

# **Evaluation of UNDP Support to Mine Action in Lao PDR, 2013-2016**

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# Evaluation of UNDP Support to Mine Action in Lao PDR, 2013-2016

## Executive Summary

This report presents an independent evaluation that examines the strategic relevance and positioning of the UNDP support under its *Support for the institutional Strengthening of the National Regulatory Authority for the UXO /Mine Action Sector (NRA) and of the Lao National UXO Programme (UXO Lao) 2013-2015* (now extended to 2016). The overall objective of this programme of cooperation between the UNDP and the Government of Lao PDR, is to support and further strengthen the institutional capacity of the NRA and the UXO Lao, the national UXO Sector operator. The NRA has lead responsibility for the regulation, coordination, and oversight of all work in the UXO sector, and to ensure that Lao PDR fulfils its legal obligations as a State Party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). The UXO Lao is the only not-for-profit national operator in Lao PDR, and currently undertakes more than half of all UXO survey, clearance, and risk education work throughout the country.

The two expected outputs of the project are:

- *OUTPUT 1: The National Regulatory Authority is able to effectively develop and provide policy guidance and to coordinate and regulate the UXO sector in support of national development goals, the implementation of the national UXO sector strategy “Safe Path Forward II”, and to ensure the fulfilment of relevant international treaty obligations*
- *OUTPUT 2: UXO Lao is better able to manage clearance and risk education programmes for the needs of communities at risk*

The report assesses support under the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, and sustainability, as well as considers monitoring and evaluation processes, under the Gender and Human Rights-Based Approach. It also makes forward-looking recommendations for the new programme (Appendix 1 provides the Terms of Reference for the evaluation). While the evaluation focusses on the support provided by the UNDP, in relation to the programme document, it almost inevitably makes comment on the work of the NRA and the UXO Lao. Further, while the recommendations are based on actions that the UNDP should take, they may have an impact on the UXO sector more broadly. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, other UXO operators, donors, and the NRA and UXO Lao, as well as the communities where UXO/Mine Action takes place.

The evaluation was conducted over a one month period in-country and included a document review (see Appendix 2 for documents consulted). A series of meetings were conducted with key stakeholders in Vientiane. One field visit was made to Xieng Khouang in the North, to meet partners, key stakeholders, and members of UXO affected areas (see Appendix 3 for a list of meetings). Meetings were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide that enabled respondents to talk openly and draw attention to issues that they considered important. This approach limits the possibility of preconceptions, prematurely narrowing the scope of the research, and overlooking important issues, while at the same time ensuring that the main areas of interest are covered. Where possible, data gathered from one interview was triangulated with document review and through meetings with other respondents. Given that some of the information provided may be regarded by respondents as

sensitive, care has been taken to ensure that meanings are correctly understood, and that as far as possible, individual respondents are not identifiable.

### Summary of findings

**Relevance:** The UNDP's support is directly relevant to the priorities of the Government of Lao PDR and is clearly aligned with national development objectives, as outlined in the 7<sup>th</sup> National Plan for Poverty Eradication (NPPE), Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 9, and the Government's international obligations under the Cluster Munition Convention (CCM). It should be noted, however, that while UXO contamination is in some of the poorest districts, there is no empirical evidence to support a causal link between UXO contamination and poverty. The UNDP plays a critical role in coordinating the Round Table Process and co-chairs the donor working groups for the UXO sector, with participation of key government officials, development partners and donors, and operators in the UXO sector. This provides a relevant forum for promoting dialogue between key stakeholders and government and is the primary platform for furthering the aid effectiveness agenda. Several donors and other stakeholders, however, were somewhat ambivalent towards the relevance of the UNDP's support.

**Effectiveness:** Overall, the programme has achieved, or is likely to have achieved by the end of 2016 most of its outputs. However, there is no data related to what these outputs contributed to (i.e. outcome level data or whether or not these outputs achieved their intended purpose). Furthermore, there is no data related to some of the UNDP's core programming principles, that is, capacity building, rights, safeguards, and gender or poverty reduction. In terms of the CCM, this is not particularly problematic. However, the UXO/mine action programme intends to contribute to human development outcomes, not simply the CCM commitments. A more effective programme document would include outcome-level results to promote outcome-level monitoring, evaluation, and outcome reporting.

The Trust Fund mechanism was primarily set up to contribute to the achievement of the CCM and is in accordance with the Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The mechanism was valued, especially by non-resident donors. However, at the time of the evaluation, a number of resident donors expressed concern with the Trust and, in particular, coordination, outcome, and impact reporting. This, in part, relates to capacity, but also to the programme document that only commits to outputs. The absence of outcome monitoring and reporting, however, does not enable donors to understand the benefits and safeguards applied to maximise their investment and minimise harm.

**Partnerships:** The UNDP has a number of long-standing partners in the Lao PDR and its role of Co-Chair of the UXO Sector working under the Round Table Process is valued. However, a number of stakeholders were frustrated with the quality of communication and coordination. Furthermore, communication could be more impactful if reports included outcome measures. At the community level, more thought needs to be given to how the recently approved Cluster Munition Survey (CMTS) and other approved survey processes will be communicated at the community level.

**Efficiency:** Overall, the structure of the Trust Fund is designed to maximise efficiency and is based on good practice enshrined in the Vientiane Declaration. While not explicit in the programme document, the demand for UXO clearance to contribute to development (which is rarely defined) has led service providers, including the UXO Lao, to undertake clearance for other UN organisations, such as the World Food Programme and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). While this enables investment, which may not have occurred otherwise, it has also contributed to inefficiencies. This is because clearance assets have been deployed to sites with no or very low levels of UXO. This partly relates to the lack of a national survey, whereby confirmed hazardous areas are located and mapped. This is beginning to be addressed through the CMTS. This is significant as clearance is time consuming

and expensive, so efficient use of resources is important and the NRA and the UXO Lao should continue to monitor the efficiency of clearance operations to make further improvements if possible.

The UNDP has well documented procedures in place that are designed to promote cost and time effectiveness and competitiveness, but these are not always well understood by the UXO Lao or the NRA. Without timely support from the UNDP, this can result in lost efficiencies. An important donor concern was the length of time taken to operationalise the NGO window in the Trust Fund, although at the time of the evaluation this was being addressed. There were some donor concerns regarding whether the GMS of 8% (agreed by member states) and direct costs associated with the programme provided value for money, although on the face of it, these charges seem similar to other providers.

**Sustainability:** For the purpose of this evaluation, sustainable outcomes relate to the sustainability of a UXO programme, given the absence of outcome data on operational activities of MRE, victim assistance, and clearance, and it is assumed that decontaminated land will not be re-contaminated. In their current form, neither the NRA office nor the UXO Lao are sustainable without donor funding. This is of concern as donor funds have not been constant over the last 20 years and this trend is likely to continue. Some donors are likely to exit the sector (or even leave Lao PDR all together) once the country exits the least developed nation status anticipated in 2020, and UXO/Mine Action may not fit neatly into the thematic funding windows. Notification 093/NRA provides some assurance that development agencies will have to budget for and purchase UXO clearance services where needed.

## Recommendations

For detailed recommendations please refer to Chapter 6 and Appendix 5.

### Programme design

1. The UNDP, with the NRA and the UXO Lao, should actively promote the allocation of resources to developing management capacities, clearly articulating how the UNDP's support contributes to programme outputs and outcomes and capacity development.

### Outputs, outcomes, impact and relevance

2. The UNDP should actively promote dialogue between the NRA, LNCRDPE, MPI, and other stakeholders, including province and district level planners, to articulate a transparent, systematic, and auditable process for task prioritisation, collection of relevant baseline and outcome indicators (possibly integrated into existing processes).
3. The UNDP should support the NRA, the UXO Lao, and other relevant stakeholders, to identify how UXO/Mine Action might contribute to the SDG targets and identify what, if any, outcome or impact level data collection can be mainstreamed into other SDG data collection processes.

### Effectiveness and efficiency of implementation

4. The UNDP should support discussions within the NRA and the Survey and Clearance Technical Working Group to review the CMTS and other approved processes under the new concept of operations to enable community voices and concerns to be heard & ensure all community members are provided with appropriate information about decisions that affect them.
5. The UNDP should support discussions within the NRA and the Survey and Clearance Technical Working Group to determine how efficiency and effectiveness of the new concept of operations will be evaluated.

### Partnerships and coordination

6. The UNDP should support the NRA hold quarterly operational meetings with development partners (program manager level).
7. The UNDP should support the NRA and UXO Lao to develop and implement an effective communication strategy, tailored to different stakeholder needs and focussed on application of safeguards, outputs, impacts and progress against the capacity building workplans.
8. The UNDP should support constructive dialogue with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and development partners to determine if the Trust Fund and its Terms of Reference are still appropriate.
9. The UNDP should continue to work with the NRA, the UXO Lao, and donors to ensure a coherent approach to the provision and coordination of technical advisory services.

#### **Gender and Human Rights-Based Approach**

10. The UNDP should support the NRA and the UXO Lao to ensure a pro-poor, gender sensitive focus including gender indicators at the output and outcome level and implementing the recent GMAP 2014 action plan and recommendations related to the 2008 gender assessment.

#### **Monitoring, evaluation and risk management**

11. The UNDP should further develop the capacity of the NRA and UXO Lao in all stages of the information cycle and to develop and implement a sector monitoring and evaluation framework that articulates minimum, output and outcome indicators.
12. The UNDP should support the NRA and the UXO Lao to integrate, monitor, and report on appropriate elements of the UNDP's recently released Social and Environmental Safeguards into their work.

#### **Sustainability**

13. The UNDP should continue to support the NRA to develop a strategy to transition to increased government financing of the sector. The strategy should be agreed on by the end of 2018, with implementation commencing at the beginning of 2019.
14. The UNDP should facilitate dialogue between the NRA, Ministry of Health, and WHO, and other relevant organisations to develop an action plan to review the quality of the incident surveillance and data collection to ensure alignment with (current or planned) injury surveillance systems, the integration of epidemiological principals into the surveillance of UXO injury; and adherence to WHO's minimal recommendation dataset for injury surveillance.



# Evaluation of UNDP Support to Mine Action in Lao PDR, 2013-2016

## 1. Introduction

This report examines the strategic relevance and positioning of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under the project *Support for the institutional Strengthening of the National Regulatory Authority for the UXO /Mine Action Sector (NRA) and the Lao National UXO Programme (UXO Lao) 2013-2016*<sup>1</sup>. The report assesses support under the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, and sustainability, and considers monitoring and evaluation processes, under the Gender and Human Rights-Based Approach. It also puts forward recommendations for the new programme.

### 1.1 Evaluation background

Since 1996, the UNDP and other United Nations (UN) bodies have supported the unexploded ordnance (UXO) sector of Lao PDR through a number of mechanisms and phases. This has included the establishment of the national clearance operator, UXO Lao, in 1996, and the establishment of the *National Regulatory Authority for the UXO /Mine Action Sector (NRA)* in 2004 under sector reform. The support delivered under the UNDAF 2012-2015, aims to assist the Government of Lao PDR in achieving Millennium Development Goal 9 (Lao MDG 9): *Reduce the impact of UXO*. The UNDP's support to the mine/UXO action sector has been delivered through two mechanisms: 1) the Trust Fund<sup>2</sup> and 2) third party cost sharing.

Since 2013, the UNDP's work in the UXO sector has been framed by the project *Support for the institutional Strengthening of the National Regulatory Authority for the UXO /Mine Action Sector (NRA) and of the Lao National UXO Programme (UXO Lao) 2013-2016*. The overall objective of this programme of cooperation between the UNDP and the Government of Lao PDR is to support, and further strengthen, the institutional capacity of the NRA and the national UXO Sector operator, UXO Lao. The NRA has lead responsibility for the regulation, coordination, and oversight, of all work in the UXO sector, to ensure that Lao PDR fulfils its legal obligations as a State Party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). UXO Lao is the only not-for-profit national operator in Lao PDR, and currently undertakes more than half of all UXO survey, clearance, and risk education work throughout the country.

The two expected outputs of the project are:

- *OUTPUT 1: The National Regulatory Authority is able to effectively develop and provide policy guidance, to coordinate and regulate the UXO sector in support of national development goals and the implementation of the national UXO sector strategy "Safe Path Forward II", and to ensure the fulfilment of relevant international treaty obligations.*
- *OUTPUT 2: UXO Lao is better able to manage clearance and risk education programmes for the needs of communities at risk.*

Under the umbrella of the current UNDAF, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has also been involved in Mine Risk Education and the development of materials to reduce children's exposure to

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<sup>1</sup> Originally planned to finish in 2015, the programme was been extended to the end of 2016 in August 2015

<sup>2</sup> Full title - *Trust Fund for Support to the Full Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in the Lao PDR within the Framework of the Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness*

UXO. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has also identified the effects of UXO as an area to address in terms of rehabilitation in its 2012-2015 Cooperation Strategy for Lao PDR.

The year 2015 is the penultimate year of UNDAF implementation (2012-2016), and an independent evaluation of its cooperation has been undertaken. The UNDAF evaluation presented an opportunity to commission an independent evaluation of the UN and UNDP's contributions to the UXO sector. This was provided for in the Monitoring and Evaluation provisions for the 2013-2016 project, which included an assessment in the final year (originally 2015, but the project has extended till 2016) with a focus on progress against projected outputs and their alignment to outcomes. In addition, given it has been more than five years since the Trust Fund was established, the evaluation presented a timely opportunity to review its relevance and effectiveness in the context of the full range of modalities used for UN and UNDP's work in the sector.

The evaluation coincided with the UNDP global evaluation of support to mine/UXO action, in which Lao PDR was one of the case studies. The evaluation, led by the UNDP's Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), was conducted in June-July 2015, with a focus on the impact of the UNDP support to the sector since the beginning of its engagement. It was expected that the IEO-led impact evaluation of the UNDP's support to the sector would provide useful recommendations for this evaluation. The year 2015 is also an important time in regards to UXO support and Trust Fund mechanism. The *Safe Path Forward II* strategy was subjected to a mid-term evaluation in 2015. The purpose of this was to take stock of achievements in the 2011-2015 period relative to the objectives and indicators of the National Strategic Plan. In addition to this, the evaluation intended to involve all stakeholders in making recommendations for 2016-2020, based on experience and highlighting achievements and shortcomings of each involved party in the process. Also, at the end of 2015, the government will launch its 8<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan. The First Review Conference of the CCM was also held in 2015. Together, these processes will assist in the design of the UNDP's continued involvement in the UXO sector in Lao PDR. Furthermore, the evaluation focussed on the extent to which the UN and UNDP's support addressed the rural development and livelihoods aspects of the Government of Lao PDR's national development plan, and how this can be improved.

## 1.2 Evaluation purpose

The evaluation covered the period of 2012-2015, including the UN and UNDP's support to the UXO sector, with a focus on the efficacy of the Trust Fund mechanism, the use of cost-sharing agreements, the provision of technical assistance, and other modalities of support. While initially planned to be closely coordinated with the UNDAF evaluation, this did not happen due to delays in start-up. Thus, the evaluation was conducted simultaneously to the IEO-led impact evaluation. The key parameters of the evaluation were assessed against the common evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability, and were:

### **Strategic Positioning, Concept and Design**

This included an assessment of the appropriateness of the objectives, planned outputs, activities, and inputs as compared to cost-effective alternatives within the time period of the evaluation (2013-2015).

### **Implementation**

The evaluation aimed to assess the implementation of the intervention, in terms of quality and timeliness of inputs, and efficiency and effectiveness of activities. Furthermore, it assessed the effectiveness of management, as well as the quality and timeliness of monitoring. In particular, the evaluation was asked to assess the use of adaptive management.

## **Partnership and Coordination**

The evaluation aimed to assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of the collaborations and partnerships that were established to deliver support to the UXO sector. This included an assessment of the partnerships with key line ministries, as well as with international development partners, non-governmental organisations, and local non-profit associations. The evaluation was asked to draw conclusions about the extent to which the UN and UNDP were effective in supporting the government in coordinating the support offered by all partners in the UXO sector, and the extent to which risks were taken into account with regards to partnership management.

## **Monitoring, Evaluation and Risk Management**

The evaluation assessed the extent to which adequate monitoring was undertaken throughout the evaluation period, and the extent to which evaluation systems adequately captured significant developments and informed responsive management. This included assessing how lessons learned were captured and operationalised throughout the programme period under investigation. This aspect included assessing how effectively the UN and UNDP's support to the UXO sector incorporated relevant global knowledge on good practices.

## **Gender and Human Rights-Based Approach**

The evaluation also examined the extent to which the project sought to strengthen a Rights-Based Approach and mainstream gender into the programme, including the measures taken to achieve this and how successful the actions were in addressing the specific rights-and gender-related aspects of the UXO issue.

### **1.3 Evaluation methods**

The evaluation was based on a desk review, key informant interviews, and community visits in Xieng Khouang. Reviewed documents included those provided by the UNDP, as well as those readily available from public sources. These included annual reports, programme documents, strategic country development documents, and any other available documents that provided evidence to inform the evaluation purpose. Key informants were identified using purposive sampling, based on the evaluators' subjective assessments of "who would know", in addition to a review of the organograms of UXO Lao, the NRA, and a list of donors. An initial list of potential key informants was drafted and shared with the UNDP to identify other people who should be included. Interviewees were also asked to recommend people who could provide insights into the evaluation questions. Interviews were primarily conducted face-to-face, usually in the workplace setting. Interviews used a semi-structured interview guide. This helped to ensure that the evaluators asked questions relevant to the evaluation, but also gave interviewees the opportunity to raise issues. One field visit was made to Xieng Khouang in the North to meet partners, key stakeholders, and members of UXO affected areas. Interviews lasted approximately 45-60 minutes in length and were conducted by an evaluator with a national researcher from the University of Health Sciences. Summaries of all the interviews were checked for consistency by either two international evaluators or an international evaluator and national researcher.

