

**Lao People's Democratic Republic**  
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity



**Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare**

NRA Office National Regulatory Authority for

UXO/Mine Action Sector in Lao PDR

Dated 18<sup>th</sup> December 2022

**Minutes of the Fourth Quarter, 2022**  
**(Q4, 2022) Meeting of UXO Survey-Clearance Technical Working Group**

**I. Date, Place, and Participants**

The Fourth Quarter, 2022 (Q4,2022) Meeting of UXO Survey- Clearance Technical Working Group was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2022, at 8:30 am-16:00pm at the Training Center of Lao Front for National Development. The Q4, 2022 Meeting was chaired by Mr. Bounpheng SISAWATH, Deputy Director General of NRA Office, and attended by representatives from Survey-Clearance Unit, Quality Management Unit, the Information Management Unit, six humanitarian assistance organizations (namely NPA, Halo Trust, HI, MAG, Humanitarian UXO Demining of Army 58), representatives from UN agencies, Tetra Tech, and other business operators concerning UXO survey and clearance.

**II. Objectives of Meeting**

To continue reviewing on remained issues in the previous quarters, to discuss on reporting issue, progress of data collection and report, inserting areas for clearance, to report on UXO survey-clearance and to conclude the achievements of implementation of each UXO operators as well as to provide inputs and comments on related issues among the technical working group.

**III. Content of Meeting**

The meeting was officially started at 8:30 am. After the Meeting chair delivered opening remarks, the meeting was informed and continued to discuss on the following issues:

- review on the outcome of previous quarter meeting of the UXO survey-clearance working group.
- Report on the progress, evaluation, and conclusion on the achievement of the implementation of UXO Survey-Clearance in Quarter 4, 2022. Consolidated all failures in the UXO survey-clearance implementation plan by UXO operators. The UXO operators claimed with many reasons that have the impact on the implementation of workplan as the follow: In the beginning of 2022, the new wave of COVID-19 pandemic is the key impact, leading to suspension of implementation in some provinces; Delaying of MOU approval caused the implementation of projects; the weather and more contamination in the clearance area, and other reasons.
- Discuss on the UXO Survey-Clearance Annual Workplan in 2023. The meeting raised on the target area number for UXO clearance 10.000 ha/year. By comparing to the capacity and financial support, many UXO operators found that the target area number for UXO clearance is

quite high and challenged. Waiting for the confirmation of target area number for UXO clearance per each province which will be further discussed in 2023, Vang Vieng.

- For UXO detectors and equipment using for UXO clearance and disposal, it is found that some ordered and imported items have not been using, because the UXO operators missed to study in suitability detail of item. Therefore, if any operators would like to order the detectors from now on, it is required to request for the approval from NRA. Moreover, for broken/unusable items, it is required to request to related organization for the stock clearance (not to handover the broken items, unless the items are still working/usable).
- For the progress of the draft document on prioritizations for UXO Clearance, NRA office has already finished drafting in Lao version, and it will be circulated to related stakeholders for technical inputs and comments after translating in English.
- Report on the revision progress of the National Standards on the operation. It is preparing to organize a meeting in Vang Vieng, expects to convene in next week (open for comments from all participants in the meeting).
- Report on incident of cluster munition self-exploding. Quality Management Unit has investigated in the actual area and found that it happened for several times and in many provinces in the past. Besides, the meeting was also reviewed on SOP, recommendations for prevention and guideline of caution in UXO clearance.
- For the preparation for destroying MK 82, FMU 54 B and 904 in Sed Khod village, Paksong district, Champasack Province, the SEOD4 of NPA presented on method and plan for destruction. NPA is also welcome for any good suggestion from the meeting in the plan.
- For the conclusion of UXO Quality Management in cleared sites in Quarter 4, it is found that there was no failure against SOPs in the implementation of operators after monitoring and conducting QC.
- Report on the result of detector testing and report on the UXO detector setting with Halo Trust.
- Report on the actual testing of body armor (PPE) of Halo Trust.
- Report on the investigation of BLU26/36 self-exploding in the actual location in NPA clearance site and introduced the prevent recommendations.
- Report on the monitoring and support on UXO survey-clearance in Quarter 4. Through the monitoring of UXO operators, it is found that all operators well implemented and was in line with the standards and met safety requirement. However, some operators must increase more skills in explaining each task under one's responsibility to ensure the smooth and professional, especially when the visitors come to visit the sites.
- Report on UXO disposal (not in the workplan) in the community. NRA currently coordinates with technical teams, Humanitarian UXO Demining of Army 58 to conduct emergency UXO disposal in provinces where they do not have the support of UXO operators, and lack of budget. To the date, it is found that most of works are successfully implemented, and it will continue conducting this emergency operation.
- Regarding the notice letter on UXO clearance and disposal operations of companies. In the previous time, there were some companies to take and operate UXO clearance under the projects in province, but the local authority does not receive any notice letter from NRA. In fact, this creates difficulty for the management and monitoring.

