



GENDER ANALYSIS AND ACTION PLAN FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND UNDP UXO PROGRAMME IN LAO PDR

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study is the fourth gender and UXO assessment conducted in Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). Compared to previous assessments, this one addresses intersectionality: specifically, the interconnected lens of poverty, ethnicity and disability. Each of these characteristics puts people at higher risk of experiencing unexploded ordnance (UXO) accidents, missing out on key information, not having their voices heard in consultations and not being able to access clearance for their farmlands, which provide food for their consumption. This means they are more likely to be left behind in the development process. It also renders the UXO sector less efficient as it misses insights based on their unique and diverse local information.

This study used different approaches to seek information from people at the village level. Participatory activities did not require literacy, and the Hmong language was used for discussions. Information was gathered from separate groups of women and men in two villages in Xiengkhouang Province and two villages in Bolikhamxai Province to understand their daily lives. This included documenting the time spent by family members on different activities during an average day and mapping areas of contamination and clearance within their villages. These groups included people of various ethnicities, income levels, ages and education levels as well as men with disabilities from UXO accidents (no women with disabilities from UXO accidents were present in the villages). This information was supplemented through seven household interviews, including people from four ethnic groups, three married men with disabilities from UXO accidents and a widow whose husband was killed by UXO.

This field data was analysed alongside findings from extensive interviews with workers in

the UXO sector. These included staff in the National Regulatory Authority for the UXO/ Mine Action Sector in Lao PDR (NRA), the Humanitarian UXO Demining Teams of the Lao People's Army (Unit 58) and the Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme (UXO Lao), including personnel working in management, non-technical surveys, technical surveys, clearance and explosive ordnance risk education (EORE). Government stakeholders and international and national EORE and victim assistance community service providers were also interviewed. These interviews were conducted in a manner similar to those from the gender and UXO assessments by the Mines Action Group (MAG) in 2008, the Gender and Mine Action Programme (GMAP) of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) in 2014, and UN Women, the Lao Women's Union (LWU) and the NRA in 2018. As extensive data on Lao PDR have been available over a 15-year period, the consultants included questions used in previous studies and focused on their recommendations to assess progress in this sector over time. This process was aligned with UN and international standards and drew from the results of a significant literature review conducted at the outset of the study.

While significant progress has been made on gender and UXO issues internationally, the conclusions of this study mirror findings from previous assessments. There has been little progress on the systemic inclusion of gender issues within UXO policy and programming in Lao PDR. Most past recommendations have not been implemented and remain relevant today. As such, they have been consistently referenced throughout this report, updated into a set of 25 recommendations and summarized into four key areas to produce a Gender and Diversity Action Plan.

This plan and an associated monitoring and evaluation framework cover four years from 2023 to 2026 to align with a UNDP programme, Supporting Effectiveness and Efficiency in the UXO Sector to Contribute to the Achievement of SDG 18 and Safe Path Forward III (SPF III). The programme funded this report, which was designed to suggest activities based on the main findings.

Five domains were used to analyse the findings:

- The legal rights and status of women, ethnic groups and persons with disabilities
- The extent of inclusive practices, participation, power and decision-making for these groups within the larger context of Lao PDR as well as within UXO programming
- Access and control of resources, information and services for these groups
- Time availability and mobility
- Levels of knowledge, beliefs and perceptions in the wider community aligned with social norms

Each of these domains explains the underlying causes of inequality for women, people from diverse ethnic groups and those with disabilities, especially those living in poverty and in remote rural areas, and from the national to the village level. The report discusses how these inequalities affect the participation of these groups within the context of UXO as well as the programming developed to address it.

The study found weaknesses in four key areas for agencies implementing the UNDP programme as well as the wider UXO sector. These comprise a lack of a coordination mechanisms and a clear strategy to address this gap; a lack of knowledge and capacity in gender and diversity issues as they relate to UXO processes; a lack of consistent and tailored approaches to addressing these issues in UXO sector policy and programming; and issues facing female workers when they are conducting work in the field as well as their representation and seniority throughout the sector. Wider issues of employment include a general lack of diversity in staff, including poor representation of diverse minority groups and very few people with disabilities representing survivors of UXO accidents.

The Gender and Diversity Action Plan is presented at the end of the report to provide a clear map forward for work by the Government of Lao PDR and UNDP and guidance to address gender and diversity issues across the UXO sector over the next four years. This will fulfil the strategic priority of the Government and the UNDP programme:

By 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, will benefit from more inclusive, resilient, transformative, and sustainable socio-economic and demographic opportunities to reduce poverty and inequalities.

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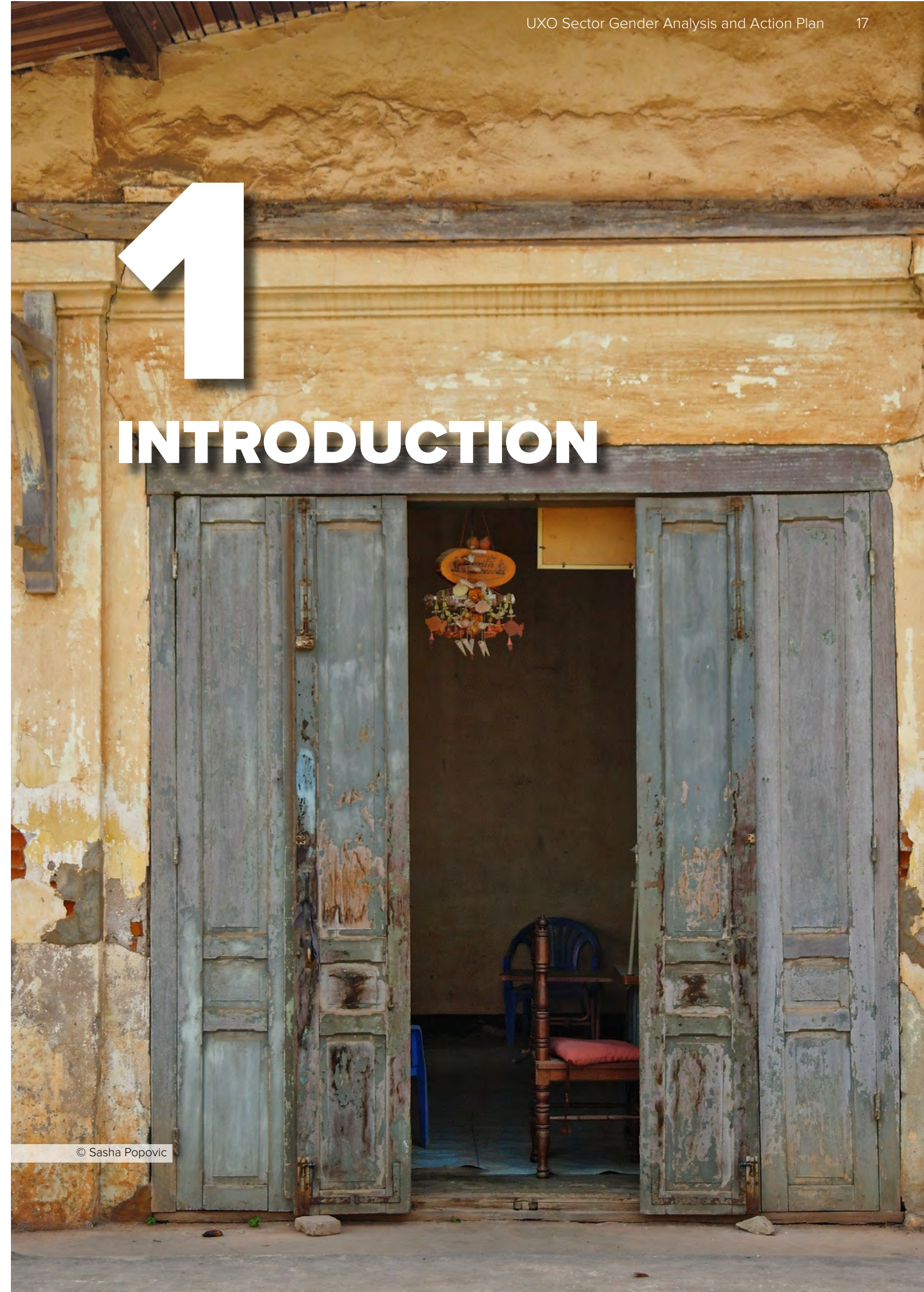


ACRONYMS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CMR	Centre Medical and Rehabilitation
COPE	Cooperative Orthotic and Prosthetic Enterprise
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
CSO	Civil society organization
EORE	Explosive ordnance risk education
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
GMAP	Gender and Mine Action Programme
HI	Humanity and Inclusion (previously Handicap International)
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICBL	International Campaign to Ban Landmines
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LDPA	Lao Disabled People Association
LDWDC	Lao Disabled Women's Development Centre
LWU	Lao Women's Union
LYU	Lao Youth Union
MAG	Mines Advisory Group
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NMAA	National mine action authority
NPAGE	National Plan of Action on Gender Equality
NRA	National Regulatory Authority for the UXO/Mine Action Sector in Lao PDR
NSEDP	National Socioeconomic Development Plan
PDDA	People with Disability Development Association
QLA	Quality of Life Association
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPF III	Safe Path Forward III
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
Unit 58	Humanitarian UXO Demining Teams of Lao People's Army
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UXO	Unexploded ordnance
UXO Lao	Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme



INTRODUCTION



1.1 Background

The 2012 Lao PDR National UXO/Mine Action Standards state:

Lao PDR is still one of the most UXO [unexploded ordnance]-affected countries in the world. The Government of Lao PDR recognises the impact of UXO and highlights the importance of the UXO/mine action programme in removing the constraints of UXO on land and people in the National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy.¹

To address these issues, with the support of the governments of Canada, Ireland, Luxembourg, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and UNDP launched a programme, Supporting Effectiveness and Efficiency in the UXO Sector to Contribute to the Achievement of SDG 18 and SPF III, in April 2022. This is the final report from a study and analysis to develop a gender and diversity action plan for this programme. The study was funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), executed through UNDP and conducted in partnership with the NRA.

1.2 Objectives and scope of the study

The study objective was to conduct a gender analysis of all parts of the UXO sector where UNDP supports decision-making, UXO risk education, survey and clearance, and to assess the impacts of—and obstacles to—women’s engagement in the sector. A set of gender-responsive and effective interventions to eliminate gender disparities has been developed, including guidance on integrating a gender perspective into the programme, addressing gender inequality and meeting the different needs of women and men, and ensuring female participation.

The study involved an extensive literature review of international, regional and national documents on gender in the UXO sector, and a gender and diversity analysis of national UXO and development policies, standards and reports. Key gender and diversity trends in the international and Lao PDR UXO sectors were identified. Relevant stakeholders were

identified, and a field mission took place in two villages in Bolikhamxai Province (Thongseang and Phonsaat villages) and two villages in Xiengkhouang Province (Pungman and Poua villages).

The gender and diversity analysis was conducted in line with international standards and included an examination of the impact of inequalities experienced by those living in poverty, persons with disabilities and diverse ethnic groups (as relevant to those consulted in the field mission). The ultimate outcome of the study is the development of a four-year Gender and Diversity Action Plan (2023-2026) for the UXO sector.

1.3 Limitations

Due to constraints on time, resources and logistics, it was not possible to conduct surveys in the target villages, which would have enabled anonymous responses (data collection was through key informant interviews, focus group discussions and household interviews). It was also not necessary to conduct a survey of NRA staff as this was being done by MAG.

Although all efforts were made to consult with provincial, district and village authorities and UXO Lao and Unit 58 staff, some personnel were unavailable. In some cases, additional information requested from stakeholders was not obtained after several follow-up emails. As with all global and regional field missions, some of the poorest and most disadvantaged villagers were likely not able to attend focus group discussions due to distance, lack of transport, workload and an inability to speak the Lao language. Since the national consultant speaks the Hmong language fluently, language barriers did not restrict the attendance of Hmong men and women. While diverse villagers from the Hmong, Khmu, Muoi and Kha groups attended the sessions in Bolikhamxai and Xiengkhouang, this research does not represent all Lao and ethnic groups across the country.

During household interviews and some focus group discussions, the presence of a large field mission team (four women and two men) and government personnel (up to four male officials) appeared to influence respondents’ answers. In several cases, officials answered the questions

directed to villagers. While this was not unique to this field mission or to the context in Lao PDR, some divergent views may not have been shared.

When meeting with UXO staff from the NRA, Unit 58 and UXO Lao, the presence of senior staff also influenced the flow of discussion, with senior staff answering most questions or more junior staff visibly looking to senior personnel to seek permission to share their views. This is a standard expectation when conducting group discussions with staff of different levels of seniority.

A final limitation was the inability to interview a female victim of a UXO accident. The field mission had hoped to meet a woman with a disability to assess the impact of disability on her economic, social and familial context. Yet no women with disabilities from UXO accidents were recorded or known in the villages of the study. This corroborates national statistics that show a lower incidence of accidents experienced by women.

The limitations cited above are not unusual for a field mission. The authors believe that the findings represent a valid source of evidence on which to base the analysis and subsequent recommendations of this report.

1.4 Report outline

This report first summarizes a literature review of key international documents from the United Nations and GICHD that offer guidance on standards and tools. The following section on Lao PDR’s policy on UXO and gender includes a review of documents from the Lao PDR UXO sector and analysis of previous recommendations from gender and UXO studies. Additional references from the literature review are included where they reinforce findings from the field mission.

A brief analysis of the socioeconomic context for Lao PDR is included to identify a baseline in terms of the status of women, people with disabilities and ethnic groups living in poverty. This is followed by an analysis of the UXO sector based on field mission findings aligned to the following domains: legal rights and status; access and control of resources; time and space; participation, power and decision-making; and

knowledge, beliefs and perceptions (social norms and stereotypes, which are the most common underlying causes of inequality).

The analysis of these domains helps to identify gender and diversity-related disparities and inequalities in the UXO sector, from the national to the village level, as a step towards addressing underlying causes defined by the field mission and literature review. Annex 6 lists the processes and tools used throughout the field mission; these are briefly summarized in the main report.

This report makes recommendations related to gender and diversity issues specifically for the government of Lao PDR and the UNDP programme on the UXO sector. These recommendations provide a rationale for effective and achievable interventions on gender and diversity in the context of Lao PDR. They follow the priorities of the Government and the UNDP programme, and align with core UN and international standards.

This report includes a Gender and Diversity Action Plan with concrete measures and defined targets. To implement the plan, the report identifies a coordination mechanism involving gender and diversity focal points within key stakeholder agencies.

Annexes 1 to 6 provide additional supporting documents. These include a list of people consulted in the field mission, combined recommendations from previous gender assessment studies, gender and diversity issues in the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), guidelines and field tools.

1.5 Methodology

Process

The first phase of this study included an extensive literature review presented in a 52-page inception report, an outline of the data collection methodology and the development of a gender and diversity analysis framework.

It proposed a list of relevant stakeholders for in-depth interviews in Vientiane and outlined a plan for field work in Bolikhamxai and Xiengkhouang with key informant interviews and focus group discussions with provincial, district and



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village authorities, local service providers of EORE and victim assistance, as well as non-technical and technical survey teams from Unit 58 and UXO Lao working at the village level. These discussions provided insights into how UXO sector staff (primarily from the NRA, Unit 58 and UXO Lao) and local authorities address gender and diversity issues in UXO programming. A full list of those consulted is in Annex 1 with the guiding questions for key informant interviews and focus group discussions presented in Annex 6.

The Government and UNDP in its UXO programme aim to improve the lives of local communities affected by UXO to enable them to increase their safety and access to safe land. Consulting with local villagers was essential to investigate how gender and diversity issues and inequalities are present in UXO programming at a local level, and to fully understand the implications related to UXO contamination and clearance. This data collection process involved participatory group activities conducted separately for women and men. It considered the needs of those who were illiterate and only spoke the Hmong language. It was supplemented with seven interviews with diverse local households.

Gender and diversity analysis framework

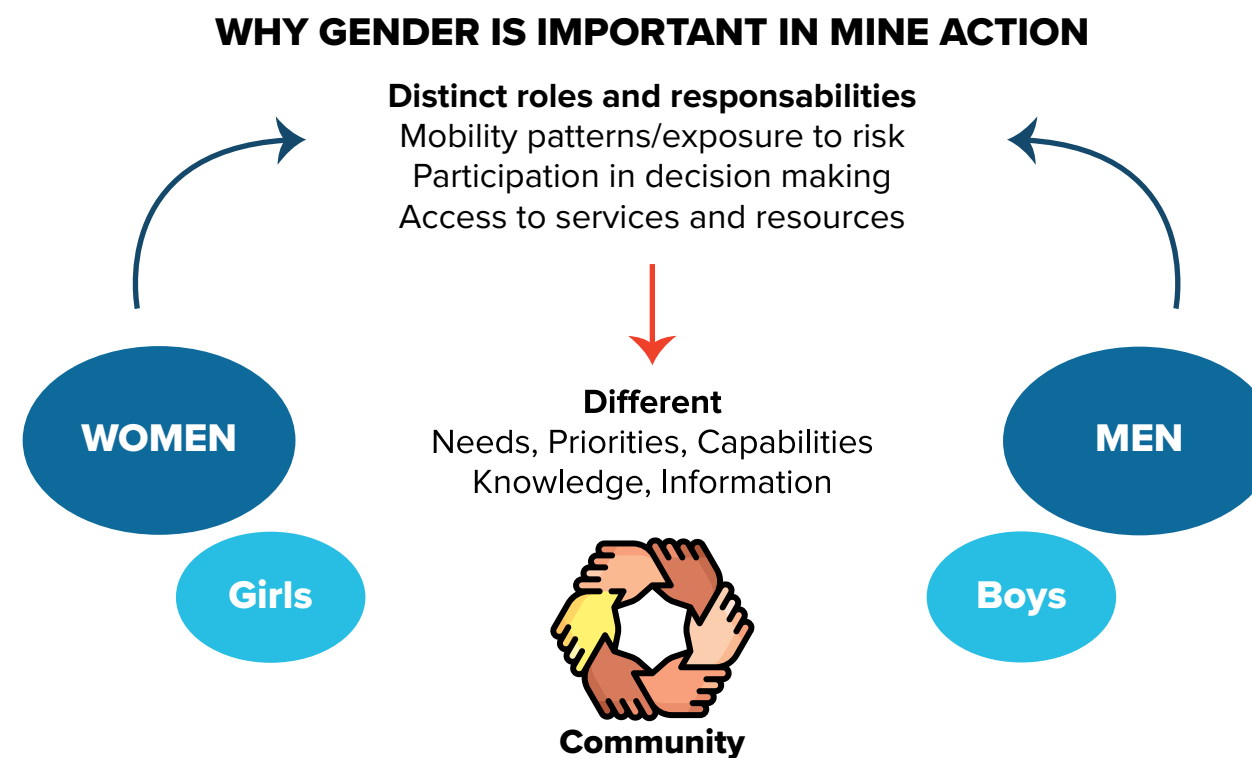
All research tools were designed to elicit context-specific information to address the five domains below, which provided an analytical framework to address gender and diversity issues:

- Legal rights and status
- Practices, participation, power and decision-making
- Access and control of resources
- Time and space, the triple role of women and a conducive environment
- Knowledge, beliefs and perceptions, including social norms and stereotypes

The field mission findings were aligned to these domains and are outlined further in Section 5. The GICHD’s GMAP has created a specific model designed for the UXO sector that includes a gender and diversity lens as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Why gender and diversity matter

Source: GICHD, see: www.gmap.ch/gender-diversity-matter/.



The social roles of diverse women, men, boys and girls differ and are affected by social norms that guide their roles and responsibilities in the family and community. This process influences their exposure to UXO risks, participation in decision-making and access to services and resources. As such, GICHD further defines gender as:

...the socially-constructed roles and opportunities associated with women, men, girls and boys. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are 'socially constructed' (as opposed to being biologically determined), learned through social norms, and are context/time-specific and changeable.²

The diversity lens is further extrapolated in the 2019 UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes, which identify the following diversity dimensions in the UXO sector: sex, age, disability, ethnic group, level of education, language, religion, social status, wealth and economic activity, and LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex) rights.³

Ethics

Prior to each focus group discussion and household interview, the purpose of the study was explained. All interviewees were informed of the right to withdraw at any stage. Written consent was provided to use photographs and names.



NOTE

The field mission identified significant and diverse issues within the UXO sector, based on sex, age, disability, ethnicity, level of education, language and poverty. Throughout this report, these key forms of diversity will be considered as part of a gender and diversity approach to the UXO sector in Lao PDR.

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SUMMARY OF KEY INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review succinctly annotated key literature on gender issues from national, regional and global perspectives to understand the evidence, standards and core issues in the UXO sector. This section briefly outlines these resources. Some are not discussed due to the duplication of issues but can be accessed in the Annexes 2, 3, 4 and 5.