### **1.4 Evaluation limitations and constraints**

As with all evaluations, there are some limitations that need to be acknowledged. An important limitation to note is that the programme is essentially, from the UNDP's perspective, an institutional capacity building programme, yet the programme document does not include a definition of institutional capacity building. This, coupled with a lack of baseline data, makes evaluating the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of UNDP's support, in terms of institutional

capacity building, problematic. Furthermore, the programme document does not clearly articulate how the deployment of technical advisors and the activities they undertake will contribute to capacity development. There is also no audit trail of the UNDP's advisory work which makes evaluating the relevance and effectiveness of the UNDP's support in relation to capacity building difficult. This is important because the UNDP is not the only actor providing advisory capacity building services. Other actors include advisors contracted by other donors, international NGOs (INGOs), national institutions, and organisations based in the region. The lack of clarity or audit trail of the UNDP's advisory work makes assessing UNDP's contribution to any observed changes challenging.

## 2. Country Context

Situated in South East Asia, Lao PDR is a lower-middle-income, heterogeneous, multi-ethno linguistic society and a socialist one-party state (United Nations 2012). The geography is dominated by remote uplands and shares borders with Thailand to the west, Vietnam to the east, Myanmar and China to the north, and Cambodia to the south. Increasingly, the Lao PDR is linked to these countries through improved road networks and greater integration into regional trade. The country has a Human Development Index of 0.569, ranking it 139th out of 187<sup>3</sup> countries on the UNDP measurement of human development. The demographic transition is underway, evidenced by population growth, a large youthful population, increased life expectancy, and a changing health profile. The country is experiencing rapid socio-economic change. In recent years, economic growth has been strong, poverty has declined significantly, and impressive progress has been made across a range of other social and economic indicators, including education and health. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, for example, has steadily increased from 362.01 USD per capita in 1995 to 2,879 USD per capita in 2011, when the country was reclassified from a low to a low-middle income country and the national poverty headcount had declined from 46% in 1992 to 28% in 2008<sup>4</sup>. The government is also committed to graduating the Lao PDR from the least developed country status by 2020. Much of the economic growth has been driven by the development of the country as a provider of energy, minerals, timber, and cash crops, mainly destined for China, Vietnam, and Thailand.

Despite progress, economic growth has had limited impact on generating sufficient employment opportunities or demand for local services, especially for those in rural areas. Large disparities also remain between urban and rural areas, uplands and lowlands, amongst different ethnic groups, and between women, girls, men, and boys. The Gini coefficient has increased slightly from .30 in 1992 to .36 in 2008. Informal work, subsistence agriculture, and related activities, remain the key livelihood strategies, engaging approximately 71% of the population<sup>5</sup>. Farm productivity is low, with most farmers relying on rain-fed, traditional farming methods, with limited mechanisation. Farmers are producing just enough to support their food and non-food needs, making them risk-averse and limiting their capacity to innovate and invest in cash crops. Markets in remote areas are typically weak, with farmers often having limited capacity to negotiate fair prices, and transport links remain poor. In some areas, the government has pursued a policy of land concessions, granting land to both foreign and domestic companies for hydroelectric plants, mines, and plantations. As a result, families lose their access to land because of land concessions and face a rapid transition to casual wages and increased dependency on concession companies, which may contribute to downward mobility. While contract farming provides an alternative to plantation concessions, the lack of well-organized grower associations means that farmers often have limited experience with the principles of a market-based economy and lack the ability to secure fair

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<sup>3</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-1-human-development-index-and-its-components> accessed 12th August 2015

<sup>4</sup> Lao MoPI /World Bank, 2010

<sup>5</sup> World Bank. World Development Indicators: World Bank; 2012

prices for their products. Seven chronically poor provinces have been identified (i.e., Phongsaly, Luang Prabang, Huaphanh, Xieng Khouang, Savannakhet, Sekong and Attapeu)<sup>6</sup> and of these, Luang Prabang, Huaphanh, Xieng Khouang, Savannakhet, Sekong, and Attapeu have been identified as among the most UXO impacted provinces and have a UNDP supported UXO/Mine Action programme. Most of the UXO in these provinces is in rural areas, with many inhabitants chronically poor in relative terms, and food insecure<sup>7</sup>.

## 2.1 Origin and extent of national mine/UXO problem

Following the end of colonial rule in Laos in the 1950s, the country was increasingly integrated into the second Indo-China conflict. Most of the current UXO contamination in the country is from this era and the United States (US) bombing campaign (1964-73)<sup>8</sup>. The intensity of this campaign was such, that per capita, the Lao PDR became the most heavily UXO contaminated country in the world<sup>9</sup>. It is estimated that a total of two million tons of explosive ordnance was dropped on the country, including over 270 million explosive sub-munitions, commonly referred to as 'cluster munitions', or 'bombies'. Much of the bombing was in a predominately rural area, which became known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail, running along the Lao/Vietnam border<sup>10</sup>.

The US Department of State has provided the Lao PDR with available strike site data for the period of 1964-1973. This provides some indication of the areas that are likely to be contaminated with UXO, but does not allow for an estimation of the failure rates of the various munitions dropped (estimated to be about 10-30%). Consequently, obtaining accurate estimates of the areas with UXO contamination is difficult using the bombing data alone. More detailed information about contaminated or suspected contaminated areas mainly comes from local key informants and injuries. The provinces that have the most UXO impact are: Huaphanh, Xieng Khouang, Luang Prabang, Khammouane, Savannakhet, Champasak, Saravan, Sekong, and Attapeu. Important to note, however, is that this data is based on available bombing records and a 1997 Handicap International Socio-Economic Survey, rather than a technical survey that identified confirmed hazardous areas. In 2010, the First Meeting of States Parties (1MSP) stated in Article 7 of the Transparency Report for Lao PDR, that an estimated 87,000 km<sup>2</sup> of land is contaminated with UXO, including explosive sub-munitions in 14 of the 18 Laotian provinces. This estimate was revised down in the 2nd MSP to 8,470 km<sup>2</sup>. This calculation is based on 70,000 individual targeted locations, indicated by bombing data released by the US.

## 2.2 UNDP support to mine/UXO action in the Lao PDR 1995-2012

Prior to UNDP engagement in clearance efforts, UXO clearance was undertaken by the military with technical training and equipment from Vietnam and the Soviet Union. UXO clearance was also undertaken by commercial companies, including Milsearch, a joint private venture with the Lao military, funded by private investors or donors. Other interventions were also undertaken on the periphery of development projects by local de-miners, with support from the military. However, in many cases, villagers were left to undertake clearance themselves<sup>11</sup>. In 1995, the UNDP and UNICEF established, with

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<sup>6</sup> UNDP. Country analysis report: Lao People's Democratic Republic. Vientiane, Lao PDR: UNDP, 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Epprecht M, Minot N, Dewina R, Messerli P, Heinemann A. The geography of poverty and inequality in the Lao PDR. Berne, Switzerland, Washington DC, USA: Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South, Geographica Bernensia, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), 2008.

<sup>8</sup> National Regulatory Authority, Post-clearance impact assessment, NRA, Vientiane 2010

<sup>9</sup> An estimated 2-3 million tonnes were dropped on the country

<sup>10</sup> Handicap International. Living with UXO, final report, national survey on the socio-economic impact of UXO in the Lao PDR. Vientiane: 1997

<sup>11</sup> Handicap International. Living with UXO, final report, national survey on the socio-economic impact of UXO in the Lao PDR. Vientiane: 1997, Bolton M. Foreign aid and landmine clearance. London: I.B. Touris & Co Ltd; 2010

the government, the Lao PDR Trust Fund for UXO clearance, with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) as the main partner. Projects financed through the Trust Fund could be executed through a range of entities, providing that the focus was on affected communities and included: UXO clearance and associated awareness activities; research into effective clearance techniques; food security or income generating activities where food shortages were a result of UXO contamination; exploring the potential to develop a national commercial UXO clearance capacity; technical and management capacity building; and strengthening health service capacities to manage casualties from the acute trauma phase through to rehabilitation. Despite this broad range of potential activities, the Trust Fund was primarily used to support the development of the Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme (UXO Lao). Established by the Prime Minister's Decree Number 49 (13th February 1996), UXO Lao was established under the MLSW to coordinate activities related to UXO clearance and community awareness. The MLSW acted as the Chair of the UXO Committee, and UXO Lao acted as the Secretariat until 2000, when a Prime Ministerial Decree handed responsibility over to the newly created National Steering Committee Office. UXO Lao also became a service provider, and with the UNDP support, the programme was established in nine provinces thought to be the most contaminated, based on the 1997 Handicap International Socio-Economic Survey funded through the Trust Fund. To enhance technical and management capacity of UXO Lao, and to mobilize financial support, the UNDP secured support from international actors in each of the nine provinces where it was operational. These included Gerbera (Huaphanh and Luang Prabang), Handicap International (Savannakhet), Norwegian People's Aid (Attapeu and Sekong), World Vision (Khammouane), and later, the Belgian military (Champasak) and Mines Advisory Group (Xieng Khouang and Saravan).

In 2002, the UNDP and UXO Lao commissioned an evaluation<sup>12</sup> that recommended separating the planning, coordination, and regulatory functions from UXO Lao to another entity. It also recommended that the sector be opened to more private and commercial actors, establishing a quasi-market<sup>13</sup>. This division of labour was consistent with that promoted by the UNDP and other UN agencies, and led to the establishment of the NRA in 2004. The NRA was responsible for sector coordination and regulation with UXO Lao, positioned as a service provider. In response to the evaluation, the UNDP and the Government of Lao PDR (GOL) developed the first national strategic plan (Safe Path Forward 2003 – 2013).

A UNDP-supported 2008 mid-term evaluation recommended that the Safe Path Forward be revised to better account for the work of all operators, and to include a focus on development and poverty-reduction<sup>14</sup>. The UNDP supported the NRA to coordinate a participatory process in revision of the strategy, resulting in 'The Safe Path Forward II (SPF II) 2010 – 2020', which was approved in 2012. In 2008, the Lao PDR also became the second state to sign the CCM and subsequently hosted the First Meeting of States Parties in November 2010. At this meeting, the UNDP Trust Fund to support the full implementation of the CCM in the Lao PDR was established, and Lao MDG9, which is specific to UXO/Mine Action in Lao PDR and not part of the global MDGs, was unveiled (see box 1 below). Since 2011, the NRA has been under the Prime Minister's Office (Ministerial Decree No 604/PM). The timeframe of the Safe Path Forward II is also consistent with the Lao PDR's deadline for meeting the provisions stipulated in the CCM (2008). This requires the clearance and destruction of cluster munition

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<sup>12</sup> Keeley, R, Allcock A, Singthilath, T and Kongsaysy, M, Mission to Assess Future Sustainable Options of the Lao UXO Trust Fund and the UXO Lao Mine Action Programme, September 2002

<sup>13</sup> Delivery of public goods designed to reap the assumed efficiency gains of free markets without losing the equity benefits of traditional systems of public administration and financing.

<sup>14</sup> Griffin, R, Keeley, R and Sayyasouk, P, *UXO Sector Evaluation Lao PDR*, 2008

remnants, located in cluster munition contaminated areas under its jurisdiction or control, within 10 years of entry into the force.

#### Box 1: Lao Millennium Development Goal 9

##### **Millennium Development Goal 9**

Reduce the impact of UXO in Lao PDR in accordance with the National Strategic Plan for the UXO sector "The Safe Path Forward II".

**Target 9a:** Ensure the complete clearance of UXO from priority/high value agricultural land by 2020

9.1 20,000 hectares released from UXO contamination

**Target 9b:** Reduce substantially the number of casualties as a result of UXO incidents

9.2 Number of casualties reported as a result of UXO incidents

**Target 9c:** Ensure that the medical and rehabilitation needs of all UXO survivors are met in line with treaty obligations under the Convention on Cluster Munitions

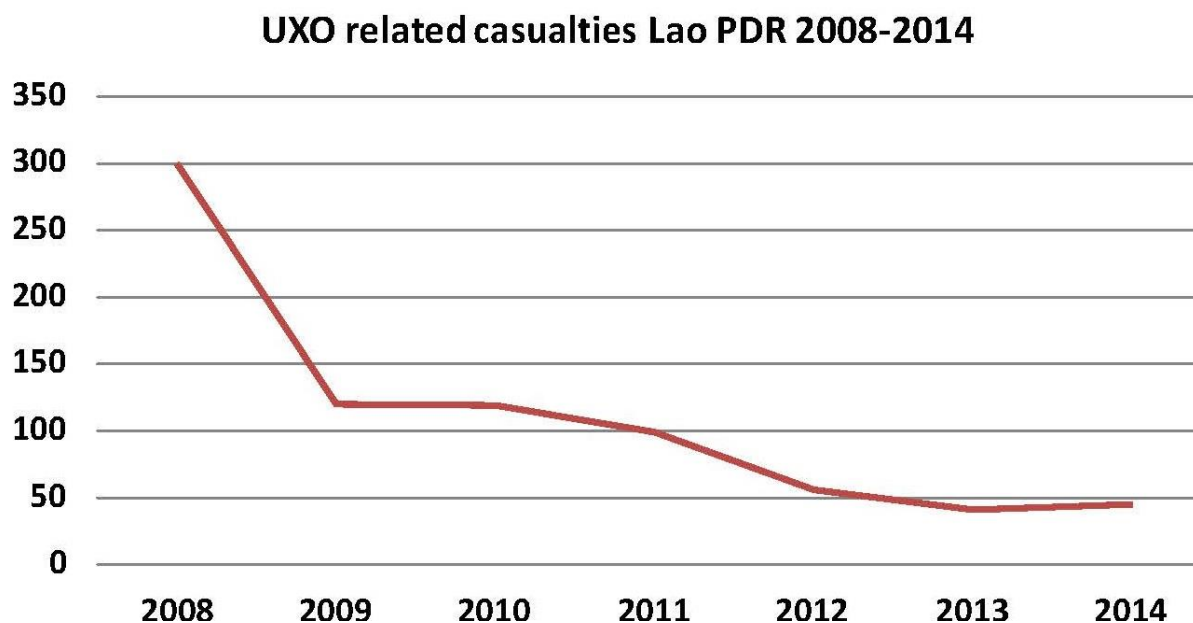
9.3 Provision of proper assistance to UXO survivors

Initially linked to saving lives, the work of the UXO sector has increasingly been linked to development and poverty eradication. The causal linkages between UXO and rural poverty are not well-supported by empirical evidence, nevertheless, some of the districts identified as the poorest in the country are also some of the most UXO polluted<sup>15</sup>. Furthermore, UXO contamination can act as a barrier to investment opportunities, including basic community assets, such as safe water, all weather access roads, and irrigation. The presence of UXO has also been an important contributor to the burden of injury-related mortality and morbidity. From 1995 until relatively recently, injuries were reported to be around 300 per annum. For example, in 2008, the number of new casualties was 302. Currently, the number of new casualties is below 50, and hence, below the national Lao MDG9 injuries per annum (refer to Figure 1). Of note is that these figures are actual numbers, rather than based on the more common population health measures of incidence and mortality. If these measures were used, the decline is likely to be sharper given the increase in population between 1995 (estimated to be around 4.5 million) to current estimates of 6.8 million. As elsewhere, males of working age are disproportionately harmed, and as such, UXO injury can have a catastrophic effect on family livelihoods. This is due not only to the permanent or temporary loss of labour to a family, but also high-out-of-pocket health expenses, with few rural farmers having any kind of formal insurance or social protection. While not all injuries result in long-term impairments, an estimated 11% of disabilities in Lao PDR are due to UXO injury, making it the third known cause of disability. However, some caution is needed in interpreting the prevalence of UXO-related disabilities given that there is no systematic data collection of people with disabilities.

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<sup>15</sup> From the outset of the programme for example it was documented that farmers continued to use contaminated land

Figure 1 UXO related casualties Lao PDR, 2008-2014<sup>16</sup>



### 2.3 Other international stakeholders in mine/UXO action in Lao PDR

**International NGO Mine Action operators:** Following an evaluation in 2002 and sector reform in 2004, international UXO/Mine Action NGOs have provided UXO clearance and other related UXO/Mine Action services. This has independently created a quasi-market and more options for donors and other purchasers of UXO/Mine Action services. Currently, there are five international NGOs operating in the country (Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA), HALO Trust (HALO) Handicap International (HI), and Japan Mine Action Service (JMAS)). These service providers work under the coordination of the NRA and participate in Technical Working Group (TWG) meetings, sharing lessons learned. For instance, JMAS support UXO Lao in Xieng Khouang with technical advice. There is no standard approach to task identification and prioritisation, thus each INGO may operate in different ways, although the processes are broadly similar and should be in accordance with the National Standards. These NGOs have also, at different times, partnered with UXO Lao, and in recent times, this included the piloting of new technical survey methods. Other international service providers, working mainly in MRE and victim assistance, include: Catholic Relief Services (CRS), World Education (WE), Quality of Life Association (QLA), Cooperative Prosthetic and Orthotic Enterprise (COPE), Danish Church Aid (DCA), and Spirit of Soccer (SoS).

