

## SUPPORT TO THE INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING OF THE NATIONAL REGULATORY AUTHORITY FOR THE MINE ACTION AND UXO SECTOR (NRA)

Project ID: 00080296

### Background

During the Second Indochina War (1964-1975), more than two million tons of explosive ordnance were dropped on Laos, making it, per capita, the most heavily-bombed country in the world. Today, much of the country is still contaminated with cluster sub-munitions and other Unexploded Ordnance (UXO). These kill and injure dozens of people a year, and their presence negatively affects socioeconomic development, preventing access to agricultural land and increasing the costs, through land clearance, of all development projects. In 2010, Lao PDR introduced a localized Millennium Development Goal, MDG9: *to reduce the impact of UXO*. The same year, the Convention on Cluster Munitions<sup>1</sup> came into force, obliging Lao PDR to make specific progress on UXO.



*The UXO contamination problem in Lao PDR is so severe that in 2010 the Government adopted a localized Millennium Development Goal. This became known as MDG 9: Reduce the impact of UXO. Credit: NRA*

<sup>1</sup> See [www.clusterconvention.org](http://www.clusterconvention.org)

### Project Summary

- Status: Active
- Duration: 2013-2016
- Geographic Coverage: Lao PDR
- Focus Area: Reducing the impact of UXO (MDG 9), crisis prevention and recovery
- Implementing Partner: NRA
- Websites: [www.nra.gov.la](http://www.nra.gov.la)

The National Regulatory Authority for UXO and Mine Action in Lao PDR (NRA) was established in 2005, becoming operational in 2006, by the Government of Lao PDR with the task of coordinating and regulating the overall management of the UXO sector in Lao PDR, including national, commercial and humanitarian operators. The NRA leads the country's policy formulation with regard to the UXO/Mine Action sector, accredits operators, coordinates operational activities, manages information and data on UXO, and manages quality of operations in the sector.

### Project Overview

Through this project, the UNDP supports the NRA to develop its institutional capacity in the areas of coordination and planning for the sector. This is to further UNDP's overall project goal of addressing the long-term humanitarian and development challenges posed by the presence of UXO. The NRA provides a UXO focal point within the Government and has developed a framework for implementing organisations. The UNDP also provides NRA with program oversight and administrative, technical and financial support to build local capacity and to provide support to staff. This reduces the number of those UXO victims and accidents, thus reducing the impact of UXO on individuals, families and communities living in UXO contaminated areas. This work also enables previously contaminated land to be safely farmed, or to be used as sites for development.

## Main Objectives and Outcomes

The primary outcome of this project is to support the government of Lao PDR in its efforts to reduce the impact of UXO, thereby enabling sustainable growth to lift the country from its current status as a Least Developed Country (LDC). In order to achieve this, the UNDP supports the development of the institutional capacity of the NRA to address key coordination needs for the UXO sector, to channel resources as effectively as possible to UXO activities with the maximum developmental and humanitarian effect.

Through this project, the NRA's regulatory and coordination capacity is being increased to better: 1) provide policy guidance and coordinate activities in the UXO sector; 2) plan and establish priority activities; 3) assess and accredit operators; 4) ensure compliance with national standards; 5) report to government and donors; 6) manage resources efficiently and transparently; and; 7) lead cooperation between stakeholders.

The principle of national ownership is central to the UNDP's support and a long-term, fully nationally-owned and managed capacity to efficiently manage and coordinate the sector for humanitarian and development purposes is the key output of the project.

## Results and Achievements to Date

During the project period, the NRA has successfully managed a budget of more than USD 20 million per year, with improved financial management practices and increased transparency of resource use.

The NRA has also assessed and accredited a total of 17 operators in the UXO sector, including 12 commercial and five humanitarian operators, allowing them to contribute their capacity and expertise to reducing the impact of UXO under national supervision.

Also in 2014, UXO risk education was formally included in the national school curriculum and more than 1,300 sets of schoolbooks have been printed and circulated. In 2015, 1,200 additional sets have been printed with the support from the Korea International Cooperation (KOICA)

To deal with the shortcomings in victim assistance (identification, immediate and ongoing medical and financial support), with the UNDP's support, the NRA has developed and adopted its first Victim Assistance Strategy.

Through close collaboration with leading humanitarian operators, the NRA has been able to develop and adopt an evidence-based survey methodology to increase the efficiency of clearance activities in terms of numbers of UXO recovered. The focus on survey and evidence has also brought Lao PDR closer to fulfilling its obligations with relation to quantifying the UXO threat as detailed in the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The NRA has been able, with UNDP's support, to field Quality Management teams in order to regulate the standard of work undertaken by all accredited operators. These teams help to

ensure that Standard Operating Procedures are followed to protect the safety of clearance operators dealing with the dangers of UXO.

The NRA has also established an Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) to track contamination, survey progress and clearance work. The establishment and management of this platform allows greater oversight and better-informed planning in the sector.

The UNDP has completed a Capacity Assessment of the NRA (as well as of UXO Lao) in 2014 and both bodies have identified key areas of need and improvement. This provides a framework through which the development of the two institutions can be managed and tracked in order to achieve national leadership and management of the UXO sector.

To further a coordinated approach to the UXO sector, in 2010 the UNDP established the *Trust Fund for Support to the Full Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Lao PDR*. This has helped to effectively mobilise and manage international assistance from numerous sources. The Trust Fund, which currently serves primarily as a mechanism for support to the NRA and UXO Lao, is operated under the framework of the national UXO strategy and UXO policies approved by the NRA Board. Its Steering Committee is chaired by the Government and co-chaired by UNDP, in close consultation with the UXO Sector Working Group. The Trust Fund complements other funding options available to donors, including bilateral support and direct funding to UXO operators.

### Funding (2013-2016):

- Project budget: USD 9,478,000
- Resource Contribution to date:
  - Australia: USD 1,215,222
  - DFID: USD 177,066
  - EU: USD 395,834
  - Ireland: USD 1,182,673
  - REP of Korea/KOICA: USD 2,507,012
  - Switzerland: USD 2,580,733
  - UNDP: USD 316,419
- Unfunded budget: USD1,102,000

### For more information:

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