This section includes additional resources that set standards or provide guidelines to integrate gender and diversity issues across the UXO sector in Lao PDR. As such, there is a focus on identifying UN standards and guidelines, and the specialized work of the GICHD and GMAP, as these are of direct relevance to this project. This summary prioritizes critical gender and UXO studies already conducted in Lao PDR and the national policy and standards for the UXO sector.

2.1 UN commitments and guidelines for gender in the UXO sector

In the Cartagena Action Plan 2010–2014: Ending the Suffering Caused by Anti-Personnel Mines,⁴ Article 7 calls for pursuing a gender-sensitive, age-appropriate, inclusive, coherent and coordinated approach to the development and implementation of relevant national policies, plans, legal frameworks and instruments of international law. It calls for information on the implementation process and resource mobilization, including victim assistance and measures taken to ensure gender sensitization in all aspects of mine action.⁵

The 2014 Maputo Action Plan calls for implementation in a cooperative, inclusive, age-appropriate and gender-sensitive manner: “[P]roviding assistance will support plans and programmes that are informed by relevant and accurate information on contamination and the socio-economic impact of anti-personnel mines – including information which is collected from affected women, girls, boys and men, and is analysed from a gender perspective – and that promote and encourage gender mainstreaming.”⁶

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action released the 2018 IASC Gender Handbook

for Humanitarian Action; it defines priorities for women, girls, boys and men. The handbook includes a short section on mine action good practices: “Promote the leadership of women in mine action and of adolescent girls in child protection committees. Agree on representation quotas for women with the community prior to any process for elections.”⁷

In 2002, the IASC produced the “Mine Action Gender Marker Tip Sheet,” providing specific guidance to address gender in mine action projects through needs assessments, project activities and outcomes. It provides a set of minimum gender commitments in mine action in land release, mine risk education, victim assistance and advocacy. This was followed by the Guidelines: Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (2019), which outlines how to consider differences in risks and barriers to addressing intersectionality across age, gender and other diversities for people with disabilities, including different types of disabilities.

In 2019, the Oslo Action Plan⁸ identified a best practice as “integrating and mainstreaming gender considerations and taking the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account in mine action programming.” The Oslo Action Plan commits States Parties to:

Ensure that the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men are considered and inform all areas of Convention implementation and mine action programmes, in order to deliver an inclusive approach. Strive to remove barriers to full, equal and gender balanced participation in mine action and in Convention meetings.⁹

The Oslo Action Plan calls for addressing the needs and experiences of people in communities affected by anti-personnel mines, with a focus on gender, age, disability and other diverse socially marginalized groups. A paper presented to the Oslo review conference offered practical recommendations for gender mainstreaming at a strategic and operational level.¹⁰ While the recommendations are too extensive to list here, they comprehensively address all aspects of mine action including IMAS, surveys, clearance, EORE

and victim assistance, and focus on detailed sex, age and disability data and a diversity analysis. The paper also called for UXO-affected countries to remove obstacles to women’s employment and advancement at all levels of mine action. This includes achieving gender balance in their own mine action structures and encouraging implementing partners to do the same across all operations.

The Second Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in September 2021 adopted the Lausanne Action Plan. It makes commitments similar to those in the Oslo Action Plan. Action 4 states:

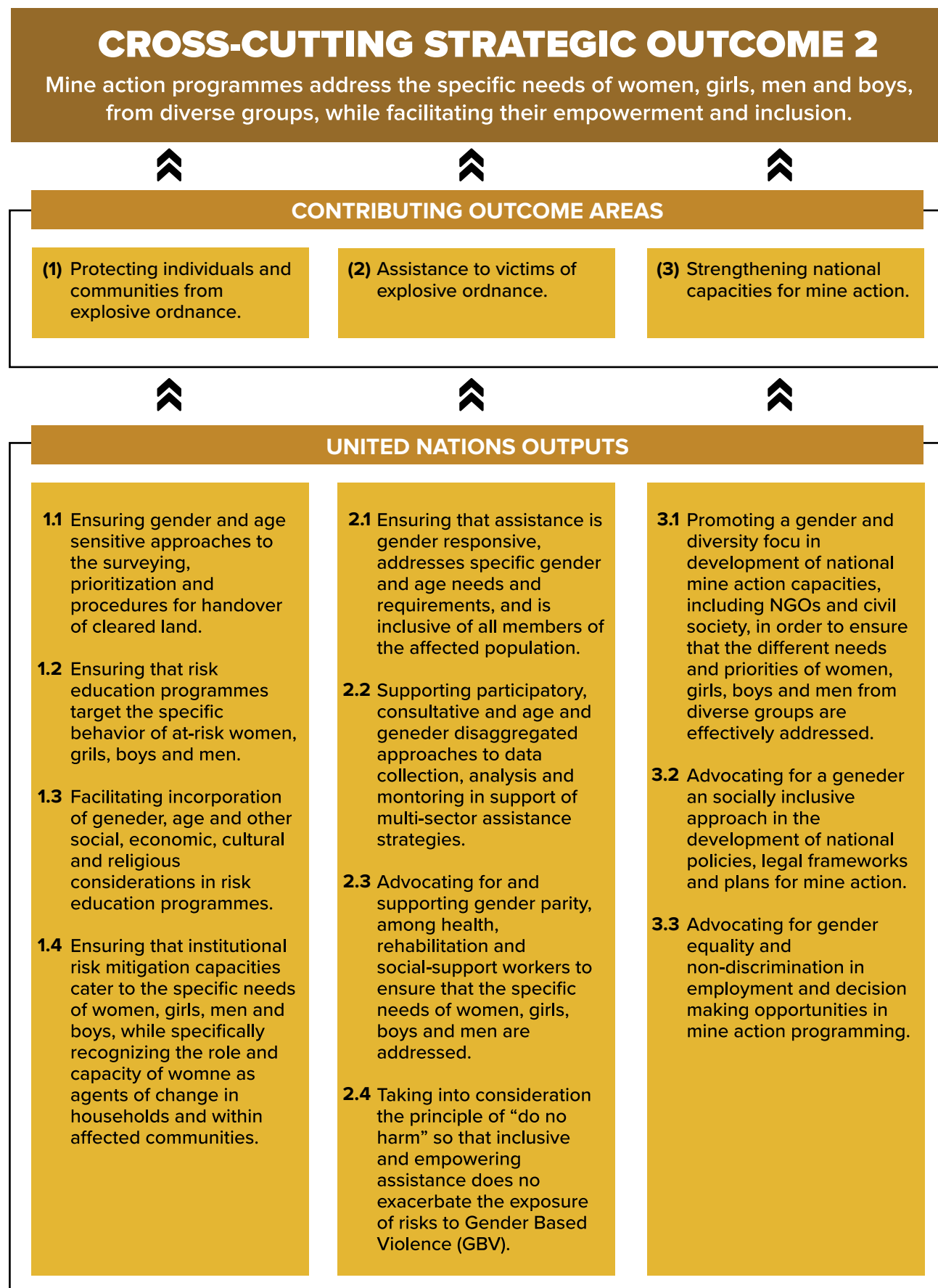
Ensure that the different needs, vulnerabilities and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men from diverse populations and all ages are considered and inform the implementation of the Convention in order to deliver an inclusive approach, as well as strive to remove all barriers to full, equal and meaningful gender-balanced participation in implementation activities at the national level and in the Convention’s machinery, including its meetings.

The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), in the United Nations Mine Action Strategy 2019–2023, addresses gender and diversity in cross-cutting Strategic Outcome 2, on mine action programmes addressing the specific needs of women, girls, men and boys from diverse groups, while facilitating their empowerment and inclusion. The outcome is provided in full in Figure 2 as it provides clear guidance for a national approach to gender and diversity in the UXO sector. It is used as a measure of alignment for the Gender and Diversity Action Plan in this report.



Figure 2: United Nations Mine Action Strategy 2019–2023

Source: UNMAS 2019b, p. 23.



The first edition (2005) of the UNMAS *Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes*¹¹ was translated into the Lao language. The current and third edition (2019) aligns with the UN Mine Action Strategy 2019-2023. These guidelines adopt a wider diversity lens with an increased focus on management processes and targets for recruitment, team composition and mixed gender teams, codes of conduct, internal policies and practices, and facilities and workplace environments.

The foreword in these guidelines from the UN Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Peace Operations states:

One of the five strategic outcomes calls for the mainstreaming of the specific **needs of women, girls, men and boys from diverse groups**, while facilitating their empowerment and inclusion, in a **cross-cutting manner in all aspects of mine action programmes**. I am confident these Guidelines provide relevant, practical guidance not only for the United Nations to implement its Strategy but also **for the entire sector** as we work together towards a world where communities are free from these deadly threats.¹²



FINDING

The field mission found no evidence that any UN commitments on gender and diversity have been implemented in the UXO sector in Lao PDR or that guidelines have been used. No officials or UXO staff indicated they knew about the commitments or associated guidelines, even though the 2005 *Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes* was translated into the Lao language.



NOTE

As the international standard outlined in the United Nations Mine Action Strategy 2019-2023 and the UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes (2019) is to address gender and diversity, in agreement with UNDP, this report has adopted a gender and diversity lens for this project and the associated action plan.



RECOMMENDATION 1

The Gender and Diversity Action Plan should align with international UN standards agreed by Lao PDR as a Member State.

The guidance documents developed by UNMAS should be used to mainstream gender and diversity in the UXO sector with any required adjustments based on the specific context of Lao PDR.

2.2 Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, Gender and Mine Action Programme and the Gender and Diversity Working Group

GICHD, the GMAP and the Gender and Diversity Working Group play a significant leadership role on gender in the UXO sector. The majority of documents identified through the literature review were from GICHD and the GMAP (the latter is now a thematic unit under GICHD) or were journals authored by GICHD/GMAP staff. These documents provide evidence-based research, analysis and best practice guides for national governments and UXO sector partners to use. They can assist in the implementation of the Gender and Diversity Action Plan.

In 2021, GICHD released a Gender Equality and Inclusion Policy and a Gender Equality and Inclusion Action Plan to transform the commitments from the policy into measurable, realistic targets and concrete actions. The objectives of the policy and plan address GICHD’s institutional framework. They comprise contributing to gender equality and inclusion; ensuring women and men from diverse backgrounds participate in and benefit from activities and services on a full and equal basis; ensuring the organizational culture is inclusive, enabling and free from bias or discrimination; and providing fair, equal and transparent access to employment opportunities and benefits.

Each of these objectives has a set of indicators with associated baseline data, targets for each year and annual results. These documents provide a good practice for the sector.

GICHD/GMAP guidance tools

Core guidance resources produced by GICHD/GMAP that provide practical guidance in the sector include:

- Gender and Priority-Setting in Mine Action (2012)
- Gender-Sensitive Recruitment and Training in Mine Action—Guidelines (2013)
- Gender and Diversity in Mine Action Quality Management (2014)
- Gender and Diversity in Mine Action Contracting and Grants Management (2014)
- Victim Assistance Responsive to Gender and Diversity Aspects (2018)

Gender and Priority-Setting in Mine Action identifies processes for gathering data and preferences from affected communities (a bottom-up approach) rather than the allocation of government resources as a top-down approach. It provides guidance on processes to consult with local people of different genders, ages and socioeconomic groups to ensure activities and resources achieve the greatest impacts. It includes practical processes for gender analysis with the provision of field tools.

Gender-Sensitive Recruitment and Training in Mine Action—Guidelines outlines processes to address gender issues in recruiting and training staff in all areas and levels of demining and land release activities, including non-technical and technical surveying, mapping, clearance, marking, community liaison work and the handover of cleared land. Good practice case studies are provided for diverse countries, making the tool relevant across a wide range of organizations.

Gender and Diversity in Mine Action Quality Management is a substantial set of guidelines designed to assist mine action stakeholders to mainstream gender and diversity in quality management and documentation practices. It includes a checklist for mainstreaming, including: national mine action standards, national technical standards and guides, standard operating procedures, and quality planning, assurance and control. The guide contains recommendations for addressing gender and diversity in accreditation processes as well as in

monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

GMAP and GICHD's 2014 Gender and Diversity in Mine Action Contracting and Grants Management provides checklists to ensure gender and diversity considerations are mainstreamed into contracting and grants management documentation, including requests for proposals, invitations to bid, calls for expressions of interest, grant application forms, statements of work, contracts and grant agreements. This resource also provides recommendations on how to address gender and diversity considerations in appraisal, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The toolkit is both comprehensive and practical for sector stakeholders.



FINDING

Report findings and assessment recommendations have not been implemented.



RECOMMENDATION 2

Since GICHD and GMAP have already developed significant guidance on gender and diversity issues in priority setting, recruitment and training, quality management, contracts and grant management, and victim assistance, these core resources should provide key inputs into the implementation of the Gender and Diversity Action Plan.



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3 POLICY OF LAO PDR ON UXO AND NATIONAL GENDER ASSESSMENTS

This section focuses on policy and work addressing gender and diversity issues in Lao PDR. The first part analyses key national policy and guiding documents for the inclusion of gender and diversity issues, specifically as they relate to the UXO sector. The second part looks specifically at assistance provided to the NRA. The third part focusses on several critical gender assessments that have been conducted in the UXO sector in Lao PDR.

3.1 National policy and guiding documents

This section specifically examines national and guiding documents related to the UXO sector. Other national policies on women, people with disabilities and ethnic groups are discussed in Section 8. Lao PDR's 2021 Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reports on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality and the empowerment of women but makes no reference to any UXO issues. Conversely, the national SDG 18 on the UXO sector does not discuss gender issues, referring to "UXO survivors and their families." Under target 18.1, however, the indicators include the number of reported UXO casualties and deaths disaggregated by age group and sex (18.1.1) and the percentage of the population in contaminated villages with information on confirmed hazardous areas in their village (disaggregated by age group, sex and disability) (18.1.2), while noting that disability data were not reported for this indicator.

The Fourth Five-Year National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (NPAGE) 2021-2025, released in 2021, refers to women with disabilities but does not mention UXO. The document sets a target for 80 percent of sectors to collect statistical data segregated by sex, age, disability, ethnicity, place of residence and socioeconomic status.

The Ninth National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED) 2021-2025, released in 2021, contains six key outcomes containing a range of outputs. Outcome 3, on the enhanced well-being of people, addresses issues of gender and UXO in separate outputs. Output 3, on promoting and developing women, juveniles and young people, does not mention UXO issues. Output

6, on UXO clearance progressively accelerated and more lives made safe from UXO, does not mention women or gender specifically, although it does state:

...it is evident that the areas cleared of UXO so far are not sufficient to meet the rising needs and demands of the people and socio-economic development, due to limited resources, capital and technical capacity.¹³

The Eighth NSED calculated deaths and injuries from UXO by "persons"—that is, data were not sex or age disaggregated. The monitoring and evaluation framework for the Ninth NSED includes Indicator 113, on the number of UXO casualties by age and sex, which differentiates based on the sex of adults and children. Indicator 117 captures the number of UXO survivors and victims reached by medical treatment, mental health rehabilitation, vocational rehabilitation, training and careers, and disability rights advocacy.

The *UXO Sector Annual Report 2021* reports on localized SDG Indicator 18.1.1, the number of reported UXO casualties disaggregated by age group and sex. For 2021, this included the death of eight men and six boys and injuries to 15 men and 15 boys. For females, this data indicated no deaths of girls but included the deaths of two women, and injuries to nine women and eight girls.¹⁴

The National Strategic Plan for the UXO Sector in the Lao PDR 2021-2030, SPF III, states:

- Multi-sectoral integration and participation is an important mechanism to achieve the vision of SPF III, especially in terms of gender mainstreaming and environmental protection.
- In the past, gender work has also been integrated into the UXO sector, such as through EORE, victim assistance and UXO survey and clearance. Furthermore, sex and age disaggregated data are collected in the UXO database.
- Gender mainstreaming is important for the UXO/Mine Action National Strategic Plan and work plans. Data needs to be disaggregated by sex and age, and women must be engaged in work planning and the

implementation of projects.

- Gender Awareness and Equality: The M&E system should be based on the full participation of men and women and promote equality.

The SPF III references the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was ratified by Lao PDR in 1980. On ethnic groups, the SPF III states:

- This process of addressing the UXO issue simultaneously involves creating opportunities and facilities for development, protecting and assisting Lao ethnic groups living in high-risk areas.
- In the past, UXO accidents have caused extensive damage to both the lives and property of Lao people, especially ethnic groups living in more remote areas.
- Over the past 10 years (2011-2020), the NRA, as secretariat of the Government, has been conducting EORE and raising awareness among the multi-ethnic Lao people groups regarding the dangers of UXO.

References made to people with disabilities include:

- UXO (victim assistance) is an integral part of public health, education, labour and social welfare work at the central, local and community levels. Likewise, to assist people with disabilities requires coordination and proper integration of such work, which the NRA is responsible for.
- (Victim assistance) is part of the broader national and community based public health approach to disability and integration and NRA has a shared responsibility in this area. However, emergency assistance in the event of a UXO accident is not yet systematic and focused, and the UXO Victim Database has not been fully updated. Comprehensive statistics, medical care, rehabilitation, vocational support, and the employment of UXO victims are still limited.

The SPF III also refers to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified by Lao PDR in 2006, as well as the National Policies, Strategies and Action Plans for Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 and the Law on Persons

with Disabilities No. 57/NA.

The Prime Minister's Decree on Solving the Problem of Unexploded Ordnance (final Lao language version, GoL/210, dated 29 July 2022) does not mention gender or issues specifically targeted to women but does make several references to people with disabilities. These include:

- Promoting and protecting the rights of people with disabilities from unexploded ordnance remains to be implemented in line with the Law on Persons with Disabilities.
- Article 25: Restoration of duty. Persons disabled from the accident of UXO will be rehabilitated according to medical principles by providing equipment, aids and aids in living after receiving treatment.
- Article 26: Rehabilitation of physical health. Disabled persons from the accident of UXO will receive physical and mental rehabilitation, surgical services, modification and decoration of the body, provision of equipment, support equipment and helpers according to medical principles at hospitals, functional rehabilitation at the medical centers, community and family rehabilitation.



FINDINGS

The *UXO Sector Annual Report 2021* is an excellent resource for data on UXO deaths and injuries as well as sex-disaggregated data on employment in the UXO sector. The Ninth NSED provides sex-disaggregated data on deaths and injuries among adults and children but not data on medical and psychological rehabilitation or vocational training.

The SPF III makes several references to gender, ethnic groups and people with disabilities, and the Prime Minister's Decree on Solving the Problem of Unexploded Ordnance makes several references to people with disabilities. Other documents silo gender and UXO issues, however, with few references to the impacts of UXO in gender documents, and a lack of a gender analysis in UXO documents. This does not conform to the Fourth NPAGE target for 80 percent of sector organizations to collect statistical data segregated by sex, age, disability, ethnicity, place of residence and socioeconomic status.



RECOMMENDATION 3

In line with the Fourth NPAGE, all data should be segregated by sex, age, disability, ethnicity, place of residence and socioeconomic status, especially in reference to the UXO sector.

3.2 Previous gender support to the NRA

A 2009 document, UNMAS and Gender Mainstreaming in Mine Action, indicated that national mine action directors and UN advisers from Afghanistan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand attended a workshop entitled, “Perspectives from the Asia Field Programmes.” The workshop provided support to national programmes in preparing, updating, evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of their tailored gender action plans, shared challenges and good practices, and linked gender advisers to national programmes to ensure practical and realistic support. The session aimed to increase national authority and ownership of gender action plans.

In 2014, GICHD worked with the NRA to produce the report Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programs Lao PDR. This includes a dedicated section on gender mainstreaming:

While individual operators make efforts to include gender considerations in their activities, the extent to which gender is mainstreamed in the broader strategic planning process of the Lao PDR programme is not clear. In its strategic objective four: Ensure effective leadership, coordination and implementation of the national programme, the SPF II includes a major action that specifically related to gender: “Formulate an annual sector work plan to support the implementation of this strategy as well as the implementation of the recommendations from the 2008 assessment of gender perspectives into UXO action.” The indicator of success related to this action is that the annual work plan includes “gender targets”, and that the assessment recommendations are implemented.¹⁵

The report also notes that the NRA requested the GMAP to organize a training workshop on

mainstreaming gender in the Lao PDR UXO/ Mine Action Programme, which was conducted in May 2013. Participants took a pre-training self-assessment to identify their perceptions of how gender is mainstreamed in UXO action. An annex summarizes an assessment by participants. Although more than half of the 27 respondents stated they had not received gender training previously, 88 percent considered gender mainstreaming as (very) important, 77 percent said they do not have opportunities within their organizations to strengthen gender knowledge, 41 percent considered the promotion of gender equality and respect for diversity was insufficient, and 95 percent thought it would be useful to establish a working group on gender in the workplace.