**Commercial providers:** Commercial providers include BACTEC Lao Ltd, a branch of International Limited in the UK, and Milsearch, a private Australian company. These providers (alongside Lao commercial

<sup>16</sup> Annual Report of the National Regulatory Authority for UXO/Mine Action in Lao PDR, 2014



operators) work for profit and respond to a variety of requests from private organisations (for and not-for-profit) who need UXO clearance prior to investment.

**Donors:** Donors who funding through the UNDP in the project period included Australia, Belgium, Canada, DFID, European Union, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, and the UNDP TRAC Fund. At the time of the evaluation, the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) was also channelling funds through the UNDP. Other donors fund the NRA or other service providers, including UXO Lao, bilaterally. The US is a significant donor and co-chair, together with the UNDP, of the UXO Sector Working Group in the Round Table Process, and provides technical advisors to the NRA and UXO Lao (currently contracted to Sterling international).

**Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining:** The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining has provided support in relation to data management and gender mainstreaming, to the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA).

### 3. Situation at beginning of UNDP UXO support project 2013-2016

#### 3.1 Programme Organisation

##### 3.1.1 UNDP support

The UNDP provides the overall institutional support to the NRA and UXO Lao, including financial oversight and assistance to the government in framing UXO issues. It also highlights the strategic priorities within the broader development and international cooperation context. Financial support is mainly provided through the Trust fund or cost-sharing arrangements. Outside of these mechanisms, the NRA and UXO Lao are also supported by bilateral donors, which may include the provision of technical advisors who are not necessarily coordinated by the UNDP advisors. The programme began as a directly executed programme modality (DEX or DIM) and transitioned to a nationally implemented modality (NIM). The NIM means that the NRA and UXO Lao, themselves, manage the daily management and operations.

##### 3.1.2 The National Regulatory Authority for the UXO sector in the Lao PDR (NRA)

The NRA is the secretariat of the inter-ministerial NRA Board and the national coordinator of the UXO sector. It was established with support from the UNDP, based on a recommendation from a sector evaluation in 2004. Formally operationalised in 2006, the NRA has the overall responsibility for coordination, regulation, and oversight of the UXO sector. It is also the focal point within the Government for the implementation of the CCM's international treaty obligations (2008). The treaty was signed by Lao PDR in March 2009 and was enacted in August, 2010. The framework for the UXO sector in Lao is set out in the sector strategy SPF II 2010-2020. This sector strategy is also expected to act as a multiplier for MDGs 1-8, as well as a means for achieving Lao MDG 9. A Prime Minister's Decree in 2011<sup>17</sup> appointed a new NRA Board, chaired by the Minister to the Prime Minister's Office and Chair of the National Leading Steering Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication. This shift in leadership and institutional alignment of the NRA Board was seen as a step towards integrating the UXO sector into the broader poverty reduction efforts of the government. The main responsibilities of the NRA, as contained in the SPF II, include:

- Implementation and monitoring of the SPF II;
- Provision of policy direction and prioritisation of operations within the sector;
- Accreditation and licensing of all Mine Action operators;

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<sup>17</sup> Prime Minister's Decree 406, of 8th November 2011

- Management of the national database;
- Coordination of all UXO/Mine Action activities in the country;
- External QA/QC of all UXO/Mine Action activities;
- Conduct of impact assessments and other studies;
- Representing the Government in relevant international fora; and
- Providing a secretariat function as related to international treaty obligations

Table 1 shows the number of staff working in the NRA in 2013 and 2014 (source: NRA Annual Report, 2013, 2014).

Table 1 Number of staff working in the NRA in 2013 and 2014

NRA staff 2013 and 2014							
<i>Office</i>				<i>Operations</i>			
<i>National</i>		<i>International</i>		<i>National</i>		<i>International</i>	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>2013 (N = 47)</b>							
20	14	2	0	7	2	2	0
<b>2014 (N = 47)</b>							
21	15	2	0	5	2	2	0

### 3.1.3 UXO Lao

UXO Lao is the national UXO clearance operator and was established in 1996 to undertake pre-planned UXO clearance, “roving” tasks, community-based surveys, and risk education. It currently works in nine of the most affected provinces. It maintains an office in Vientiane and has offices and operations in the nine most impacted provinces as identified by the 1997 Handicap International Socio-Economic Survey. The operations reflect the generic pillars of Mine Action, but exclude advocacy and victim assistance. Quality management (QM) aims to ensure the effectiveness, efficiency, and safety of operations and is overseen by a QM Unit in Vientiane. The increase in capacity of the QM Unit has been concurrent with the decrease in international technical assistance at the provincial level. Quality management includes the Standard Operating Procedures, three mobile QM teams, and ten audit teams – one in Vientiane and one in each of the nine provinces where UXO Lao works. The work of UXO Lao is also guided by the Safe Path forward II. Table 2 shows the number of staff working in UXO Lao in 2013 and 2014 (source: NRA Annual Report, 2013, 2014).

**Table 2 Number of staff working in UXO Lao in 2013 and 2014**

UXO Lao staff 2014							
<i>Office</i>				<i>Operations</i>			
<i>National</i>		<i>International</i>		<i>National</i>		<i>International</i>	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>2013 (N = 1200)</b>							
136	53	3	1	814	193	0	0
<b>2014 (N = 980)</b>							
88	32	3	0	722	135	0	0

### 3.1.4 Sector working groups

Within the Round Table Process, the Government of Lao PDR established a UXO Sector Working Group, chaired by the NRA Board Chairman and co-chaired by the UNDP Resident Representative and the Ambassador of the United States. This is in accordance with the Vientiane Declaration for Aid Effectiveness. The UXO Sector Working Group oversees the work of the three technical working groups facilitated by the NRA, that is, clearance, risk education, and victim assistance. The intent of the UXO Sector Working Group and the technical working groups is to enhance coordination within the sector and promote effective and efficient use of assets.

In the programme period being evaluated, the priority actions and activities for the sector were identified as survey and clearance, focussing on areas identified by the National Leading Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (NLCRDPE). These areas included further developing the capacity of the Lao army to undertake survey and clearance in accordance with national standards and under the oversight of the NRA, and on-going community awareness and victim assistance activities. These activities were intended to contribute to the achievement of the objectives outlined in the Safe Path Forward II and were planned to be supported by the UXO Trust Fund. The Fund was also committed to broadening its scope to include funding opportunities for non-government organisations and community-based organisations, and, in particular, disability and victim assistance organisations working in the sector, as well as risk reduction activities. According to the Trust fund, for example, point 1 d reads: "As contributions for the purpose of co-financing a specific project or projects in support of victim assistance to be handled in accordance with UNDP's policies and procedures for contribution arrangements".

It is important to note that in UXO contaminated areas, people have become accustomed to living with the presence of UXO, and contaminated land is frequently cultivated. Indeed, even at the start of the programme in 1996, widespread cultivation of contaminated land was reported. This is likely to be because UXO and cluster munitions are not pressure activated like landmines, and people can often move surface items relatively safely and/or work around items. Indeed, the most common reason for not expanding land is a lack of labour and low productivity, primarily due to farming methods based on rain-fed agriculture with limited use of chemical fertilisers, lack of mechanisation, and supply and

demand-side factors related to limited access to markets<sup>18</sup>. By the time the programme started in 1996, UXO-related injuries had already plateaued to 300 per year and remained at this level until recently. However, the number of people who survive UXO injuries has increased. The reasons for this have not been examined, but may be due to different patterns of engagement with UXO or better access to health clinics or trauma care. Survivors often, but not always, continue to live with functional impairments and disability.

### 3.2 Issues to be addressed at beginning of project (2012)

Prior to developing the present programme (2013-2016), a review was undertaken in 2012 to inform the UNDP's approach for the 2013-2016 programme<sup>19</sup>. The review was also done to support both the UXO Lao and the NRA to ensure accountability for the expenditure and the delivery of outputs contributing to clearly formulated outcomes. This evaluation noted that tasks for UXO clearance were planned and prioritised somewhat ad hoc, with requests for clearance gathered at the local level. In the case of UXO Lao, tasks were compiled up through various administrative levels, from village to district, and further to provincial and national levels, whereby they were integrated into provincial and national level workplans. The way in which this approach has developed may be partly due to the fact that people use contaminated land. Thus, at certain times of the year, farmers, especially subsistence or semi-subsistence, do not want UXO clearance, as they would lose their crop which would have catastrophic effects on their livelihoods. In addition, until relatively recently, the road and communication infrastructure has been very weak, with UXO clearance in many districts restricted to areas with all-weather access in the rainy season. Another issue is that there has been no national level technical survey that has identified the extent of the UXO contamination or confirmed hazardous areas. As not all service providers undertake a technical survey when they receive requests for UXO clearance, and because of this, some areas have been decontaminated despite not being contaminated. This has been partly, but not limited to, areas where clearance was requested for specific infrastructure investment. These investments have typically been World Food Programme (WFP) projects, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) projects, or NGO projects. These projects have included clearance requests to access roads or relatively small areas, as well as to spot tasks for school rehabilitation, fish ponds, weirs, irrigation canals, community water systems, and small plots of land for agriculture. These tasks have typically been undertaken in areas where there is known local UXO contamination, for example, in highly impacted districts, such as Boulapha. The tasks have been driven, in part, by international organisational risk management strategies (i.e. not wanting to put local people at risk by working in suspected contaminated areas) and also the drive to link mine/UXO action with 'development'. In the latter, checking areas where known development inputs were available has often been seen as attractive in reporting terms. This is because of the ability to link clearance with a new livelihood asset, for example, an access road or a weir. Furthermore, it helps to demonstrate livelihood impact than the much slower return, in terms of 'development impact', on clearing agricultural land for subsistence farmers.

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<sup>18</sup> See for example, NRA, 2010, Post-clearance impact assessment, NRA: Vientiane; Durham, J, 2012. Examining who benefits, in what ways, and in what contexts from Mine Action in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Kurdish Iraq. Ph.D. Curtin University, Centre for International Health; Durham, Jo, Nanhthavong, Vong and Sychareun, Vanphanom (2016) Explaining how unexploded ordnance clearance enhances livelihoods in the Lao PDR. Evaluation and Program Planning, 54 82-93. Also refer standard development texts on the capacity of low-income farmers to expand productivity such as Sen A, K. Development as Freedom New York: Anchor Books; 1999; Todaro, M. P., & Smith, S. C. (2015). Economic development (12th ed.). Harlow, U.K: Pearson

<sup>19</sup> Sekkenes, S & Palmer, A, Programme Review 2003-2011 UNDP support to NRA and UXO Lao, UXO sector, LAO PDR, 2012

The 2012, evaluation commended the NRA on endeavouring to fulfil each of its responsibilities and the progress it had made since its inception (for a full discussion refer to Sekkenes and Palmer, 2012). The report also noted that the UXO Lao was generally regarded as competent, with a positive work ethic, and a high level of understanding of how the different functions and work areas fit together. It was also noted that the UXO Lao had well-established standard operating and administrative procedures and a commitment to achieving annual targets and goals. The 2012 report provided a large number of recommendations for the UNDP, the NRA and the UXO Lao, that are summarised here. The report highlighted that while the programme was relatively competent and efficient in relation to UXO clearance, a more strategic, proactive, coordinated, and systematic approach for priority setting, with agreed upon criteria, would improve cost-efficiency and cost effectiveness. Other recommendations included establishing the extent of UXO contamination (also consistent with the CCM); enhancing the capacity of the NRA to fully undertake its accreditation; ensuring quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) responsibilities and compliance with the National Standards; shifting from an approach whereby only areas requested are cleared to also clearing adjacent land that is part of the 'footprint'; continuing to ensure targeted Mine Risk Education (MRE); and integrating the Victim Assistance (VA) activities of the NRA and the newly established multi-stakeholder coordination body, led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW), focusing on people with disabilities. With regards to the UXO Lao, the 2012 evaluation recommended promoting better use of data and application of lessons learned, continuing to improve efficacy and effectiveness, developing monitoring and evaluation procedures, providing training of basic financial management and budget drafting to relevant staff, and integrating lessons learned to new budgets. The recommendations for the UNDP included promoting results-oriented, outcome reporting, based on the output achieved, providing training on new concepts and methodologies, strengthening critical thinking, supporting the recapturing of perimeters of clearance done in the past to contribute to a more coherent baseline, and reviewing salaries against labour market expectations.

The UNDP also provides a Technical Advisor (TAs) to both the NRA and the UXO Lao. The 2012 evaluation recommended that the TAs provide more advice on the strategic and integrated aspects of their work, rather than simply on the technical aspects. The report also noted that as the UNDP is not the only organisation providing TA support to the NRA and UXO Lao, there is a huge scope for fragmentation of TA support. The report recommended a more coherent reporting and accountability structure that applied to all TAs, regardless of which organisation/donor paid their salaries. Other recommendations for the UNDP were to leverage the UNDP's other work in, for example, MDG localisation, to support capacity development in the NRA and the UXO Lao, and to use NIM procedures as an opportunity for capacity development, especially in areas such as programming, budgeting, reporting, procurement, monitoring and to improve communication. The report also noted that the government's financial contribution to the programme needed to be increased and properly reported.

The evaluation also noted that many stakeholders were not entirely happy with the quality, timeliness, and transparency of the UNDP's communication and the lack of clarity over how tasks are prioritised (also mentioned in the 2002 and 2008 evaluations and a 2010 impact assessment). Stakeholders were also concerned about the lack of clarity regarding the reporting of outputs (i.e. amount of land cleared, number of UXOs removed, number of beneficiaries, etc.) with no monitoring of outcomes or impact. The NRA supported an impact evaluation in 2010, but lessons learned have not been systematically applied. Similarly, in 2008, the UNDP undertook a gender assessment, but efforts to implement the recommendations and mainstream gender remained modest at best.

### 3.3 Expected end-of-project situation

Based on the 2012 evaluation, the Safe Path Forward II (SPII) and the 7<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NESPD), the 2013-2016 project *Support for the institutional Strengthening of the National Regulatory Authority for the UXO /Mine Action Sector (NRA) and of the Lao National UXO Programme (UXO Lao) 2013-2016* - a cooperation between the UNDP and the Government of Lao PDR, identified a number of priorities. This included a survey and clearance, with a focus on a rapid response explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) capacity and planned survey and clearance in areas identified as priority by the NLCRDPE. It also included further developing the capacity of the army to undertake UXO survey and clearance and integration of some of the key recommendations of the 2012 evaluation. As stated earlier, and repeated here for ease, the two expected outputs of the project are:

*OUTPUT 1: The National Regulatory Authority is able to effectively develop and provide policy guidance and to coordinate and regulate the UXO sector in support of national development goals, the implementation of the national UXO sector strategy "Safe Path Forward II", and to ensure the fulfilment of relevant international treaty obligations.*

*OUTPUT 2: UXO Lao is better able to manage clearance and risk education programmes for the needs of communities at risk.*

In particular, the project aimed to further strengthen the capacity of the NRA and the UXO Lao to meet their targets under the SPII; meet obligations under the CCM and other relevant treaties; and contribute to achieving the MDGs and, in particular, Lao MDG9. The UNDP support was mainly to be channelled through the Trust Fund to support the UXO Lao and the NRA, but also non-government, national, not-for-profit, and community-based organisations. This was anticipated to be through disability organisations to support risk reduction. Channelling funds through the Trust Fund was expected to contribute to multi-year national planning, increased effectiveness and efficiency, and improved links between the MPI and the NLCRDPE. Also identified as important, was assisting the government to develop a long-term resource mobilisation strategy to support the transition to less reliance on international donor funding. This was also in response to the 2012 evaluation that noted that government financial contributions to the programme needed to be increased. The strategy also outlined a commitment to continue to provide the UNDP-supported Technical Advisors (TAs) to both the UXO Lao and the NRA, and to undertake an institutional capacity development assessment to map out current capacity baselines and to develop a three-year plan for the two organisations. The key areas of action, with specific activities and goals, were set out for the NRA under survey and clearance, mine risk education, victim assistance, and institutional capacity building. They were also set out for the UXO Lao, relating to estimated number of hectares cleared and items removed, as well as estimated number of individuals supported. Other actions were related to clearance and land release, risk education, survey, roving tasks, strengthening management capacity, providing training for UXO personnel (through the training centre), and adopting new technology and methods as appropriate.

## 4 UNDP program support 2013-2015

### 4.1 Summary of support provided during this period

In this section, the report summarises the support provided by the UNDP under the specific parameters for the evaluation and subsequent recommendations. These relate to: 1) strategic positioning, concept, and design; 2) implementation; 3) partnership and coordination; 4) monitoring, evaluation, and risk management; and 5) Rights-Based Approach and gender mainstreaming. This section will then proceed

to discuss how efforts were undertaken to tackle the issues “to be addressed” identified at the beginning of the project.

#### 4.1.1 Strategic Positioning, Concept and Design

The UNDP’s strategic positioning is related to the Government of Lao PDR’s priorities and the design of the UN/UNDP’s overall intervention. It also relates to the appropriateness of the objectives, planned outputs, activities, and inputs, as compared to cost-effective alternatives. The UNDP’s UXO programme is clearly relevant to, and aligned with, the national development objectives as outlined in the 7<sup>th</sup> NSEDP and Lao MDG9. UXO issues, including new survey procedures, are also contained within the draft NSEDP, to be unveiled in December 2015. The UNDP was particularly active in advocating for its inclusion. The programme is also aligned to the UNDP’s core focus of poverty reduction in achieving the MDGs and institutional capacity development goals. It should be noted, however, that casual links between poverty and UXO contamination have not been empirically demonstrated. In the period of 2012-2015, the UNDP has not effectively supported the integration of other relevant strategic priorities, including those from the 2012 evaluation, such as gender equality and facilitating south-south approaches, despite regional expertise.