- Other related requests in the meeting. Companies requested to insert one chapter in national standards on UXO clearance under water.

#### **IV. Proposal, Recommendations from Meeting Chair and some UXO operators**

1. NRA proposed the UXO operators to recheck and provide information the UXO detector that are using in the current, how many types are there? in each type, how many of detectors are there? How many are there that still working, and how many are there that expired and broken? It is suggested to submit the importing or ordering plan with the specification of number and type of detectors that needed. (Clearly indicated which MOU are such detectors under)
2. It is proposed the UXO operators to submit 2023 workplans and conclusion of 2022 implementation (for UXO Survey-Clearance only).
3. It is proposed to coordinate with provinces, districts, and village in determining workplan to ensure the response of clearance for all.
4. In reviewing the national standards, it is proposed experts to prepare their inputs in prior (which number and paragraph).
5. For the prioritization of UXO clearance, it is proposed to focus on the operation in CHA, and also some other non-CHA, which is also necessary such as: area for building school, health care center, water supply, etc., as needed by donors for the clearance.
6. For the prioritizations, it is proposed the Survey-Clearance Unit to translate to English after finishing the draft in Lao versions, and subsequently circulate to related stakeholders.
7. It is proposed the operators to report on the achievement of UXO survey-clearance implementation to NRA before the conclusion of the project (as stipulated in MOU).
8. After gaining project activities, it is proposed business operators concerning UXO clearance to request for the Letter of Notice from NRA in prior operating in the site. The Letter of Notice shall be submitted to the province, district, and other related organizations in every time before operating clearance in the local area.
9. It is proposed Survey-Clearance Unit to host a technical meeting in week 2 of the last month of the final quarter in order to ensure the convenience of related stakeholders in participating the meeting
10. It is proposed Survey-Clearance Unit and Quality Management Unit jointly coordinate with experts for the UXO which found by NPA in the cleared sites during March 2022 to address and destroy in timely manner to ensure safety.
11. As per testing body armor and UXO clearance, Halo Trust to continue working to find precise result.
12. All related stakeholders to prepare personnel to participate SEOD4 Training as soon as possible.
13. Foreign Experts, who have experiences, are welcome to provide expertise in SEOD Training. The first session of training will be theoretical lesson and following by site visiting.
14. NPA:
  - As per plan of MK 82 destruction, it will begin from January and will share and present on the detail after finishing the shelter and procedure for destruction.
15. Halo Trust:

- Proposed to draw/map CHA on HI's survey area (which were the closed site, but having evident points from the previous UXO disposal), is it possible to indicate as CHA?
16. HI: It successfully implemented and achieved its target plan, although facing the delay of MOU signing.
17. MAG: proposed to Mr. Phommachanh and Vilaysack to clarify in the report, which mentioned by Mr. Vilaysack, whether it mean or specify to any operator or in general?. How would NRA like the operator to address on Marking system in the site, the clarification of marking system will be implemented as the same standard for all.

## **V. Outcomes of Meeting**

- The Meeting agreed to host a technical meeting in the last month of fourth quarter, because majority of participants would like to have a new year holiday.
- Operators will submit the workplan in every quarter
- The meeting agreed that the operators will coordinate with provincial, district and village authorities for jointly developing Annual Plan in order to ensure the precise information.
- The experts to prepare for reviewing the national standards, particularly which paragraphs and points should be made for revising.
- The Survey-Clearance Unit to translate from Lao to English on the prioritization for UXO clearance. Subsequently circulate to other technicians to provide inputs/comments.
- Before the conclusion of project, it is required to submit the draft project report to NRA office for consideration.
- Business operators concerning UXO survey and clearance shall request the NRA to issue the letter of notice in order to further submit to the province and district before beginning the operation in the sites, as well as to obey the existing regulation and standards.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The Meeting Chair delivered his closing remark. After that, he expressed his thanks and extended best wishes to all participants for good health.