The GMAP’s 2014 Gender Assessment of Lao PDR Mine Action Programme (henceforth referred to as GMAP 2014) was the result of a rapid gender assessment of the UXO programme funded by the Department for International Development. The assessment focused on the NRA with field visits to UXO Lao, Norwegian People’s Aid, MAG and Humanity and Inclusion (HI) operations to identify how to strengthen the NRA’s capacity to mainstream gender in the UXO sector. The GMAP applied learnings from other countries to build the Lao PDR programme to be a gender mainstreaming example. The study focused on internal and external processes, assessing gender awareness and the gender balance of staff, staffing policies and procedures, and examining gendered impacts across the project cycle, information management, impact assessment, and access to and benefits from clearance.

The assessment presented recommendations to fully integrate gender mainstreaming from the outset of programming (rather than it becoming an ‘add on’), including through the systematic collection of data and by conducting local consultations with women as well as men. Recommendations and an associated Gender Action Plan are contained in Annex 4. One specific high-level recommendation was:

NRA consider drafting and adopting a stand-alone policy on Gender and Diversity for the UXO sector, as a document to be referred to in the National Standards and used to communicate,

both internally to staff and externally to partners, stakeholders and donors, the vision, values and practices in terms of gender and diversity that the NRA strives for.



FINDING

Since 2009, GICHD and the GMAP have provided training, technical advice and a full assessment on gender issues relating to the work of the NRA. There is no evidence that these recommendations have been implemented.



RECOMMENDATION 4

The NRA should prioritize the GMAP recommendation to draft and endorse a stand-alone policy on gender and diversity for the UXO sector. This is a critical and early deliverable under the Gender and Diversity Action Plan.

3.3 Additional gender and UXO action-focused assessments for Lao PDR

Extensive investment in addressing gender and UXO in Lao PDR over the past 15 years began with a significant gender assessment produced by MAG in 2008.

In 2008, UNDP commissioned MAG, with Irish Aid funding, to produce the ground-breaking *Assessment of Gender Perspectives in UXO Action in the Lao PDR* (MAG 2008). This was the first national assessment of the UXO sector to examine gender issues. A smaller study conducted the previous year based on discussions between MAG, UNDP, UXO Lao and the NRA indicated strong support for the wider study, which included other humanitarian mine action operators. The study assessed the extent to which gender issues were embedded in processes within UXO contamination, clearance prioritization, EORE, victim assistance, clearance personnel and employment. The findings indicated low levels of women’s engagement throughout the sector with extensive data providing a baseline from which to measure changes in the impact of gender-focused interventions. The report included all survey tools, allowing the study to be replicated to

analyse trends over time. This current study has replicated some of these questions to test changes over time.

Recommendations focused on the five mine action pillars and the employment of women within the sector. They were developed to assist UNDP in its gender action plan for the UXO sector in Lao PDR,¹⁶ and to provide a platform for policy development and a review of draft national standards. The recommendations are included in Annex 2.



FINDINGS

There is no evidence that any recommendations from the MAG gender assessment have been implemented, other than the translation of the UNMAS Gender Guidelines in Mine Action into the Lao language.

Replicating questions from the MAG gender assessment and asking stakeholders about the implementation of recommendations indicated no observable change from the baseline or indeed knowledge of the assessment (outside the MAG representative at the EORE meeting).

High-quality reports and data to address gender and UXO have largely been overlooked.

In 2018, UN Women released *An Assessment Report: Enhancing Results of UXO Programs in Lao PDR by Promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment*, developed in collaboration with the LWU and NRA. It provides an excellent background on work on gender and UXO until 2018. The assessment aimed to identify strategic and practical entry points for mainstreaming gender in UXO policies, operations and victim assistance, with a view to working with the LWU to increase gender equality in the UXO sector, including through standard operating procedures for UXO clearance, risk education and victim assistance.



FINDINGS

Only five recommendations from the assessment have been implemented.¹⁷ One resulted in the production of the *Gender Mainstreaming Training Manual in UXO Sector in Laos*, a comprehensive training manual translated into the Lao language. It identified the achievements and challenges in

addressing gender in UXO issues and outlined how to conduct gender analysis and gender-sensitive planning in the sector, specifically through non-technical surveys, UXO clearance, EORE, victim assistance and advocacy. Various practical sections included gender mainstreaming in the UXO project cycle, gender-sensitive human resources policies in the sector and the impact of gender mainstreaming.

Key stakeholders in Vientiane as well as provincial, district and village stakeholders were asked if they had participated in this training. No one had been trained or even heard of the resource except for a Level 3+ explosives officer from UXO Lao in Xiengkhouang who reported attending a training of trainers. Throughout discussions, all stakeholders (both men and women) requested more intensive gender training.



RECOMMENDATION 5

The Gender Mainstreaming Training Manual in UXO Sector in Laos should be reviewed and updated where necessary and rolled out for use by all stakeholders in the UXO sector and with provincial, district and village-level personnel working on UXO issues.

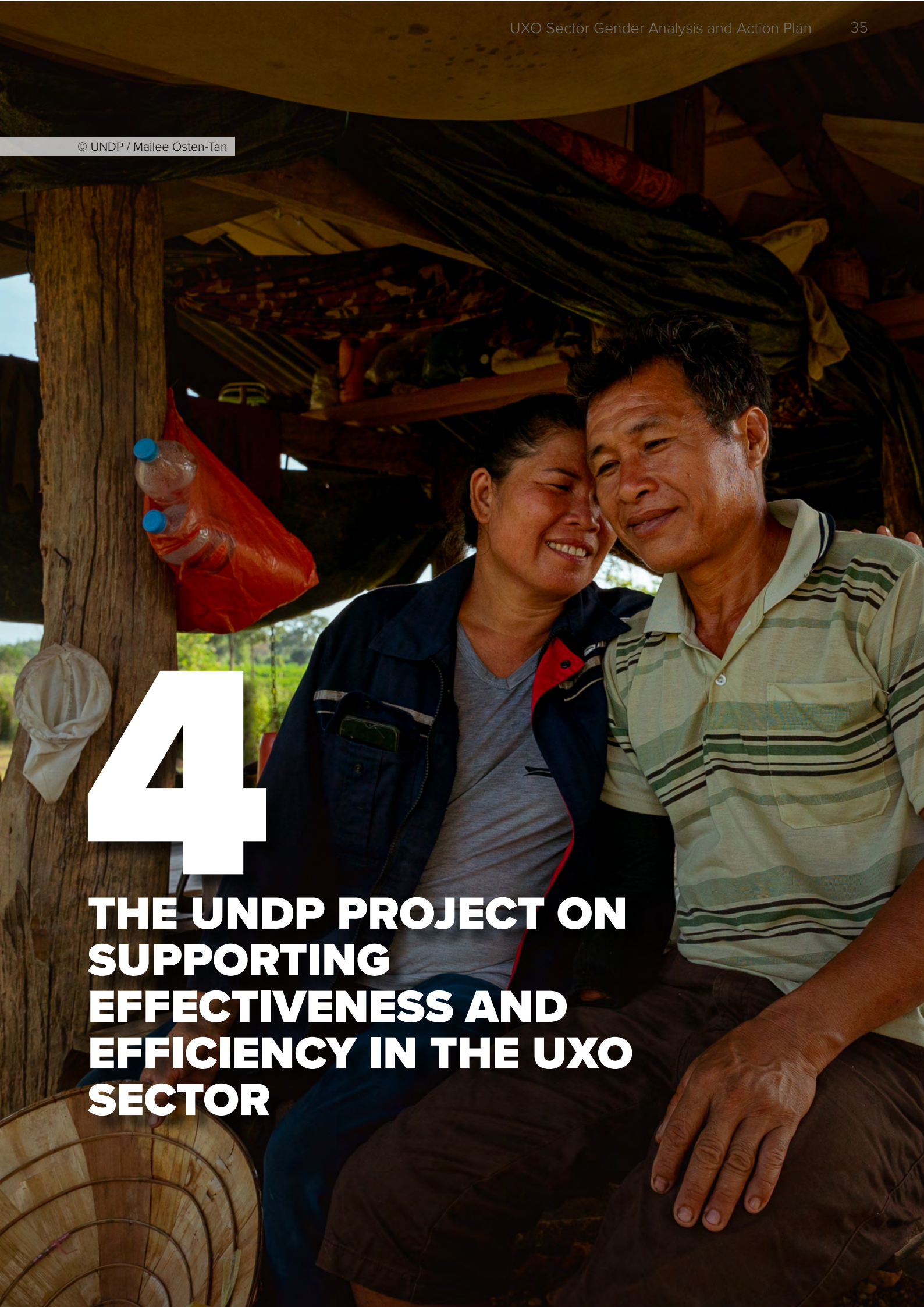


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4

THE UNDP PROJECT ON SUPPORTING EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY IN THE UXO SECTOR



UNDP has been supporting the UXO sector in Lao PDR since the mid-1990s and helped create two key state institutions—UXO Lao and the NRA. Due to this leading role, UNDP co-chairs the UXO Sector Working Group, together with the Lao Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy of the United States of America. The various iterations of UNDP work on the UXO sector have included several assessments of gender elements. This section highlights some of these and looks specifically at the current project, providing recommendations for including gender and diversity.

4.1 Background of the project

UNDP carried out a project entitled Support for Strengthening the National Regulatory Authority for the UXO/Mine Action Sector and the Lao National UXO Programme from 2013 to 2015 (extended to 2016). This was followed by the UNDP—Lao UXO Program 2017-2021. The current UNDP programme, Supporting Effectiveness and Efficiency in the UXO Sector to Contribute to the Achievement of SDG 18 and SPF III, is the focus of the Gender and Diversity Action Plan in this study.

A 2016 paper, *Effectiveness and Impact of UNDP Mine Action Support: Lessons Learned*,¹⁸ refers to UNDP efforts to mainstream gender using the *UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action* and working with the GMAP. The paper found “little evidence that UNDP’s support in this area has transformed national mine action programs, and further efforts to improve gender equity are required.”¹⁹

An external Evaluation of *UNDP Support to Mine Action in Lao PDR, 2013–2016*, conducted in 2016, referred to the 2008 MAG assessment, stating that the implementation of recommendations remained modest at best:

UNDP has not systematically provided gender analysis and training, or monitored the extent to which gender is taken into account in policies and practice... there are no strategic tools for pro-poor gender-sensitive planning in task identification and prioritisation processes... 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 Cluster Munition Survey (CMTS) ... Part of the problem relates back to the programme design, which does not contain management level capacity building processes, outputs, and outcome indicators.²⁰

The review provided the following specific recommendations:

Action:

- 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.

Indicators:

- 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.

Means of verification:

- Action Plans indicate where UNDP has provided technical support.
- Gender indicators included in the next project document.

UNDP partnered with GICHD in 2017 to produce the report *Leaving No One Behind: Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals*. It included a section on gender that succinctly related issues of gender in mine action to SDG 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women. Three outcomes were aligned with indicators to measure mine action initiatives against SDG 5:

- To increase female representation in national mine action programmes and/or institutions assessed against the indicator on the proportion of management positions held by women in mine action programmes and/or institutions compared to national average;
- The effective participation of women in setting mine action priorities/impact

assessment at community level assessed against the indicator on the proportion of women consulted in prioritisation/impact assessment processes compared to ratio men/women living in community;

- The economic empowerment of women in previously contaminated agricultural area [number] months after handover of released area measured by the indicator of the proportion of women among the landowners or land users of released agricultural land.

In 2019, the *UNDP—Lao UXO Program 2017-2021: Mid Term Evaluation, End Evaluation of EU Contribution & Forward-Looking Opportunities* referred to the NRA Gender Equality Strategy in 2011²¹ and the *Manual for Trainers on Gender Mainstreaming in the UXO Sector* developed by UN Women with the LWU and NRA. The review noted that initial workshops were held “but there did not seem to be arrangements for ongoing implementation, follow-up and impact monitoring in the field. There is a need for follow-up donor support to allow further roll out and implementation of the Manual moving forward.”

The review referred to a gender indicator that calls for 20 percent of senior management in the UXO sector to be women. This was achieved by the NRA but the share at UXO Lao had only reached 3 percent. The evaluation suggested that UNDP and the Government of Lao PDR could “make greater efforts towards gender mainstreaming including ensuring that the gender components and targets of programs and projects are supported by operational plans for implementation and follow up.”

It also suggested “a gender balance target should be set for all UXO Lao and NRA staff, not just senior staff. This could be set at 30% within five years and increase to 50% within 10 years.” The evaluation team also observed an eight-months pregnant UXO Lao woman working physically on survey and clearance in a hill area, stating:

Apart from UXO risks to the mother and unborn child, this indicates a total lack of gender policy and procedures on the responsibilities of the employer towards pregnant women.

The evaluation concluded by stating:

It is unclear how meaningful progress on gender equality and mainstreaming has been, and how effectively women participate in decision making. More research is needed to understand gender equality in the sector and gender equality among beneficiaries... there is a clear need for UNDP, with support from UN Women and the LWU, to assist NRA and UXO Lao to develop and implement internal gender policies, including on their employer responsibilities to female staff when pregnant, and post-natal maternity.²²

The main finding on gender and human rights was that:

The programme should pursue a gendered, pro-poor approach to UXO action, keeping the “do no harm” principle at the forefront of its work. The current programme document is not explicitly aligned to these principles.

The key recommendation was that:

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.²³

Moving Towards Achieving SDG 18: Removing the UXO Obstacle to Development in Lao PDR: Final Report was produced in 2021. It noted that UNDP aimed: “to promote and support gender mainstreaming and human rights, directly and through national capacity development, within the policies and practices of the UXO sector.” The report indicated that since the UN Women office in Lao PDR had closed, UNDP had attempted to promote the *Manual for Trainers on Gender Mainstreaming in the UXO Sector* but an application for funding was not successful.

The report could not verify whether women in contaminated areas were systematically consulted throughout operations. It found that data on victim assistance work did not detail how different demographic and socioeconomic needs were considered. The report questioned

whether meaningful progress had been made in gender mainstreaming in the UXO sector. It recommended that future projects should include a consultation mechanism throughout operations as a means of measuring and assessing the impact of progress. It found no evidence that UNDP's support to the UXO sector had contributed to meeting the needs of ethnic minorities.



FINDINGS

The reviews of the Government and UNDP UXO programme have identified consistent gaps in past programming to address, implement and monitor effective gender interventions, and to consistently mainstream gender issues, including in contributing to meeting the needs of ethnic groups

UNDP developed a proposal for funding to further implement the UN Women/LWU training manual.

The project document for the current programme has addressed several recommendations through the inclusion of ethnic groups and the collection of data on ethnicity; an indicator on the proportion of management positions held by women in the NRA and UXO Lao; increased access to vocational training, jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities for women, young people, people with disabilities and ethnic groups in the poorest districts; identification of whether survey and clearance consultations at the village level include vulnerable groups; the inclusion of sex- and age-disaggregated data; and gender mainstreaming for the UXO sector based on the NRA, UN Women and LWU training manual.

The core gender recommendation from the final review was to **“promote gender mainstreaming and the meaningful participation of women in the UXO sector.”**

4.2 Current UNDP programme

The current UNDP programme, Supporting Effectiveness and Efficiency in the UXO Sector to Contribute to the Achievement of SDG 18 and SPF III, is situated within the UNDP Country Programme Document for Lao PDR (2022-2026), under Outcome 1 on inclusive prosperity, and in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026, under Strategic Priority

2, on inclusive prosperity (and Joint Output 2.6 on rural development and UXOs). Four key areas are identified in the project document:

- Improving holistic coordination, capacity and multisectoral approach to link land release with development priorities (clearance)
- Individuals continue to engage in unsafe behaviour (EORE)
- UXO victim rights are not fulfilled
- Need for stronger policy and legislative environment

The strategy addresses safe land release, behaviour changes among at-risk groups, the realization of the rights of victims of UXO, an enabling environment, mainstreaming (gender, disability and ethnic considerations) and innovation.

The Country Programme Document provides a clear context for ongoing work on gender and UXO issues in paragraph 13 and Output 1.3. These sections have been extracted for reference:

Paragraph 13: UNDP will support vulnerable groups – women, young people, persons with disabilities, ethnic groups and those impacted by unexploded ordnance – in the poorest districts to gain increased access to vocational training (TVET), jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities, with a particular focus on innovation and technology. UNDP will work with mass organizations, including the Lao Front for National Development, the LWU and the Lao Youth Union (LYU). This will be complemented by support to the Government to continue to clear unexploded ordnance from agricultural lands and other areas for productive use, following a more thorough prioritization exercise.

Output 1.3: Vulnerable groups, especially women, young people, persons with disabilities, ethnic groups and those impacted by unexploded ordnance, have increased access to vocational training (TVET), employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Indicator 1.3.1. Percentage of trainees with increased income six months after training (disaggregated by sex, age and ethnicity).

- Baseline: 0% (2021) Target: 30% (2026)
- Source: LWU and LYU/Project reports
- Frequency: Annual



FINDING

The field mission meeting with victim assistance providers in Vientiane and Xiengkhouang Province found that TVET was predominantly focused on men with disabilities with no specific approaches for youth or ethnic groups. This is understandable given the much higher injury rate for men and boys from UXO accidents; however, only the Lao Women's Disability Centre provides tailored training and vocational courses for women with disabilities. The centre also focuses on ensuring that ethnic women with disabilities in remote areas are prioritized for training as they have little access to any opportunities in their local villages. These activities are not funded through the UNDP programme.

Specific references to gender, disability and ethnic groups are further addressed in the project document:

- Mainstreaming inclusion (including gender, disability, and ethnic considerations) and the environment into the Government and UNDP UXO programming will assist the sector in driving equity, reducing the environmental impact of UXO work and strive to improve productivity in the sector where there remain significant challenges in meeting Convention on Cluster Munitions obligations. Careful consideration will be given to the gendered nature of UXO victimisation, the role of women and men in land release processes, EORE and VA.
- The improvement of transparency in sector-level task prioritization will enable improved monitoring of the use of UXO-sector resources and will enable analysis of beneficiary groups.
- UNDP will support the NRA in the development of this plan (Post Clearance Assessment) and will advise on what should be included to ensure it aligns with the principles of a human rights-based approach and can verify whether vulnerable groups are included in

survey and clearance consultations at the village level.

In identifying how the project is likely to improve gender equality and women's empowerment, the project document states:

The project includes components designed to improve the management and use of data by the NRA. This includes increased collection and use of gender- and age-disaggregated data (gender and diversity), where feasible relating to primary beneficiaries, victims of accidents and staff who are exposed to adult learning resources provided through the project. In addition, the NRA has affirmed its commitment to enhancing gender mainstreaming in the UXO sector as a part of the SPF III sector strategy.

Commitments include:

- ➔ Among 13 new teams under the Humanitarian clearance teams of Lao People's Army (Unit 58), one or two teams to be allocated as female teams by 2026 so that more women can be assigned as leaders.
- ➔ Unit 58 will maintain a minimum 15% female personnel among its 20 teams.
- ➔ The NRA with UNDP's support will provide gender mainstreaming ToT to train all entities engaged in the UXO sector in gender mainstreaming, based on the Manual for Trainers on Gender Mainstreaming in the UXO Sector in Lao PDR.

In the section on accountability to stakeholders, the project document states:

This project promotes accountability to project stakeholders by: (i) enabling active local community engagement and participation in decision-making, particularly those at risk of being left behind; and (ii) ensuring stakeholders can communicate their concerns and have access to rights-compatible complaints redress processes and mechanisms.

This project also supports an accountability mechanism, so called UXO hotline EORR [Explosive Ordnance Risk Reduction] – under

[victim assistance] unit of NRA, that ensures individuals, peoples, and communities affected by projects or UXO have access to appropriate procedures for hearing, sharing information, and jointly addressing issues related to the social and/or environmental impacts of UNDP-supported projects.



RECOMMENDATION 6

UNDP needs to ensure a whole-of-population, rights-compatible complaints mechanism that is accessible to minority groups that do not speak Lao language, and to people who are illiterate. These elements should also be included in the UXO hotline and explosive ordnance risk reduction sessions.

Under the programme, UNDP will support the deployment of EORE teams in Xiengkhouang, Bolikhamxai, Vientiane and Xaysomboun provinces, and conduct a knowledge, attitudes and practices survey to analyse UXO awareness. It will support wide dissemination of EORE messages through radio broadcasts, rural volunteers and school curricula, targeting at-risk populations through the following activities:

- Support the development of an EORE strategic plan and standard operating procedures
- Measure changes in the behaviours of at-risk populations through the establishment of baseline and endline data
- Support the strengthening of explosive ordnance risk reduction practices for behaviour change focused on at-risk populations, including in emergency situations.



