's national demining plan may be affected by outcomes from the process of boundary survey and demarcation and other factors and in noting Thailand's commitment to submit an updated work plan by the end of phase 1 the Committee noted that the Convention would benefit from Thailand submitting to the Committee by 30 April 2019, an updated detailed work plan for the remaining period covered by the extension. The Committee noted that this work plan should contain an updated list of all areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, annual projections of which areas and what area would be dealt with during the remaining period covered by the request and by which organisation, and a revised detailed budget.

26. The Committee noted that the plan presented by Thailand is lends itself well to be monitored, and states clearly those factors that could affect progress in implementation. The Committee also noted that the plan is contingent upon negotiations on areas to be demarcated, the expansion of the demining programme, the application of non-technical survey and extending the pilot project in an effort to use the full range of practical methods to release, with a high level of confidence, areas suspected of containing anti-personnel mines, in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards and international cooperation and assistance. In this regard, the Committee noted that the Convention would benefit from Thailand reporting annually, by 30 April, to the States Parties on the following:

(a) Progress made relative to the commitments contained in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Work Plan contained in Thailand's request;

(b) Update on efforts put forth during Phase 1 of Thailand's Plan of Work to prepare for Phase 2 of the Work Plan including the outcome of negotiations in order to address ADs;

(c) The outcomes of survey efforts and how additional clarity obtained may change Thailand's understanding of the remaining implementation challenge;

(d) Update on progress in updating the National Mine Action Standards to be in line with the latest version of IMAS and the results of this effort;

(e) Resource mobilisation efforts and external financing received and resources made available by the government of Thailand to support implementation efforts, including through efforts to facilitate operations of international demining organisations and expanding of indigenous capacities, and the results of these effort;

(f) Updates on Thailand's efforts to explore new technology to help survey hard to access areas near the borders and the results of these efforts;

(g) Update on efforts by Thailand to make continuous improvements in the capacity of its information management team, systems and processes to enable more precise information on survey and clearance operations to be collected and displayed.

27. The Committee noted the importance, in addition to Thailand reporting to the States Parties as noted above, of keeping the States Parties regularly apprised of other pertinent developments regarding the implementation of Article 5 during the period covered by the request and other commitments made in the request at intersessional meetings, Meeting of the States Parties and Review Conferences as well as through its Article 7 reports using the Guide for Reporting.
