



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

**Minutes of the First Quarter, 2021**  
**(Q 1, 2021) Meeting of UXO Clearance Technical Working Group**

**I. Introduction**

The First Quarter, 2021 Meeting of UXO Clearance Technical Working Group was convened between 08:30 am to 16:00 pm on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021, at the Lao Women's Union Training Center, Phonethan Village, Vientiane, chaired by Mr. Bounpheng SISAWATH, Deputy Director General of NRA Office. The meeting was participated by representatives from Humanity & Inclusion (HI), Humanitarian UXO Demining of Army 58, UXO Lao Programme, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), UXO Training Center, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), HALO Trust, Mines Search Company, MMG Company, Phonsackda Company, ASA Power Lited, S.H.B.C.L lited, Lao UNEOD Cooperation Limited, Hi-Tech Lited, Sengphet UXO Limited, Oummar Co., Ltd, Great Corporation, AUSLAO Group, LCY Ltd, Phanvila Co; Ldt, L&B Ldt, NLN Ltd, SG Zhouyun, SDK UXO, Woma UXO Ltd, Lao BSL, Silavanh UXO Ltd, Insee Ltd, Tetra Tech, US Embassy and related staffs from NRA Office.

**II. Content of Meeting**

1. The Chair of Meeting has delivered welcome remarks and informed the objectives of the meeting which is appeared below:
  - To report on the success of the implementation of UXO survey and clearance;
  - To review on the previous meeting
  - To report on the progress and evaluation of the implementation of UXO survey, clearance and disposal during the first quarter of 2021;
  - To conclude the result of the implementation of national standards and relevant regulations on non-technical survey, technical survey, UXO clearance and roving task;
  - To review on the challenges concerning the UXO survey and clearance (including Mine survey and clearance)
  - To exchange views on the development and usage of modern technology in the UXO survey and clearance (including drones)
  - To share views on the priorities related to the UXO clearance
  - To review on the inputs/recommendations from the operators to NRA Office in revising national standards;
  - To discuss on other matters and necessities.

2. The Survey Unit and Clearance Unit briefly reported on the indicators and expected outcomes of the survey and clearance as well as reviewed the previous meeting and other issues including:
  - The challenges and issues on the coordination and information collection
  - The UXO survey, clearance and workplans related to local authorities
  - The priorities and the selection of area.

### **III. Outcomes of the Meeting**

The participants have exchanged views and recommendations as following details:

- Donor's representative from USA proposed to the operator to implement right away as soon as received funds. As per this proposal, the operator justified that the implementation of fund is delayed because they have been waiting for the approval of MOUs (several facts caused the delay).
- UXO Lao Programme proposed the meeting about the use of different flatforms/formats, it used IMAS, AMAS and later the national standards. As per this issue, NRA Office requested UXO Lao Programme to submit official letter and request UXO Lao Programme to review on the prioritization.
- UXO Lao Programme requested NRA Office to provide guidance for UXO Lao provincial Coordination Offices on the development of plan and priority, particularly the stipulation of the focused development areas in the plan which is yet indicated in the plan in the previous. As per this request, NRA Office is awaiting for the submission of request letter from UXO Lao Programme for reference;
- Humanity and Inclusion (HI) proposed the meeting to take consideration about the process of MOU approval which is quite slow and impact on the other activities including the issuance of certificate and the needs of people in the target area. For instance, when the villager has found UXOs, HI could not conduct and take immediate action in addressing the found UXO since the certificate is expired and the MOU is yet approved. To this issue, the Chair of Meeting has shared and clarified several facts that coursed the delay of MOU.
- MAG and UXO Xiengkhuang Province request NRA office to have a consultation meeting on the UXO survey and clearance particularly the certain depth for the UXO survey and clearance. As per this issue, NRA office suggested MAG and UXO Xiengkhuang to refer to the national standards as the principle. If any change/amend in national standards, related stakeholders will discuss again.
- NPA exchanged view on the indicating and prioritizing plan that it is unnecessary to share with the donor in every time, but every year. NPA also raised the most found issue in implementing activity is the certain depth. In the previous, the implementation of UXO survey and clearance didn't require the suitable depth standard in prior, but when NPA completed its operation, the depth standard is suddenly required. As per this issue, NRA office requested all operators to consult, prepare and agree on related documents with local authority in details before conducting UXO survey and clearance. Most of local authority is yet understood about techniques and expertise. NPA is also requested to notify NRA Office if it found any issue for consideration and responsive action;