RECOMMENDATION 7

UNDP's support for EORE should integrate the findings of this current study into the knowledge, attitudes and practices survey, strategic plan, standard operating procedures, baseline and endline data and support for EORE practices, specifically noting the issues of language and literacy, and targeting activities to at-risk populations based on locations and times convenient for them, and including incentives to attend.

The risk management section of the project document states:

Paragraph 4: The Implementing Partner acknowledges and agrees that UNDP will not tolerate sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse of anyone by the Implementing Partner, and each of its responsible parties, their respective sub-recipients and other entities involved in Project implementation, either as contractors or subcontractors and their personnel, and any individuals performing services for them under the Project Document.

(a) In the implementation of the activities under this Project Document, the Implementing Partner, and each of its sub-parties referred to above, shall comply with the standards of conduct set forth in the Secretary General's Bulletin ST/SGB/2003/13 of 9 October 2003, concerning "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse" ("SEA").

(b) Moreover, and without limitation to the application of other regulations, rules, policies and procedures bearing upon the performance of the activities under this Project Document, in the implementation of activities, the Implementing Partner, and each of its sub-parties referred to above, shall not engage in any form of sexual harassment ("SH"). SH is defined as any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.



FINDING

UXO staff and provincial, district and village authorities were asked about their knowledge of standards, their practices addressing sexual harassment and abuse, and other policy standards related to women in the UXO sector. No UXO personnel or government officials had any knowledge of the UN Secretary-General's special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, nor was there knowledge on national legislation addressing sexual harassment.



RECOMMENDATION 8

The review of personnel policies for the NRA, Unit 58 and UXO Lao in the Gender and Diversity Action Plan needs to address gaps in sexual harassment and abuse policies and procedures, and ensure alignment with the Labour Code for safe maternity practices, while recognizing challenges to addressing human resource policy for Unit 58 given that it is a unit within the Army under the Ministry of National Defence.



5

OUTLINE AND FINDINGS OF THE FIELD MISSION

5.1 Data collection from stakeholders

This section outlines the stakeholders targeted for the study, the forms of data collection and the focus of questioning. It provides some high-level findings; the next section offers additional details of findings related to the gender and diversity framework.

The field mission took place from 22 January to 8 February 2023, and involved stakeholder interviews in Vientiane Capital followed by data collection in Bolikhamxai and Xiengkhouang provinces. UNDP selected these provinces for the field sites as it is funding survey and clearance activities there by Unit 58 and UXO Lao. Interviews took place with male and female staff and the provincial, district and village leaders responsible for management at the local level. The Field Mission Team consisted of Bouakham Thammavong (NRA), Manivanh Kittylath (Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare) and Vathsana Luongaphai and Bounthan Souasae (LWU).

A full list of the field tools is in Annex 6, which includes questions for key informant interviews, focus group discussions and household interviews, and the participatory tools used for focus group discussions with local groups of village women and men. Several questions used in these tools were replicated from the MAG 2008, GMAP 2014 and UN Women/LWU 2018 assessments. Some questions came from GMAP/GICHD publications and the 2019 UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes. These questions were included to track implementation of the recommendations from previous gender and UXO assessments, and to identify the level of alignment with UN and GMAP/GICHD standards.



FINDING

It became apparent early in the key informant interviews that the recommendations from the previous gender and UXO assessments had not been implemented. There was little knowledge of international standards on gender and diversity in the UXO sector. Some survey questions were progressively deleted for the provincial, district and village levels. There was no knowledge of a code of conduct and standards for zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse among authorities from the national to the village levels.

5.2 Stakeholders in Vientiane

The list of stakeholders interviewed in Vientiane is in Annex 1. Stakeholders were from the NRA and Unit 58 (as field staff were in town) as well as national providers of EORE and victim assistance. Questions focused on gender and diversity policies and standards and procedures for the organizations, as well as the integration of gender and diversity issues into standard policies. The international and national consultants conducted all interviews in Vientiane.

Stakeholders were asked about their observations of gender and diversity issues in the UXO sector, including demographic trends in poverty and ethnic group populations, and sex- and age-disaggregated data for UXO deaths and injuries, EORE strategies and processes, and available victim assistance services. Each organization was asked about the sex, disability and ethnicity of staffing in their organizations, and staff access to gender training. Field work questions focused on the prioritization of land clearance and community consultations (e.g., how meetings were called, where they were held and who attended sessions). UXO personnel were asked specifically about the standards, conditions and perceptions of mixed teams compared to all male or all female teams.

NRA and Unit 58

The Unit 58 teams were in Vientiane at the time of the mission. Although separate times had been requested for the non-technical, technical and clearance staff, all participants in the Unit 58 meeting attended at the same time, including personnel from all male and mixed teams. Only one woman attended the meeting, so it was not possible to hold a separate women's discussion.

The focus of questioning was on perceptions of the work, productivity, shared accommodation and community perceptions of all male, all female and mixed teams in local communities. Other issues included codes of conduct, specific policies for women, the potential for women in management roles, processes for community dialogue and the tailoring of announcements, meetings and EORE materials to reach at-risk groups.



FINDINGS

The NRA does not have a gender policy or action plan for gender. Staff members do not have knowledge of gender issues in the UXO sector and have not received training on this area.

Of 180 staff, 28 are women, two are Khmu and no one has disabilities.

The 28 women, although working in different areas, are part of a women's unit. There are five leaders in this team who connect with the LWU and therefore have a double line of accountability within the Army. If the five leaders attend training or receive information, they are responsible for sharing new knowledge with all other women. The one woman attending the Unit 58 meeting reported receiving information on women's rights, gender roles and policy but nothing specifically on the links to UXO.

EORE team

- The EORE team currently has four members with no women. The consultants were informed that the field camp "is not fit for women." Stakeholders suggested that women were not able to do heavy work, especially travel to remote places where it was necessary to trek through forests, ride motorbikes and sleep in the open, often without tents or bedding.
- The EORE team collects sex-disaggregated data on adults but not children, and does not collect age, disability or ethnicity data. The representative stated that if community members are asked to attend sessions, they should be the head of the household. The representative suggested that the low numbers of people from ethnic groups attending sessions may be due to the likelihood that those who are unregistered will run to the mountains when the Army comes to town.
- It was reported that more girls attend EORE sessions at school due to the higher dropout rate for boys. When asked how EORE reached boys who are out of school, the representative said they were provided with posters and books or could ask their sisters who attend school.
- None of the EORE materials targeted specific people in the community (e.g.,

tailored resources for at-risk boys out of school}.

Non-technical survey team

- The Unit 58 team works in Bolikhamxai where there is a higher percentage of diverse ethnic groups.²⁴
- Whole village meetings are held; all family members can ask questions. Sessions are generally held in community halls or temples.
- Personnel stated that women are less likely to share information if it is contradictory to what the men have said.
- They also stated that Hmong women do not attend meetings due to cultural gender roles where they rarely leave the home. Interviewees said they do not have "useful information".
- Hmong people are less likely to report UXO as they can earn money from selling scrap metal from them.

Technical survey team

- Among the seven team members, there are no women, ethnic groups or people with disabilities.
- Barriers for ethnic people in the Army may be language and/or lack of interest. Medical standards may prevent people with disabilities from joining the Army; however, if a person is injured while working in the Army, he or she will be transferred to a desk job.
- Barriers for women were cited as difficult travel and accommodation in the forest as well as the lower number of women in the Army.
- The non-technical survey, technical survey, clearance and EORE teams may all travel to villages together if there is enough money.
- Staff understanding is that the only national policies that address women's issues are related to maternity leave.

Clearance team

- There are five clearance teams, each with 13 staff, generally with two women in each team. There are no staff from ethnic groups or people with disabilities.
- In districts, accommodation is generally a dormitory or one floor of a house, in which

case there will be three or four men to a room and the two women living separately with a shared bathroom. They generally stay between one to three months.

- When female staff members travelling to the field are married, the line manager will talk to their husbands.
- The consultants asked about the cooking, cleaning and washing in shared accommodation. A list of chores would be developed with a roster for washing dishes. Typically, women went to the market and sometimes men did the cooking.
- As Unit 58 follows army standards, there are no specific recruitment or employment policies for women. The consultants were advised that UNDP could not request changes to the personnel policies. Positions are not advertised for outside personnel.
- Women have six months paid maternity leave. If women are not well during their pregnancy they can work in the office or take sick leave.
- Meeting participants described the Army's code of conduct as more rigorous than those of other organizations. When the consultants asked about sexual harassment processes, they were informed that army policy is confidential.
- Meeting participants stated that mixed teams were good as this encouraged men to work with the men and women inspired each other. They felt local village women were less comfortable with all male teams, but that because they are the Army, the community trusts them. The men said that even for all male teams, the Army is strict on banning alcohol.
- One woman mentioned that she would feel less safe on an all women team and would be worried about the perceptions of people in the villages.



NOTE

In addition to the findings above, refer to the findings on sexual harassment and TVET in the section on the current UNDP programme.



RECOMMENDATION 9

Representatives of the Women's Unit in Unit 58 should be included in core training on gender and diversity issues in the UXO sector. The Gender and Diversity Action Plan for this study proposes making space for two representatives on the Gender and Diversity UXO Focal Group. This would preferably include one senior and one non-senior representative.

5.3 Vientiane meeting of victim assistance providers

Attendees included the NRA, Centre Medical and Rehabilitation (CMR), Lao Disabled People Association (LDPA), HI, World Education and the Lao Disabled Women's Development Centre (LDWDC).

- The CMR has 160 staff with 71 women, including 18 teachers, all with a disability (mostly men), with no knowledge of ethnic groups employed.
- LDPA has eight staff of which three are women, one is a person with a disability and one is from an ethnic group (Phuon).
- HI has 114 staff; 38 percent are women; it has no knowledge of staff members currently from an ethnic group or living with disabilities but sometimes has employed the latter.
- World Education has 30 staff with 16 women and two Hmong staff but no people with disabilities
- LDWDC has 34 staff of which 27 are women; it has people from three ethnic groups on staff; only four staff do not have disabilities.

LDPA conducts disability assessments in villages (one man and one woman will travel to the field), and provides advice and awareness in four provinces. It also offers capacity-building for the Government on economic inclusion, inclusive education and EORE. It is the only organization among those attending the meeting that provides psychosocial support focused on UXO survivors and their families.

Although the Cooperative Orthotic and Prosthetic Enterprise (COPE) did not attend the meeting, the consultants were informed they provide wheelchairs and prosthetics, and a per

diem and accommodations for people having prosthetics fitted.

LDWDC serves mostly women with disabilities who come from poor, rural areas of Laos. Many are members of minority ethnic groups and over 80 percent have lost one or both of their parents.



FINDINGS

The LDPA practice of male and female staff conducting disability assessments in villages is a good one, along with the provision of psychosocial support for UXO survivors and their families.

Although women with disabilities represent a lower percentage of survivors with disabilities from UXO accidents, LDWDC is responding to a clear gap in the sector.



NOTE

The consultants do not believe they obtained complete information from either victim assistance or EORE providers as they did not represent the full spectrum of sector providers. Among those who attended the meeting, some women worked in finance or administration. Upon questioning why attendees were selected to attend the meeting, these women suggested their organizations chose to send a woman (often from a less senior role) because it was a gender meeting. As such, the findings are seen as useful but not necessarily representative of the whole sector, making it difficult to provide recommendations based on evidence.

5.4 Vientiane meeting of EORE providers

The attendees included World Education, MAG, Halo Trust and the LYU.

- Halo Trust has 1,129 staff (60 percent female), with female team leaders in nine departments, two ethnic language translators as well as nine staff from ethnic groups, enabling the organization to cover nine languages.
- MAG has 585 male and 337 female staff, with no details on people with disabilities or by ethnicity.

- The LYU and World Education were unable to provide staff data.

Attendees collected the following data on people trained in EORE:

- World Education now includes sex.
- Halo Trust collects based on sex, age, disability and ethnicity.
- The LYU includes age, sex and ethnicity.
- MAG collects data on sex and age; it is working on disability but has no data based on ethnicity.

All providers stated they did not have resources in ethnic languages and that no resources were targeted to at-risk groups. EORE sessions were held with whole population groups rather than segregated groups based on sex, ethnicity or other parameters (e.g., the elderly). MAG conducts gender and UXO training.

Discussion explored high-risk groups and the likelihood of accidents and considered how they could be targeted for specific training:

- Farmers are high risk because they need to move UXO to access their land for farming.
- Parents could be trained to look at the specific risks for their children. Their messages could address protecting yourself and your family.
- Scrap metal collectors are hard to reach because poor families are driven to sell the scrap metal to address poverty.
- Boys were seen as playing with UXO due to male bravado. EORE could target the impact not just on them but on their families.

Brainstorming around how to reach boys and young men out of the formal education sector who are not accessing EORE generated the idea of a soccer festival to entice participation. Although meeting attendees were not representative of senior management, they believed their organizations would be interested in working jointly on such an initiative and could provide T-shirts and caps, notebooks, pens and other items to the boys. A play/drama could be held on EORE and distribute cartoon leaflets with core tailored messaging. This could be particularly effective in poor villages with young men from ethnic groups who drop out of school at high rates.



NOTE

The idea of the soccer festival was tested with various personnel in the meetings and discussions held in Bolikhamxai and Xiengkhouang with very positive responses.



FINDING

Although EORE and victim assistance providers held annual meetings, gender and diversity issues in the UXO sector had not been discussed. In addition, there is not a consistent whole-of-sector approach—all providers use different frameworks for their work.



RECOMMENDATION 10

A wider spectrum of victim assistance and EORE providers should be included in the Gender and Diversity UXO Focal Points proposed in the Gender and Diversity Action Plan for this study. This would enable a sharing of good practices across different frameworks and a forum for addressing high-level challenges, including tailored EORE programming for at-risk groups. Additionally, the group should discuss a soccer festival targeting boys and young men and other outreach to those outside the formal education system, with consideration for funding under Output Indicator 1.3 of the UNDP programme, on the availability of a platform for discussing innovative ideas.

5.5 Xiengkhouang victim assistance

Participants comprised the People with Disability Development Association (PDDA) and KOICA.

- PDDA is a national civil society organization with 11 staff. Three are women; nine have a disability, including one woman with a disability; and three are Hmong, all male.
- KOICA has two staff in Xiengkhouang, both male.

The PDDA programme focusses on awareness-raising for the whole community. It provides training for all people with disabilities—there is not a focus on women or gender and diversity issues.

KOICA has \$2.5 million to work on victim assistance. They assist people with disabilities based on a list provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and Ministry of Public Health. They admit their list may have gaps because surveys may have only been done in Lao. Ethnic groups may also have been in the field when data were collected. The representative stated that poor rural families do not have money for transportation or time to access support so they will be left behind.

KOICA works in physical rehabilitation and funds COPE, the LYU and the Quality of Life Association (QLA) in two provinces, including 15 districts. With KOICA's support, COPE has provided support to hospitals and provided wheelchairs and prosthetics for arms and legs. Survivors need to have a certified form for free health care from the authorities or must pay for hospital services. The representative was not clear whether COPE held community meetings. Most staff only speak the Lao language but some staff can speak ethnic languages.

QLA provides psychosocial assistance related to the social and mental context, community advocacy training, peer-to-peer consultations, economic empowerment through business training and financial management training. The LYU provides vocational training, including Lao weaving and sewing, as well as tree planting and computer repair. When asked about whether the vocational training for sewing and weaving was focused on women and the tree planting and computer repair courses were targeted to men, the representative advised that training is provided for all people but no sex-disaggregated data were available.



FINDING

Different stakeholders have varying sets of victim assistance information that is not aligned. Some offices collect details on disability type; others collect data by age and sex; some do not collect data on ethnicity. This makes it difficult to compare information from the health and social welfare sectors. Donors have their own systems and often require types of disaggregated data that do not exist in the government system. There is no system for follow up or data collection on the amount of support a person receives.



RECOMMENDATION 11

Victim assistance data should be disaggregated consistently across the sector by sex and age at a minimum, and preferably by ethnicity. The Survivor Tracking System could provide qualitative/quantitative monitoring tools to gauge the impact of assistance on survivors. Resultant data could be used to design and tailor services with partners (e.g., the ministries of education, health, and labour and social welfare).

night before (although consuming alcohol is against regulations).

It was advised that all UXO accidents are reported to village authorities or through the UXO hotline. EORE sessions include information on reporting and the hotline number. The hotline only provides responses in the Lao language, however. The field team was told that people who did not speak Lao have not called the hotline.



RECOMMENDATION 12

The hotline must offer other languages; ethnic groups should be informed of its availability.

In line with the MAG survey, the field team asked about risky behaviours and activities at the time of accidents. Most key informant interviews stated that activities included farming, scrap metal collection and boys playing in fields. Only one interviewee mentioned burning wood in the fields to keep warm in cold weather. The wood is collected by women and men all year; however, men travel further for wood.

The UNMAS Gender Guidelines in Mine Action address the need to “provide safe transport for survivors and indirect victims to the different services, and for relatives to accompany women travelling alone if needed.” The representative stated that an ambulance is available at the provincial level but it is unlikely that there will be a car in the village to help. If the family contacts the village head, that person may have a car or tractor.

When asked about considerations provided for women-headed households and women who are carers of family members with a disability, key informant interviews indicated there is no information on this issue, nor is there knowledge of it being addressed.

UXO Lao stated that for victim assistance, it will train survivors to work for the team or on vocational training skills such as massage, which is the available job at the provincial level. In Xiengkhouang, local civil society organizations

(CSOs) provide vocational training but nothing is available at the village level.

5.7 UXO Lao non-technical survey, technical survey, clearance and EORE personnel

In Xiengkhouang, due to the availability of UXO Lao staff (various non-technical survey and clearance personnel need to go the field), all technical staff were again interviewed in one meeting. As these teams often work in the field together (and many of the questions were the same) this was not seen as an issue by the field mission team. Additionally, a separate women-only meeting was held, which included two EORE staff (one Hmong and one Khmu women) who travel together as a team, and a technical survey staff member who travels as the only woman in an otherwise all male team. A separate meeting was held with the all female team in Kham district (discussed later in this section).

None of the staff had received any training on gender and diversity issues related to UXO but would like to be trained. None had heard of a zero-tolerance policy for the sexual exploitation and abuse of populations in demining areas.

Staff were asked about their rationale for choosing this work. The majority said their first inspiration was to have a job, and to contribute to the country’s development by reducing UXO accidents and providing safe land for farming. Men were asked: “Would you want your wife or daughter to work in UXO clearance; what would influence this decision given what you know of the work; and who would make the ultimate decision for her?”

- Some of the men said they would not want their wife or daughter to do this work because it is high risk. Two men said they would support the equal rights of women to make their own decisions and it is their right. Then it was commented that these two men’s wives work here (lots of laughter).
- Others said they would not support their wives or daughters to do this work unless there is no choice of another job. All participants recognized the inherent risks in the work and reported that their contracts include health insurance.

Although UXO Lao does not provide any specific assistance after an accident, participants knew that QLA would provide ongoing assistance for treatment and support for the family through vocational training and that it would continue to monitor their needs. Although government social security funds have only provided limited support in the past, donor funds have institutionalized life insurance in the past year. Personnel did not, however, mention this as a source of support.

As UXO Lao has all male, all female and mixed teams (of 10 team members, two are women), participants were asked about the strengths and challenges of each type of team. As technical survey, non-technical survey, clearance and EORE teams often travel together, this was a whole group discussion:

Benefits—all male

- Travel to remote areas is easier for men.
- When local men report UXO, it is easier for the men to walk with them to locations.

Disadvantages—all male

- If local women report UXO (which occurs in 30 to 40 percent of cases) they must bring another woman from the village to walk to the field due to cultural norms. Married women cannot travel alone with men.

Benefits—mixed team

- The men said they are too lazy to cook, clean and go to the market. The women would also bring food to the field and cook it for lunch.
- They did not see a problem with accommodation as they had separate rooms.

Disadvantages—mixed team

- The technical survey team has four men. They felt the disadvantage of a mixed team is when women have to travel as areas can be remote and women cannot ride motorbikes there. They also need to find separate accommodations for women in villages and there are disadvantages in having shared bathrooms.

5.6 UXO Lao in Xiengkhouang

The senior representative of UXO Lao in Xiengkhouang confirmed that UXO Lao does not have a gender policy. Employee contracts provide nothing specific for women and people with disabilities except for maternity leave. He was not aware of a code of conduct and had not heard of the UN Women/LWU gender and UXO training programme. He stated that UXO work is high risk for women and affects their health. While the all male and mixed teams consistently met the quota to clear 120 square metres of land per day, there was a perception that the all women’s team did not meet this quota. No data could be provided to substantiate this difference in productivity.

