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# The Norwegian People's Aid Mine Clearance Project in Cambodia

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# 1. Executive summary and recommendations

## 1.1 Brief project history

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) has been involved in demining work in Cambodia since the summer of 1992. Over this period of time the organisation has had different roles and conducted various assignments according to the developing needs for demining support in Cambodia. In 1992, the organisation started up on a small scale in co-operation with United Nations Development programme (UNDP) in the north-western province of Banteay Meanchey with only one platoon to monitor, which later expanded into three platoons. Since 1993, NPA has been working within the framework of the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC). The role of NPA has changed significantly also during this period, from a role of field operations and training to supervision and advisory services.

The arrangement has been based on an agreement stating that NPA pays the salaries for the Technical Advisors with funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). CMAC has ensured salary for local deminers and equipment for conducting the demifling operation. The current agreement with CMAC elapsed as of 31 December 1995 and a new contract is about to be worked out.

There has been a lack of clear goals and objectives for the operations of NPA in Cambodia. There are no terms of reference or project appraisal documents stating the specific mandate of NPA's role in Cambodia. This fact presented a challenge for the mission with regard to evaluating NPA's degree of effectiveness in their work. As the mission had no specific goal achievement criteria upon which to base their evaluation, the report will also be affected by this in terms of structure and detail.

## 1.2 Conclusions

For future operations, it is necessary that clear and measurable objectives are set for NPA's involvement in de-mining in Cambodia. The mission will in this report provide some input as to which objectives that may prove useful for the project. Furthermore, recommendations are made as to how to improve reporting routines from the local operation and back to NPA and MFA.

NPA have assisted CMAC mainly in the regions of Battambang and Banteay Meanchey. The emphasis over the past 2-3 year period has been on supporting regional managers and administrative staff in the areas of management and operations, logistics, finance and administration. There has been a total of 50 people from NPA involved at different stages over the project period, and given the changes that have occurred in the requirements to NPA, the organisation has adapted to these with a relatively high degree of flexibility.

The mission points out the following main findings from the evaluation work:

- Demining is still of vital importance to the Cambodian society and continues to be a necessary precondition for achieving a successful rehabilitation of the country. NPA has made a substantial contribution to this task, by supporting CMAC with qualified personnel in accordance with the developing needs of the organisation

over the project period. The value of NPA's work is recognised, both by domestic and international authorities, as well as by local citizens. The achievements of NPA are highly relevant both with regard to local and national priorities.

- Considering the entire history of NPA's mine clearance project in Cambodia, and taking into account the deployment of staff over the period, NPA has managed to balance the type and amount of staff according to the developing needs of CMAC in an efficient manner. In general, the mission finds that NPA has achieved its project outputs through an efficient use of the financial, human and material resources that have been available in the project.
- NPA's mine clearance project has been effective in terms of capacity building at the operational level of mine clearance. These operations now run on a day-to-day basis under full control of Khmer staff. However, there is significant room for improvement in the way the job training of regional management is conducted. There does not exist clear terms of reference for this job and there is no formalised training programme for coaching and advising management at different levels. Furthermore, NPA have not implemented reporting procedures to evaluate progress of the managers they are training.

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The mission have made some recommendations for how this could be improved in annex 11.

- The main impact of NPA's contribution is that operations in the field can now be considered self sufficient. However, to improve impact in the future, NPA should take on a more proactive role in promoting new innovative methods and focusing on research and development as well as using experience from other regions where they are involved in de-mining. Furthermore, NPA should actively take part in developing the socio-economic aspect of demining. This will have a considerable effect on the ultimate impacts of the de-mining process and will make it easier to measure the real results of de-mining to the Cambodian society.
- NPA's efforts with regard to creating a self sustained organisation within the fields of demining and paramedical personnel have succeeded. For the near future, the challenge lies in developing the management of CMAC. Thus the area with the greatest need for continued expatriate assistance is that of supporting management at various levels. For this reason, a clear focus should be kept on creating managerial sustainability and influencing CMAC towards developing a more integrated approach to the demining process from verification of mined areas to reutilisation of cleared areas (chapter 5). In order to continue and sustain the positive effects created by the efforts of NPA and other organisations, it is an absolutely crucial success factor to strengthen the ability of local resources to manage the large and relatively complex organisation that CMAC has become.