The UNDP plays a critical and valued role in the Round Table Process and co-chairs, with the US Ambassador, the donor working groups for the UXO sector. This provides a relevant forum for promoting dialogue between key stakeholders and the government. It is also a platform for forwarding the aid effectiveness agenda, including the Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation Framework, and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation.

The project document results and resources framework describes outputs and actions, primarily for the NRA and the UXO Lao. Most of the UNDP’s effort has been directed towards achieving these outputs. However, despite being an institutional capacity development programme, the project document contains no definition of capacity building, how it will be achieved, or even specific capacity building indicators. This is an important omission because it provides limited guidance for the UNDP TAs, and, indeed, key information regarding the skills that TAs are required to bring to the task. Arguably, it also means that the UNDP’s effort is directed at the output level, with less attention given to higher-level outcomes and impact level objectives. In addition, it means that the UNDP supported reports are focussed at the output level, with limited attention given to documenting outcomes (including capacity building outcomes). In turn, this creates tension regarding the quality of reports provided to donors, which should include donor reporting requirements and evidence of developmental aid providing value for money and achieving donor objectives. This is particularly important in an environment of reduced budgets, especially with a shift from humanitarian support to development aid, as Lao PDR progressed from low-income status to lower-middle income country status.

The Trust Fund administered by the UNDP, includes an eight percent General Management Support (GMS) fee (seven percent for the EU), agreed upon by member states. This applies to both the Trust Fund and Cost-Sharing Agreements<sup>20</sup>. Services provided from this fee are outlined in the UNDP’s Policy on Cost Recovery from Regular and Other Resources. While these are standard charges across the UNDP programmes, the UNDP has not consistently communicated to donors how these charges are used to secure sound financial management and protect donor investment. This is further compounded for

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<sup>20</sup> The fee of 8% has been in place from 2014, previously it was 7%

some donors by aggregated reports that are provided to the Trust Fund, meaning it is not possible for donors to assess value for money.

#### 4.1.2 Implementation

The evaluation also considered the activities that have been implemented to generate outputs. Positioning the UXO programme as a national implementation strategy seems relevant, given that the government is directly concerned with the programme's activities and results. This is evidenced by the integration of UXO issues into poverty reduction plans and the shift of the UXO sector to the Prime Minister's Office under the NLCRDPE. Both the NRA and the UXO Lao, however, have a somewhat ambiguous status. While technically a nationally implemented UNDP supported project, they also have many of the characteristics of a government department and unit, but receive no government funding. In general, it was felt that UNDP support contributed to the NRA succeeding in coordinating UXO/Mine Action activities – particularly those of the not-for-profit sector. Particularly useful has been the support provided by the UNDP TAs in planning and chairing meetings and Technical Working Groups. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the NRA, in particular, have benefited from the UNDP support in terms of meeting its CCM compliance requirements (Articles 1,3,4,5,6,7,9, and 11) and being adequately prepared for, and participating in, international meetings.

An area in which respondents felt less confident was the effectiveness of UNDP support in developing the capacity of the NRA to meet its Quality Assurance/ Quality Control obligations. Some respondents were also somewhat ambiguous about the effectiveness and efficiency of the NRA in terms of ensuring maximum impact for investment. International NGOs, in particular, expressed frustration regarding the length of time taken to process MOUs and the UNDP's capacity to influence this. This has been a long-standing issue, but is not one restricted to the UXO/mine action sector. It relates more broadly to overall administrative capacity and has been a subject of much discussion in NGO and government forums. In general, the processing of MOUs for the UXO/mine action sector do not seem to take significantly longer than those in other sectors. Further, respondents felt that while the NRA asserts its authority over NGOs, it takes a more relaxed approach to the activities of other service providers, notably for-profit services and the army. The UNDP could support the NRA further to ensure that there is no real or perceived conflict of interests. In the second quarter of 2014, the UNDP supported a participatory capacity assessment and is currently advocating for increased government commitment in terms of financing the NRA and the UXO Lao. This is also an issue for some donors who feel frustrated at the lack of government budgetary contributions, but, to date, progress against this has been limited.

Overall, the UXO Lao is seen as a competent provider of UXO clearance services. The UNDP support, alongside other organisational support over the years, has contributed to this. Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of UXO clearance operations is, however, an on-going endeavour, including piloting different methods of land release. Since the CCM came into force in 2010, having a more accurate understanding of the scope of UXO contamination has become particularly important in order to comply with Article 4. It has also led to the trialling of technical survey methods to identify confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs). This was a direct response to some donor demands for more information on the extent of the contamination problem. Donors expressed concern that an analysis of the IMSMA database revealed that many of the completed clearance tasks did not find any UXO. While a collective effort with international and national actors, the UNDP has been instrumental in facilitating this process, which has resulted in the CMTS and other survey processes being approved by the NRA Board. The CMTS has already demonstrated the potential to increase effectiveness, in terms of the number of cluster munitions removed per hectare. The challenge will be to ensure a balance between survey and clearance resources, such that clearance continues at the same pace while the CMTS is being implemented. With the UNDP support, the 8<sup>th</sup> 5-year NESP draft has included indicators to undertake



the CMTS in priority focal development areas and the non-technical survey in the remaining areas of the nine provinces where the UXO Lao works.

In terms of Victim Assistance related outputs, many of the proposed outputs have been achieved, including approval of the first UXO Victim Assistance Strategy for the NRA. However, the UNDP's contribution has been relatively small. Further, as noted earlier, the programme focus excludes outcomes, thus making the purpose of some of the achieved outputs unclear. For example, one target is to track survivors of UXO injury. This is necessary because the 2008 national survey recorded injuries but not survivors. However, the purpose of this data collection and how it will be used is not clear. Thus, this output can potentially be achieved without having any impact on the lives of people injured by UXO. UNICEF has provided limited inputs to the MRE units, in both the UXO Lao and the NRA. The MRE unit, in cooperation with the Ministry of Information and Culture, developed specific risk education messages related to making fires, a major cause of injuries. These messages were broadcasted via radio to vulnerable communities in two severely contaminated provinces, Xieng Khuang and Saravane. UXO Education textbooks for primary school were also updated in this project period.

In 2014, the UNDP supported a participatory capacity development assessment for the UXO Lao and the NRA, which was welcomed by donors, the NRA, and UXO Lao. The assessment has resulted in action plans for each organisation. Overall, the evaluation found limited evidence of adaptive management practices, with management tending to be reactive rather than based on active monitoring of context. An important step in promoting adaptive management is the use of information management (including HR, finance, operations, etc.), but as mentioned previously, there is limited evidence of proactive information management strategies. There is also limited learning from implementation successes and failures to improve subsequent policies and actions over time. In 2014, for example, the GMAP undertook an assessment of the Gender for UXO sector in Vientiane, Lao PDR, noting that recommendations from a 2008 assessment were still to be implemented.

#### 4.1.3 Partnership and Coordination

The UNDP is the major development partner in Lao PDR, in terms of its strategic influence on the government and its relationships with government partners. An important part of this is the Round Table Process where the UNDP is a co-chair, with the US Ambassador, of the UXO Sector Working Group. The UNDP's role in the Round Table Process was valued by donors and government alike, although many donors interviewed felt that the UNDP's role could be more impactful. The UNDP also convenes regular meetings among development partners to exchange ideas and information, organises ad hoc meetings as required, and provides TAs to both the UXO Lao and the NRA. Between 2012 and 2015, there has been one senior TA in both the NRA and the UXO Lao, and one finance advisor for some of the time. A policy forum was established in 2013, with the first meeting held in October 2014 with encouragement from the UNDP. Another was held in 2015. The forum aims to address the "strategic middle ground" in between Technical Working Groups and the Round Table Process. Reports are also provided to donors, but these were reported to be of poor quality and of limited use. This partly relates to limited capacity within the NRA and UXO Lao and inadequate attention to capacity building in this area. It also relates to poor understanding of donor needs and their reporting requirements. This has been a long-standing issue and a lack of real or perceived responsiveness to these concerns was a source of much frustration. While it was recognised that in 2015 there have been some improvements, many respondents remained dissatisfied with the UNDP's coordination and a clear communication strategy is not evident.

The UNDP's capacity to recruit advisors with experience in the sector was noted. As noted previously, however, senior advisors have primarily directed their efforts to the programme outputs and the CCM.

In this project period, tensions and a lack of consensus among the UNDP advisors had a deleterious effect on coordination, credibility, and progressing innovation and change. The UNDP also works with UXO/Mine Action civil service providers to harness expertise from external advisors and draws on the innovations of international NGOs. With regards to INGOs, the UNDP's support seems to have been relatively effective, as evidenced by the development and approval of new survey procedures. Aside from the UNDP, other donors provide TAs, particularly to the NRA. While there is some level of coordination and information sharing between the different advisors, poor coordination and/or agreement on roles, responsibilities, and reporting, has contributed to seemingly parallel project advisory teams and fragmented advice, particularly in the NRA.

The UNDP has a generally good relationship with the government and meets regularly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Ministry of Planning and Investment, and the NRA. Some frustrations were expressed, however, with UNDP processes and inadequate attention given to capacity building strategies to manage these processes. There are also tensions with the Trust Fund. While the Fund was established to support the full implementation of the largely output focussed CCM and, implicitly, the Lao MDG9, many Trust Fund donors' priorities are outcome focused and relate to poverty reduction. Since the Trust Fund has been operational for five years, some donors expressed an interest in reviewing its Terms of Reference. Furthermore, donors were frustrated that the UNDP's communication and coordination of the Trust Fund was inefficient in relation to opening the funding window for civil society. Although, it should be noted, that there has been progress on this at the time of the evaluation with a tender process for survey. On the government side, some officials felt that more ownership of the Fund and its administration should be handed over to the government. Furthermore, while on the one hand, donors have been frustrated with the protracted process in opening the civil society window, the definition of civil society as it relates to the Trust Fund, is contested with donors viewing international NGOs as eligible for the civil society window, while the government perspective is that civil society pertains to Lao not-for-profits. This has been particularly problematic in terms of the recent process for survey, as there are no Lao not-for-profits that undertake survey, that can also be considered as civil society organisations. As with donors, the government and the NRA and UXO Lao, in particular, would appreciate clearer and timelier communication. Although in recent months, this was reported to be improving.

#### 4.1.4 Monitoring, Evaluation and Risk Management

The UNDP provides financial oversight and risk management processes, but has had limited effectiveness in building the capacity of the NRA and UXO Lao in these areas (nor are there related objectives in the project document). Of particular concern, is that while the UNDP has risk management processes in place, these do not include the monitoring of the UNDP's Social and Environmental Screening Procedures. While it is acknowledged that these did not come into operation until 2015, and there were no expectations that these safeguards would be utilised prior to 2015, the lack of such safeguards and monitoring potentially elevates the risk of UNDP supported UXO clearance being used inappropriately. This was of particular concern for some donors in the context of the resettlement of some communities and the recognition that if poorly executed, resettlement could potentially cause harm to individuals and communities. At the time of the evaluation, however, specific plans on how the UNDP's new social and environmental safeguards would be introduced and applied, were not clear. In their absence, ensuring that appropriate safeguards were in place to protect individuals, families, and communities, was not a priority or a focus of the UNDP's risk management processes. This risk is elevated by the lack of a transparent and auditable task prioritisation process.

As in other areas, much of the UNDP effort has focussed on monitoring clearance processes and outputs, with limited attention to outcome and impact monitoring and the evaluation or monitoring of

issues such as gender and pro-poor outcomes. Developing information management capacity has primarily focused on supporting the staffing of the database unit and updating the IMSMA database (with other actors such as the GICHD and the US funded advisors). While important, limited effort has been directed at building the capacity to analyse, interpret, disseminate, and use data. An analysis of the IMSMA database by advisors, however, revealed that 33% of all completed clearance tasks and 94% of all technical survey tasks, between 2009 and mid-2011, had no items found. Robust monitoring processes would have identified this earlier and could have enabled some discussion and reflection on the effectiveness of this approach. In addition, the lack of rights-based or gender related indicators means that important UNDP and donor concerns do not get monitored or reported.

#### 4.1.5 Gender and Human Rights-Based Approach

While some effort has been made to address issues of gender, the UNDP has not systematically provided gender analysis and training, or monitored the extent to which gender is taken into account in policies and practice. For example, there are no strategic tools for pro-poor gender-sensitive planning in task identification and prioritisation processes. Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that the UNDP has built capacity of the NRA or the UXO Lao (or the wider sector) to provide an enabling environment for women and men to participate in the prioritisation process, including in the recently adopted CMTS. Similarly, there is limited evidence to suggest that attention has been given to a Rights-Based Approach to UXO/Mine Action. A particular area of concern is the lack of analysis related to areas where UXO clearance is undertaken in support of relocation.

#### 4.2 Efforts to address issues “to be addressed” at beginning of project

In the absence of baseline data at the beginning of the *UNDP Support to Mine Action in Lao PDR, 2013-2016*, it is not possible to measure change against the two main programme objectives. Nevertheless, overall, the programme has achieved many of its targets and undertaken many of the actions outlined in the results framework. An important achievement is the approval and implementation of the CMTS, which is expected to contribute to more efficient, evidence-based clearance practices. However, the UNDP has made limited progress in supporting the NRA and UXO Lao in a number of areas as identified in the 2012 evaluation. In particular, there has been limited progress on ensuring a strategic, proactive, systematic, and transparent approach for priority setting, with agreed upon criteria. Further work needs to be undertaken to enable the NRA to fully undertake its accreditation and QA/QC responsibilities. The UNDP efforts have also been limited, in terms of promoting better data management processes or outcome reporting. The issues of fragmented advice and the lack of a coordinated approach to donor supported TAs, have not been addressed and were further aggravated by the UNDP itself. Some progress has been made in recent months in donor communication. A number of in-country donors, however, expressed discontent with the quality, timeliness, and transparency of the UNDP’s communication and application of safeguards. Also of concern, is the limited progress on developing a longer-term resource mobilisation strategy that supports the transition to less reliance on international donor funding.

#### 4.3 Financial support and management of Trust Fund

Funding is channelled through the UNDP via the Trust Fund or cost-sharing agreements. The Trust Fund was reported to be expensive to set up and administer. However, it does provide a mechanism for donors who want to specifically support the implementation of the CCM or do not have an in-country presence to adequately oversee the administration of their funds. In 2013, a total of USD 1,683,067 contributions were made to the NRA, with expenditure of USD 1,522,571. Of the total contributions, USD 1,592,320 was channelled through the UNDP with expenditure USD 1,393,980. In 2013, a total of

USD 6,204,648 contributions were made to the UXO Lao, with expenditure of USD 8,819,955<sup>21</sup>. There is some inefficiency in budget management in regards to budget versus spending as is evident, for example, in 2013 where overall available funding was greater than contributions. In both 2013 and 2014 however improvements were observed compared to previous years. Nevertheless, while end of year figures suggest improved efficiencies, against each quarter the figures look less efficient, partly due to delays in work plans being signed off. For in UXO Lao in particular, in 2014 provided a difficult funding environment and reduced budgets and approximately 200 staff being released.

Specifically established in 2010 to support CCM implementation, the Fund has not been as effective as envisioned in mobilising funds. Nevertheless, for donors who use the Trust Fund mechanism, it provides a lower risk option than bilateral funding. The Trust Fund is also relevant to the Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. Although the Trust Fund includes a window for civil society, some donors were particularly concerned that this had not been progressed in a timely manner. A tender process was initiated, however (that closed at the end of June), and was generally seen as being well-run and an effective process. The Trust Fund can however, be unwieldy to administer, especially where donors earmark funds for specific geographic areas. For example, in 2014 an estimated \$2m shortfall lead to the standing down of 19 clearance teams. Yet, this could have been mitigated if all available funds had been un-earmarked. Furthermore, the UNDP has not provided consistent financial technical support to the UXO programme. As a result, the UXO Lao and the NRA often struggle with the UNDP's real, or perceived, complex processes. Thus, the programme frequently struggles to provide timely donor reports. This may also be because limited effort was placed on building these management capacities of the NRA and UXO Lao to meet the requirements of the Trust Fund. There is insufficient data to determine the extent to which the UNDP supported the Government of Lao PDR to identify and resource these capacity needs.

Figure 2 shows the Trust Fund trend comparing the resources mobilised versus resources required showing that while the Fund has mobilised less resources than initially envisaged, it has generally been able to mobilize the resources needed. Further, UNDP has generally been able to fill some Trust Fund gaps through non-Trust Fund resources, notwithstanding the 2014 financial crisis.