The field team was informed that it is heavy work for women to dig the dirt if they find a UXO and pregnancy impacts their productivity. Female clearance officers are supposed to stop work six months into pregnancy but often worked up until the last month, performing lighter work and cooking.



NOTE

The statements on the lower productivity of all female teams were contradicted by the women’s team (outlined later in this section) who asserted they met all their quotas.

The representative did note that the women’s team had the highest quality work, and that the all male team was often less effective in the mornings due to hangovers from drinking the

- For married women, living in shared accommodation with men is frowned upon in villages.

The issues for all women teams were discussed in the separate women's session.

The men in the all male and mixed teams admitted that they drink after work, even though they are aware of the ban on drinking. They also mentioned that it affected the quality of their work the next day and therefore their safety. The alcohol was sometimes offered by landowners after UXO had been cleared from their land as a symbol of appreciation. In these cases, sometimes the women would also have some alcohol. This practice is aligned to cultural, social and gender norms to reward men with a drink as a form of celebration.



RECOMMENDATION 13

For safety, the team leader should enforce the no alcohol policy when personnel are working the following day. Local villagers should be informed by village authorities of this policy to ensure alcohol is not offered as a form of appreciation for their work, as this may put personnel in an uncomfortable social situation.

The non-technical survey and technical survey teams consist of 11 members, including one woman and two Khmu men. They are required to clear 12 villages per month, as decided in the provincial plan for development. The non-technical survey team provides a report on land that should be cleared within the villages. A decision is then made by two technical survey team members (male) and one from information management (female) based on principles of prioritization listed below in the order of importance (provided that all necessary conditions are met).²⁵

1. Having the purpose of development (e.g., focal development area)
2. Location (land in/nearby a village/community)
3. Poor village
4. Poor landowner
5. Cooperation from landowner for vegetation cutting

Women in technical survey and EORE teams

As the EORE team included two women, discussion on EORE was combined with wider issues for women in the field in an all female meeting.²⁶

The EORE staff reported that more women attend community consultations than men, but they do not know how many people with disabilities or from ethnic groups attend. They believe women's larger share is due to men farming in remote locations far from the village. As the women providing EORE are Hmong and Khmu, they can speak to people from the major ethnic groups. When consulting with women, they reported using more diagrams due to lower literacy levels.

Women raised several significant issues about villagers' perceptions of women UXO workers as well as concerns about accommodation. The female EORE staff had worked in their jobs for 20 years so were used to the issues facing women in the field. Sometimes they may travel with other teams as the only woman. The Hmong woman noted that her husband is concerned about her travelling to villages.

All the women reported feeling the impact of villagers' perceptions of their role travelling into villages (both as married women and as members of mixed teams, noting the female EORE staff often travelled with other teams as well). The women have raised these issues with their managers but understand their managers cannot do much. In one case, the manager held an all team meeting to discuss the issue and male colleagues were encouraged to speak to local villagers to address local perceptions. The women appreciated the support of their male colleagues but felt local villagers still held the same notions.

The issue of shared accommodation and bathrooms was particularly concerning when there was only one woman in the team. The women explained that toilets were mostly outside the house, and when they were far away, the women felt afraid. When other teams are present and there are more women, women feel they have company and are safer. The female EORE and clearance staff said they always travel with two women.

The consultants asked if there were safe places for women to stay in the villages. One woman suggested staying in the house of the village head. Another woman said she had done this once and felt the local people wanted "something bad for her;" the men in the village were looking at her through windows. She found the owner of the house was watching her and felt unsafe so she left and stayed in the house where the men were accommodated.



FINDING

There are serious safety issues for women travelling to the field in terms of accommodation, safety and community attitudes. Safety risks escalate when there is only one woman in a mixed team.



RECOMMENDATION 14

The number of women in mixed teams should be increased to a minimum of three, with a long-term goal of equal numbers. There should not be only one woman in a mixed team.

Additionally, the wider UXO sector must address village perceptions of female UXO personnel in the field. These issues are not unique to UXO Lao. The Gender and Diversity Action Plan for this study suggests addressing this issue as a UXO sector concern.

UXO Lao all women demining team

The women within the field mission team met with the all women clearance team in Kham District (see photo below). This included the team leader, deputy, three other clearance officers and the field nurse. The team was asked questions similar to those posed to other UXO clearance teams with some focus on gender-specific issues.

The consultants felt the presence of the team leader and deputy influenced the answers provided by other clearance personnel as all questions were met with a pause allowing the team leader to comment first, with all staff looking towards her for a response.



RECOMMENDATION 15

Further studies with women working in the UXO sector should be conducted as one-on-one interviews with guaranteed anonymity to enable all participants to provide their perspectives without a filter.

When asked why they chose to work in this area, several women mentioned it was because they had no other job. Other responses included to help people, remove UXOs and make farmland safer. One woman mentioned she saw an accident where people died and others were injured so she wanted to help solve the problem.



All-women UXO Lao clearance team in Kham district. © UNDP/Suzette Mitchell

The consultants asked about the perceived advantages and disadvantages of all male, all female and mixed teams. The women said all male teams were better able to do the ‘heavy work’ and mixed teams were able to help each other. Responses specific to being in an all female team included:

- They need to work hard to deal with heavy things.
- They are all women so they have more responsibility and have to try harder to work.
- They take longer but they are calmer and more careful.
- They need to clear 55 hectares per year, the same as men. They do not need to work longer hours than the men’s team.
- One woman clarified that when women deliver babies and take maternity leave, it is slower, with one or two women on maternity leave each year. They clarified that overall, they can catch up to the production of men over the year.
- They mentioned it is hard for women to cut heavy trees so they may ask local village men to help. The consultants asked if it was difficult for women to walk with village men to locate UXO in the field. The team leader responded that this is not difficult, stating, “this is our responsibility so we have to do it.” She added that they are not comfortable but it is their job, and the village may provide other women to go with them.

The members of the women’s team responded positively to the question: “Would you want your daughters to work in UXO clearance; what would influence this decision given what you know of the work; and who would make the ultimate decision for her?” They stated that other jobs required higher levels of education; however, one woman said if there was a different job, she would ask her daughter to take it. The only UXO policy they knew about that was specifically for women was on maternity leave. They reported receiving three to four months maternity leave (generally three, but they can take another month of paid leave if their health is still not strong enough). They also have health insurance to pay for hospital deliveries. Only one staff person was single. The remaining women were all married with two or three children, one was currently pregnant, and one was on maternity leave.

Most of the women said they worked in clearance until they were nine months pregnant. One mentioned that if they felt tired in the last month of their pregnancy, UXO Lao medical staff would need to certify that they can stay home. In some cases, they could avoid hole digging and work lighter duties such as sweeping.

When asked about a code of conduct and sexual harassment issues, the Level 3+ officer clarified that the Policy on Women and Children Protection and Women’s Rights is applied across the Government, with nothing specific for UXO Lao. The officer also mentioned that Lao PDR has a gender-sensitive culture.

The consultants asked if the women’s team was invited into landowners’ homes when clearance was completed to celebrate with food and alcohol. They stated that some families provide food and alcohol and sometimes the women will drink a little to be polite.

The women said that they do not hold community meetings prior to clearance. Instead, they consult with the village head and the landowners.

When asked about the perceptions of the female clearance officers in the village, the team leader indicated the villagers were happy to see them, the same as the men.

The interview took place in a UXO personnel camp. Two male teams were also staying in the camp, which had a shared bathroom. When asked about the shared accommodation, the team leader mentioned that she is also the controller of the quality of life. If the team has a problem, they report to her. Due to her senior level, the men in the camp could report to her or to their own team leader. Xiengkhouang has four controllers and if any grievance cases are reported, the issue will be solved through discussion among all four. She also said that the women in the team are representatives of the LWU. If women do not want to report to their team leader, they can report to the LWU or UXO Lao at the provincial level. The other women present said they did not know this information.



Women in leadership

There are four levels in clearance work:

- Level 1: Clearance
- Level 2: Clearance team leader training
- Level 3: Team leader
- Level 3+: Explosives expert

Mme Saisamone is at Level 4 (known as EOD level 3+ in IMAS 09.30). Three women in Lao PDR are at this level, including two in Xiengkhouang and one in Champasak. There are 20 men at this level.

The women believed that men are more likely to work in the sector as they have a higher level of education. All the women mentioned they would like to progress to Level 3+.



RECOMMENDATION 16

All female and male UXO personnel must be provided with information on the various contact points and the formal process to report issues, in line with the establishment of a formal process to deal with conflict and grievances based on assigning focal points and informing all UXO personnel of various contact points.

The team leader had attended the UN Women/LWU training on gender and UXO. She reported there were three women and three men from UXO Lao and six from MAG. This team leader was the only person interviewed who had attended the training or even heard of it.



FINDING

The evidence indicates that gender (and diversity) training is needed by UXO personnel and authorities. All interviewees felt positive about attending such a training.

Lastly, women were asked what their husbands thought about them being in shared accommodation with men. As most were married before they took their positions, they said their husbands understood. They also mentioned

that sometimes their husbands and children will come to see the accommodation and are welcome to visit after work.

5.8 Provincial, district and village authorities and local service providers

Local authorities at all levels were asked questions about the sex, disability and ethnic details of staff and decision-making committees, as well as about the demographics of the province, district and village. Information was sought on specific UXO accidents in the past five years. Due to the low number of cases, however, many authorities included information from earlier years. Each accident was explained, including information on sex, age and ethnicity, and the activity occurring at the time of the accident.

Authorities were also asked about the specific processes used in surveys, prioritization, clearance and EORE activities. This involved understanding processes from the national to the provincial, district and village levels; the requirements from Unit 58 and UXO Lao; and how diverse local groups of women and men could find out about requesting clearance, handovers, attendance at community consultations and

EORE sessions and materials. Other questions sought to define the amount of land in villages that had been cleared of UXO, including the number and types of UXO.

Local authorities were asked to share their views on the most important gender issues relating to UXO and how disability and ethnicity may create barriers for people's participation in the sector. They were also asked if they had received any gender training on UXO.

Key findings

Overall

- Men predominated in all employment positions and decision-making bodies. Men from ethnic groups were present on village decision-making bodies in areas where the majority of people came from ethnic groups.
- There were no people with disabilities in decision-making roles on village or district committees in the field sites. Authorities said there were no barriers for women in employment or decision-making yet people with disabilities cannot access support, such as training to develop skills.
- Clear processes to inform community members on how to request land clearance did not exist. Unless someone knew to come to the village authorities and complete a form, their land would not be considered for clearance. The authorities clarified that if people were illiterate, the village authorities would assist in completing the form (Bolikhamxai).
- The predominance of male UXO accidents was confirmed throughout the four villages. Most accidents had occurred when men were farming or collecting scrap metal, and when boys had been playing in contaminated land.
- No EORE posters were seen in any of the village authority buildings or schools where the field mission team met with authorities. In two villages, the authorities said they had posters but they were locked in a cabinet (Figure 3).

Thongseang Village, Bolikhamxai Province

- All village members had been invited to attend EORE sessions. Authorities couldn't remember the number of adult attendees as there was no registration. Village authorities used loudspeakers to announce meetings in the Lao and Hmong languages.
- Authorities said no death and injury data were collected. Data were provided from their memory; the accidents were a long time ago and records were not kept.
- Here are no community consultation meetings. Unit 58 identified the area to be cleared and sent this information to the province, then to the district, village and village leader, who informed the landowner of the clearance.
- Authorities could report the amount of land cleared and the number and types of UXO that were found and destroyed.

Phonsaat Village, Bolikhamxai Province

- In 2019, village authorities filled out the field form detailing a local UXO accident and subsequent injury. They sent the form to the district authorities. It was forwarded to the province, which sent it to the NRA. The NRA contacted World Education but the local authorities were not clear on what its role was.
- Unit 58 held a community consultation for the last clearance process. If people had not reported land for clearance, however, they did not come to the village meeting. Unit 58 can only clear identified UXO based on the plan from the NRA in Vientiane. The village committee asked for more areas to be cleared but was informed that no money was available for this. Officials and landowners said they were not told the number or types of UXO found.
- When UXO are destroyed, Unit 58 makes a loudspeaker announcement for people to stay away from the area. The announcement is only made in the Lao language.
- A local Khmu man was sent to Vientiane to be trained by the NRA on UXO. On his return, he provided an EORE session to members of the community that was well attended. Authorities noted the high attendance was due to the fact that he provided notebooks and pens,

which increased school attendance. Given the village is 80 percent Hmong, the team asked why a Khmu man had been chosen for the training in Vientiane. Authorities explained they needed a representative with good Lao language skills. Again, no registration data were collected on the sex and age of attendees.

Pungman Village, Xiengkhouang Province

- The process for reporting UXO contamination in Xiengkhouang was different as UXO Lao has procedures that vary from those of Unit 58. After forms are completed, village authorities send the information to the district social welfare department. This then goes to the provincial social welfare office and then to the UXO Lao head office in Vientiane. UXO Lao will then come to the village. Authorities stated that everyone is aware of the process to complete a lodgement form.
- UXO Lao has conducted EORE in the district every year since 1998. Meetings are held at the temple. UXO Lao sends a letter through the district social welfare department and asks the village committee to inform the community.
- More women attend community consultation meetings when they are held in the morning; more men attend at night. Most meetings are held in the morning, however.

Poua Village, Xiengkhouang Province

- Authorities confirmed that when UXO Lao came to the villages, they informed the village heads of the meetings, who then used local languages to inform people.
- Men and women attended community consultation meetings for land clearance as both husbands and wives were concerned about the land (however, no registrations were referenced).

The MAG 2008 assessment recommended:

The (Mine Risk Education) Needs Assessments should gather data, disaggregated by sex, age and ethnicity, so that the knowledge, practices and attitudes of the different risk groups are clearly defined; all (mine risk education) materials should take into account gender, culture and

language, activities and relevant risk behaviors depicted; (mine risk education) messages and activities should target high risk groups defined by sex, age, behavior and livelihood activities; participation in any MRE sessions must be carried out in either groups of women, groups of men, individual women, individual men or together (as in individual household groups or groups of scrap metal collectors, for example); risk education teams should comprise of female and male team members to allow for male to male and female to female interaction; and risk education teams should comprise of members with abilities to deliver messages in the languages of linguistic groups of the target populations or train local communicators that will be able to deliver the messages in the local language (Sections 4.3.1-4.3.5).

To ensure those who were illiterate could actively participate, symbols were used for them to stick onto the chart (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Symbols for daily calendar



In addition, the facilitators asked the following questions during discussions after the daily calendar was completed:

- Who in the family attends meetings? What type of meetings?
- Who in the family goes to the health-care clinic? What for?
- What are the major sources of income for the household, what are they from, and who earns the money?
- Who decides major financial decisions?
- Whose names are on any land titles you have?

The second activity involved groups drawing their village with landmarks of relevance to them and then marking areas where UXO clearance had taken place as well as areas that were still contaminated.

Participants were asked to draw a map of their village and mark in places where:

- Any UXO accidents had taken place in the past five years, who was killed or injured, and their sex, age, ethnicity and type of injury
- UXO clearance has occurred
- UXO remains present
- Other landmarks of relevance

Below are the maps created by participants in Phonsaat. This activity did not require literacy skills.



Men's group in Phonsaat.



Women's group in Phonsaat

Participants were asked the following questions after the maps were completed: "For the process of clearance, did anyone in your households attend a community meeting on UXO clearance? Who attended from your household? How did they find out about it? Who made the decision on who from the household would attend?"

The purpose of these activities was to draw out information on the typical activities, roles and responsibilities of people of different ages, sex, ethnicities, education and income levels. Discussion explored how these roles affected people's engagement in community decision-making, attendance at meetings and subsequently knowledge of UXO identification, processes around local clearance and contamination, and understanding of risk behaviours.

Village-specific findings

Thongsean

Women

- Some women found UXO in their cassava farms. They had no knowledge of UXO clearance areas; however, they mentioned that the authorities did the 'bip bip' in some areas around their village. They said that if this was clearance, then some village areas might be cleared.
- The eldest Muoi woman mentioned they have had to move UXO, which are more often on the roadside than in the rice fields.

Men

- The men were more aware of UXO risks and found more UXO because of their traditional roles in digging fields and hunting.
- They explained that taking care of elderly people is the role of men in the Hmong culture. When their parents die, only the son is allowed to take care of the funeral. The women said that wives, daughters and daughters-in-law will still be the ones cooking and supporting all the cleaning for everyone in the family.

Phonsaat

Women

- Most women had never been to school. Only one woman had attended EORE. She said many older people and children joined as well because they were provided with T-shirts and some gifts, and the facilitators could speak the Kha language.
- Most women said their income was from cassava and rice.
- The women had no knowledge about land certificates. One of the district authorities mentioned that the registrations for land certificates had not yet taken place in this area.

Men

- None of the men's group except the authorities had attended a session on EORE.
- All the men were more confident in developing the village map and participated in village meetings (most were members of the village authority). They mentioned they have found UXO on their land but there has not yet been clearance.
- They also find UXO in the villages and mountains where the boys play. They sent a request for clearance of this area (they could not remember when this was sent but maintained that it was a long time ago).
- The group stated that sometimes they touch the UXO as they think the UXO will not explode because they are old. At least three had an experience in finding, touching and moving UXO to another side of their farm.
- The men will drive their wives to the market to sell the cassava as only the men can drive. This group mentioned the wife keeps the money and the husband spends the money.

Pungman Village

Women

- All the women mentioned that they are lucky because now they have washing machines at home so they spend less time washing clothes, and they have water systems next to their houses so they do not need to travel far for water.
- The women in Pungman had more knowledge of UXO and clearance areas than the women in Bolikhamxai. They felt the riskier work around UXO affected their husbands and sons because they mostly go out in the forests for food, wood and hunting.
- Half the women reported attending EORE sessions, but the field team noted that these women were married to village authorities. They said that people liked to attend the sessions as they can learn and enjoy traditional dancing (lamvonglao).
- The women mentioned they used to move UXO from their land to the river and still move some UXO because they need the land for farming. They said many people did the same so there would be a lot of UXO in the river but it has not had clearance yet.

Men

- The men's group understood the process to request clearance but the group included local village authorities. Several men said that the time required for officials to move the UXO led them to move the UXO themselves as they need to farm.
- The men said they do not often share EORE information with their family members after they attend sessions. They share information with their friends and neighbours when they sit around in a group in the evening and have a drink. The youngest man in the group said he had never seen UXO before and that older people have more UXO knowledge.
- The men stated they mostly attend the meetings; however, the women said that more women attend because their farming work is nearer to the village and less heavy, making it easier for them to take part.

Poua Village

Women

- The women's group had good knowledge of the location of UXO clearance and contamination in their village and were active in drawing the village map. Women mentioned that they still find many UXO around the village, near people's houses, in farm areas and in nearby mountains.
- Many women had attended EORE sessions as they were conducted in the evening after people came home from farming.
- Women work more than their husbands but still help their husbands to bring the cows home in the evening. The husband often goes out for meetings and works out of the village, sometimes going to town or visiting relatives and friends.

Men

- The men said that all women in the family work: grandmothers, mothers, wives and daughters. The older men in the family take care of grandchildren and some take the children to school.
- A man with a disability asked the field team if his case should have had support money or not. He did not have any knowledge of victim assistance.
- The men's group said the UXO mapping exercise was important and interesting for them to discuss and share knowledge of UXO. They suggested that the EORE sessions should add this activity into the training because more elders know where the risky areas are around their village and need to share this information with younger men and boys.



RECOMMENDATION 18

Include the participatory UXO mapping activity in EORE sessions for groups of males and females of various ages. These maps should be presented with a discussion on the differences between men's and women's knowledge and the importance of obtaining information and perspectives from all family and community members. To ensure participation, sessions

should be held in the early evening when all family members have returned from farming activities. They must be in local languages (including the posters) and use diagrams for those who are illiterate.

5.10 Household interviews

Seven household interviews were conducted including:

- Six husbands and wives
- One Khmu widow and her daughter
- People from four ethnic groups (Lao Luom, Hmong, Khmu and Muoi)
- One interview with a man with a UXO disability in Poua Village
- One household in Thongsean Village with a man with a UXO disability and his wife, and one household in Phonsaat Village where the grandfather had a UXO disability and his wife.