- NRA office proposed the operators who has the purpose in using Cluster Submunition Clearance Machine, to propose to NRA office in written. In using drones, the operator is also required to submit project proposal;
- The development area which is not in CHA, how do we have certificate? Therefore, we need to have certificate in order to indicate into the national standards.
- The UXO Survey of NPA in four southern provinces, it is necessary to conduct the evaluation.
- The indication of priority is to incorporate into the plan and the national standards.
- There is no SOP for the Mine Site yet, it is proposed HALO Trust to incorporate into the plan and the national standards.
- It is proposed the operators to include “gold” in the revised draft of national standards
- The company proposed that there is no standard for underwater clearance. The companies only designed the method by itself for this operation.
- NRA Office shared with the meeting that it will take some times to revised the national standards. Therefore, it is necessary to have a clear plan and to establish a team for this task.
- HI shared with the meeting that it has tested F3 and F4 detectors, the result is F3 detector catches the object in the dept of 30 cm while F4 detector can do with the depth of 35-40 cm.
- UXO Lao Programme proposed NRA office to circulate the revised draft of national standards to the operators.

**Quality Management Unit briefly reported on the progress of QA/QC implementation in 2020, detail is below:**

- Quality Management Unit concluded the implementation of workplan 2020 including the compilation of regulations for the new technology development using in UXO action sector and related recommendations from the operators in order to revise the national standards.
- The achievement: issuing the extension letter of technical accreditation for 14 companies, visiting and QC monitoring to the implementation of UXO operators 36 times (humanitarian assistance organization 29 times and companies 7 times), monitoring to the medical and technical clearance training 01 time, participated by related organization, the detail is below:
  - 06 humanitarian assistance organizations: UXO Lao Programme (UXO Lao), Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA), Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Humanity & Inclusion (HI), HALO Trust and Humanitarian UXO Demining of Army 58; and
  - 26 domestic and foreign companies

**Good Points:**

- a. Related operators implemented its works in compliance with national standards: upgrading the technical training and equipment/tools effectively.
- b. The operators conducted UXO Non-Technical Survey, Technical Survey and Clearance in consistence with the standards and more quantitatively and qualifiedly;
- c. Having clear and precise CHA area and information greatly support the operators in planning for the future clearance;

- d. More cluster munitions have been found during the clearance operation in the site;
- e. The humanitarian assistance organization and companies regularly report the result of UXO survey and clearance in the national information system;
- f. The coordination and communication between central and local authorities have been improved.

#### **Remaining Issues:**

- a. Some companies have yet reported on the progress and achievement of the UXO survey and clearance implementation to NRA office and in the national information system.
- b. The equipment/tool using in the site is old and incomplete set as stipulated in the standards.
- c. Some cluster munition has been found by Quality Management Unit, NRA Office after conducting QC in the cleared site of some operators.
- d. The selection of the clearance area is in consistence with the needs of villager and local administration.
- e. The Quality Management Unit, NRA Office could not monitor and conduct QA/QC in every site of survey and clearance.
- f. Coordination with local authority is inadequate.
- g. Related UXO action sector could not exchange and share technical information in order to contribute to the UXO survey and clearance plan.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

- The meeting proposed the operators to summarize and review on their workplan in the previous year.
- To submit the list of trainees who participate in EOD Training to NRA office;
- To improve the coordination;
- For those companies are interested in the training, they are requested to submit the request letter to NRA office. The curriculum will be discussed later.
- The plan in revising the national standards in attached in this meeting minutes.

The meeting was officially closed at 16:00 pm.

#### **Chair of the Meeting**

(Signed and Stamped)

Bounpheng Sisawath

#### **Prepared by**

(Signed)

Buala