**Figure 2 Trust Fund trend: Resources mobilised versus resources required<sup>22</sup>**

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<sup>21</sup> Annual Report of the National Regulatory Authority for UXO/Mine Action in Lao PDR, 2013

<sup>22</sup> Presented at UXO Trust Fund Steering Committee Meeting 27 February 2015

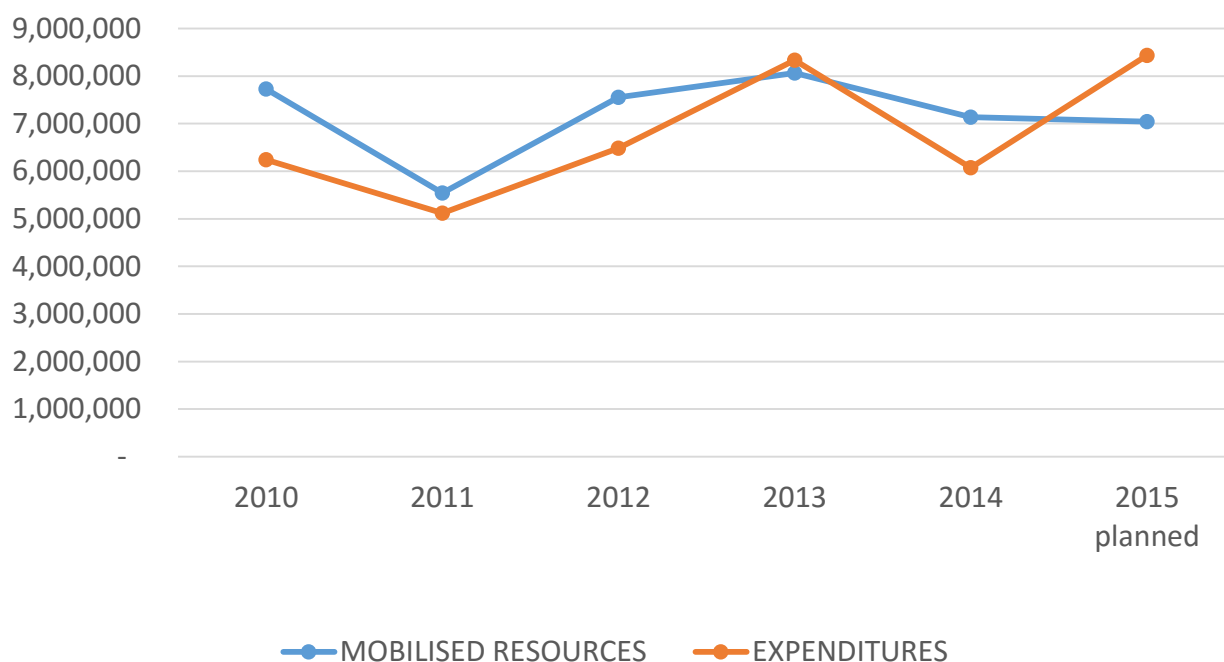


Table 1 shows the total signed agreements until to December 2014), total received funds and overall expenditure resources mobilized by UNDP, through the Trust Fund or through cost-sharing.

**Table 3 Overview of other resources mobilized by UNDP<sup>23</sup>**

SOURCE OF FUND	DONORS	TOTAL SIGNED AGREEMENTS (USD)	TOTAL RECEIVED FUNDS (USD)	TOTAL EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DEC 2014	AVAILABLE CASH (AS OF 01 JAN 2015)	AGREEMENT BALANCE 2015
COST SHARING	AUSTRALIA C/S	2,504,817	2,504,817	2,129,094	375,723	375,723
	AUSTRALIA RL	1,633,572	1,633,572	887,680	745,892	745,892
	BELGIUM	133,489	133,489	133,489	-	-
	NORWAY	886,132	886,132	101,132	785,000	785,000

<sup>23</sup> Presented at UXO Trust Fund Steering Committee Meeting 27 February 2015

	EU	1,700,000	1,413,071	1,125,561	287,510	574,439
	<b>TOTAL COST SHARING</b>	<b>6,858,010</b>	<b>6,571,081</b>	<b>4,376,956</b>	<b>2,194,125</b>	<b>2,481,054</b>
	DFID	125,990	125,990	125,990	0	0
<b>THEMATIC TRUST FUND</b>	SOUTH KOREA	70,000	70,000	70,000	0	0
	<b>TOTAL TTF</b>	<b>195,990</b>	<b>195,990</b>	<b>195,990</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>UNDP RESOURCES</b>	TRAC	655,857	655,857	655,857	0	0
	<b>TOTAL UNDP</b>	<b>655,857</b>	<b>655,857</b>	<b>655,857</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>32,428,643</b>	<b>29,934,239</b>	<b>25,392,021</b>	<b>4,542,218</b>	<b>7,036,622</b>

Also important to donors, and in terms of sustainability, is the absence of a clear plan to ensure that the UXO sector is included in Government budgets and expenditure plans. The estimated contribution of Government funding for the sector in 2013 was \$4.9M (in-kind) and approximately USD 1,067,922 in 2014. This includes rental, tax exemption for project equipment of UXO operators, new provincial office construction in the Attapeu province for the UXO Lao, Lao army humanitarian team training, and operation costs for survey and clearance. Therefore, almost all of the NRA and the UXO Lao operational costs are funded by donors. Notification No. 093 on UXO clearance for socioeconomic development projects in the Lao PDR, for development partners and relevant line Ministries, requires that all development projects undertaken in contaminated areas plan for survey and clearance as necessary and build costs into their budgets. While welcome, a longer-term plan for a resource mobilisation strategy is required.

## 5 Key evaluation questions and results

### 5.1 Relevance of UNDP support

The UNDP's support is clearly relevant to the Government of Lao PDR's priorities. It is also clearly aligned with the national development objectives as outlined in the 7<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, Lao MDG9, and the 5-year Rural Development and Poverty Eradication Plan (2010-2015). In this plan, UXO clearance is prioritised for 64 areas that have been identified as focal development areas, as well as 167 rural areas identified for stabilisation, settlement, and secure livelihoods. While tied to the UNDP's goals of poverty reduction, the UNDP's support, to date, has been irrelevant and ineffective in ensuring appropriate social and environmental safeguards are applied to resettlement. Relevance of UNDP support is also demonstrated in the transfer of the sector to the LNCRDPE and the Government's international obligations under the CCM. It should be noted, however, that while UXO contamination is in some of the poorest districts, there is no empirical evidence to support a causal link between UXO contamination and poverty. Further, given the lack of baseline data or an underlying programme theory of how and in

what ways UXO clearance may contribute to poverty reduction, assessing its relevance to poverty reduction is problematic. Nevertheless, UXO clearance can contribute to opportunities and provide some of the minimum conditions necessary for living with dignity. In this way, UXO clearance can contribute to human development. Other opportunities to better align support to development and the needs of the programme recipients, include taking a pro-poor, gender focus. Another opportunity is integrating safeguards and other aspects of a rights based framework, for example, by enhancing the participation of girls, boys, women, and men in decisions that affect them, analysing socio-economic risk in terms of relocation, providing avenues for hearing, and addressing programme-related grievances. Incorporating a rights-based framework or the UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards, will also enable the programme to move away from placing individuals, families, and communities, as 'beneficiaries', to a more balanced approach that enables individuals, families, and communities to participate in programme processes.

The UNDP plays a critical and relevant coordinating role in the Round Table Process and co-chairs the donor working groups for the UXO sector. The groups provide a platform for furthering the aid effectiveness agenda, including the Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation Framework, and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation. Having a separate sector-working group for the UXO is relevant to Lao MDG9 and the CCM, but seems in contrast to its crosscutting relevance to poverty reduction and development as proposed in the UNDP and government documents. The UNDP has provided relevant support in the CCM process. Several donors and other stakeholders, however, were somewhat ambivalent regarding the relevance of other areas of the UNDP's support. Furthermore, while the relevance of the Trust Fund in enabling the full implementation of the CCM seems clear, its relevance could be enhanced by extending funding to a wider range of actors to enable the implementation of the full range of activities under the CCM.

Under the umbrella of the current UNDAF, UNICEF has also been involved in Mine Risk Education and the development of materials to reduce children's exposure to UXO. Given UNICEF's long history in MRE, this is relevant. While WHO identified the effects of UXO as an area to be addressed in terms of rehabilitation in its 2012-2015 Cooperation Strategy for Lao PDR, little progress seems to have been made on this. However, it is important to note that this is likely to be a long term endeavour given the very limited number of staff in the health system trained in rehabilitation, as well as the traditional focus on maternal and child health and infectious disease. Under UNDAF, community development groups were going to be established in villages formerly contaminated with UXO (UNDP, UNHABITAT, UNIDO). However, the clear integration between UXO clearance and community development groups is unclear and not articulated as a specific output in the programme document.

## 5.2 Effectiveness of UNDP support

The programme has continued to strengthen the capacity of the UXO Lao and the NRA, particularly in relation to technical capacity. Overall, the programme has achieved, or is likely to achieve by the end of 2016, most of its outputs (see Appendix 4). However, there is no data related to the outcomes of these outputs, that is, whether or not they achieved their intended purpose. Furthermore, there is limited tangible evidence and data related to capacity building in some of the UNDP's core programming principles. This includes rights-based programming, safeguards, pro-poor, gender sensitive development, or the more strategic activities identified in the 2012 evaluation, such as supporting effective stakeholder communication and developing adaptive management capacities. For example, information management is generally weak. While the NRA's IMSMA database for the UXO sector in Lao PDR is generally up-to-date, and electronic reporting has increased, the use of data analysis to inform planning is poorly practiced. In other words, data collection and entry is seen as an end in itself, rather

than a means to an end. Another example is gender mainstreaming. The NRA has assigned a female Programme Technician to be the Gender Focal Point for the NRA and has convened a training workshop on gender within the Lao UXO Sector, with training provided by the Geneva-based Gender and Mine Action Programme (GMAP). However, the extent to which gender has been mainstreamed into the programme remains limited. Part of the problem relates back to the programme design, which does not contain management level capacity building processes, outputs, and outcome indicators. This lack of clarity makes it difficult to evaluate the outcome of the UNDP's capacity building efforts and to disentangle the UNDP's contribution to change (positive, negative, intended, or unintended). This lack of clarity presents a challenge for the UNDP to communicate the results of its capacity development efforts and lessons learned about what works and in what context, in relation to capacity development.

The UNDP has worked effectively with the government to include the CMTS and other survey processes in all of its priority focal development areas. The non-technical survey has also been included in the remaining areas of the nine provinces where UXO Lao works. In theory, the CMTS and other survey approaches will enable a village-by-village approach to UXO clearance, based on the concept of clearing each and every confirmed hazardous area in the village. How this will work in practice, however, is unclear. Farmers are often using contaminated land and may not be willing to potentially lose their harvest in the interests of clearing all confirmed hazardous areas in the village. This is recognised by the UXO Lao who have adopted a more pragmatic approach, namely clearing individual plots in confirmed hazardous areas. This issue, however, does not appear to have been seriously considered and has not been discussed by the UNDP and other international advisors.

Furthermore, across all areas of the programme, there is limited evidence that the UNDP has worked with the NRA and UXO Lao to incorporate issues of gender and pro-poor prioritisation into the CMTS and other approved survey processes. Also important to note, is the lack of communication with programme recipients. Of particular importance, is explaining to programme recipients how the approved survey processes will work and what it means for individuals, families, and communities. In villages where the evaluation team visited (as part of the IEO evaluation), and where CMTS had been undertaken, villagers had very little understanding of the process. It was also clear in discussions with both the UNDP and other advisors in the NRA that little thought had been given to this aspect of the CMTS. There has been no discussion, for example, as to how this has been managed elsewhere or plans for community consultation to examine how communities would solve this dilemma. In addition, if a village-by-village approach is taken, it is imperative that clear and transparent criteria and indicators are developed to guide the prioritisation of villages and individuals within villages. This process should also be transparent and clearly communicated to individuals and communities.

The Trust Fund mechanism was set up primarily to contribute to the achievement of the CCM and is in accordance with the Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. It was also expected that the establishment of the Trust Fund would attract both new donors and ones who had moved away from the sector, as well as non-resident donors and those who did not want to enter into project cost-sharing arrangements. The mechanism, however, has been less effective than hoped for in attracting additional funding. However, the potential of the Trust fund as a mechanism for coordination was valued although some donors felt this potential is not currently realised. At the time of the evaluation, a number of resident donors expressed concern with the Trust and, in particular, coordination and reporting, including outcome and impact reporting. This in part relates to capacity, but also to the programme document that only commits to outputs. The absence of outcome monitoring and reporting, does not allow donors to understand the benefits and safeguards applied to maximise their investment and minimise harm. In addition, the provision of aggregated output reports means that some donors have to disaggregate their contribution themselves in order to meet their reporting requirements. For donors,



this is particularly problematic with regards to resettlement (which often generates requests for UXO clearance) and land concessions. The potential exists for the rights of individuals and communities not to be fully upheld. For some donors, developing the capacity for more tailored reporting would enhance the effectiveness of coordination and use of the Trust Fund mechanism. Furthermore, while the option of earmarking funds channelled through the Trust Fund, either thematically or geographically, is available and preferred by some donors, this method is less effective and can constrain operations, as seen in the 2014 funding crisis. In this example, staff were stood down despite there being money in the Trust Fund. The UNDP's protracted negotiations with the government to open the civil society-funding window were also identified as a source of ineffectiveness. Certainty for non-resident donors however, the Trust Fund provides a cost-effective and relatively low-risk funding option. Notwithstanding this, there are legitimate concerns regarding the extent to which the Trust Fund can effectively achieve its purpose without opening the Trust Fund to a wider range of players as envisaged for example in the civil society window.

### 5.3 Partnership and coordination

As discussed, the UNDP has a number of long-standing partners in the Lao PDR and its role of Co-Chairing the UXO Sector Working Group in the Round Table Process and facilitating other meetings is valued. Communication, however, with donors, NGOs, and government, was repeatedly identified as being suboptimal and a long-standing issue. A need for a communication strategy was identified in the 2012 evaluation and in the programme document. However, progress has been somewhat protracted. Communication to donors could be more impactful if reports included outcome measures, but as mentioned previously, this is not facilitated by the 2012-2016 programme document, or required by the CCM. Communication to donors also often fails to adequately communicate to donors the UNDP's capacity building efforts and how identified issues are being addressed.

Donors valued the close relationship that the UNDP has with the Government and recognised that it works with Government at high levels. At the same time, some donors felt that the UNDP was too close to the Government or too quick to acquiesce to government positions, rather than advocating for issues such as task prioritisation and government financing. Several donors expressed concern that the UNDP seemed unable to influence the Government or to effectively represent their concerns regarding relocation and task prioritisation. While the issue of relocation extends beyond the UXO sector, and is one that donors can also advocate on, the UXO sector is an important player. Arguably, the shift to the LNCRDPE provides an opportunity for greater engagement in these issues. Some donors suggested that lessons learned from the Poverty Reduction Fund may be applied to the UXO sector. It was beyond the scope of the evaluation, however, to examine the effectiveness of the Fund in-depth, but it is something that could be explored further in-country.

In relation to government partnerships and coordination, the Government particularly values the role the UNDP plays in the coordination and mobilisation of funding. Nevertheless, the Government would appreciate more control over the allocation of Trust Fund resources. At the beginning of the project period, these meetings, especially with the NRA, were somewhat ad hoc and contributed to frustrations, misunderstandings, and inefficiencies, especially around UNDP processes. However, since early 2015, coordination has improved somewhat. Further work and capacity development, however, in the NIM procedures, would enhance the capacity of the NRA and UXO Lao to work more effectively together. This should include demonstrations and clear explanations of what is required for appropriate reporting.

The UNDP has used operational partners effectively in the course of the current project, and particularly in terms of devaluing new survey approaches. In the UXO/Mine Action sector, however, it seems to have drawn less on valuable expertise within the UN family. Such expertise is generally unavailable in the UXO/Mine Action sector, especially for gender mainstreaming, organisational capacity development

(including adaptive capacity, monitoring and evaluation), public health, injury surveillance, and victim assistance. Further, the UNDP seems to have made limited use of the opportunities for facilitating south-south cooperation

#### 5.4 Efficiency of UNDP support

Overall, the structure of the Trust Fund is designed to maximise efficiency and is based on good practice principles enshrined in the Vientiane Declaration. It was, however, reported as being complicated and expensive to establish. Overall, now that the Trust Fund is established, on-going costs do not seem to be any more expensive than cost-sharing arrangements. The extent to which the Trust Fund is effective, in fulfilling the intended objectives and needs of users, is mixed. There were, for example, donor concerns regarding whether the GMS of 8% (agreed by member states) and direct costs associated with the programme provided value for money. Donors also noted that reporting procedures were often inefficient and reports insufficiently detailed. Several donors felt that the UNDP accountability and risk management processes were not very effective. Thus, they did not always provide donors the assurances they required to be confident that Trust Fund money was always being used in the most appropriate manner.

An important donor concern was the length of time it took to operationalise the NGO window in the Trust Fund. Although at the time of the evaluation, this was being addressed. It was beyond the scope of this evaluation to assess competitiveness, in terms of other modalities, such as INGOs. This would require transparent reporting from all sides, which in an increasingly competitive market, may be challenging. Another concern regarding the effectiveness of the Trust Fund was its capacity to provide assurances that donor resources were being utilised for their intended purpose. There were concerns, for example, that the funds could be used to support land concessions or relocation of communities without ensuring that sufficient monitoring practices were in place. Donors also felt that the UNDP was ineffective in communicating identified risks and strategies that might mitigate those risks.

Several respondents felt that the UNDP is often reactive, rather than proactive in identifying issues and taking preventative action in a cost-effective and time-efficient manner. Nevertheless, these donors also felt that there had been some improvement beginning in 2015. While some donors were concerned about value for money, in relation to the GMS of 8% (agreed by member states and mandated for all programmes across the UNDP) and direct cost recovery, the fees do not seem to be overly high or significantly different from other international organisations. Alternative options for donors wishing to support the sector are through the private sector (for or not-for-profit) or directly to the government. Both of these options also entail administrative overheads and these charges are often higher in the private sector than UNDP's 8%. Despite these concerns, most donors interviewed appreciated the controls that the UNDP can place on fund utilisation. Critical for the UNDP, is to ensure that these administrative overheads are used effectively on financial management and that this is demonstrated through timely and transparent reporting. Administration and communication in relation to the Trust Fund were reported to be poor until early 2015, and on-going effort should be directed at restoring trust, credibility, and efficiency.