The interviews took place in the homes of interviewees between the times of 1 pm and 5 pm, with each interview taking from 1.5 to 2 hours. The field mission had requested a minimum of four household interviews per province, i.e., two per village.²⁸ This was completed with the exception of Poua Village. The team was able to meet with people representing a good mix of ages and ethnicities, three households with men who had UXO accidents and one widow whose husband died from a UXO accident. Apart from the widow and one man with a disability in Poua, all the interviews had both the wife and husband present. The team had planned to interview the husbands and wives separately; however, this was not possible due to the lack of interpretation services. This affected the input from wives but not husbands; however, the team asked the wives specific questions.

Questions covered knowledge of UXO identification and EORE; personal experiences with UXO; areas that have been cleared and the number and types of UXO found; access to information on community meetings; and notifications of clearance team processes. Those with disabilities from UXO accidents were asked about their knowledge of support processes through the NRA and victim assistance health providers (including psychological support), impacts on family income and the workload of

other family members, and forms of discrimination experienced.

Household interview findings

Household 1 in Phongsean Village: Lao Lum-Muoi couple, ages 43 and 44, both attended school through fifth grade, income from cassava and rice farming

- The husband was the only person in the village who had had a UXO accident, with several UXO remnants still in his body. When the accident happened 35 years ago, nobody helped, just his parents and family. A nurse who worked for the nearby Vietnamese peanut-cropping company treated his wounds at home.
- He has had no assistance or support since 1985. People have come and asked questions, including an organization that said it would help but no assistance was provided.
- He met with the Unit 58 EORE team in 2022. This was the first time he heard about the form for victim assistance. He completed it last November but had not filed it as he did not feel like anything would come from it.
- The shrapnel in his body often causes pain and he cannot lift heavy things. He gets very depressed and angry and "becomes a sad person." His wife said that when he is angry, he can be an "ugly person". He did not know that psychological support can be provided.

Household 2 in Phongsean Village: Muoi and Tang ethnic couple, ages 62 and 67, husband illiterate, wife with a primary education, income from cassava, rice and peanut farms and a village shop (run by the woman)

- The husband said he did not know that his land had been chosen for clearance until Unit 58 arrived so he had planted cassava. He reported that the survey was done about 10 centimetres deep and believes more UXO remain deeper in the ground. UXO was found every day they conducted clearing but he was not informed how many or what types were found.
- Neither husband nor wife had heard about EORE sessions but both would like to attend.
- They have seven pieces of land: four are in both their names. The other three are in their

son's name; he lives with them.

- The wife explained that women in the village are active income earners, weaving Lao skirts and farming cassava. Women and men go to the fields to farm together. The men mostly smoke while the women do the work.
- The husband said that due to Moui culture, both he and his wife discuss and share economic decisions. He mentioned this was not the case for Hmong people as husbands want their wives to work in the farm and stay in the house, and not to work outside the home.

Household 3 in Phonsaat Village: Kha-Khmu couple, ages 33 and 34, wife no education, husband attended school to fourth grade, income from cassava

- The husband used to bring UXO pieces home thinking they were scrap metal and store them under the house. After an accident nearby, where a man died from UXO thought to be scrap metal, the husband contacted the authorities. The UXO was collected a few days later but the authorities did not ask to see the land where it was found.
- In the days between reporting and removal, no markings or warnings were provided around the space under the house. The wife said she was scared every night as she had not known the UXO was there, and children and buffaloes roam the area.
- The field team asked the wife what she would do if one of her young children was injured. She said she would go the health centre in the next village. She would need her husband to drive the motorbike but if he was farming, she would ask relatives or someone with a car (there are four or five cars in the village).
- Neither of them knew they needed to report UXO accidents or that support is provided to pay for health costs. They were not aware of the hotline.
- The husband believes there is UXO on the land where he farms. He had reported it to the village authorities in 2019 but they did not complete a form. They did not know about the form before the interview but doubted they could submit it as they do not have a land certificate. The district authority has not come yet to provide land certificates.

- After the scrap metal incident, the husband attended the EORE session held by the man trained in Vientiane. He heard the loudspeaker announcement from Unit 58 in the Lao language. Both the husband and wife mentioned the posters should be in ethnic languages and some of them should just have pictures (as the wife is illiterate).

Household 4 in Phonsaat Village: Ka-Khmu mother and daughter, ages 40 and 18, mother illiterate, daughter with early secondary school, income from cassava

- The woman was widowed in 2019 after her husband was moving 'scrap metal' he had collected from his brother's farm land. He had been storing it under the house without informing her.
- With the support of World Education, the NRA provided 6 million kip and village authorities gave 200,000 kip to cover funeral costs.
- She subsequently reported two pieces of UXO she found on her cassava farm to the authorities. These were removed but she believes there are more on her land. She does not know if any clearance will continue, saying "let's see if they come back." She thinks they did not clear more land because the cassava was growing and they cannot clear until the crop has been harvested.
- Apart from the cassava, she does not know how to make money; her child is still young. She needs to cultivate the cassava even though she is aware that more UXO may be there.
- When the father died, the daughter dropped out of high school to help with the cassava; otherwise they would have no money.
- None of her family have had EORE and they had not heard about it.

Household 5 in Pungman Village: Lao-Phuon couple, ages 84 and 63, neither attended school, income from small animals; son and daughter-in-law have a rice farm and sell any of the harvest beyond their own consumption, the daughter-in-law provides income from weaving

- The man had been injured from a UXO in 1978 while farming. The UXO pieces are still in his hand and stomach and cause

pain when the weather changes. (Note: The village authorities did not tell the team about this survivor, possibly because no form was completed.)

- His understanding was that you get support if you are a soldier but as he was not in the Army, he did not submit a form for support.
- He said there are health volunteers in the village but no health clinic. He had no knowledge of local services for disability such as COPE.
- There has been no clearance in his community despite the whole village asking for it. They do not know exactly what a mine looks like. The husband thinks they are yellow and have legs.

Household 6 in Pungman Village: Lao-Phuon couple, ages 70 and 72, primary school education, income from rice farming and raising small animals; son and daughter-in-law farm and daughter-in-law provides income from weaving; they have garden vegetables for consumption.

- The husband's rice farming land has been cleared. It was a priority established by the village so he did not need to do anything. He knows to have it cleared he needs to ask the authorities.
- He mentioned he moved a UXO off the road last year. He put it on the side of the road where it sat for nine or 10 days. During that time, the clearance team was in the village, so he told them directly, and they came and marked it in two or three days. It was another five or six days before they took it away. He said that because he moved it very carefully, it was safe.
- Men report the presence of UXO as they travel further for farming.
- The husband and wife had both heard of EORE but had never attended sessions as they believed they already know the risks. They said their children went to EORE seven or eight years ago.
- He said that if there was community EORE he would want to be invited directly. The wife was eager to attend community sessions. If someone provided information, they would be very grateful.

Household 7 in Poua Village: Lao Lum, only the man interviewed, age 60; wife at home, age 58; husband secondary school, wife with primary school; income from small animals and rice if production exceeds household needs.

- Due to time constraints, household interviews were not possible in Poua. The field team was able to interview a male UXO survivor.
- His accident happened in 1982 when he was digging for water for his rice farm. At the time, there was no village or district health-care centre so he had to go to the small provincial hospital where his wounds became infected. This led to his arm and thumb being amputated.
- He has been given a prosthetic for his arm but it does not fit well and causes pain so he only wears it to go to parties. He has had no financial support or any EORE.
- It was very hard for him to work. His relatives have helped and his wife has worked longer hours. He still tries to work but is limited by the amputation and pain from UXO pieces still in his body. A son and daughter-in-law help on the farm. His sons (no daughters) started light farm work when they were 10 years old, then worked fully on rice farming from about age 14 or 15.



RECOMMENDATION 19

The UXO sector needs to significantly increase community knowledge of how to report UXOs, access information on clearance and obtain available victim assistance services, while ensuring everyone has access to EORE. This is especially true of those who are more vulnerable such as the poor, those with lower levels of education and literacy, ethnic groups, women, people with disabilities and those in remote areas.

In remote areas, mobile services (two personnel travelling from house to house) could be used to provide information on EORE, available victim assistance and UXO clearance information.



6

FINDINGS ALIGNED WITH LAO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND UXO GENDER AND DIVERSITY ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

As stated in previous sections, all research tools were designed to elicit context-specific information to inform gender and diversity analysis, based on the domains below:²⁹

- Legal rights and status
- Practices, participation, power and decision-making
- Access and control of resources
- Time and space, the triple role of women and a conducive environment
- Knowledge, beliefs and perceptions, and social norms and stereotypes.

Under each of the five domains, the study identified national legislation, statistics and sociocultural aspects to understand how trends in the UXO sector either align with or differ from those at the national level.

6.1 Legal rights and status

This section will describe key national policy documents that enshrine the legal status of the Lao population. Specific strategies address needs and special measures for women, people with disabilities, the poor and ethnic groups, and address sexual harassment, sexual abuse and other issues. Legal issues related to land are discussed in section 6.3.

Poverty consistently emerged in field discussions as an added form of inequality faced by all people. This aligns with the national context. The World Bank calculated that the incidence of poverty declined by 6.3 percentage points from 24.6 percent in 2012-2013 to 18.3 percent in 2018-2019.³⁰ Poverty remains high among ethnic groups and households with no formal education, with a poverty rate of 34.6 percent in 2019. This is 10 times higher than households where the head of the household completed secondary education.

The Ninth NSEDP estimates that the poverty rate will increase to 21.5 percent due to the impact of COVID-19. Prior to the pandemic, remittances were a source of livelihoods for nearly 15 percent of households and contributed significantly to poverty reduction, along with the expansion of agricultural and food exports between 2012 and 2018.³¹

Poverty varies widely between urban and rural areas, and across provinces, districts and ethnic groups. The poverty rate in rural areas was more than three times higher than in urban areas in 2018-2019. Poverty reduction has been slower among non-dominant ethnic groups. To address poverty and development disparities in Lao PDR, the Ninth NSEDP says government efforts will focus on the poorest and ensure sustainable livelihoods by evenly distributing income and providing social protection to all groups of people, especially vulnerable groups.

Legislation on women and gender issues

Lao PDR ratified CEDAW in 1981. The national policy framework to address women and gender issues is the Fourth NPAGE, which includes three programmes: information dissemination, awareness-raising and database development; promoting and creating gender equality; and reviewing, amending and developing legislation, and implementing obligations under treaties, regional and international declarations regarding women's rights to which Lao PDR is a party. The Fourth NPAGE identifies the major barriers to women's equality in Lao PDR as:

... primarily caused by women's limited participation in decision-making and management at all levels to provide an enabling environment and lifetime opportunities for women and girls to access education, healthcare, equal employment and economic empowerment. This is especially the case for women and girls in remote areas to access capital and land for production to contribute and reap full benefits from socio-economic development in safe working, learning and living environments without sexual violation, harassment or violence.³²

Another key piece of legislation is the Five-Year National Plan of Action for Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children II (2021-2025), which contains three main areas of work: to protect the rights and interests of women and children in Lao PDR through ending violence against women and girls; to uphold their roles and dignity within society, communities and families; and to implement gender equality and fight gender-

based violence and contribute to social order and national development goals.

There are two references in the Labour Law (revised) 2013 that relate to maternity leave and pregnancy. Most people during the field mission knew that a key piece of legislation for women related to maternity leave. Paternity leave is not included in the Labour Law. The review of personnel policies for the NRA, Unit 58 and UXO Lao in the Gender and Diversity Action Plan needs to address sexual harassment abuse policies and procedures, and alignment with the Labour Code for safe maternity practices (see Recommendation 8).

Labour Law Article 97 (Revised) on the Employment of Pregnant Women or Women Caring for Newborns states:

It is prohibited to employ a woman during pregnancy or during the period she is caring for a child under one year of age to perform the following work:

2. Work lifting and carrying by hand, carrying on shoulders, carrying on a pole, or the bearing of loads heavier than ten kilograms; and
5. Work which involves standing for longer than two consecutive hours

A woman during pregnancy or during the period she is caring for a child under one year of age that has previously undertaken any of the work outlined above must be transferred by the employer to a new and more appropriate position temporarily, and shall maintain the same salary or wage.



FINDING

Given that women working in UXO clearance are likely to be standing for longer than two hours and potentially carrying items over 10 kilograms, it is possible that the Labour Law is being violated. In the interview with UXO Lao, all female clearance team members said that they generally worked in clearance until nine months of pregnancy, although sometimes team members would enable them to perform lighter duties. This finding suggests a need to enforce temporary transfers for clearance staff during pregnancy.

This study recommends research into the reasons why women work until nine months of pregnancy in the field and do not take what several women referred to as an option of transferring to desk work (in line with the Labour Code). Some reasons could include the feeling that their transfer will mean each of their team members need to work harder and longer to meet the quota; peer pressure; perceptions that managers or organizational culture would frown on this; concerns that it would reinforce the stereotype of women in clearance being 'weak' and not able to handle the task; or the lack of a precedent of other women clearance officers taking this option.



RECOMMENDATION 20

Conduct a further study on issues related to female personnel in the UXO sector who travel to the field. This should include but not be limited to pregnancy and maternity leave; sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse; wider safety and employment practices; issues for women in shared accommodation; organizational culture and overt or covert expectations and stereotypes, and perceptions of women in the sector by diverse members of local communities. This study should also look at the effectiveness and efficiency of female clearance officers on an individual rather than team output level as well as comparative analysis of group effectiveness and efficiency of all male, all female and mixed teams, including an economic analysis.

Article 98 in the Labour Law (revised) 2013 states:

Article 98 (Revised) Maternity Leave Before and After Giving Birth Before and after giving birth: women workers shall be entitled to at least one hundred and five days of maternity leave; however, at least forty-two days of such leave shall be taken after giving birth. In cases of giving birth to twins, maternity leave shall be at least one hundred and twenty days. During such a period, the employee shall receive full payment at the normal salary or wages.



FINDING

The women from Unit 58 stated they received six months maternity leave; however, the UXO Lao all female demining team claimed they received three to four months maternity leave. The average estimate of working days in a four-month period is generally 88.³³ Whether UXO Lao is following the provisions for maternity leave as per the Labour Law must be verified.

Additional international standards to ensure the rights of women are specifically related to the UNDP programme. Its programme document refers to the implementation of the UN Secretary-General's Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

The only reference to sexual harassment in the Labour Law (revised) 2013 is:

The employee has the right to request cancellation of an employment contract and receive compensation in the following cases:
4. In the event there is any molestation, harassment, or sexual harassment on the part of the employer, or the employer ignores the occurrence of such actions.³⁴

The implementation mechanisms of the Fourth NPAGE state:

...consider amendment of Article 86, the Law on Labour to include the definition of sexual harassment and application of punitive measures...

The consultants could not find any specific legislation that addresses sexual harassment and punitive measures for perpetrators, explaining why none of the interviewees knew about sexual harassment policies. Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse is an international standard for UNDP and the wider international UXO sector. Addressing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, including through grievance mechanisms, is generally addressed in a code of conduct within UXO operators. The recommendations from the MAG 2008 and GMAP 2014 stand as relevant for the sector:

- **All organisations should have a CoC [Code of Conduct]** clearly stating what kind of behaviour is appropriate with colleagues, beneficiaries and partners, and what will not be tolerated by the organization, including **sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse**. The CoC should be in Lao for nationals and English for **international staff and all staff should read it and sign it** together with the employment contract and be briefed on it during the induction... During accreditation of operators, SWPs/SOPs related to human resources and Code of Conduct should be checked to ensure compliance with national labour law and gender and diversity sensitivity... Operators must disseminate information on procedures with regards to **reporting harassment**—lines of communication must be clearly defined as well as plans for taking action, in this regards it is imperative that female staff can report to a woman. A female is more likely to report harassment from a male colleague to a woman than a man. (MAG Gender and UXO Assessment 2008, section 4.5.9)
- **A safe, confidential, transparent, and accessible complaint mechanism** for breaches of the CoC should be set up, with at least a man and a woman as referral people. It is recommended that an anonymous staff survey is conducted once a year and that any arising issues are addressed... Induction to new staff should include gender issues, **CoC, and an explanation of the complaint mechanism**. (GMAP 2014)



RECOMMENDATION 21

In addition to the whole-of-population, rights-based complaints mechanism addressed in Recommendation 6, it is further recommended to ensure a code of conduct or equivalent document is produced on addressing sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, and that a safe, confidential, transparent and accessible complaint mechanism is annexed to employment contracts.

Decree on the rights of persons with disabilities

In 2008, the Government signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It released the Decree on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2014. The decree protects the rights and interests of people with disabilities and stipulates the elimination of all forms of discrimination that prevent them from full and equal participation in social and economic life. Additionally, the decree established the National Committee for Disabled People and the Elderly. It states:

Article 27. Employment of Persons with Disabilities

State and society shall promote employment and consider giving priority to persons with disabilities by accepting those meeting the conditions to work in the position, determined every year by the concerned entity. In case it is impossible to take persons with disabilities to work in the concerned sector, the latter shall pay to the Fund for Development of Persons with Disabilities an amount equal to the salary minimum as provided for in Labour Law. The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and other concerned agencies shall formulate the particular quota schemes for implementation when persons with disabilities are taken to work, they shall be provided with necessary accommodation.

Two other articles have direct relevance to the findings from this study:

Article 31. Social Welfare State shall enhance living conditions of persons with disabilities by providing them with food, clothing, shelter and a decent environment suitable for their life. State shall assist particular kinds of persons with disabilities such as the helpless, old, poor, homeless, and the families of persons with disabilities who are poor.

Article 32. Assistance in Caring for Persons with Disabilities. Administrative authorities at various levels shall cooperate with social organizations to uplift persons with disabilities as stated in article 31 of this decree and to

assist them as follows: 1. Monthly allowances determined by Government. In case of death, funeral allowances are provided by the State.



FINDINGS

Two household interviews were conducted with elderly poor men, one of whom asked if any government assistance was available. It is unclear how Article 31 is implemented in the context of victim assistance. Given that the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare is responsible for UXO programming, it would be useful to discuss a Gender and Diversity and UXO Sector Working Group with other UXO organizations working on victim assistance.

Although the consultants asked about assistance for carers of family members with a disability, there was no knowledge of any assistance. Several interviewees stated that the issue had not been discussed in the sector. There was clear evidence at the village level that the State provided funeral allowances, however.



RECOMMENDATION 22

Invite the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare to be an active member of the Gender and Diversity UXO Focal Group and to make a presentation on the alignment of victim assistance with the Lao Decree on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Ethnicity

The 2015 Constitution³⁵ guarantees that all Lao people have fundamental rights and obligations to develop the country. Article 8 states:

The State pursues the policy of promoting unity and equality among all ethnic groups with all ethnic groups having the right to protect, preserve and promote the customs and cultures of their own tribes and of the nation. All acts of creating division and discrimination among ethnic groups are forbidden...the country's economic system is for the purpose of improving the living standards, both materially and spiritually, of Lao PDR's multi-ethnic people. And environment, and require opportunities to

be provided for ethnic groups to discuss their concerns. However, it states the implementation of laws and policies needs strengthening.³⁶



FINDING

It was clear throughout the field mission that significant disparities exist within and between ethnic groups, specifically for women. These were reflected in poverty and education levels, and illiteracy rates. For some ethnic groups, being unable to speak the Lao language significantly affected their access to information. These issues are discussed more fully in the following domains for this gender and diversity analysis.

The Guidelines on Ethnic Group Consultation (2012) call for the engagement of all ethnic groups in relevant development projects and activities with potential benefits and impacts on livelihoods.

6.2 Practices, participation, power and decision-making

There is significant inequality in women's political participation, leadership and decision-making in Lao PDR, from the national to the village level. Social and cultural norms that favour men, fewer educational opportunities and heavy workloads disadvantage women in assuming leadership positions and participating in governance structures. People with disabilities are also disproportionately impacted by discrimination and the lack of access to employment and workplaces.³⁷ In looking at gender disparities in decision-making for and within ethnic groups, the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute considers women from the Lao-Tai and Khmu as being in a better position in the control of household resources. Among women experience much lower levels of decision-making power and control of household resources.³⁸ All these sources of inequality for women, people with disabilities and ethnic groups were evident from the focus group discussions and household interviews.

Women made up 21.95 percent of the 2021 National Assembly of Lao PDR, the lowest level

since data were first collected in 2002.³⁹ Women hold 23.2 percent of ministerial and equivalent positions and 36.04 percent of management positions. They occupy 32.35 percent of positions at the provincial level, 33.02 percent at the district level and 9.21 percent at the village level.

Data sourced from government SDG reports indicate that 32.2 percent of elected local government seats were held by women. At the provincial level, this percentage was higher. At the district level, Khamkert had 58 percent, with more women than men, and Phoukoud had 30.7 percent, close to the average. The consultants were not able to obtain data for Thongsean and Poua villages. In Pungman Village, women held 20 percent of local seats; Phonsaat Village had no women in these positions. It is not possible to make a generalization based on such small samples.

