



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

No.408/NRA.QM
Vientiane Capital, Date : 25 May 2023

To: Director General of NRA Office

Subject: The mission report on the visit and monitoring to the UXO clearance operations of Lao National UXO Programme (UXO Lao) in Khammouan Province.

I. Introduction

According to the approval letter of Director General of NRA Office, No. 0642/ NRA.O, dated 10th May 2023, in conjunction with UXO Lao-Khammouan Province, the Quality Management Unit, NRA Office was assigned to jointly visit and monitor to the UXO clearance operations on 12th-18th May 2023, with a particular focus on the clearance and disposal operations in Khammouan Province.

The member of monitoring team is listed below:

1. Mr. Bounthavy Keovilay, Technician, QM Unit, NRA Office
2. Mr. Laythong Khonthathilath, Technician, QM Unit, NRA Office
3. Mr. Khanthaly Vienthasing, Technician, QM Unit, NRA Office
4. Mr. Santi Keovixay, Driver/ Technician, QM Unit, NRA Office
5. Mr. Khemphone Phasivongmixay, Medic/ Technician, QM Unit, NRA Office
6. Mr. Phonphilom Taysho, Technical Officer, PRA Khammouan Province.
7. Mr. Iyocha Phanhsod, Technical Officer, PRA Khammouan Province

Representatives from UXO Lao-Khammouan Province:

1. Mr. Vanhxay Volakoummarn, Site Management and Inspection Unit

II. Purpose of the visit and monitoring

The purpose of the site visit is to conduct a follow-up and monitoring of the operations, with a specific focus and observe on techniques related to: control/administration practices in place, UXO survey, clearance, and disposal with the ultimate goal of ensuring high efficiency and safety while improving overall operations. Additionally, the visit serves to track the progress of 2023 workplan implementation, and to establish control measures to standardize all operations according to the same set of standards.

▪ Number of personnel and qualification

UXO Lao-Khammouan Province has 181 staffs (43 females). Those include 17 administration staffs (5 females), 168 field operational staffs (36 females) who are working in different teams such as 01 Mine/UXO Risk Education team, 01 Non-Technical Survey team, 03 Technical Survey teams, and 09 Clearance teams, and housekeepers/security guards. UXO Lao-

Khammouan Province has a complete set of administration structure, and all staffs have passed training courses from National UXO Training Centre.

▪ **Document System Inspection**

UXO Lao-Khammouan Province maintains an efficient document and information management system. This system encompasses various documents such as Survey Report Level 2, Completion Report Level 3, Internal Quality Control Form, Daily Record Book, Unspecified UXO Report Form, Accident and Emergency Response Plan, Records of Blood Group and Allergy of staff, and other relevant documents. These documents are compiled as a comprehensive set, aligning with the national standards and ensuring consistency throughout.

▪ **Implementation Progress of Annual Workplan 2023**

In 2023, UXO Lao-Khammouan Province implements its annual workplan in 4 districts: Mahaxay, Xaybuathong, Bualapha, and Yommalath. Besides, it also has two reserve districts (Thakhek and Hinboun) for UXO clearance operation. According to the annual workplan, UXO Lao-Khammouan Province has successfully achieved some targets as appeared in the following details:

- Mine/UXO Risk Education (MRE): Out of 60 villages as set in the annual workplan, UXO Lao-Khammouan Province has successfully conducted MRE in 20 villages.
- Non-Technical Survey (NTS): out of 12 villages as set in the annual workplan, UXO Lao-Khammouan has successfully conducted NTS in 04 villages.
- Technical Survey (TS): according to the annual workplan, there are 33 CHA area. UXO Lao-Khammouan Province has successfully achieved 2,259,581 m².
- Area Clearance (CL): Out of 3,550,485 m² as indicated in the annual workplan, UXO Lao-Khammouan Province has successfully achieved 780,420 m².
- Roving Task (RT): UXO Lao-Khammouan Province regularly operates RT as reported by local authority. However, it is not indicated in the annual workplan.

All UXO Clearance operations are under the financial support from the United States, UXO Lao-Khammouan Province is currently conducting experiment of internal quality control within its programme by establishing Site Management and Inspection to carry out and monitor the internal quality control in the province. If result of this experiment is satisfied, it may be extended to the other provinces, where UXO Lao is operating in.

▪ **Monitoring in the site**

The monitoring team visited on-going sites in Na Pang Village, Bualapha District, operated by Clearance Team (AC05&TS01). The monitoring team has focused on the monitoring of techniques in UXO clearance and Control/Administration, as well as observed on technique in UXO survey and disposal with the ultimate goal of ensuring high efficiency and safety. The Quality Management Team, NRA office also conducted quality control in 10 cleared sites, which has 330,238 m², QC more than 2% = 7,800 m², in Xaybuathong, Mahaxay, and Yommalath districts in order to confirm and ensure efficiency and safety for those who use the lands.

Throughout the quality control conducted by QM team, it is found that 01 site have yet passed and met requirement/quality. The site is located in Pha Nang Village, Mahaxay, Task ID: UXO Lao-AC-2023-1202006-001, S=30,599, GPS: UTM 48Q519690 1918169. At this GPS point, QM team found number of metal pieces, if combine all found metal pieces, it is bigger a half of BLU, which failed to meet the national standards.

III. Results of Monitoring

Throughout the visit of the monitoring team, it has some observations as follows:

- **Positive observations/Achievement:**

1. UXO Lao-Khammouan Province operates its UXO clearance activities under SOPs, which is in line with the national standards.
2. The UXO clearance operation has met safety requirement.
3. Team leader and the assistants has professional and qualified skills, and EODs have passed training courses from the National UXO Training Centre.
4. After conducting QC in the cleared site, it is found that there is no pieces of metal or fragments bigger than a half of BLU26 (1/2 of BLU26). These cleared sites have met safety requirement and these lands can be used safely in the depth of 25 cm.
5. The presentation and brief guides for the visitors in the site, a control/administration point, a medical operation point, a storage for keeping UXO detectors, a parking area, a rubbish pit, toilet, a storage area for metal fragment, a storage area for explosives, and a storage area for moveable UXOs are constructed/set in consistence with SOPs and the national standards.

- **Negative observation/Remaining Issues:**

1. A Leader of Clearance Team (AC05) have yet done well in presenting and reporting on site's status and UXO clearance operations to the visitors (presentation was not in order, unclear, and incomprehensive). It is suggested to improve and take some lesson learnt from other colleagues.
2. The record of medical equipment/tools receipt under the clearance team (AC05) was not incompatible with the actuality, some equipment/tools are missing (In fact, this has not been addressing). It is highly suggested head of medic and medics consider to propose to responsible-organization to provide a complete set of equipment/tool to ensure the consistency with its SOP.
3. It is proposed the Lao National UXO Programme (UXO Lao) in Vientiane to inspect or investigate the two sites that failed to meet internal quality control in 2022 (found by Quality Management Unit, NRA Office). For this time, it is found that one of them still has not passed the quality assurance. After completing the investigation, UXO Lao to submit a report to NRA Office for consideration and information.
4. The Site Management and Inspection to follow and adhere to the SOPs, Chapter 6 on the Quality Control and Assurance, as well as National Standards, Chapter 19 on Quality Management. If any metal pieces or small fragment are found in the same location/point. It is mandatory to gather all metal pieces or small fragments together, and if combined pieces

exceed half ($1/2$) size of BLU26, it would be considered a failure to meet the required quality standard.