Of the two different types of mechanisms for funding the sector through the UNDP— using the Trust Fund or cost sharing agreements – there seems to be little discernible difference in efficiency. However, from a donor perspective, they may be able to negotiate additional safeguards and performance criteria into the agreement. For donors looking for more than contribution to CCM outputs, a cost sharing agreement may seem more attractive and may provide increased value for money. As discussed earlier, earmarking funds channelled through the Trust Fund may not always promote the most efficient use of funds. A further potential source of inefficiency in the Trust Fund is that because it primarily funds the

NRA and UXO Lao, it is not based on competitive free-market principles. Another potential source of inefficiencies is the lack of capacity building within the NRA and UXO Lao to adequately manage and account for the use of donor funds. The UNDP has well documented procedures designed to promote cost and time effectiveness and competitiveness. However, these are not always well understood by the UXO Lao or the NRA and which without timely support from the UNDP, can result in lost efficiencies. Some donors would also like to discuss the options for revising the Trust Fund Terms of Reference to incorporate requirements for donor-disaggregated reporting against each donor's objectives (i.e. at outcome level) and stronger safeguard obligations.

While not explicit in the programme document, the demand for UXO clearance to contribute to development (which is rarely defined) has led service providers, including the UXO Lao, to undertake clearance for other UN organisations, such as the World Food Programme, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and non-UXO/mine action development NGOs. While this enables investment, which may not have occurred otherwise, it has also contributed to inefficiencies. This is because clearance assets have been deployed to sites with no or very low levels of UXO. This partly relates to the lack of a national survey whereby confirmed hazardous areas are located and mapped. However, this is beginning to be addressed through the CMTS. This is significant as clearance is time consuming and expensive, so efficient use of resources is important and the NRA and the UXO Lao should continue to monitor the efficiency of clearance operations to make further improvements if possible. Nevertheless, given the uncertainties created by the lack of a technical survey, it seems reasonable that agencies have requested clearance prior to any intervention, given the risk and consequences for the UN and other international agencies to have persons killed or injured at their project sites.

## 5.5 Sustainability

For the purpose of this evaluation, sustainable outcomes means the sustainability of a UXO programme, given the absence of outcome data on operational activities of MRE, victim assistance, and clearance, and the assumption that decontaminated land will not be re-contaminated. In their current form, neither the NRA office nor the UXO Lao are sustainable without donor funding. The capacity of the NRA and UXO Lao to raise their own funds, through cost-recovery mechanisms or directly from donors or Government, is limited. Both programmes are supported, almost entirely, by donor contributions bilaterally, or through the UNDP. Donor funds have not been constant over the last 20 years and this trend is likely to continue. Some donors are likely to exit the sector (or even leave Lao PDR all together) once the country exits the least developed nation status anticipated in 2020. As a result, UXO/Mine Action may not fit neatly into the thematic funding windows. Yet, at the same time, Lao PDR is unlikely to have met its CCM commitments. In the absence of a national not-for-profit service provider, such as the UXO Lao, notification 093/NRA provides some assurance that development agencies will have to budget for, and purchase, UXO clearance services where needed. Integration of UXO clearance into the development, planning, and budgeting process, especially at provincial and village levels, is also important in placing UXO clearance on a more sustainable footing.

To maximise the likelihood of sustainable outcomes, documenting a transition strategy that is nationally owned, with indicators of progress and timeframes, which are regularly reported so that progress towards transition is measurable and observable, is essential. The plan should include how MRE and victim assistance can transfer out of the NRA and be mainstreamed into other relevant sectors. For example, UXO injuries should be incorporated into a national injury surveillance system at the outset of one being established. MRE can be further mainstreamed, for example, into other activities and sustainable capacity formal and informal education, with the NRA acting as an advisor on content. Ways of the UXO Lao mobilising funds, for example, through cost-recovery mechanisms, should also be

examined and opportunities for other sources of funding including emerging donors and private sector co-operation, and corporate social responsibility should also be examined. The UNDP should also further support the capacity of the NRA and the UXO Lao to manage donor funds and reporting requirements. Developing the capacity of the military to undertake UXO clearance to national standard requirements should also be a priority if this is the body that will manage any residual risk. It is unlikely that the technical capacity that has been built will transfer readily to military salaries. The initial UXO Trust Fund agreement included provisions of supporting the development of a national commercial UXO clearance capacity that could have been self-sustaining. However, this capacity has not been systematically developed, although a private for-profit sector is emerging.

## 5.6 Monitoring, evaluation and risk management

While both the NRA and the UXO Lao have QA/QM procedures, and the UNDP has some internal processes, there are no formal monitoring and evaluation processes, and information that is collected is not used to improve performance. The results framework allows for relevant monitoring of outputs, but not for outcomes and impacts as there are no indicators. Further, most of the indicators relate to technical outputs and there are no outcomes or impact indicators, or more substantive pro-poor, gender sensitive or rights-based indicators relevant to the UNDP's core business.

Overall, the risk assessment seems reasonable, but the extent to which some of the risks have been effectively managed and monitored is less clear. Certainly, with regards to task prioritisation, which has been a long-standing issue, and in particular, more latterly in regard to resettlement, many resident donors do not feel that the risk has been managed well. Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that there has been a proper risk assessment in relation to specific UXO clearance tasks related to resettlement. This is of particular importance for the UNDP in 2016, given the Government and NRA are expected to prioritise for UXO clearance in areas identified as focal development areas, including the 167 rural areas identified for stabilisation for settlement and secure livelihoods, in keeping with the 5-year Rural Development and Poverty Eradication Plan for 2010-2015. For the UNDP and donors, the key is safeguarding the rights of people who are asked to relocate. This issue is also linked to broader task prioritisation concerns, which have often been described as opaque and non-standardised within the sector. The issue of task prioritisation also relates to the purpose of UXO clearance, initially seen as a humanitarian issue. However, the purpose has shifted to a development and poverty reduction issue, despite there being no empirical evidence to support this. To date, the UNDP has not adequately supported the NRA or the UXO Lao in developing these links, which further frustrates some donors who are required to demonstrate how taxpayer money is addressing donor country priorities.

Similarly, the NRA and the UXO Lao have continued to be highly dependent on donor funding as evidenced by the 2014 financial crisis. In this instance, risk mitigation strategies were not particularly effective, evidenced by the numbers of people who were stood down. From a donor perspective, Government contributions are still too low. While insufficient opportunity for dialogue among the NRA, donors, and operators, was identified as a risk, mechanisms to mitigate this, such as a communication strategy developed and implemented and policy forums, were not consistently implemented. Staff turnover was identified as a risk, but this is a reality for all organisations in a growing market economy and is one that needs to be planned for in order to minimise the effect.

The programme document also identifies the technical complexity of the sector as a risk; yet technical capacity building is where most of the effort has been directed. Compared to most interventions, aside from the significant problem of not knowing which areas are contaminated, the actions and outputs in the programme document related to technical competence are relatively straightforward. More complex is achieving the upstream outcomes, which are not included in the programme document.

These relate to the broader purpose of the UXO/Mine Action to contribute to poverty reduction, whereby poverty has multiple layers of cause and effect pathways, making it difficult to disentangle UXO/Mine Action's contribution. Another risk that seems more relevant to achieving outcomes than technical complexity are the downstream tasks of community engagement and task prioritisation, which influence the quality and type of outcomes that are observed. Another risk identified in the project document is that provincial and district authorities are reluctant to accept an NRA proactive, centralised role, in prioritisation and planning of activities. Few activities, if any, seem to have been undertaken to mitigate this potential risk, although in reality, a centralised approach has not been implemented to date. Changes in governance arrangements or key personnel in the NRA or UXO Lao were also identified in the project document. Despite this being a well-documented phenomena, limited action seems to have been undertaken (or at least documented) to actively mitigate the risk .

## 6 Conclusions and Recommendations for further UNDP support

The UXO sector has made steady progress since its beginnings in 1995, but despite this, much remains to be done. This includes getting a better understanding of the extent of UXO contamination and determining where it has the most impact on individuals, families, and communities, so that resources can be prioritised to the areas where they will be the most impactful. A summary of recommendations is also provided in Appendix 5.

### Programme design

In many ways, the UNDP support to UXO/Mine Action in this project period has been appropriate and many of the programme outputs have been, or are likely to be, achieved by the end of the three-year period. These outputs contribute to the Government of the Lao PDR achieving its CCM obligations. In relation to the CCM, the programme design can be considered satisfactory. The objective of the UNDP's support, however, is not simply to strengthen the delivery of UXO/Mine Action related services. Rather, the purpose is to strengthen the capacity of the NRA and UXO Lao as articulated in the programme title, to enable the delivery of effective UXO/Mine Action services. The purpose of these services, as stated in government documents, is to contribute to the government's rural development and poverty eradication objectives. That is, UXO clearance is the means to an end, not an end in itself. From this perspective, the lack of focus in the programme document related to task prioritisation, for example, and the absence of outcome indicators, including indicators relating to capacity development and gender and human rights, significantly diminishes the effectiveness of the program design. While not uncommon in Mine Action programmes, these limitations make assessing the UNDP's full contribution challenging. Furthermore, it does not hold the UNDP accountable for capacity building. The UNDP has begun to address this through the implementation of the NRA and UXO Lao Capacity Development Strategy and Action Plans (2014), and this work should be continued in the next programme cycle (2017 onwards). This will also allow for a more rigorous analysis of the UNDP's contribution to achieving the programme's objectives.

### Specific Recommendations

1. The UNDP, with the NRA and the UXO Lao, should actively promote the allocation of resources to developing management capacities, clearly articulating how the UNDP's support contributes to programme outputs and outcomes and capacity development.

### Outputs, outcomes, impact and relevance

UXO/Mine Action in Lao PDR remains highly relevant to the Lao context and is a priority for the Government, the UNDP, and State Parties to the CCM (art. 6). Output data provides an indicator of

measurable progress towards CCM commitments. The absence of a transparent task prioritisation process (refer to sections 4.1.4, 4.1.5 and 4.2) and empirical outcome data, however, makes it a challenge to assess outcomes and impacts (positive, negative, intended, and unintended), and their relevance in terms of contributing to the programme's broader purpose of rural development and poverty eradication. The plan to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation capacity beyond the current QA/QC will go some way towards addressing this. Looking forwards, considering how the UXO sector's work contributes to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) targets is also important.

2. The UNDP should actively promote dialogue between the NRA, LNCRDPE, MPI, and other stakeholders, including province and district level planners, to articulate a transparent, systematic, and auditable process for task prioritisation, collection of relevant baseline and outcome indicators (possibly integrated into existing processes).
3. The UNDP should support the NRA, the UXO Lao, and other relevant stakeholders, to identify how UXO/Mine Action might contribute to the SDG targets and identify what, if any, outcome or impact level data collection can be mainstreamed into other SDG data collection processes.

### Effectiveness and efficiency of implementation

Significant progress has been made towards agreeing on, and improving, technical survey methodologies, including the recent approval of survey procedures, which include the CMTS. While these procedures are expected to contribute to increased efficiency and effectiveness, little thought has been given to how community voice will be integrated into this process (see for example sections 4.12, 4.15, 4.2, 4.2, 5.4).

### Specific Recommendations

4. The UNDP should support discussions within the NRA and the Survey and Clearance Technical Working Group to review the CMTS and other approved processes under the new concept of operations to enable community voices and concerns to be heard & ensure all community members are provided with appropriate information about decisions that affect them.
5. The UNDP should support discussions within the NRA and the Survey and Clearance Technical Working Group to determine how efficiency and effectiveness of the new concept of operations will be evaluated.

### Partnerships and coordination

The Government of Lao PDR, the NRA, and UXO Lao see the UNDP as a valued development partner. Furthermore, particularly for donors who are not a resident in the country, the UNDP provides a relatively low risk investment option. Nevertheless, some donors felt that the UNDP coordination and capacity to present donor concerns to the Government was limited, sometimes to the real or perceived detriment of progress, and this has affected donor confidence. This is partly due to a misunderstanding as to what donors are paying for with the GMS fee. Some of these issues could be resolved through an improved communication strategy for the sector. It was, however, recognised, that since the beginning of 2015, coordination had improved. Also relevant is the coordination of technical capacity building services (both the UNDP and other donor supported advisors). This was reported as frequently being limited, resulting in fragmented or contradictory advice and contributing to inefficiencies.

6. The UNDP should support the NRA hold quarterly operational meetings with development partners (program manager level).
7. The UNDP should support the NRA and UXO Lao to develop and implement an effective communication strategy, tailored to different stakeholder needs and focussed on application of safeguards, outputs, impacts and progress against the capacity building workplans.

8. The UNDP should support constructive dialogue with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and development partners to determine if the Trust Fund and its Terms of Reference are still appropriate.
9. The UNDP should continue to work with the NRA, the UXO Lao, and donors to ensure a coherent approach to the provision and coordination of technical advisory services.

### Gender and Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)

To be consistent with the UNDP's mandate and Government policies, the programme should pursue a gendered, pro-poor approach to UXO/Mine Action, keeping the "do no harm" principle at the forefront of its work. The current programme document, however, is not explicitly aligned to these principles (refer to section 4.1.5).

#### Specific Recommendations

10. The UNDP should support the NRA and the UXO Lao to ensure a pro-poor, gender sensitive focus including gender indicators at the output and outcome level and implementing the recent GMAP 2014 action plan and recommendations related to the 2008 gender assessment.

### Monitoring, evaluation and risk management

Most of the monitoring and evaluation focus has been on QA/QM, outputs, and financial monitoring. While important, on their own, these are insufficient in capturing the programme outcomes (positive, negative, intended, and unintended) and generating lessons learned to improve performance. While more support is needed to develop a functioning monitoring and evaluation process, it is also recognised that even existing processes, such as QA/QC and monitoring of post-clearance land use as stipulated in the National Standards, are not being fully implemented. Thus, while recommending developing a monitoring and evaluation process, and plans for this are underway, care needs to be taken not to over burden an already fragile information management capacity.

#### Specific Recommendations

11. The UNDP should further develop the capacity of the NRA and UXO Lao in all stages of the information cycle and to develop and implement a sector monitoring and evaluation framework that articulates minimum, output and outcome indicators.
12. The UNDP should support the NRA and the UXO Lao to integrate, monitor, and report on appropriate elements of the UNDP's recently released Social and Environmental Safeguards into their work.

### Sustainability

The UNDP's activities in the sector are aligned with the priorities of the Government of Lao PDR and fits with the government's international legal obligations under the CCM. The government is also actively engaged in the sector and the CCM process. On the other hand, the NRA and UXO Lao are very dependent on donor funding and there is no clear transition plan that outlines how the Government's in-kind and direct financial contributions will increase in tandem with decreased donor funding, based on projected GDP and estimated need (determined by CHAs). Nor is there a clear strategy that outlines how UXO clearance will be integrated into the development planning and budgeting process at provincial and village levels. Furthermore, the UNDP is not actively working with other partners to enable a transfer of responsibilities to national organisations. It has, however, through funding support from the Republic of South Korea through the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), begun to work with the Lao army who have been identified as a possible option for a national capacity to

manage residual UXO threat (refer to section 5.5) but no clear strategy of how this transition will take place has been articulated

### **Specific Recommendations**

13. The UNDP should continue to support the NRA to develop a strategy to transition to increased government financing of the sector. The strategy should be agreed on by the end of 2018, with implementation commencing at the beginning of 2019.
14. The UNDP should facilitate dialogue between the NRA, Ministry of Health, and WHO, and other relevant organisations to develop an action plan to review the quality of the incident surveillance and data collection to ensure alignment with (current or planned) injury surveillance systems, the integration of epidemiological principals into the surveillance of UXO injury; and adherence to WHO's minimal recommendation dataset for injury surveillance.



## 15. Appendices

### Appendix 1: Terms of reference

#### Terms of Reference (TOR)

##### Evaluation of UN/UNDP Support to the UXO Sector (2012-2015)

Duty Station:	home-based
Duration:	approx. 10 days over 2 weeks
Start Date:	20 November 2015

#### Background and Context

Lao PDR is, per capita, the most heavily bombed country in the world. More than forty years after the end of the 1964-1973 Indochina Conflict, unexploded ordnance (UXO) remains a major humanitarian and socioeconomic challenge to the country, causing deaths and injuries, limiting access to potentially productive land, and adding substantial costs to processes of development. The Government of Laos PDR has been active in the process of clearance since shortly after the conflict. Lao PDR has advocated for the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and hosted the first Meeting of States Parties in 2010. It also embraced the UXO issue as a key development matter by locally establishing the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 9 on UXO.

Currently under the framework of Outcome 9 of the UNDAF 2012-2015, UNDP and other UN bodies have supported the UXO sector of Lao PDR since 1996 through a number of mechanisms and phases, including the 1996 establishment of national clearance operator UXO Lao. The support delivered currently aims to assist the Government of Lao PDR in achieving MDG 9: Reduce the impact of UXO. UNDP's support to the sector has been delivered through the Trust Fund mechanism, as well as other third party cost sharing mechanisms. Since 2013, UNDP's work in the UXO sector has been framed by the project Support for the institutional Strengthening of the National Regulatory Authority for the UXO /Mine Action Sector (NRA) and of the Lao National UXO Programme (UXO Lao) 2013-2015.