Most authorities could not provide data on ethnicity or disability. The Xiengkhouang provincial committee compared to other provincial committees is an exception and illustrates a good practice in diverse representation in decision-making. Overall, provincial data show that women, ethnic groups and people with disabilities do not have representation in decision-making positions commensurate with their population shares (Table 2).

Table 2: Representation of women, ethnic groups and people with disabilities in leadership positions at the provincial, district and village levels in field sites visited by the study team

	Male	Female	Total (gender)	Ethnic group staff	People with disabilities
Bolikhamxai Province	5	3	8	DK	0
One of the women is the second in charge and two are technical staff in social welfare; the UXO unit is a one-man unit.					
Khamkert District	18	25	43	0	0
Two people work in UXO, one man and one woman. The woman helps him on communications and writing letters to the authorities. Of the five village leaders, none are women. Ten women from the LWU occupy posts at the local authority level.					
Thongsean Village	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Phonsaat Village	5	0	5	DK	DK
The five officials include the head of the village, a teacher, a village security officer and the LYU with two staff. No LWU member is present as a representative on the village committee, but when LWU members come to the village, they are asked to attend committee meetings.					
Xiengkhouang Province	19	25	44	2 (1 Khmu male, 1 Hmong male)	1 Female
Phoukoud District	13	14	17	DK	0
Women include an LWU representative and another three LWU members. The men include a village security officer, a manager and three village heads.					
Pungman Village	4	1(LWU)	5		0
Poua Village	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Note: DK = do not know

The NRA's UXO Sector Annual Report 2021 provides information on personnel at UXO operators (Table 3).

Table 3: Personnel in UXO operators in Lao PDR, 2021

Organization	Administrative staff				Technical/operating staff				Total
	National		International		National		International		
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	
NRA	30	16	0	0	16	3	0	0	65
Unit 58	2	24	0	0	158	4	0	0	168
The HALO Trust	42	32	1	1	459	491	5	0	1,031
UXO Lao	118	74	11	0	918	344	1	0	1,466
MAG	45	29	2	3	740	419	8	0	1,246

Source: NRA 2021, p. 17.

With the exception of Halo Trust, fewer women than men are employed in the UXO sector in Lao PDR, as is the trend globally. A study of 12 global UXO operators in 2019 found that men made up 80.21 percent and women 19.79 percent of the whole sector.⁴⁰ Based on a comparative analysis of international data, the rate of female employment in the UXO sector in Lao PDR is high (Table 4).

Table 4: Employment in EORE and victim assistance organizations met during the field mission

Organization name	Women	Men	Total(gender)	Ethnic group	Disability
Centre Medical and Rehabilitation	71	89	160	DK	18
Lao Disabled People Association	3	5	8	1	1
Humanity and Inclusion	43	71	114	DK	DK
World Education	16	14	30	0	2
Lao Women with Disabilities Association	27	7	34	3	30
Lao Youth Union	95	97	192	DK	DK
Xiengkhouang People with Disability Development Association	3	8	11	3	9

Note: DK = do not know

Victim assistance and EORE service providers have a much higher rate of female employment than the wider UXO sector. This is in line with international trends of women employed in carer organizations that provide formal assistance to people with disabilities and social services. International Labour Organization (ILO) data show that 19.3 percent of women's employment globally is in the paid care workforce.⁴¹

There is still low diversity in terms of ethnicity and disability within the victim assistance sector. The low representation of people with disabilities overall in victim assistance providers is surprising. CMR and LDWDC are exceptions. Increasing the participation and employment of women, people with disabilities and people from ethnic groups is specifically mentioned in the UNDP programme document:

Given the gender gap of the Lao PDR, opportunity will be explored to increase women's engagement and participation in UXO related activities. Further, the project will work to ensure for participation of gender, ethnics and persons with disability in planning and community consultations.

A key issue in female employment is the representation of women in clearance teams. GMAP conducted a global survey on the effects of mixed teams in 2012-2013, finding the inclusion of women was a major benefit. Local managers and field staff from the study noted that men became more competitive due to stigma associated with performing worse than women, women's presence brought more harmony to teams, and women increased effectiveness but not efficiency.⁴² In line with this finding, the GICHD gender assessment presented to the NRA in 2014 made a recommendation to ensure that: "survey teams are gender-balanced, as the presence of women in the teams will encourage more affected women to come forward and report contamination, impact, land use and [knowledge, attitudes and practices]."

This study identified significant issues faced by a single woman in an otherwise all male team. The recommendation above to have gender balance in mixed teams is an important issue to enable women to have the company of other women, which increases their safety in village accommodation. The UNDP programme document states:

1 or 2 humanitarian army clearance teams to be allocated as female teams by 2025 so that more females can play leadership roles, and the Unit 58 will maintain the percentage of female personnel among its 20 teams to at least 15% women to ensure women's participation in the sector.

In 1995, the UN Economic and Social Council endorsed a 30 percent target for women's participation in decision-making. Research has shown that a critical mass of 30 percent is needed for women to be heard in parliaments and for workplaces to improve. With less than 30 percent, women lack support to initiate change or claim their rights.⁴³ In line with this critical mass theory, rather than creating one or two all female clearance teams, it is preferable to increase the share of women in mixed clearance teams to 30 to 35 percent by 2025.

In Outcome 5 of the Fourth NPAGE, the government target is to increase the rate of women in decision-making and management positions in the Government and mass

organizations by an average of 25 to 30 percent. The consultants were unable to obtain specific data on management positions held by women in the NRA, Unit 58 or UXO Lao. This study suggests that the Gender and Diversity Internal Working Group should access this data and incorporate a target for women to hold 25 to 30 percent of management positions by 2025.

Lao PDR is the most ethnically diverse country in South-East Asia. Lao people comprise four main ethno-linguistic families: Lao-Luom (62.4 percent), Mon-Khmer (23.7 percent), Hmong-Lu Mien (9.7 percent) and Chine-Tibetan (2.9 percent).⁴⁴ The proportion of ethnic people employed in the UXO sector is exceptionally low and does not reflect these population shares. Authorities have limited language skills to consult with local ethnic group who do not speak the Lao language. Additionally, although the 2015 Lao census estimates that 2.8 percent of people in Lao PDR have a disability, global data from the World Health Survey estimate a 15 percent prevalence. Even at the rate of 2.8 percent, people with disabilities are underrepresented in employment within the sector.⁴⁵

It is recommended to increase the proportion of people from ethnic groups and people with disabilities employed in the UXO sector to 10 percent for ethnic groups and 5 percent for people with disabilities at a minimum. This aligns with Article 27 of the Decree on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities⁴⁶ as well as guidelines for the UXO sector to employ UXO accident survivors. As there is currently no employment data on ethnicity and disability, this will require personnel departments to collect this data where possible (while respecting the choice and consent of staff members in disclosing this information).



RECOMMENDATION 23

Amend the targets in the Government and UNDP UXO project from increasing the number of all female clearance teams to increasing the percentage of women in mixed clearance teams to between 30 to 35 percent by 2025. Include a quota for employment of at least 10 percent for ethnic groups and 5 percent for people with disabilities.

Decision-making at the household level

A CARE Rapid Gender Analysis in 2020 confirmed a gender disparity in decision-making between men and women in households. Although women tended to have control of financial decisions related to household work such as food buying, in some cases, particularly in ethnic communities, these decisions would be shared. The study found that men generally make decisions about earning money, financial planning, raising livestock, construction and problem solving, with these decisions sometimes shared, although interviews in the CARE study indicated that husbands made the ultimate decisions.⁴⁷ The study found that decision-making roles for women were generally at much lower levels within ethnic groups (although this varied across groups).

As the field work for this UXO study was focused on Xiengkhouang and Bolikhamxai, findings can only be compared for Lao-Luom, Khmu and Hmong. The field work confirmed lower levels of household decision-making for Hmong and Khmu women, illustrated by their low attendance at community meetings. Hmong women stated that when men returned home from the meetings, they did not share any information. This was confirmed by men who explained that they talked about the issues with their male friends and neighbours when they had a drink in the evening. The CARE study also found there was little follow up to ensure that information provided to men was shared with the rest of the family.⁴⁸

6.3 Access and control of resources

This domain refers to having control of or being able to access resources. It includes access to resources, income, services, information and benefits.⁴⁹

CARE's 2020 *Rapid Gender Analysis of COVID-19 in Lao* identified that access to services and resources is lower for women, ethnic groups, people with disabilities, those in poverty and rural communities. Female-headed households face additional challenges, such as less access to employment in fishing and forestry and reduced abilities to obtain loans, especially formal loans to invest in income generation.⁵⁰

The *Country-Level Gender Analysis* of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) identifies barriers to accessing health care, especially for women and girls confronting challenges related to transport, language, lower education levels and higher illiteracy. Women, youth, people with disabilities and LGBTQI+ people lack access to information on services provided in the community. The report also found that a lack of diversity in staffing in these services affects the ability of people from ethnic communities, especially women, to access them.⁵¹



FINDING

Throughout the field mission, it was clear that stakeholders pursued only two specific strategies to address or improve information access for women, ethnic groups or people with disabilities. The first was the use of ethnic languages in some consultations (this was not consistent, and there is a significant need to increase staffing with people who speak ethnic languages, especially in communities where ethnic groups do not speak the Lao language). Secondly, authorities and UXO operators were cognizant of seasonal farming needs, avoiding community meetings at these times, and scheduling consultations in the evening when women had finished cooking dinner and men had returned from the fields.

In 2009, two staff from the Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines co-authored a paper, *Gender and Land Release: The Responsibility of the Mine Action Community*. It focused on issues of access and control for women in land ownership and decision-making. It found that due to lower educational levels and restrictive social norms, women in many countries do not have access to information on land release processes or legal rights. This paper raised the critical issue of what happens to land when a husband is killed by UXO and the wife's name is not on land ownership documents. It called for UXO operators to consider the impact of land release on women's access and control of land. The paper advocated for equal and meaningful consultation processes; gender training for staff; investigating processes required for women to receive land certificates or post-clearance titles; and gender-responsive conditions for land-release.⁵²



FINDING

The field mission team could not access any clear information on land release processes. Women interviewed did not have knowledge of these processes as only the men of the household were involved and those with their names on land use certificates. In Bolikhamxai, land use certificates have still not been provided by local authorities.

The IMAS standards on land release (07:11) state:

- Local participation, including both men and women, should be fully incorporated into the main stages of the land release process in order to ensure that land will be used following handover.⁵³
- “All reasonable effort” may include, but not be limited to: identifying and accessing all relevant sources of information, including women, girls, boys and men, as well as historical and analytical material.⁵⁴
- The organisation undertaking survey or clearance shall: consult closely with affected communities including women with regards to all decisions to cancel, reduce or handover cleared land.⁵⁵

There is no reference to women in the Lao PDR National UXO/Mine Action Standards.



RECOMMENDATION 24

A revision to the Lao PDR National UXO/Mine Action Standards should include references to women being consulted to access their knowledge and to being fully incorporated into the main stages of land release and in all decisions on cleared land.

Access to community consultations and EORE

The authors see the issue of access to information on UXO processes, participation in data collection and wider community consultation, including EORE sessions, as one of the most

significant areas for focus. Not ensuring equity in access to EORE information increases risks for women, people with disabilities and ethnic groups, especially those in poverty, and those who do not speak the dominant language and/or are illiterate.

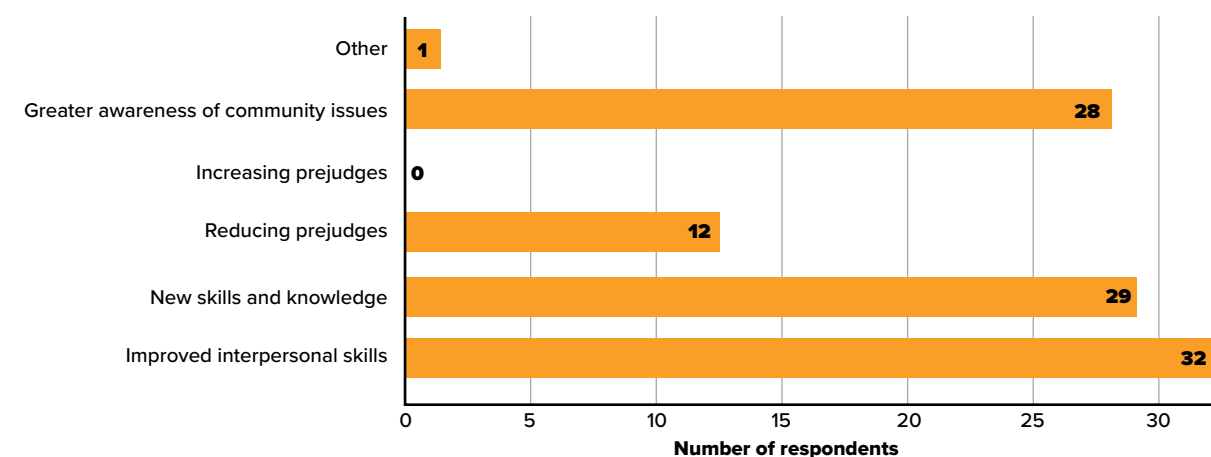
Two comments made by interviewees during the field mission highlighted key access issues. An official in Vientiane noted that the process was for local authorities to contact heads of households to attend meetings. This is substantiated by research conducted with international non-governmental (NGO) UXO operators. Released in 2018, it found “the process has to go through the local authority, and then the local authority refers only to the heads of the families, which are mostly men.”⁵⁶ It stated that ethnic

women do not travel far from the home, therefore, the information they have is not useful for collecting data. Both these examples illustrate covert forms of discrimination that limit the ability of women to access and provide key information.

In several cases, the field mission team was informed that community consultations were not undertaken at all within clearance missions. In several cases, both local authorities and villagers stated that notices of meetings were only broadcast over the loudspeaker in the Lao-Luom language. This limits access for all who do not speak this language as well as those in areas out of the range of the loudspeaker.

A 2016 survey of male and female staff in different areas of work within two international NGO UXO operators focused on social inclusion and marginalized communities. It found workplace barriers for national staff inhibit the participation of ethnic women in remote areas due to language and cultural differences. On the positive side, the survey indicated that employing diverse ethnic and female staff helped develop staff skills, knowledge and awareness of community issues, and reduced prejudice (see Figure 5 and Recommendation 23 on a target for the increased employment of people from ethnic groups).⁵⁷

Figure 5: Influences of working with colleagues from different ethnic communities⁸⁶



Other findings from the field mission that relate to access issues are:

- Men had more access to information on UXO processes from attending community meetings and EORE sessions, including knowledge of formal clearance request processes. Access to this information was low for all groups but significantly lower for women and ethnic groups.
- Neither men nor women understood how to access health support after a UXO accident or knew of the hotline number. The hotline is currently only providing the service in the Lao language, which limits access for all people who do not speak the dominant language (especially ethnic women).
- Most attendees had not attended EORE sessions. Of those that did, a higher number of men reported attending them.
- Although EORE sessions used the excellent mediums of video and diagrams, posters may remain inaccessible for those who are illiterate. (Note: This finding was based on the consultants viewing the posters rather than field discussions as no EORE posters were seen in any of the locations visited.)
- None of the villagers met in the field mission were aware of the process to report accidents and access health care via the NRA or had knowledge of the hotline. UXO accident survivors were not aware of health services outside local health clinics and provincial hospitals. Although several victim assistance service providers are available in Xiengkhouang, including COPE, which travels to villages, none of the men with disability interviewed knew of these services.

The issues identified here are not new. They were critical issues raised in the first gender and UXO assessment published in 2008 and were echoed as remaining issues to be addressed in the recommendations from the 2014 GMAP assessment. In addition, the inclusion of all community members (especially those who are most at-risk and hardest to reach) is a criterion identified in the IMAS (listed below). No additional recommendations are needed from this study on these issues as these standards and recommendations are still as relevant and critical today as they were 15 years ago.

- The process of data gathering and analysis should be transparent. The process of a needs assessment should **ensure the participation of women, girls, boys and men from the at-risk community and include marginalised and other hard-to-reach at-risk groups (persons with disabilities, elderly, out-of-school children, etc.)** (IMAS 12.10 Second Edition 2020 5.2).
- **Specific strategies** should be put in place to ensure that **women and people from ethnic minorities** are included in information gathering and priority-setting meetings, and that their voices are heard... **‘All reasonable effort’** (IMAS 8.10) must be made for survey teams to access all sources of information (men, boys, girls, women) in affected communities (GMAP 2014).
- Community teams must have a **gender balance** to enable male to male and female to female interaction and be **trained in gender awareness** and specific techniques of interviewing **women, men, girls and boys of differing linguistic groups** (MAG 2008: 4.1.1).

- **It is particularly important that the non-technical survey teams are gender-balanced, as the presence of women in the teams will encourage more affected women to come forward and report contamination, impact, land use and KAP (knowledge, attitudes and practices) (GMAP 2014).**
- Male and female staff of UXO operators **must visit the village to physically inform households** of an upcoming meeting and its topic and clearly disseminate information with regards to the purpose of the meeting and work with community members to **select the best time and day for the meeting to take place.** Delivery of a letter to the village chief is not considered sufficient prior notification of the topic of the meeting as it is likely that the information will not be disseminated fully when provided in this way... Participation in any community meetings must be carried out **in either groups of women, groups of men, individual women, or individual men.** To ensure that illiterate or people with poor linguistic skills can participate, meetings must be carried out in simple verbal dialogue (with **interpretation into local languages** where possible). Operators must ensure that the participants are from a **broad sector of the community, including the poorest sectors,** and not only the educated or members of higher status families (MAG 2008: 4.2.1)

Human resources and access to employment

The previous section addressed statistics on employment and where possible leadership positions for women, ethnic groups and people with disabilities in the UXO sector. The significantly lower education levels of women and girls compared to men and boys is a key barrier to accessing employment. This is exacerbated for women and girls from some ethnic groups, with data indicating the national literacy rate for women is 84.6 percent (91 percent for men), while the literacy rate for women in rural areas is 51 percent (72 percent for men).⁵⁸ Data vary among ethnic groups; however, in Lao-Luom communities, one third of girls drop out in upper secondary schooling. The share is 50 to 57 percent for girls from ethnic groups (1.9 to 4 times more than for boys).⁵⁹

Addressing the representation of women in UXO programming has been a concern within the sector globally. GMAP developed the *Gender Sensitive Recruitment and Training Guidelines* in 2013 to increase women's access to employment in the sector. The guidelines state:

Gender sensitive recruitment, training and codes of conduct are key to achieving and maintaining gender balance in all areas of demining, from survey and clearance teams to trainers and managers in top level positions. The benefits of having a gender balanced staff, apart from legal obligations embodied in several international agreements, involve the ability to access men, women, boys and girls in order to collect more accurate information for clearance, to include different perspectives in land release activities, as well as to meet donor requirements. Women's employment brings income and status and the provision of role models for other women and girls.⁶⁰

The UNDP programme directly addresses the need to increase women's access to employment and leadership. This requires strategies to encourage women in these roles. The MAG 2008 and UN Women/LWU 2018 assessments both made recommendations to address this issue. The UN Women/LWU assessment focused on a human resources policy and guidelines on gender, while the MAG assessment provided some practical strategies. As these recommendations still need to be implemented, they remain relevant in this study.

- Design and implement an **internal NRA and UXO Lao human resources policy on gender.** This could promote gender equality internally in NRA and UXO Lao which in turn could have a positive gender equality impact on the beneficiaries of NRA and UXO Lao work; and design and adopt **guidelines on gender sensitive human resources** procedures for NRA and UXO Lao, including responsibility for gender mainstreaming in the **job descriptions of technical, managerial and project and work planning staff:** a draft could be prepared, and a workshop h

- Organizations must include **"Women Applicants are Encourage to Apply"**, in all job opening advertisements regardless of position and a range of media should be used to advertise; especially radio. Selection criteria must not be too narrowly defined to exclude potential female applicants; and organizations must ensure that **both women and men on interview panels**—if no women are available from within the organization then arrangements should be made with organizations such as LWU or development partners to take part in the interview process. Having a woman on the panel can increase a female candidate's confidence and enable her to show her potential. (MAG 2008: 4.5.2 and 4.5.3)

6.4 Time and space

National context

The USAID *Laos Country-Level Gender Analysis* highlights the need to consider unequal divisions of labour within the household, including unpaid care responsibilities, and women's time constraints and time poverty.⁶¹ This domain includes recognizing gender/disability/ethnicity differences in the availability and allocation of time, which was a key feature of the daily calendar activity used with local villagers. This aligns to the Harvard Analytical Framework⁶² for identifying roles to understand the local household and community. It provided knowledge on the types of household and farming activities undertaken by family members of different ages and the time spent on these tasks. The objective was to determine how people of different sexes, ages, disability status and ethnicity spend their time, the implications for other employment and availability for programme activities.

