

Humanitarian Mine Action and Unexploded Ordnance Removal



The U.S. Government has invested over \$37 million in a broad spectrum of programs not only to locate, remove and destroy ERW -- unexploded ordnance (UXO), landmines, and other explosive materials -- but also to address the effects of UXO on the health and livelihood of Vietnamese living in affected areas. The U.S. has provided an additional \$43 million since 1989 to support organizations assisting people with disabilities.

As a result of 30 years of conflict, explosive remnants of war affect all of Vietnam's 64 provinces to varying degrees. There is also some landmine infestation in southern Vietnam and along Vietnam's border with China. Quang Tri and Quang Binh provinces, which adjoin the former demilitarized zone, are among the most highly impacted. Since the inception of the USAID Leahy War Victims Fund program in 1991 and the U.S. humanitarian mine action program in Vietnam in 1998, the USG has invested over \$80 million in a broad spectrum of programs to locate, remove and destroy unexploded ordnance and landmines, to address the UXO effects on health and livelihood of Vietnamese living in affected areas, and to assist people with disabilities. This effort includes support to NGOs carrying out clearance, mine risk education and assistance to victims' projects, as well as completion of a Landmine Impact Survey. Our continued assistance seeks to address real, ongoing challenges -- continued clearance, returning land to productive use, mine risk education, and assistance to victims of accidents -- and well as to help Vietnam build a sustainable national capacity.

Landmine Impact Survey

The Landmine Impact Survey (LIS), funded by the Department of State, was completed in early 2009 by the Technology Center for Bomb and Mine Disposal (BOMICEN) of the Vietnamese MoD's Engineering Command, with expert data collection oversight and training provided by the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAf). The LIS covers six central provinces (Quang Tri, Quang Binh, Ha Tinh, Nghe An, Thua Thien Hue, and Quang Ngai). The Final Report, released in July 2009, provides Vietnam and the donor community with vital information regarding the impact of landmines and UXO upon communities.

U.S. Assistance Efforts

BOMICEN routinely conducts parallel explosive ordnance disposal clearance when LIS field surveys indicate the presence of particularly hazardous UXO. Clearance conducted with U.S. funds by Mines Advisory Group and PeaceTrees Vietnam continues apace with thousands of hazardous UXO and mines removed annually. The USG has also donated a significant quantity of equipment to the People's Army of Vietnam to assist efforts in UXO and landmine clearance and in returning land to productive use. Years of effort by the GVN, the USG, and by other donor nations and groups in mine risk education have resulted in a significant drop in the annual casualty rate from UXO and mines. Further, U.S. funding also assists victims of explosive accidents, including providing medical care and job training.



Deputy Assistant Secretary Stephen Ganyard, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, with PeaceTrees UXO Clearance Team

Vietnam Bomb and Mine Action Center

On April 29, 2008, Vietnam's Prime Minister established the Vietnam Bomb and Mine Action Center (VBMAC). As the GVN's national coordinating agency, the Vietnam Bomb and Mine Action Center (VBMAC) was created in an effort to centralize project management and lend coherence to the GVN's efforts to liaise with international donors and manage NGO assistance in support of landmine/UXO clearance operations, mine risk education programs and efforts to assist victims of accidents caused by explosive remnants of war. VBMAC has prepared a strategic plan and to improve its institutional capacity to harness international support and to focus activities with the international operators and announced that the plan will be published in May 2010. A national-level strategic framework is essential both to maximize the impact of limited resources on the ground today, and to facilitate the growth of Vietnam's own planning and management capacity in the future. As Vietnam looks for international assistance in this important effort, this document will be a key tool for Vietnam to solicit increased support from international donors.

U.S. Funding

In fiscal year 2009, mine-action and related foreign assistance totals US\$3,098,863. Of that, US\$2,120,000 is from the NADR-HD appropriation supporting clearance operations (both NGO and BOMICEN), victims' assistance, and mine risk education. The Office of the Secretary of Defense provided US\$978,863 to Golden West Humanitarian Foundation and Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation Project RENEW as part of its Research and Development support.

Thanks to significant support for this issue in the U.S. Congress, the State Department will provide \$3.5 million in support of UXO clearance and related activities in 2010. These grants will focus on strengthening VBMAC's capacity and technical expertise and aid in the development of quality assurance, quality controls, and international mine action standards as well as continuing to support NGOs that work with both VBMAC and the Technology for Bomb and Mine Disposal (BOMICEN) to make Vietnam a safer place through clearance activities, to prevent accidents through education, and to assist victims when incidents do occur.



PeaceTrees Landmine Education Center, Quang Tri Province



Mines Advisory Group Visitors Center, Quang Binh Province