The overall objective of this three year programme of cooperation between the UNDP and the Government of Lao PDR is to support and further strengthen the institutional capacity of the National Regulatory Authority for the UXO/Mine Action Sector (NRA) and The National Unexploded Ordnance Programme (UXO Lao), the national UXO Sector operator. The NRA has lead responsibility for the regulation, coordination and oversight of all work in the UXO sector, and to ensure that Lao PDR fulfils its legal obligations as a State Party to the CCM. UXO Lao is the only national operator in Lao PDR, and currently undertakes more than half of all UXO survey, clearance and risk education work throughout the country.

The two expected outputs of the project are:

**OUTPUT 1:** The National Regulatory Authority is able to effectively develop and provide policy guidance and to coordinate and regulate the UXO sector in support of national development goals, the implementation of the national UXO sector strategy "Safe Path Forward II", and to ensure the fulfillment of relevant international treaty obligations

OUTPUT 2: UXO Lao is better able to manage clearance and risk education programmes for the needs of communities at risk

Under the umbrella of the current UNDAF, UNICEF has also been involved in Mine Risk Education and the development of materials to reduce children's exposure to UXO. The WHO has also identified the effects of UXO as an area to address in terms of rehabilitation in its 2012-2015 Cooperation Strategy for Lao PDR.

#### Evaluation Purpose

2015 is the penultimate year of UNDAF implementation (2012-2016) and UN will be embarking on an independent evaluation of its cooperation. Under the framework of the UNDAF evaluation, it is also an opportune moment to commission an independent evaluation of the UN and UNDP's contributions to the UXO sector. The Monitoring and Evaluation provisions for the 2013-2015 project include an assessment in the final year (2015) focusing on a review of progress against projected Outputs and their alignment to Outcomes. It has also been more than five years since the Trust Fund was established, and therefore, it is time to ensure its relevance and effectiveness in the context of the full range of modalities used for UN and UNDP's work in the sector.

From the national perspective, 2015 is an important year to steer strategic thinking around the future of the UXO support and Trust Fund mechanism. The Safe Path Forward II strategy will be subjected to a mid-term evaluation in 2015, the purpose of which is to take stock of achievements in the 2011-2015 period relative to the objectives and indicators in the National Strategic Plan, and to involve all stakeholders in making recommendations for 2016-2020 based on experience, highlighting achievements and shortcomings of each involved party in the process. Also in 2015, the government will launch its 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan, and the first Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions will take place in 2015. The evaluation, in tandem with the others, is aimed at informing the design of UNDP's continued involvement in the UXO sector in Lao PDR. A particular focus will be on the extent to which the UN and UNDP's support addressed the rural development and livelihoods aspects of the Government of Lao PDR's national development plan, and how this can be improved. This evaluation will be conducted alongside, and feed into, the overall UNDAF evaluation under way in 2015. It will present forward-looking recommendations to shape the design of the next phase of the programme.

#### Evaluation Scope and Objectives

The independent evaluation will cover the period 2012-2015 and all facets of the UN and UNDP's support to the UXO sector, including a focus on the efficacy of the Trust Fund mechanism; the use of cost-sharing agreements; the provision of technical assistance and all other modalities employed. Although it will be conducted independently, the evaluation exercise will be closely coordinated with the UNDAF evaluation and its findings will inform the UNDAF evaluation. In line with the evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, the below areas will form the parameters of the evaluation and the areas in which recommendations should be made for a subsequent approach.

#### Strategic Positioning, Concept and Design

The Evaluation will assess the concept and design of the UN/UNDP's overall intervention in the UXO sector since 2012, including an assessment of the appropriateness of the objectives, planned outputs, activities and inputs as compared to cost-effective alternatives.

## Implementation

The evaluation will assess the implementation of the intervention in terms of quality and timeliness of inputs and efficiency and effectiveness of activities carried out. Also, the effectiveness of management as well as the quality and timeliness of monitoring and backstopping by all parties to the project should be evaluated. In particular, the evaluation is to assess the use of adaptive management.

## Partnership and Coordination

The evaluation will assess effectiveness and appropriateness of the collaborations and partnerships that were established to deliver support to the UXO sector. This includes an assessment of the partnerships with key line ministries, as well as with international Development Partners, Non-Governmental Organizations, and local Non Profit Associations. The evaluation should draw conclusions about the extent to which the UN and UNDP were effective in coordination the support offered by all partners in the UXO sector. It will also evaluate what risks were taken with regards to partnership management and how these were managed.

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Risk Management

A further focus of the evaluation will be on the extent to which adequate monitoring was undertaken throughout the period, and the extent to which evaluation systems were adequate to capture significant developments and inform responsive management. The evaluation will assess how Lessons Learned have been captured and operationalized throughout the period under investigation. It will look into how effectively the management of support to the UXO sector incorporated relevant global knowledge on good practices.

## Rights-Based Approach and Gender Mainstreaming

The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project sought to strengthen a Rights-Based Approach and the mainstreaming of gender into development efforts. This should look at what measures were taken to this end and how successful those have been in addressing specific rights- and gender-related aspects of the UXO issue.

## Use and Management Response

UNDP evaluation policy, approved by its Executive Board in 2009, requires all independent evaluations to have a management response. According to the policy, UNDP management, in close consultation with NRA, UXO Lao, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other stakeholders, will prepare a management response to the recommendations and follow up action points. This plan will note the responsible parties for each follow-up activity, as well as the timeframe by quarter, to allow for clear tracking of progress on the corporate public website, Evaluation Resource Center ([erc.undp.org](http://erc.undp.org)).

## Evaluation Questions

The evaluation should address the following questions:

### Relevance

- To what extent was the support to the UXO sector by the UN/UNDP based on clearly identifiable development needs as outlined in the government's strategies, international obligations and others?

- During the evaluation period, what economic, social or political changes have taken place that affected UN/UNDP-supported UXO initiatives? How do these relate to the relevance of the UXO sector to poverty eradication and economic development in Lao PDR?
- What opportunities are there to better align the support to the changed context and the needs of the beneficiaries?
- How does the UN and UNDP's UXO work link to other development initiatives, implemented by the UN, other Development Partners, Civil Society Organisations, or government agencies?

#### Effectiveness

- To what extent were the Outputs and Outcomes of the UXO sector, and the indicators used, successful in guiding the support to have maximum positive impact in human development terms? How might this be improved in future?
- What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving intended outcomes? To what extent have UNDP outputs and assistance contributed to outcomes?
- How far was the Trust Fund mechanism, its objective, set-up and rules and procedures, effective in fulfilling the intended objectives and needs of the users? How has its effectiveness compared with that of other funding modalities?
- To what extent was the planning undertaken for support to the sector adequate to sustain and improve operations?
- To what extent are the intended beneficiaries satisfied with the results? How well have gender considerations been taken into account?

#### Efficiency

- To what extent was the response designed to maximize the efficiency of the UN/UNDP's support to the UXO sector?
- How cost-effective and time-efficient was the implementation by the UN and UNDP of their UXO sector activities and outputs in the evaluation period? What measures were taken to ensure competitiveness?
- How efficient did the various modalities of UN and UNDP support prove to be in the period?
- To what extent are the planned funding and timeframe sufficient to achieve the intended outcomes?
- How appropriate was the approach taken to organizing clearance activities in terms of competitiveness? How could this be improved?

#### Partnership and Coordination

- How appropriate and effective has the UNDP partnership strategy been? What factors contributed to this effectiveness or ineffectiveness?
- How is policy dialogue being used to effectively influence government and development partners and support the outcomes?
- How could the approach to policy dialogue be strengthened and made more impactful?

## Sustainability

- To what extent will the benefits and outcomes continue after external donor funding ends?
- What can be done to maximise the likelihood of sustainable outcomes?
- To what extent has the Government of Lao PDR increased its ownership of the UXO issue during the period in question? What impact has this had on external support?
- In what ways were relevant social, environmental, resettlement and other safeguards taken into consideration during the evaluation period?

## Monitoring & Evaluation and Risk Management

- To what extent is the Monitoring and Evaluation system generating credible information that can be used for program improvement, learning and accountability?
- To what extent did the results framework allow for relevant monitoring of progress and impact of interventions? How could this be improved, with particular reference to the findings regarding relevance?
- How accurate was the risk assessment undertaken? How effectively were the risks managed?
- How effective were the provisions for oversight of the work in the sector?

## Methodology

The report will be developed based upon field data previously collected by another consultant, and through a related case study of community level impacts of mine action in Lao PDR, carried out by UNDP IEO in July 2015.

## Data Collection

- Data collection will be limited to telephone and email contacts to gain additional information and insights in addition to the background data and evidence already amassed from previous work on this evaluation.

## Field Visits

- No field visits will take place

## Data Analysis

- Application of triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis of the data.

The evaluation should be undertaken with the guidance of the 2009 UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results, available here:

<http://web.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/documents/english/pme-handbook.pdf>

## Evaluation Deliverables

The Consultant will be responsible for delivering the following products by the end date of the contract (15, December):

- A power point presentation on key findings, for use by the UNDP country office during their planned workshop with donors
- Draft and Final evaluation report –finalized based on feedback from, and submitted to, UNDP IEO and UNDP country office in Lao PDR.

#### Evaluation Team Composition and Required Competencies

The work will be carried out by an independent evaluation consultant, who is responsible for drafting and timely delivery of the evaluation report.

#### Required Qualifications

- Master’s degree or equivalent;
- Proven record of leading complex programmatic evaluations for at least ten years, including Mine Action/UXO programmes.
- Demonstrable in-depth understanding of Results-Based Management and strategic planning;
- Fluency in English both in speaking and writing; knowledge of Lao is an asset;
- Strong drafting and analytical skills;
- Experience in evaluating a financing mechanisms is an asset;
- Knowledge of the context of Lao PDR is an asset.

#### Evaluation Ethics

The evaluation must be undertaken in accordance with the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, which are available here: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/548>

#### Implementation Arrangements

The below table outlines key roles and responsibilities for the evaluation process.

#### Person/ Organization Roles and Responsibilities

Commissioner of the Evaluation: UNDP IEO • Determine scope of evaluation in consultation with UINDP Lao PDR CO;

- Safeguard the independence of the exercise;
- Review the draft evaluation report, ensure the final draft meets quality standards.

Evaluation Report Recipient: UNDP CO: Lao PDR • Provide the Evaluation Team with administrative support and required data;

- Review the draft evaluation report, ensure the final draft meets quality standards.

Evaluation Consultant • Fulfill the contractual arrangements in line with the UNEG norms and standards and ethical guidelines

#### Time Frame for the Evaluation

The process of report writing is expected to take 10 days over two weeks, and will be completed by 15, December 2015.

#### Indicative Cost

International Consultant: lump sum contract: \$8000

International and field travel = none planned

#### Annexes

Annex 1 – Project Document: Support for the institutional Strengthening of the National Regulatory Authority for the UXO /Mine Action Sector (NRA) and of the Lao National UXO Programme (UXO Lao) 2013-2015 (available here:

[http://www.la.undp.org/content/dam/laopdr/docs/Project%20Documents/UXO/Signed%20Project%20Document%20UXO%20Lao%20and%20NRA%202013-2015\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.la.undp.org/content/dam/laopdr/docs/Project%20Documents/UXO/Signed%20Project%20Document%20UXO%20Lao%20and%20NRA%202013-2015_Eng.pdf) )

Annex 2 – Safe Path Forward II strategy (available here:

[http://www.la.undp.org/content/dam/laopdr/docs/Reports%20and%20publications/UNDP\\_LA\\_SPFII%20%20Eng.pdf](http://www.la.undp.org/content/dam/laopdr/docs/Reports%20and%20publications/UNDP_LA_SPFII%20%20Eng.pdf) )

Annex 3 – UNDAF Action Plan 2012-2015 Lao PDR (available here:

[http://www.la.undp.org/content/dam/laopdr/docs/Legal%20Framework/UN\\_LA\\_UNDAF\\_2012\\_2015.pdf](http://www.la.undp.org/content/dam/laopdr/docs/Legal%20Framework/UN_LA_UNDAF_2012_2015.pdf) )

Annex 4: Suggested outline for the Evaluation Report

#### Executive Summary

##### 1. Introduction

Evaluation background

Evaluation purpose

Evaluation methodology

Evaluation limitations and constraints

##### 2. Country Context

3. Situation at beginning of UNDP UXO support project 2013-2015

4. Development of national mine action and UNDP support 2013-2015

5. Key evaluation questions and results

Relevance

Effectiveness

Monitoring and reporting

Partnership and coordination

Efficiency of UNDP support

Impact

Sustainability

6. Conclusions and Recommendations for further UNDP support

7. Annexes



## Appendix 2: Documents reviewed

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## Appendix 3: People met

### **Government of the Lao PDR/National Regulatory Authority/UXO Lao**

Mr Ki Boutsada, Chief of Operations, UXO Lao

Mr Phoukiou, Chanthasomboune, Director, NRA

Mr Bountao Chanthavonsa, UXO Victim Assistance Officer, NRA

Mr Thongchan Duanmalalay, Lao Disabled People's Association (LDPA)

Mr Wanthong Kamada, Deputy Director, UXO Lao

Mr King Phet, PC, UXO Lao, Xieng Khouang

Dr Maligna Saignavongs, ex Director NRA

Mr Souban Sayasenh, Head of Cabinet

Mr Boungheng Sisawath, Deputy Director, NRA

Mr Thiphasone, Soukhathamavong, Director UXO Lao

Mr Thongdeng Singthilath, ex Deputy Director UXO Lao

Mr Bounphamit Somvichith, Deputy Director, NRA

Mr Somneuk, Volasane

Mr Morlakot Vongxay, the Director General of Department of International Cooperation

### **UNDP project or programme staff**

Mr Nils Christensen, UXO Unit Manager, UNDP

Ms Azusa Kubota, DRR, UNDP Lao PDR

Mr Sebastian Kollach, interim advisor, NRA

Mr Tim Lardner, ex CTA UXO Lao

### **Contractors**

Mr Olivier Bauduin, Task Manager, Sterling International

Mr Nigel Orr, Advisor, Sterling International

### **Donors**

Ms Sawada Keisuke, Aid Coordination Officer, at JICA

Mr Hideyuki Onishi, the Counsellor, the Japan Embassy

Mr Brent Rapson, NZAID (by phone)

Ms Vesna Roche, SDC

Ms Dulce Simmanivong, DfAT

Ms Kath Sweet, SDC

Mr James Toone, British Embassy

Tone Wroldsen, Norwegian Embassy, Hanoi

Mr Mike Toyryla, Chief Political/Economic Section, US Embassy

Mr Dave Vosen, DfAT

Mr Andreas Zurbrugg, DfAT

Ignacio Oliver-Cruz, Attache, Cooperation, EU

Phonesavanh Sethanaphaixanh (Programme Officer) EU

Ms Minyoung, the Aid Effective Specialist, KOICA

**Others**

Mr Thoummy Silamphan, Quality of Life Association

Mr Ernst Woest, MAG, Xieng Khouang

Mr Julien Rossard, World Bank Poverty Reduction Fund

Ms Courtney Innes, VA consultant

Mr Samnieng Thammavong, World Education

Mr Avi Sarkar (UNHABITAT)

Mr Sommai Faming (UNIDO)

Mr Bounpone Sayasenh, the Director General of the Pension Department, MLSW

Mr Samnieng Thammavong (VA TL Integrated UXO Victim Assistance Support Project), World Education

## Appendix 4: Achievements against the program document

Indicator Established	Target Issue	Evaluator Comment	Target Year 1 (2013)	Target Year 2 (2014)	Target Year 3 (2015)	Evaluator Comment
NRA Report to consider the need for a national policy on 'UXO within the scrap metal trade' drafted 92010: no, 2015: yes, MoV: availability of NRA report including recommendations)	Scrap Metal Trade (AR1, Action 4)	This was already an old issue by 2012 even. The scrap trade did cause a surge in incidents/accidents with UXO in the mid-2000s and a number of studies were commissioned, including an excellent study by GICHD in 2005. The broader economic and environmental conditions which made the scrap trade significant had long since passed. By 2012/13. This therefore seems a relatively irrelevant target by 2012, and sits oddly as the first target	Draft report of Research on Scrap Metal Trade is finalized	To continue to monitor the trade in scrap metal, and if necessary, propose measures to Government to regulate it	No Target	Since the global financial crisis and the collapse in the price of metal there has been a steady decline in the industry and consequent related injury. Nevertheless, the policy may provide some protection should demand for scrap grow beyond current supply
Number of UXO Survivors whose needs are tracked (2010, 2015: 10,000, MoV: NRA Database)	Tracking of UXO Survivors (AR2, Action 9)		Track 5000 UXO Survivors	Track 5000 UXO Survivors	Number of new UXO survivors who are tracked (estimated at 100 persons for 2015)	It is somewhat unclear how this figure was set and what the purpose of the tracking is. Potentially it could lead to raising expectations of services which are unlikely to materialize in the near future

