



Australian Government

AusAID



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Mine Action Program

Facilitating safe returns of displaced communities



The extent of the threat from widespread unexploded ordnance have prevented many from returning. For many who have returned home, there remain ongoing risks from basic activities such as accessing water wells, schools and other public buildings, some of which were contaminated with explosive devices.

Landmine contamination

Around two-thirds of Sri Lanka's Northern Province contains areas contaminated by unexploded ordnance. This prevents resettlement and constrains economic and social opportunities.

Demining is a slow and arduous process, and can often only be done manually, requiring many teams of de-miners with good quality training and carefully coordinated work. This has meant that the process of comprehensively clearing Sri Lanka of unexploded ordnance, and making it safe for all its people, is likely to take many years.





Australia's support

In October 2009, the Australian Government announced a new five-year, \$20 million initiative to accelerate the pace of demining in Sri Lanka. It remains a critical first step in enabling displaced people to return to their homes. The initiative built on earlier demining assistance which helped resettle people in the western part of northern Sri Lanka where fighting ended in 2008.

Australia's funding has deployed additional demining teams and clearance equipment. Though our support, more than 70 square kilometres of land has been cleared and released for resettlement and livelihoods activities.

Australian funding for mine-risk education has contributed to an internationally comparatively low death and injury rate as a result of contact with explosive ordnance.

The Australian Government will continue to support the Sri Lankan Government's own strong demining work throughout the north.



Our funding has expanded Sri Lanka's capacity to clear mines and other unexploded ordnance by providing:

- > mine clearance equipment and maintenance assistance for metal detectors and flails
- > funding for international demining agencies to conduct technical and non-technical surveys—the first step in identifying contamination
- > clearance activities, including the removal and destruction of mines and other unexploded ordnance
- > mine action coordination personnel in locations in the north to help demining teams prioritise tasks
- > mine-risk education, victim assistance and advocacy—which has helped raise men, women and children's understanding of the dangers of mines and unexploded ordnance.





Australia is working with the Government of Sri Lanka and other donors

Australia is working alongside other donors and international demining agencies to help the Sri Lankan Ministry of Economic Development's Humanitarian Demining Unit to complete emergency demining in and around resettlement areas.

AusAID also supports the National Mine Action Centre which coordinates all mine action activities in the country. Major achievements over the last year include updating a database which registers all hazardous areas and helps to identify where demining teams should be deployed, finalisation of the National Mine Action Strategy and updates to the Sri Lanka National Mine Action Standards.

Our help is critical to ensuring that demining is undertaken at the fastest possible pace, allowing the greatest number of people to return home safely. Our assistance also means that humanitarian clearance work will be completed sooner than originally anticipated.

Australia in Sri Lanka

Australia's long-term development objective for its aid program in Sri Lanka is for a stable, economically resilient and peaceful nation.

AusAID's inclusive development framework gives particular attention to lagging regions and vulnerable people, the program's key priorities include:

- > recovery of conflict-affected areas and providing of essential infrastructure
- > access to sustainable livelihoods and income generating opportunities
- > social protection for excluded and vulnerable people which includes better access to government services.

The program's key priorities are aligned to the Government of Sri Lanka's development vision. In delivering the aid program, Australia works closely with the Government of Sri Lanka, established and experienced partners including the United Nations, multilateral development banks, international and local non-government organisations and like-minded donors.

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