Hence, despite considerable success in establishing a viable demining organisation, substantial technical assistance is still required to strengthen the CMAC organisation, especially in the areas of management and planning, in order to secure a sustainable existence for CMAC as the national demining organisation in Cambodia.

### 1.3 Recommendations

The mission recommends a two year continuation of NPA's presence in Cambodia. NPA must be flexible in employment and where possible provide CMAC with high calibre personnel to fill a limited number of positions as technical advisors. NPA should provide CMAC with 4-5 technical advisors over a period of two years. The advisors should be deployed in positions with clear terms of reference. It is recommended that NPA provides 1-2 people at CMAC Headquarters (HQ) and 3-4 people in the regions.

In the future, NPA would greatly benefit from changing their role slightly by taking a more active part in influencing the decision-making process at CMAC headquarters. Although NPA's work in the regions is highly valued and respected, working only at the regional level does not provide the necessary influence on important decisions being made at HQ.

CMAC has made a strategic five year plan which provides a vision for how the organisation wants to develop in the future and points out in which direction the organisation wants to move. The document provides a good and very important basis for guiding the organisation in the right direction in terms of becoming increasingly professional. The strategy document is highly agreed upon both within CMAC and UNDP. The mission finds that the strategy plan provides a healthy vision for CMAC and supports the overall content. However, the document states little about how to reach the targets. To be able to influence the direction and strategy for CMAC in accordance with the five year plan, it is important for NPA to obtain 1-2 positions at HQ. In this way, NPA will have a direct influence on the direction of CMAC.

The interviews with CMAC and other organisations revealed a number of specific areas where CMAC needs to improve in the future to be able to implement the five year strategic plan. These are areas where NPA could take part and create an important impact. A further description of these areas is given on the following pages.

- a) Public Relations/Fund-Raising. CMAC has been criticised for not being proactive in marketing their organisation and for not being active enough with fund-raising. The organisation has relied on the support of UNDP and the efforts of NGOs. CMAC's new director, and the management in general, have become aware of this weakness and the importance of this skill for the future of the organisation. It appears to be recognised that CMAC needs to employ a highly experienced person in this position, with experience in lobbying and international marketing of non-profit organisations. An important task will also be to develop a long-term funding plan together with local Khmer staff.

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This is a position that will most likely be available in CMAC in the very near future and the position will have a significant impact on the future strategy of CMAC. Hence, it could be an opportunity for NPA.

- b) Mine Awareness. Mine awareness has been recognised as an area for improvement within CMAC, both by the recent UNDP evaluation mission and by CMAC. Mine awareness has been largely undertaken by traditional means and

more effective measures must be taken to maximise impact. Ideas that have been discussed include combining awareness and marking campaigns and combining awareness programmes and casualty reports. Better planning and implementation of the annual mine awareness day will also be important areas of improvement.

Mine awareness will be important for the success of CMAC in the future, and providing a TA in this area could also prove to be an opportunity for NPA.

- c) Socio-economic Branch. It is likely that CMAC would benefit significantly by setting up a socioeconomic branch. This has also been recognised by the recent UNDP evaluation report and positively received by CMAC. The primary objective of such a branch could be to ensure that the demining undertaken by CMAC is providing significant socioeconomic benefit in the redevelopment process in Cambodia. The measurement of the socio-economic impact of demining is paramount for continued long term support from donors. A crucial part of this branch is to strengthen CMAC's institutional links with other Governmental Departments and establish partnerships with international agencies and NGOs in order to optimise the resettlement once an area of land has been cleared. Furthermore, a more active involvement and co-operation with governors and local authorities are critical.

Finally, this branch would have to integrate closely with the database programme for mine marking. As one of CMAC's weaknesses is lack of planning, the organisation would benefit significantly by being in possession of integrated information from initial verification all the way to measuring the social impact of demining.

