



Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
NRA Office National Regulatory Authority for
UXO/Mine Action Sector in Lao PDR

Minutes of the Third Quarter, 2021
(Q 3, 2021) Meeting of UXO Clearance Technical Working Group

I. Introduction

The Third Quarter, 2021 Meeting of UXO Clearance Technical Working Group was convened between 08:30 am to 16:00 pm on 1st September 2021, at the Lao Women's Union Training Center, Vientiane, chaired by Mr. Bounpheng SISAWATH, Deputy Director-General of NRA Office. The meeting was participated by representatives from the Ministry of Defense, the UN agency, the UXO Lao Training Center, the operators, the Lao and foreign companies, and the Clearance Unit, NRA office (the total number of participants is 65). The meeting was conducted and strictly followed the Vientiane Governor's Order No. 015/VTE, dated 30th August 2021 on the increased measures for the COVID-19 outbreak precaution and control in Vientiane. Therefore, the Chair of Meeting and participants considered and revised the meeting agenda in aligning with the said Order.

II. Objectives of the Meeting

The Third Quarter, 2021 Meeting aimed to discuss and exchange technical views on the presentations on the progress of updating national standards, the SEOD4 training, the progress of training and conducting Mines Clearance in Kalong Nuer Village, Phalanxay District, Savannakhet Province, the Experiment of Explosive Detection Dog (EDD) and Drones in the UXO survey, clearance and disposal operations, the experiment of the VALLON VMH4-VS30 detector in the clearance sector, the review on the utilization of explosive materials in destroying each type of UXOs, the utilization of equipment in UXO clearance operations and other related issues.

III. The Content of Meeting

The Third Quarter, 2021 Meeting of UXO Clearance Technical Working Group was officially convened at 8:30 am. After the opening remark of the chair, the meeting has discussed on the following issues:

- Reviewing on the Minutes of the First Quarter Meeting of UXO Clearance Technical Working Group in the previous;
- Reporting on the progress and evaluation of the implementation of UXO survey, clearance and disposal in the Second Quarter, 2021;
- Reporting on the handover and continue using National UXO Clearance Training Center in the future and reporting on the updating of curriculum system and standards for the

training, the upgrading of trainers and the inclusion of them in SEOD4 Curriculum Training;

- Reporting on Mine Survey and Clearance by HALO Trust;
- Presenting on the utilization of Dogs and Drones in UXO clearance operation by NPA;
- Reporting on the progress of reviewing and updating of the national standards by Quality Management Unit;
- Reporting on the progress of Mine Clearance Training in Savannakhet Province by HALO Trust;
- Reviewing on the utilization of explosive materials in destroying UXOs as well as the utilization of equipment in UXO clearance operation by Quality Management Unit;
- Discussing on Announcement Letter of the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Chair of NRA, No. 10/NRA, dated on 10 May 2021 regarding the identification and prioritization of areas for UXO survey and clearance.

IV. The Outcomes of Meeting

- The training center and operators agreed to continue updating curriculums and upgrading the capacity of the trainers to ensure their efficiencies in supporting the operations as stipulated in SOPs. The curriculums for training must be jointly reviewed. In building capacity of EOD2,3 and 4 of the operators must be conducted in training center only. For EOD1, the operators and training center will jointly conduct the training. The training center and Tetra Tech will jointly continue consulting on the conduct of SEOD4 training. MAG and HALO Trust proposed to provide assistance in reviewing on medical curriculums.
- The meeting has discussed and exchanged views on the progress and plan for reviewing national standards, and requested the operators to provide information/inputs and submit to the Quality Management Unit for compiling and arranging a technical meeting to update the National Standards.
- Regarding the Mine clearance action in Savannakhet Province, HALO Trust in conjunction with UXO Lao Training Center will conduct the training on mine clearance curriculums in Savannakhet Province in this September in order to continue their mine clearance operation in Phalanxay district. Furthermore, HALO Trust proposed to share information on mine issues in other provinces to the meeting. For the information of the found mines during the clearance operation will be shared with related authorities.
- The meeting discussed and learned that it is necessary to jointly develop some specific media tools for UXO/Mine Risk Education. The media tools shall be agreed and approved by NRA office and the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism.
- The meeting learned some lessons and experiences of Cambodia and Viet Nam Programme on the utilization of Dogs and Drones in UXO survey, clearance and disposal operations and it could provide a lot of advantages. The meeting requested the operators to study on the utilization of Dogs and Drones in their SOPs in order to further update the National Standards before using those techniques. The meeting proposed that it is also necessary to conduct the Explosive Detection Dog (EDD) and Drones

trails/drills in prior. For those operators who wish to use advance technologies in the UXO sectors in Lao PDR, it is requested to reconsider on the sustainability and costs.

- According to the VALLON VMH4-VS30 detector Trail of National UXO Lao Programme, it is concluded that these detectors are appropriate for using the work sites since they accurately catch the signal and specific point of metal object or UXOs. They are handy, easy to use and assemble. They have Bluetooth connection and can download data to the computer. The operators are also interested to try using them for the UXO survey and disposal operation.
- Some operators actively exchanged lesson and experiences during the presentation on the utilization of explosive materials in UXO disposals. It is found that the UXO disposal will be conducted differently, depended on some circumstances including the type of found UXOs and places. Therefore, the meeting agreed to review on the standard of UXO Disposal Training particularly to handle with the explosive materials.
- The meeting raised some issues on the utilization of detector and equipment in UXO clearance operation in worksites since it is found that some detectors and equipment are not appropriate to use in the real and certain situations which caused the delay of UXO clearance operations. Some operators have only followed the SOPs of Mine Clearance.
- The meeting requested the operators to coordinate with local administration at provincial and district levels respectively to implement the Announce Letter of the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Chair of NRA, No. 10/NRA, dated 10th May 2021 regarding the identification and prioritization of areas for UXO survey and clearance.
- The meeting discussed and exchanged views on the development of the Priority Plan of the UXO Clearance. The NRA office in conjunction with Tetra Tech and related operators will study and research on the development of the guidelines and manual for Priority Selection System for Planning.

V. Other issues

The Meeting provided opportunity for the operators and UN agency to exchange experiences, the achievements, difficulty, challenges and solution approaches in UXO clearance as well as the coordination with NRA office at central and provincial levels.

VI. Conclusion

The Chair of Meeting delivered and emphasized in his closing remarks to request the operators to report the correct, clear and transparent information of Area Clearance Completion in the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) to avoid the overlap areas. The chair of meeting extended his wishes to the participants/operators for the attendance for good health and stay safe from COVID-19. the meeting was officially closed at 16:00 pm.

Chair of the Meeting

Prepared by