

**LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**  
Peace Independence Democracy Unity and Prosperity  
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National Committee for Rural  
Development and Poverty Eradication  
**National Unexploded Ordnance Programme**

## **Concept of operations: UXO Lao restructuring**

### ***References:***

- Safe Path Forward 2.
- The Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM).
- The 7<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan.
- Project document UNDP/Government of Lao PDR for UXO Lao and NRA.

### ***Background***

UXO Lao has been operational since 1996. It currently employs 1,216 national staff, clearing more than 3,000 Ha per year as well as undertaking spot tasks and risk education for rural at-risk populations. In 2014 shortages of funding and the prospect of staff losses has prompted UXO Lao to accelerate planned changes to its operations and corresponding organisational structures.

To be consistent with the Vision and Goals of the National Strategic Plan for the UXO Sector and the effective implementation of the CCM there is a requirement to refocus work towards the more efficient removal of UXO. This can be achieved by identification of Confirmed Hazardous Areas (CHA) following an evidence-based survey, and the subsequent prioritised clearance of those areas.

During the third quarter of 2014, funding within UXO Lao reached a critical point and there is not enough money to maintain the entire organisation and the current way of working. Restructuring of the organisation will focus efforts onto removal of UXO through evidence-based survey and clearance; the core work of UXO Lao.

### ***Objectives of restructured organisation***

International best practice, as well as the general guidance of the CCM, leads to the use of effective (evidence-based) surveys and clearance of identified CHA. This concept of operations document identifies ways in which UXO Lao can undertake a restructuring process, reducing costs significantly, while at the same time improving efficiency of operations. Measuring efficiency will **NOT** manifest in terms of greater square metres/hectares cleared, but **WILL** result in significantly increased UXO items found per hectare. In addition, progressively expanding the process of identifying, through evidence, the extent of the remaining CM contamination, will inform future operational planning and support the implementation of the CCM.

UXO Lao's way of working over recent years was driven by requirements to deliver, year by year ever increasing areas of cleared land. This has led to Provinces fulfilling their annual hectare quota by including large areas of low contamination which are easy to search. The requirements of the Government, the CCM, as well as the donor community are driving more focus on the definition (and clearance) of the UXO problem.

### ***Work process and locations***

UXO Lao currently works in nine provinces. Four of those provinces also have other operators working who have been defining CHA through a process known as Cluster Munition Remnant Survey (CMRS). UXO Lao also has teams trained in this concept.

## Attachment 1

The following provinces already have clearly identified CHA.

PROVINCE	CHA	
	NUMBER OF CHA	m <sup>2</sup>
Attapeu (NPA)	363	11,771,292
Saravane (NPA)	694	26,142,378
Sekong (NPA)	532	34,591,255
Savannakhet (HALO)	87	3,220,000
UXO Lao – 9 provinces	?????	4,460,302
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,676</b>	<b>80,185,227</b>

### CLEARANCE AND SURVEY

- All provinces will have a non-technical survey capacity, through UXO Lao or through other operators working ahead of the technical survey.
- Teams will be trained and capable of doing both clearance **and** evidenced based technical survey that will produce defined CHA. This allows flexibility and ease of planning.
- Designated Roving teams will not be utilised further. In future, urgent UXO spot tasks will be dealt with by the nearest clearance/survey team to the location.
- In **Attapeu, Saravane and Sekong**, UXO Lao use teams targeted on clearing CHA already identified by NPA as well as implementing evidence based survey in other districts. This can be done under the umbrella of national and provincial development priorities. The exact number of teams can be allocated when the national funding picture is assessed in detail.
- In **Savannakhet**, UXO Lao use teams targeted on clearing CHA already identified by HALO as well as implementing evidence based survey in other districts. As a guide a minimum of one UXO Lao team will be deployed to undertake survey and three teams allocated to clearance.
- In **Khammouane and Xieng Khouang**, each province should deploy a minimum of one team for survey duties and three teams to clearance. UXO Lao will also extend discussions with MAG and NPA who are in a position to implement evidence based survey. UXO Lao's clearance teams will clear CHAs identified by this survey.
- In **Houaphan, Luang Prabang and Champasak**, UXO Lao teams are allocated on a needs basis focusing initially on identifying CHA.

