

Press Release

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Land Release: A guide for mine and ERW affected countries

The community involved in achieving the aims of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention has begun to struggle with a fundamental question related to the efficiency of mine clearance efforts: an increasing realisation that much of the land being cleared, using expensive and resource-intensive assets, did not, in the end, contain hazardous items. General assessments and impact surveys often overstate those areas declared to be Suspected Hazardous Areas.

Clearance operators and organisations in the field have found it difficult to distinguish clearly between those areas of land that pose a genuine high degree of landmine and ERW (explosive remnants of war) threat to local populations, and those that may have simply fallen into disuse. Local populations have often responded by undertaking village demining or simply re-occupying land.

To address this issue and to help organisations move more quickly towards effective land release policies, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) has published the very first guide available on the subject of land release for landmines and ERW affected countries. The Centre's work in this area is designed to stimulate mine and ERW programmes to consider more closely the different options for releasing land in a non-technical manner.

The Guide examines carefully the tools of general survey, technical survey and the more costly and technical clearance operations and provides mechanisms that allow re-classification, or release, of land by re-assessing old survey information or undertaking new general surveys. The Guide does not address the mechanisms that will apply when undertaking technical surveys. This forms part of a much wider and continuing initiative by the GICHD to develop new and more effective land release methodologies that entail all elements of the broader land release process.

Six country case studies form the basis of this publication and a comprehensive comparative analysis illustrates the differences in methods used. A broad section of the mine action community is represented by these six programmes – Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Croatia, Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen – who allowed their work to be documented and published.

We are grateful to the Governments of the Czech Republic, Finland, Italy, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom for funding this publication.

Free copies of the Guide can be ordered via: <http://www.gichd.org/publications>

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