Indicator Established	Target Issue	Evaluator Comment	Target Year 1 (2013)	Target Year 2 (2014)	Target Year 3 (2015)	Evaluator Comment
Victim Assistance Strategy is drafted (2010: no 2015, yes, MoV: NRA Annual Report)	Victim Assistance Strategy is finalized (AR2, Action 11)		Victim Assistance Strategy is finalized	Victim Assistance Strategy is approved and implementation begins	Victim Assistance Strategy is implemented with attention to VA as a component of broader disability sector.	This is positive, important now is to report on the outcomes of the strategy
Number of districts with District Clearance Plans based on District Focused Approach (DFA) (2010: 0, 2015: 20, Mov:, District Clearance Plans)	District Focused Planning Approach (DFA) (AR3 13, 14)		3 districts (pilot project areas) have district clearance plans based on district survey	No of districts with district clearance plans TBC.	No of districts with district clearance plans TBC.	This is positive progress but important now is to monitor the results of the plans (if implemented)
% of Operators Accredited (2010: 33%, 2015: 100%, MoV: NRA Annual Report)	Accreditation of Operators (AR4, Action 21)		65% of operators accredited	100% of operators accredited	100% of operators accredited	
% of operators reporting electronically (2010: 33%, 2015: 100%, MoV: NRA Annual Reports)	Reporting from Operators (AR4 – no particular Action point?)		40% of operators reporting electronically	60% of operators reporting electronically	80% of operators reporting electronically	
% of population in UXO affected areas with improved knowledge, attitudes and practices related to UXO Risk Reduction	No Target established, relates to AR1, Action Point 5					

Indicator Established	Target Issue	Evaluator Comment	Target Year 1 (2013)	Target Year 2 (2014)	Target Year 3 (2015)	Evaluator Comment
(2010: NA, 2015 TBD, MoV: KAP studies)						
Post Clearance Impact Assessment submitted to the Government (2010: Yes, 2015 Yes, MoV: Report)	No Target established, relates to AR3, Action Point 18	Two action points appear merged together, including reference to PCIA: Action 18: Convene quarterly meetings of Clearance TWG. Action in 2014: Commission Post Clearance Impact Assessment including gender perspective				
Timely submission of UXO SWG's quality inputs to RTM/RTiM (2010: Yes, 2013-15 Yes, MoV: receipt by DIC/MPI).	AR4, Action 28	No targets				
UXO Sector Multi-Year Work Plan til 2020 based on SPFII and CCM draft, approved and implemented (2010: no, 2015: yes, MoV: availability of WP)	AR5, Action 41 & AR4, Action 26	No targets  This is really relating to AR5, Action 41, but is to some extent a duplication of AR4, Action 26				
Increase in the percentage of 'un-earmarked' contributions to the UXO Trust Fund (2010: 25%, 2015: 50%, MoV: UXO TF Steering Committee report)		No targets set in NRA Work Plan				



Indicator Established	Target Issue	Evaluator Comment	Target Year 1 (2013)	Target Year 2 (2014)	Target Year 3 (2015)	Evaluator Comment
Increase in GoL contribution to the UXO sector (2010: in-kind only, 2015: financial contribution included, MoV UXO Sector Annual Report)	AR5, Action 42: Develop a long term resource mobilization strategy outline cost recovery schemes for administrative expenditures, future potentials for external funding support and access to national budget allocations for clearance, risk reduction education and VA etc, examining various fundraising opportunities, private sector co-operation, corporate social responsibility etc					This is an area where very limited observable progress has been made other than possibly a better accounting of in-kind contribution
	<b>CCM Treaty Compliance (AR6, Action 44)</b>	Project Action only refers to Articles 7 and 11, not Articles 1,3,4,5,6,7,9, and 11 as referred to in the target. In both cases the document relies on Cluster Munitions Monitor, rather than internal monitoring as the means of verification.	Lao PDR complies with Articles 1,3,4,5,6,7,9, and 11	Lao PDR complies with Articles 1,3,4,5,6,7,9, and 11	Lao PDR complies with Articles 1,3,4,5,6,7,9, and 11	
	CCM Treaty Promotion and Compliance (AR 6 – no particular Action point)	In a situation with a dearth of Targets, this is repetition of one issue area around CCM Treaty compliance. In both cases the document relies on Cluster Munitions Monitor, rather than	CCM Treaty Promotion and Compliance with Article 21	CCM Treaty Promotion and Compliance with Article 21	CCM Treaty Promotion and Compliance with Article 21	

Indicator Established	Target Issue	Evaluator Comment	Target Year 1 (2013)	Target Year 2 (2014)	Target Year 3 (2015)	Evaluator Comment
		internal monitoring as the means of verification.				

## Appendix 5: Summary of recommendations

Actions (UNDP)	Indicators	Method of verification (of UNDP support)	Timeframe
<b>Recommendation 1</b> The UNDP, with the NRA and the UXO Lao, should actively promote the allocation of resources to developing management capacities, clearly articulating how the UNDP's support contributes to programme outputs and outcomes and capacity development.			
<p>Support the NRA and UXO Lao to progress the 2014 Capacity Self-Assessment</p> <p>Support mobilisation of resources and implementation of action plans</p> <p>Identify and help source external expertise where required</p> <p>Develop output and outcome indicators in the new programme document that demonstrates how the UNDP's support contributes to programme's outputs and outcomes</p>	<p>Amount of resources raised through UNDP's activities to support implementation of the Action Plans</p> <p>Number of activities undertaken by UNDP to support implementation of the Action Plans</p> <p>Action Plans used to plan and monitor development partner contributions</p> <p>Relevance, effectiveness and impact of UNDP's activities in support of the implementation of the Action Plans</p> <p>External institutional change processes expert recruited</p> <p>Number of meetings facilitated by UNDP with NRA and UXO Lao leadership to develop output and outcome indicators</p> <p>Number of meetings facilitated by UNDP with NRA and UXO Lao leadership to a programme theory of change</p>	<p>Action Plans indicate where Trust Fund and other UNDP raised resources are covering some or all of the costs</p> <p>Action Plans indicate where UNDP has provided technical support</p> <p>Annual reports</p> <p>Minutes of meetings (TWGs/SWG)</p> <p>Monitoring reports of the action plans</p> <p>Interviews with NRA, UXO Lao staff</p> <p>Interviews with NRA, UXO Lao staff</p>	<p>From first quarter 2016 and continuing through to development of new programme</p>

Actions (UNDP)	Indicators	Method of verification (of UNDP support)	Timeframe
	Relevance, effectiveness and impact of UNDP's facilitation		
<b>Recommendation 2</b> In developing the next programme document, the UNDP should actively promote dialogue between the NRA, LNCRDPE, MPI, and other stakeholders, including province and district level planners, to articulate a transparent, systematic, and auditable process for task prioritisation, collection of relevant baseline and outcome indicators (possibly integrated into existing processes)			
<p>Actively promote dialogue between the NRA, LNCRDPE, MPI offices, and other stakeholders, including province and district level planners, to develop a transparent, systematic, and auditable process for task prioritisation</p> <p>Facilitate dialogue between the NRA and the UXO Lao to identify feasible ways in which standardised baseline and post-clearance outcome indicators can be incorporated into existing processes (e.g. survey) and are relevant to government priorities, the UNDP's Strategic Plan current and subsequent after current ends in 2017</p>	<p>Number of meetings facilitated by UNDP with appropriate decision-makers and relevant stakeholders</p> <p>Relevance, effectiveness and impact of UNDP's facilitation</p>	<p>Minutes of meetings/ workshops</p> <p>Minutes of TWG meetings</p> <p>Interviews with NRA, LNCRDPE, MPI staff</p> <p>Task prioritisation criteria integrated into relevant National Standard and UXO Lao SOPs</p> <p>Outcome indicators included in the next programme document</p> <p>Monitoring and reports</p> <p>Interviews with NRA, UXO Lao staff</p>	<p>From first quarter 2016 and continuing throughout programme cycle</p> <p>Criteria into the relevant National Standards in 2017</p>
<b>Recommendation 3</b> The UNDP should support the NRA, the UXO Lao, and other relevant stakeholders, to identify how UXO/Mine Action might contribute to the SDG targets and identify what, if any, outcome or impact level data collection can be mainstreamed into other SDG data collection processes.			
<p>Facilitate the NRA to initiate dialogue within the sector of how the sector contributes to the SDGs</p> <p>Link the NRA with Lao SDG processes</p> <p>a</p>	<p>Number of meetings where SDGs relevant to the sector are discussed</p> <p>Relevant SDGs identified</p>	<p>Minutes of meetings/ workshops</p> <p>Next programme document articulates links with SDGs</p>	<p>In tandem with Lao SDG process and in preparation of the next programme document</p>

Actions (UNDP)	Indicators	Method of verification (of UNDP support)	Timeframe
<b>Recommendation 4</b> The UNDP should support discussions within the NRA and the Survey and Clearance Technical Working Group to review the CMTS and other approved processes under the new concept of operations to enable community voices and concerns to be heard & ensure all community members are provided with appropriate information about decisions that affect them.			
Support discussions with the NRA and the TWG to review the CMTS and other survey processes to integrate community participation into CMTS and other survey	Number of meetings facilitated by UNDP with appropriate NRA staff and relevant stakeholders Relevance, effectiveness and impact of UNDP's facilitation	Minutes of meetings Minutes of TWG meetings Interviews with NRA staff and relevant stakeholders Changes should be integrated into the relevant National Standards Interviews with community members Monitoring and on reports	From first quarter 2016 and integrated into National Standards by end of 2016
<b>Recommendation 5</b> The UNDP should support discussions within the NRA and the Survey and Clearance Technical Working Group to determine how efficiency and effectiveness of the new concept of operations will be evaluated.			
processes Support development of criteria against which the efficiency and effectiveness of the and other survey processes will be evaluated	Number of meetings facilitated by UNDP with appropriate NRA staff and relevant stakeholders Relevance, effectiveness and impact of UNDP's facilitation	Minutes of meetings Minutes of TWG meetings Interviews with NRA staff and relevant stakeholders Monitoring and on reports	From first quarter 2016 and integrated into National Standards by end of 2016
<b>Recommendation 6</b> The UNDP should support the NRA hold quarterly operational meetings with development partners (program manager level)			
Support the NRA to host quarterly meetings for development partners and other stakeholders to provide a forum for discussions and recommendations that could feed up to the higher level SWG for its endorsement	Number of meetings facilitated by UNDP with appropriate NRA staff and relevant stakeholders Relevance, effectiveness and impact of UNDP's facilitation Development partner satisfaction with UNDP's and NRA communication	Interviews with development partners Minutes of meetings	Immediate and continuing
<b>Recommendation 7</b> The UNDP should support the NRA and UXO Lao to develop and implement an effective communication strategy, tailored to different stakeholder needs and focussed on application of safeguards, outputs, impacts and progress against the capacity building workplans.			
Support the NRA/UXO Lao to: understand development partner information needs; develop and implement a strategic communication plan	Communication plan Appropriate resources allocated to communication	Interviews with development partners Minutes of meetings Needs assessment of communication needs	Immediate and continuing

Actions (UNDP)	Indicators	Method of verification (of UNDP support)	Timeframe
	Relevance, effectiveness and impact of UNDP's support and its own communication processes		
<b>Recommendation 8</b> The UNDP should support constructive dialogue with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and development partners to determine if the Trust Fund and its Terms of Reference are still appropriate			
Consultation and facilitation with relevant stakeholders to review Trust Fund Terms of Reference	Number of meetings/workshops Number of relevant people consulted Stakeholder satisfaction with process	Interviews with development partners Minutes of meetings Dissemination of progress through communication strategy	Process started in first quarter 2016
<b>Recommendation 9</b> The UNDP should continue to work with the NRA, the UXO Lao, and donors to ensure a coherent approach to the provision and coordination of technical advisory services..			
Work with NRA and other providers of TA services, to develop a coherent approach to the provision and coordination of technical advisory services	Reported coherence and coordination in technical advisory services	Interviews with relevant NRA and UXO Lao staff Interviews with UNDP staff Minutes of meetings MoUs Action plans show where donor supported is provided	From first quarter 2016 and continuing
<b>Recommendation 10</b> Support the NRA and the UXO Lao to ensure a pro-poor, gender sensitive focus including gender indicators at the output and outcome level and implementing the recent GMAP 2014 action plan and recommendations related to the 2008 gender assessment.			
Support the NRA and UXO Lao to orientate the UXO programme to having a pro-poor, gender sensitive focus including gender indicators as a minimum at the output and outcome level Support the NRA and UXO Lao to implement action plan in GMAP 2014 report	Number of meetings/ workshops Number of relevant people consulted Number of activities undertaken by UNDP to support implementation of the GMAP recommendations Action plan to implement GMAP recommendations Action plan used to plan and monitor progress	Interviews with relevant NRA and UXO Lao staff Interviews with UNDP staff Minutes of meetings Annual reports TWG meeting minutes Action Plans indicate where UNDP has provided technical support Gender indicators included in the next programme document Dissemination of progress through communication strategy	From first quarter 2016 and incorporated into next programme document

Actions (UNDP)	Indicators	Method of verification (of UNDP support)	Timeframe
	Relevance, effectiveness and impact of UNDP's activities in support of the implementation of the action plan	Monitoring and on reports	
<b>Recommendation 11</b> The UNDP should further develop the capacity of the NRA and UXO Lao in all stages of the information cycle and to develop and implement a sector monitoring and evaluation framework that articulates minimum, output and outcome indicators.			
Support the development, implementation and reporting of a monitoring and evaluation framework including the development of relevant, appropriate and feasible process and output and outcome indicators Recruit external expertise if required (national, regional or international)	Number of activities undertaken by UNDP to support development of implementation of monitoring and evaluation framework Number of relevant people consulted Number of activities undertaken by UNDP to support data analysis, dissemination and use	Interviews with relevant NRA and UXO Lao staff Minutes of meetings Annual reports TWG meeting minutes SWG meetings Monitoring and evaluation framework indicates where UNDP has provided technical support	Process has started and should continue
<b>Recommendation 12</b> The UNDP should support the NRA and the UXO Lao to integrate, monitor, and report on appropriate elements of the UNDP's recently released Social and Environmental Safeguards into their work.			
Support the NRA and UXO Lao to integrate appropriate elements of UNDP's Social and Environmental Safeguards into National Standards, SOPs and practice	NRA and UXO Lao understand safeguards and are able to apply them	Safeguards incorporated into National Standards and UXO Lao SOPs Interviews with NRA and UXO Lao staff Reports	Safeguard's and monitoring of application to be in pace for the beginning of the 2017 programme for
<b>Recommendation 13</b> The UNDP should continue to support the NRA to develop a strategy to transition to increased government financing of the sector. The strategy should be agreed on by the end of 2018, with implementation commencing at the beginning of 2019.			
Support the examination of ways in which MRE, victim assistance and UXO survey and clearance can be further mainstreamed into government organisations for sustainability	Number of relevant people consulted (within and outside of the sector) Number of activities undertaken by UNDP to support transition strategy Donor satisfaction Relevance, effectiveness and impact of UNDP's support	Interviews with relevant NRA and UXO Lao staff Minutes of meetings Annual reports TWG meeting minutes SWG meetings Dissemination of progress through communication strategy	Action plan developed by end of 2016

Actions (UNDP)	Indicators	Method of verification (of UNDP support)	Timeframe
<p>Support the development of plans for MRE, UXO injury surveillance, survey and clearance to transition to government entities</p> <p>Support the development of financing strategies based on projected GDP with increasing government contributions and decreasing donor contributions</p> <p>Support UXO Lao to examine ways in which UXO Lao could mobilise its own funds, undertaking a risk assessment of each option and identifying the capacity requirements for the various options</p>			
<p><b>Recommendation 14</b> The UNDP should facilitate dialogue between the NRA, Ministry of Health, and WHO, and other relevant organisations to develop an action plan to review the quality of the incident surveillance and data collection to ensure alignment with (current or planned) injury surveillance systems, the integration of epidemiological principals into the surveillance of UXO injury; and adherence to WHO’s minimal recommendation dataset for injury surveillance.</p>			
<p>Consultation and facilitation of meetings/workshops with NRA, UXO Lao, WHO, MOH &amp; other stakeholders</p> <p>Facilitating integration of transition of UXO injury surveillance to national injury surveillance system</p> <p>Develop an action plan to review the quality of the incident surveillance and data collection to ensure alignment with (current or planned) injury surveillance systems</p>	<p>Number of meetings facilitated by UNDP</p> <p>Relevance, effectiveness and impact of UNDP’s facilitation</p>	<p>Minutes of meetings (including VA TWG minutes)</p> <p>Action plan incorporated into future programme documents</p> <p>Annual reports</p> <p>Transition plan includes plans to transition UXO injury surveillance to national injury surveillance system</p> <p>Interviews with NRA, WHO, MOH staff</p>	<p>Commence by end of second of 2016</p>

<b>Actions (UNDP)</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Method of verification (of UNDP support)</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>



## Appendix 6: Acronyms used

1MSP	First Meeting of States Parties
BAC	Battle area clearance
CCM	Convention on Cluster Munitions
CHA	Confirmed hazardous area
CMTS	Cluster Munition Technical Survey
COPE	Cooperative Orthotic and Prosthetic Enterprise
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DALY	Disability-adjusted life years
FSD	Swiss Foundation for Mine Action
GoL	Government of Lao People's Democratic Republic.
GDP	Gross domestic product
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
HDI	Human development index
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMAS	International mine action standard
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
MAG	Mines Advisory Group
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRE	Mine Risk Education
NCRDPE	National Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NRA	National Regulatory Authority for the Lao PDR
NSEDP	National Socio-Economic Development Plan
ODA	Official development assistance
PDR	People's Democratic Republic
PM	Prime Minister
SEOD	Senior Explosive Ordnance Disposal
SPM	State Parties Meeting
SWG	Sector Working Group
TWG	Technical Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Action Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UXO	Unexploded ordnance
UXO LAO	Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme