



**MINUTES OF THE UXO/MRE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP
HELD AT THE NRA CONFERENCE ROOM
ON Friday 24th August 2007**

1. Attendance

The meeting was attended by:

Dr Malinga Saignavongs, Director of the NRA
Ms. Somsanid, Deputy Director, LYU
Mr. Art Crisfield, Education Coordinator, World Education/Consortium
Mr. Khamphat Boulom, MRE Material Consultant, MAG
Mr. Bounnyot Chanthanavong, MRE Co-facilitator, MAG
Mr. Vilaysack Vongsayachan, Demining Officer, NRA
Mr. Phouviengsavanh, QA Officer, NRA
Ms. Sounisa Sundara, Program Assistant, Ausaid
Mr. Phil Bean, NRA Ops/QA Advisor
Mr. Vayolinh Phrasavath, DDG of Office, Ministry of Culture and Information
Mr. Khamlouang Keoka, Director, Oxfam Australia
Mr. Nigel Orr, Programme Manager, FSD
Ms. Phetdavanh Sayyasouk, Risk Education Manager, HIB
Mr. Tim Horner, STA, NRA
Ms. Ruth Bottomley, MRE Advisor, NRA
Mr. Bounpheng Sisawath, MRE Officer, NRA
Mr. Khamphet Fonglamay, MRE Technician, NRA

2. Opening

The meeting commenced at 14.00 hrs. Mr Bounpheng Sisavath welcomed everyone to the meeting and then handed over to the NRA Director, Dr Maligna Saignavongs to formally open the meeting. Mr. Bounpheng Sisawath then introduced the agenda of the meeting.

3. Item 1 – MRE Materials Development Consultancy

Mr. Bounpheng Sisawath introduced the project to develop MRE materials for the UXO Sector in Lao PDR, supported by UNICEF. MAG was awarded the contract to develop MRE materials and will be working closely with the NRA MRE Unit on this. The NRA will contribute some additional funds to the project through the MAG support to the NRA MRE Unit. The timeframe for the project is three months, beginning in August and having materials ready to print at the end of October. A literature review will be carried out and community workshops will be held in Xieng Khouang and Khammouane in August and September to generate ideas from the local people about the messages and materials required. MAG will hire consultants to develop the MRE materials and radio spots, and pre-tests and post-tests of the materials will be carried out in the field. The NRA requested that the MRE Operators are involved in the testing of materials. Bounpheng introduced Mr. Khamphat Boulom, the consultant hired by MAG to facilitate the community workshops, with support from a team comprising the NRA and MAG community liaison staff. The materials that are developed will be distributed to all the operators who would like to use them.

Mr. Art Crisfield mentioned that it will be important to consider which languages should be used in the south of the country for the MRE materials and that some expert advice may be required on this. It will depend on who we want the messages to reach and if the languages are alphabetized.

Mr. Khamlouang Keoka agreed that it will be important to choose carefully the languages used. He added that the Savannakhet radio station is also received in the provinces of Khammouane and Saravane.

Dr. Maligna clarified that if the messages are to be broadcast by radio, then it will be good to put the languages in the ethnic languages. However, with posters and printed materials the objective is to reach people who can read and so it will only be beneficial to produce written text in the Lao Loum language.

Mr. Phil Bean asked if there will be an opportunity to review and perhaps remake some of the films used by different operators for risk education purposes in the past.

Mr. Bounpheng Sisawath mentioned that 5 years ago UXO Lao and UNICEF had prepared puppet shows with the National Puppet Theatre, and these performances were recorded. It will be possible to burn copies of this on to CD and to distribute.

Ms. Ruth mentioned that the project aims to produce materials that can be used by all the operators and that the process may also involve revising and updating some existing materials if required.

ACTION:

- NRA will provide a formal notification to all operators regarding the materials development project
- NRA will keep operators informed of progress and will ask the operators cooperation in the field testing of materials during September and October

4. Item 2 – Update on GICHD M&E Training

Bounpheng provided a reminder to the participants of the training on Monitoring and Evaluation that will be conducted by GICHD on 24th – 26th September. The training is being supported by UNICEF. The training will take place at the Lao Plaza and the NRA will be working together with GICHD to finalise the agenda. Invitations and agendas will be sent out to operators during the second week of September. The NRA also thanked the operators who had filled out the information forms for GICHD. This information should help the trainers to tailor the course to the needs of the MRE operators in Lao PDR.

ACTION:

- NRA will prepare and send out invitations and agenda to operators during the second week of September.

5. Item 3 – Draft MRE National Standards (NS)

During the final quarter of 2007 the NRA plans to hold a review of the National Standards for the UXO Sector, which will include a review of chapter 13 on MRE. The MRE NRA Unit sent out chapter 13 in English to the operators and requested feedback. So far comments have been received by MAG and the NRA MRE Unit has also commented. There is still time for more comments from operators. Bounpheng requested all operators to look at Chapter 13 and to submit any comments they may have by email to the NRA MRE Unit. The Standards have recently been translated into the Lao language and the MRE Unit hopes to conduct a small meeting with Lao speakers to discuss the chapter 13 in Lao.

Mr. Phil Bean commented that it will also be important to review chapter 13 in relation to the other chapters of the standards, for example, accreditation and monitoring.

ACTION:

- Operators should review Chapter 13 and send by email to the NRA MRE Unit any comments they have before the end of October.
- The NRA MRE Unit will organise for a meeting to discuss the MRE standards in Lao language.

6. Item 4 – MRE National Strategy – Review and Finalisation

The NRA MRE Unit had received comments from operators concerning the National MRE Strategy. The comments were compiled by the MRE Unit and during this session the meeting participants were asked to conduct a final review of the strategy so that it could be finalised. The comments were discussed point by point and changes made to the strategy document. Once the MRE Strategy is finalised, it will be able to feed into and inform the revision of the National Strategy for the UXO Sector, the Safe Path Forward.

ACTION:

- The NRA MRE Unit will update the strategy in English based on the comments from the MRE operators. The strategy will be circulated with the TWG meeting minutes. If operators are in agreement on this version of the strategy, it will be considered a final version and the Lao version will be updated and distributed.

7. AOB and Next Meeting

Mr. Bounpheng Sisawath explained that a resource centre and information materials have been developed and set up over the last month by an intern, Ms. Clara Gladstone. The NRA would like to request that if operators have any materials or reports they could provide them to the NRA for integration into the resource centre. The resource centre will be available for use by operators.

The next UXO/MRE TWG will be held in October and will include an update on the MRE materials development project. The date will be confirmed nearer the time.

8. Closure

The meeting closed at 15.30 hrs.

Mr. Bounpheng Sisawath
MRE Officer
National Regulatory Authority

14th September 2007

Distribution:

All meeting participants
UXO LAO
FSD
MAG
PCL
UNDP
UNICEF

AusAID
NRA

Enclosure:

1. Updated MRE National Strategy in English