Chapter 5 of the report details a recommended strategy for how to improve the socio-economic impact of demining. CMAC is likely to initiate a socio-economic branch in the near future, and NPA would benefit from taking part in the development of this branch, as it most likely will be critical for CMAC's success in the future. Furthermore, such a position will represent a strengthening of the work for improved community development in Cambodia.

- d) Roving team. A strengthening of the current roving team by 1-2 technical advisors is recommended. Their objective is to strengthen internal controls through periodic reviews of field operations and administrative support provided at the regional level. This task is important in order to ensure consistent quality and also to bring in cross-learning from the various regions. Furthermore, the roving TA's would have the responsibility for planning and conducting management training for the various regional management teams. This unit could also be crucial in the sharing of competence between regions. This function could slowly take over the responsibilities of the local TAs as their activities are phased out. This is another area where NPA could play an important part in the further development of CMAC.
- e) Research & Development. Although CMAC is highly proficient in operations, demining is a very time-consuming process using today's techniques. More resources should be directed towards searching for, and evaluating, new technologies for identifying and destroying mines. CMAC would benefit from an

active search for R&D organisations that have capabilities and who are willing to co-operate with CMAC. CMAC cannot afford to wait for R&D organisations to approach them, as is currently largely the case. A technical solution, especially for identifying mines, could prove revolutionary for the demining process. NPA could also be a driving force in this area.

Finally, and related to the above, NPA's mine-dog programme should be evaluated for use in Cambodia. Initial steps have already been taken in this respect by CMAC and NPA.

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f) Support of regional management and administrative staff. There is a continued need for on the job training of regional management within the fields of planning and managing operations. Furthermore, there are still tasks to be conducted with regard to training administrative staff at regional level in the use of systems in finance, logistics and administration. There is significant room for improvement in the way the job training of regional management is conducted by establishing terms of reference for this job, formalising the training programme and implementing reporting procedures to evaluate progress of the management they are training.

Provided that recommended improvements can be made, it is recommended that NPA continues to provide support in the above mentioned capacities

#### 1.4 Plan for continuation - Phasing out plan

CMAC is in need of continued technical advice in management and planning for years to come. NPA's role is considered highly valuable and constitutes an important part of the capacity building structure within CMAC. Given the fact that CMAC have become highly effective in field operations, and as the organisation has drawn up a five year plan giving the directions for how to become more effective at management and planning, it is important for NPA to take part in this development. If CMAC follows through their five year plan and develops in the right direction, the organisation could become a "world-leader" in demining operations. Being part of this development could provide NPA with further competence, which can be transferred to other regions of NPA operations.

It is recommended that NPA's participation should have a time horizon limited to two years. NPA participation after this period should only be considered after a thorough evaluation, which proves that NPA's competence is still needed in CMAC.

Considering the not yet stable political climate and institutional conditions in Cambodia, the need for and relevance of Norwegian participation should be evaluated with intervals of no more than two years. In line with the above recommendations, NPA should occupy 1-2 positions at CMAC headquarters and 3-4 positions at regional level. One of the staff should also take on the role as project manager for NPA.

It is likely that the controlling and advising functions at regional headquarters can be taken over by local resources within a time span of 2-4 years. At this time, a Roving team of technical advisors based at CMAC's national headquarters can provide a

controlling function and this position should be the last one to be phased out of the NPA positions.

The nature of NPA's work in Cambodia, as integrated advisors in CMAC, does not call for a separate full time position on the Norwegian team as project leader. One of the full time advisors can have the role of team leader/project manager in addition to being a TA. This role will consist mainly of reporting to the NPA office in Oslo, and being a co-ordinator for the NPA staff with regard to NPA related issues.

For the future, there will be a greater need for flexibility in terms of employment in the regions and NPA staff must be prepared to work wherever the need is and not necessarily together with other Norwegians. Looking at the mine fields to be cleared in the future by CMAC, it becomes clear that there will be an increasing number of smaller fields spread over larger geographic areas, reinforcing the importance of flexibility.

It should be noted that NPA may have to consider different sources of recruitment, if they want to staff people at CMAC's headquarters in the future. The positions available at HQ do not necessarily require military background, but perhaps another type of management skills.