*Districts with significant contamination and development focal areas*

Province	Significant contamination	Districts with Government Focal Areas (33)	Districts with Stabilisation Areas (53)	PRIORITY DISTRICTS	SECOND PRIORITY DISTRICTS
<b>Xieng Khouang</b>	All districts heavily contaminated	Nonghat Kham Khoun Phoukout Phaxay	Thathom Phoukout Mok Nonghat	Kham Khoun Pek Phoukout	Thathom
<b>Savannakhet</b>	Sepon Nong Phine Vilabouly Phalanxay	Sepon Nong Thapangthong	Sepon Nong Atsaphangthong Thapangthong Vilabouly Atsaphone Phalanxay Songkhone Phine	Sepon Nong Vilabouly Phalanxay Phine	Thapangthong
<b>Salavan</b>	Samoi Ta Oi Toumlan Laongam Salavane	Samoi Ta Oi Lao-Ngam	Toumlan Samoi Ta Oi	Samoi Ta Oi Toumlan Salavan LaoNgam	
<b>Sekong</b>	All districts contaminated	Kaleum Dark-Chung Lamarm	Lamarm Kaleum Dark-Chung	Kaleum Dark-Chung Lamarm	
<b>Attapeu</b>	Sanxay Phouvong Saysettha Sammakhixay	Sanxay Phouvong Samnarmxay	Xaysettha Samarkhixay Phouvong Sanxay Samnarmxay	Sanxay Saysettha Phouvong Samakhixay	Sanamxay
<b>Champasack</b>	Paksong Bachiang Soukumma	Sanasomboun Pathoumphone Khong Moonlapamok	Pakxe Pathoumphone Paksong Moonlapamok Champasak	Paksong Bachiang	Soukumma Moonlapamok
<b>Luang Prabang</b>	Nambak Ngoi Phoukhoun	Phonexay Parkxeng Viengkham Phoukhoun Phonethong	Ngoi Nambak Pakseng Chomphet Phonethong Viengkham Nan Xiengnguen Phonexay Phoukhoun LuangPrabang	Nambak Phoukhoun	Ngoi Pak-Ou Phonethong
<b>Houaphan</b>	Xamnua Viengxay	Huamueng Sobbaou Xamtai Xiengkhor Viengthong	Xamtai Viengxay Sobbaou Xiengkhor Add Xamnuea Houamueng Viengthong	Xamnua Viengxay Xone	Sobbaou
<b>Khammuane</b>	Boulapha	Boulapha Mahaxay	Boulapha Sebangphai Bungfai Nakhai Yommalath	Boulapha Yommalath	Mahaxay

**Sub-total: 30 Districts 10 Districts**

Based on the above table, teams will remain available to the above 30 priority districts, and with limited (possibly additional) availability to 10 second priority districts. This does NOT exclude the possibility of operations being undertaken in other districts depending on national, provincial and district requirements.

### **OTHER OPERATIONS**

- Throughout the nine provinces of UXO Lao, consideration will be given to the continued use of the two person “General” Survey teams and whether there is a requirement for separate teams, or whether these teams can be incorporated into the evidence-based survey teams.
- Consideration it is being given to re-roling or reduction of Community Awareness (risk education) teams, recognising that change will need to be planned to enable transition to MoE, MoIC and CSO.
- Quality Management. Recognising that in a time of financial austerity QM is increasingly important, however it has been suggested that the full capacity will be suspended temporarily with just one of the three QM teams retained.

### **PROVINCIAL AND HQ OFFICES**

- Provincial and Vientiane HQ offices should be scaled down proportionately.

### **OPERATIONAL COSTS**

- Team operating costs are being reviewed in detail and cost savings implemented – for example, instead of teams driving several hours to site, resulting in reduced working hours, consideration is being given to boarding closer to the clearance site. There are many other opportunities for further savings.

### **VEHICLE/EQUIPMENT RATIONALISATION**

- This process also offers UXO Lao the opportunity to rationalise use of vehicles and equipment in order to reduce operational costs. Older vehicles and equipment can be withdrawn and sold to fund further operations, or can be held temporarily in store pending future increases in the programme. Consideration is being given to additional cost-reduction measures such as strictly limiting vehicle use outside working hours.

### ***Implications***

There are a number of significant implications that will result from restructuring the organisation as above:

1. **Improved efficiency and effectiveness** of operations and removal of more UXO.
2. **Systematic assessment** of village and development areas, by area and contamination footprints, rather than from limited individual land use plots.
3. **Cost savings** – dependent on the final details of the revised size of the organisation.
4. **Job losses.** An inevitable element will be the loss of staff from UXO Lao. This can be used as an opportunity to refine the quality and balance of the workforce if desired.

## Attachment 1

5. **Outputs.** No longer will UXO Lao be able to clear so much land. The hectare outputs will be smaller – due to decreased capacity and from the focussed clearance to areas of known contamination. The Government's target set for 20,000 Hectares per year will need to be revised, BUT more UXO will be removed and establishing a baseline picture of remaining contamination will be possible. This further emphasises the importance of establishing an effective M&E mechanism.
6. **Work planning.** Work planning will have to be more flexible and transparent. Priority could be given to a reduced number of districts with the highest levels of contamination and impact.
7. **Coordination.** There will need to be tighter control of operations at HQ level. This can be supported through a more effective, improved and well-managed MIS system.
8. **Political.** While current government targets in terms of area cleared will not be delivered, the perspective of the other CCM Member States will significantly alter for the better through demonstration and evidence of efficiency and effectiveness, which is likely to encourage greater support.
9. **Operational impact.** It is very clearly understood that if this opportunity to improve performance is not taken, funding for UXO Lao will significantly reduce or even stop.
10. **Cost balance.** Current cost breakdown is around 75%/25% field to HQ. This ratio should not weigh heavier towards HQ and should ideally be closer to 80%/20%.

### ***Implementation***

The UXO Lao task force will continue to consider this concept and make decisions on implementation. More detailed analysis of team makeup; equipment; procedures; and numbers of teams – based on assumed available funding – will be undertaken.

### ***Next steps***

- Rationalise teams against expected funding availability.
- Implement staff reduction planning to achieve reduced requirement.
- Implement full training process to transition to multi role clearance/evidence-based survey teams.
- Downsize Risk Education teams.
- Ensure General Survey teams are fully capacitated.
- Ensure logistic support (vehicles, eqpt etc.) is fully available.
- Implement staff reduction in Provincial and Vientiane offices.
- Review IMSMA data to identify CHAs for clearance.
- Liaise with NPA over information management related to identification of CHA.