This participatory activity, conducted separately with local men and women, identified the triple role of women—productive, reproductive and community work as identified in the Moser Framework in Table 5. This understanding is essential to addressing the gendered roles of UXO sector workers and how these ultimately impact women and their families in the communities where they work. This understanding is essential to addressing the gendered roles of UXO sector workers and how these ultimately impact women and their families in the communities where they work.

Table 5: Moser framework: triple role of women

Triple roles		
Productive work	Reproductive work	Community work
Production of goods and services for home consumption and sale (e.g. employment and self-employment, formal and informal)	Tasks associated with domestic work, maintenance of the household and care for its members. Usually unpaid.	Management and wellbeing of the community. employment, formal and informal) Usually voluntary and unpaid.
According to gender division of labour. Women: lower paid, less secured jobs, often support sector Man: technical, managerial positions, political parties	Women: preparing food, bearing and caring for children and other household members, maintaining the house, collecting water. Man: constructing the home, household security, decision-making.	Women: provisioning and maintenance of resources which are used by everyone, such as water, healthcare, education. Man: politics at the community.
Women's productive work often alongside their reproductive work.	Women have bigger burden than men. Activities often overlooked. unmeasured and undervalued.	Activities often as extension to women's reproductive role. Differences in the community engagement across the countries.

Source: Ekvilib Institute n.d.

The daily calendars showed significantly higher workloads in households for females of all ages as can be seen in the examples for Phonsaat Village in Tables 6 and 7 (each table represents a 'typical day' for the combined group). This was documented by both men's and women's groups. Roles were typically defined by gender with both groups identifying the high rates of productive and reproductive work among women of all ages. Men consistently performed fewer tasks such as cooking, cleaning and washing, although several stated they assisted children with homework. This is linked to men having higher levels of education and literacy.

The main activity for men was farming. It was explained that this involves 'heavier' tasks and work in more remote locations. Women tended to stay closer to the home when conducting these activities. Several women said that often the husband and wife would travel to the rice field together, and men would take breaks to have a cigarette. Males consistently slept longer, had more leisure time and attended community meetings more frequently. Although it was clear that women were the caretakers of the household, their community roles did not extend to a high level of engagement in community meetings.

Table 6: Daily calendar for women in Phonsaat, indicating hours spent on various activities

Time	Grand mother	Father	Mother	Son	Daughter	Grandson	Granddaughter
Early morning	1 Cooking	6 Cooking			1 cleaning 1 cooking	School	School
Late Morning		3 Farming	5 cleaning 2 washing clothes 1 farming	3 Farming	1 farming 1 washing clothes		1 washing clothes
Early afternoon		2 Farming	3 cooking 1 farming	2 Farming	1 Farming		
Late afternoon/ evening			1 cleaning 1 cooking			Playing 2 hours	

Table 7: Daily calendar for men in Phonsaat, hours spent on various activities

Time	Grandfather	Grandmother	Father	Mother	Daughter	Son-in-law	Granddaughte
Early morning	2 cooking	2 cooking 1 cleaning	2 sleep	1 sleep 3 cleaning 8 cooking	1 sleep 2 cleaning 1 cooking	1 slept 1 cooking	School
Late morning	1 farming	2 washing clothes	4 farming	4 farming 3 washing clothes	1 farming 1 x washing clothes	3 farming	2 farming 1 washing clothes
Early afternoon		1 cooking					
Late afternoon/ evening	Sleep	Sleep	4 helps with homework Sleep	2 helps with homework Sleep			

A factor related to access to resources that has an impact on time and space is men's control over the means of transportation by owning motor bikes (or very rarely cars). The women in all household interviews were not able to drive. Having no access to transport limited their mobility to distances they could walk or ride a bicycle. This also relates to men carrying out farming activities further from home and travelling to the village centre and district towns for meetings and gatherings with friends.

Gender and ethnicity

Gender and ethnicity limit the public space women inhabit, with their circle of mobility significantly smaller and focused around the house and local community. The substantial differences between the maps drawn by men and women show this difference in mobility, with men consistently able to report more details and accuracy on the location of contaminated and cleared land in a wider area (although ethnic men had a much lower level of knowledge than Lao-Luom men). The intersection of gender and ethnicity results in lower education and literacy levels and significantly less time spent out of the house and in the wider community, especially among Hmong (and to a lesser degree Khmu) women in Bolikhamxai. The maps created by Hmong women indicated the lowest level of awareness of areas cleared and contaminated, and even of what UXO clearance was.

An issue that decreased the time burden of women in Xiengkhouang was the ownership of washing machines and presence of piped water. The daily activity calendars revealed that the largest time burden was experienced by Hmong women, with females of all ages conducting various tasks in the home, whereas the male members did significantly less, if any, traditional household tasks.

Role of women's unpaid work and care for people with disabilities

The role of women and girls in unpaid work is often not acknowledged nor is their time valued. The significant unpaid role of women and girls in farming is also undervalued. A UNICEF report found that women in Lao PDR spend on average 4.1 hours a day on unpaid care and domestic work, compared to 1.7 hours a day for men, with the additional burden of caring for children under COVID-19 lockdowns mostly borne by women.⁶³ This statistic is supported by the daily activity calendars produced by both men and women throughout the field mission in Bolikhamxai and Xiengkhouang.

As there were not many people with disabilities in the villages where the field work was conducted, it was not possible to measure the amount of work that female household members perform in caring for family members with disabilities. The ILO notes that women perform over 75 percent of all unpaid care work globally, making it a key barrier to women's access to paid employment and better quality jobs.⁶⁴ Although the consultants asked about provisions for women as the predominant carers of family members with disabilities, no respondents mentioned strategies or support systems in place to address carers. It was also evident that this issue was not considered from a policy perspective, even as carers are seen as indirect victims of UXO accidents in the IMAS guidelines:

- The NMAA or the organization acting on its behalf should: promote community-based planning processes that facilitate the meaningful participation of survivors. Facilitate links between priority-setting processes for land release operations and development actors to provide comprehensive support for survivors and **indirect victims among other vulnerable people** (IMAS 13.10 VA).⁶⁵
-support the dissemination of any directory of services and identify and refer **survivors and indirect victims** to services through the provision of accessible information on available services, in coordination with the relevant ministry or authority (IMAS VA 13.10).⁶⁶

6.5 Knowledge, beliefs and perceptions, and social norms and stereotypes

This domain investigates national social norms and stereotypes about men and women, people with disabilities and ethnic groups to understand how they play out at the village level, specifically related to work within the UXO sector. A comparative analysis considers international UXO data and findings.

According to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, from 2010 to 2019, when the sex was known, 87 percent of global casualties were men and boys and 13 percent were women and girls.⁶⁷ Table 8 presents data collated in the National Strategic Plan for the UXO Sector in Lao PDR 2021-2030. This shows women and girls made up 23.5 percent of people injured over a similar time period, 10 percentage points above the global average.

Table 8: Number of UXO injuries and deaths in Lao PDR from 2011 to 2020

Injured				
Men	Boys	Women	Girls	Total
129	140	40	43	352
Killed				
Men	Boys	Women	Girls	Total
47	53	3	4	107

Source: Government of Lao PDR 2021a.

The equivalent data are not provided for deaths⁶⁸ but data on injuries show that women and girls are much less likely to be the victims of UXO accidents. Globally the prevalence of injuries and deaths of men and boys is tied to traditional gender roles and social norms whereby men are soldiers (this leads to fewer women in the Army, hence the lower percentage of women in the NRA) and 'boys will be boys', which translates into boys playing in contaminated fields, sometimes with the curiosity and/or bravado to tamper with UXO. Men are also more likely to collect scrap metal. This was confirmed in the field mission in two household interviews where the husbands had stored what they assumed was scrap metal under the house. In both cases, the husbands had not told their wives that the scrap metal had been collected and stored. One of the men ultimately died while dealing with the objects. Both these men were from ethnic groups with limited knowledge of what UXO looked like as well as a high level of poverty, making the 'scrap metal' an enticing option for additional income.

The field mission found that two Lao-Luom men in Xiengkhouang had physically moved what they were aware was UXO, in one case to remove it from a road, and in another case to take it out of a rice field. When questioned whether they were aware of the risks of moving UXO, one man said it was safe as he moved it carefully and it was old so there was less chance of an explosion. The other man stated that he had no choice as clearance took too long and he needed to farm his rice. Other relevant male stereotypes and social norms involve men travelling into more remote places due to their access to transport and undertaking the 'heavy work' in farming, which includes using hoes and picks that are more likely to cause accidents when UXO lie beneath the surface of the soil. Two male household interviewees with disabilities from UXO accidents were farming when they were injured.

Child deaths reported in Bolikhamxai involved three boys playing with a UXO, supporting the international and national trends of boys as a high-risk group due to this type of behaviour. This is a focus of the UNDP programme, with the programme document stating:

Individuals continue to engage in unsafe behaviour. Despite comprehensive risk education activities over the last years, UXO casualties persist and disproportionately affect boys and men in daily life activities. This points to gendered practices in rural areas (such as land clearance for planting and livestock herding for boys and men, water and firewood collection, cooking for girls and women), which may increase their exposure to the danger of the UXOs. It may also indicate that education is

not the only solution where behaviour is not necessarily directly impacted by knowledge acquisition.

A 2015 paper by GMAP and UNMAS on culturally sensitive risk education recognized the need to identify effective times and spaces to reach men, women, girls and boys of different ages for awareness sessions. In Somalia, an effective strategy was to target women through training midwives and traditional birth attendants; target men and religious leaders in tea shops, clinics, livestock markets and water points; and train teachers to access children and adolescents in and out of the formal school context.⁶⁹

The second edition of the IMAS on EORE noted:

... women and girls are often involved in accidents due to carrying out different types of activities, often having lower levels of knowledge about contamination in post-conflict settings, and second, they are often **powerful agents for wider change, including behaviour change among boys and male adolescents/adults** (12.10).⁷⁰

Recommendations on these issues were incorporated in the 2008 Gender Action Plan for the UXO sector (Annex 3):

Review, revise and develop MRE messages for at least 4 at risk groups and develop specific strategies for high-risk groups. Gender sensitive objectives: ensure that **groups at risk** are appropriately identified; ensure all individuals, **regardless of age, sex, education, literacy status or socio-economic status**, have access to MRE; ensure messages and strategies are targeted to identified groups; enhance the **participation of male and female community members in MRE planning and monitoring**; ensure men and women have **equal access to the employment opportunities and benefits** associated with MRE initiatives; and ensure **participation of at-risk groups in the messaging and strategy development**. Activities: assess the necessity of MRE in UXO affected areas and to **identify the specific target groups**; analysis of data collected (i.e. KAP, baseline survey, satisfaction survey, etc.) to ensure **disaggregated by sex, age and**

actual cause of incident; quality assurance on implementation of gender sensitive programs and delivery; conduct meetings with village leaders to obtain agreement on involvement of women and children; **revise and review National Standards and SOPs to reflect gender perspectives**; and Review existing makeup of team and develop a **gender sensitive HR strategy** to address gaps (recruitment, retention and staff development).

In terms of alignment with Output 2 of the UNDP programme document, on reduced risk-taking behaviour by at-risk group(s), and Indicator 2.2, on an increase in the percentage of individuals (disaggregated by age, gender, ethnicity and geography) from target at-risk groups changing knowledge, attitudes and practices, the activities in the 2008 Gender Action Plan remain relevant. As such, they should be incorporated into the current EORE review being conducted by the UNDP programme.



RECOMMENDATION 25

The current EORE review being conducted by the UNDP programme should incorporate the activities cited in the 2008 Gender Action Plan for the UXO sector (Annex 3).

Gender social norms

As is abundantly clear from the previous sections, women have defined social roles in the household, as well as within farming and in terms of community decision-making and attendance at meetings. These roles are all based on social and cultural norms.

An issue not addressed or identified within the field visit was gender-based violence. Various studies have referred to a level of social acceptance of violence against women. *The Study on Violence against Women in Lao PDR* produced by the Lao PDR National Commission for the Advancement of Women in 2015 found that 15.3 percent of women reported having experienced either physical violence, sexual violence or both.⁷¹ This share is significantly below the international average of 30 percent identified by the World Health Organization,⁷²

although its calculation includes intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence while the Lao data only comprise the former. In exploring how social norms influence this behaviour, the report states:

- 58 percent of women and 49 percent of men reported that [violence against women] was justified if women did not adhere to traditional gender norms, roles and relations
- 35.6 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that “a good wife obeys her husband, even if she disagrees”
- 22.9 percent concurred that “a man should show he is boss”
- 29.4 percent accepted that a wife was obliged to have sex with her husband⁷³

These are significant findings revealing deeply engrained beliefs and perceptions of women related to gender roles and social norms, even among women themselves.

Additional and/or exacerbated impacts of social norms in ethnic groups

There is extensive diversity in social and gender norms within diverse ethnic groups. Data indicate that families of many ethnic groups face increased poverty, especially in remote rural areas where social and cultural norms include having more children and a preference for sons, early marriage and in some cases child and forced marriage and bride prices.⁷⁴ *The CARE Rapid Gender Analysis* links bride payment to an ‘obligation’ of the wife to her husband and his family, requiring her to follow her husband’s commands.⁷⁵

Stereotypes and perceptions of female UXO field personnel

A particular area of investigation in this study was to probe attitudes towards the employment of women in the UXO sector and understand the challenges they face in their work and conditions in the field. As is evident in interviews with UXO personnel and authorities, significant stereotypes persist around how working in UXO clearance is ‘heavy work’ and not suited for women. Several interviewees mentioned that it can be dangerous to women’s health. *The GMAP Gender-sensitive Recruitment and Training in Mine Action – Guidelines state:*

....a female deminer is as physically capable as a male deminer due to the fact that all deminers must be physically fit and undergo annual health checks... If an applicant fails the health check, then he/she does not get the job, regardless of gender.⁷⁶

According to a GMAP survey, 8.8 percent of women encountered physical difficulties performing demining, compared to 9.9 percent of men. Additionally, 9.9 percent of male UXO clearance officers stated that they faced psychological difficulties compared to 2.9 percent of women.⁷⁷ Female deminers described the main challenge in their work as resistance from families, communities and male colleagues (76 percent), while this was felt by 57 percent of men.⁷⁸

Another stereotype and perception challenged through this field research is that women and all female teams are less productive in UXO clearance tasks than men and do not reach daily quotas. These notions were disputed by women clearance officers and have been challenged by international research. In 2022, a study of human resources data from four UXO clearance providers across four continents aimed to assess “stereotypes and unproven assumptions that may still exist in the mine action sector regarding women’s performance and availability to work in certain field-based roles.”⁷⁹ Analysis of the quantitative data found “no meaningful difference in operational productivity or availability to work in field-based roles in mine action based on gender.”⁸⁰

An issue that leads to the perception of female UXO clearance officers not meeting targets is maternity leave. The report cited above found no difference in the availability of male and female staff in clearance work based on data from sick leave and maternity leave (which was noted as minimal overall). However, given the young age of the female clearance officers interviewed in Unit 58 and UXO Lao, this cannot be confirmed. The UXO Lao all female team stated that at least one or two members were on maternity leave each year. Yet the full annual quota was met. As discussed in the section on legal rights and status, this may have been in part because women work up to nine-months pregnant in violation of the Labour Code. Maternity leave and the rights

of pregnant women should not be perceived as a burden for the sector. All organizations are required to fulfil the rights guaranteed in the Labor Code, with the real issue being a lack of financial provision and availability of short-term employees (especially women) to backfill staff for maternity leave as well as unforeseen sick leave that may be needed by men. GMAP has cited Lao PDR as providing a good practice in this area, referring to a MAG initiative that trained guards as technicians to backfill staff on maternity leave.⁸¹ The GMAP guidelines also encourage transfers for pregnant and post-partum women as this provides training and experiences that build their overall skillset.

A final and critical issue related to knowledge, beliefs and perceptions of women doing field work in the UXO sector is related to local villagers and shared accommodation. These issues have already been discussed and addressed in this report, with Recommendation 20 proposing a study and whole-of-sector dialogue on them. Social norms and perceptions still stress that married women should not travel from their families or reside with women when they are married, and consider the work unsuitable for them. Traditional gender roles of men and women also play out when men and women share accommodation. Although rosters were cited for the sharing of household tasks, several male UXO personnel described how women would prepare the food and even take it to the field to cook at lunch time. It is recommended that heads of teams be more accountable for the equitable sharing of household tasks in common accommodation, as well as in challenging the male practice of drinking alcohol, which is against regulations but again also an accepted social norm.

Disability

A global literature review in 2014, *Masculinity: The Unseen Barrier in Survivor Assistance*, identified a focus on women and girls in victim assistance while neglecting the different psychological impacts men and boys face from UXO injuries. Men with disabilities may feel increased powerlessness, sadness, anger and inadequacy⁸² as they cannot fulfil their role as the family income earner, which in some cases has led to domestic violence. The paper calls for

further research on male survivors’ participation in victim assistance programmes.

A household interview with a male survivor of a UXO accident who suffers ongoing pain from shrapnel in his body, which affects his ability to farm, stated that he gets very depressed and angry. His wife commented that when he is angry, he can be an “ugly person.”

The consultants asked people in villages if they felt that discrimination against people with disabilities was different for men and women. Respondents did not perceive a difference, which aligns with the 2018 USAID study on gender and disability in Lao PDR⁸³. It also noted that men with disabilities were less likely to marry a woman with a disability. A male respondent in Xiengkhouang stated:

...society sees disabled women in a negative way, disgusting and non-desirable. Men don’t want to marry them because they are afraid of being made fun of by their friends that they can only get a disabled woman. ... Parents do not want to waste their time and money taking a daughter with a disability to get a prosthetic leg because no one want to marry them.⁸⁴

Another interviewee stated that for women and girls:

...they are faced with more difficulties and they have no role to play in the family and in the community... people believe that disability is something bad and for instance if one family has children with a disability then it is believed that the family has bad luck and then the community will complain and they will discriminate against them.⁸⁵

The USAID research indicates significant gender and disability discrimination against women and girls with disabilities, based on cultural norms and stereotypes. Understanding this is particularly relevant for addressing the needs of women and girls in victim assistance. As was noted in the victim assistance meetings in Vientiane and Xiengkhouang, most services were focused on male victims, with the exception of the LDWDC. Social and cultural norms need to be taken into account to ensure that women and girls

access the support they need and male survivors gain access to psychosocial counselling. Whole-of-family support is optimal, especially when it involves assistance for the major caregiver as well as the survivor. Although COPE provides psychosocial counselling in Xiengkhouang, none of the male victims interviewed for this study had heard of this. Recommendations from the MAG 2008 and GMAP 2014 remain relevant:

- Victim assistance providers need to both understand and address issues of **self-esteem and confidence and not only focus on the physical injuries (for example men generally suffer more loss of self-esteem than women)** (MAG 2008: 4.2.2).
- Analyse the Survivor Tracking System to get **VA needs by gender and age – use findings to design/tailor services accordingly** with partners (ministries of education, health and labour and social welfare) and develop qualitative/quantitative monitoring tools of impact of assistance on survivors (by sex and age) (GMAP 2014).

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7

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section summarizes the recommendations in this report, combining some that address common issues. They have been listed thematically to align with the Gender and Diversity Action Plan and the associated results framework.

1. Gender and diversity policy and coordination mechanisms

1.A The NRA, Unit 58 and UXO Lao Gender and Diversity Policy/Action Plan

The GMAP recommendation that the NRA draft and endorse a stand-alone policy or Action Plan on gender and diversity is seen in this report as being an adaptation of the Gender and Diversity Action Plan, identifying the activities where the NRA, Unit 58, UXO Lao and LWU are responsible for implementation. Additionally, UNMAS guidance documents should be used as practical guidance to mainstream gender and diversity in the UXO sector with any required adjustments to the specific context of Lao PDR.

1.B Gender and Diversity UXO Focal Group

The development of a Gender and Diversity UXO Focal Group follows the recommendation from the UN Women/LWU assessment. The membership could include the wider UXO sector of victim assistance and EORE providers and all donors active in the sector. Agenda items could include:

- A whole-of-sector study on issues related to the employment of female personnel, including but not limited to issues of pregnancy and maternity leave, harassment and safety, shared accommodation and community perceptions.
- Good practices in addressing high-level challenges across the sector, including tailored EORE programming for at-risk groups, with regular monitoring and evaluation of progress reviewed in a timely manner.
- Consideration of a soccer festival targeting boys and young men aligned with the UNDP programme Output Indicator 1.3, on the availability of a platform for discussing innovative ideas.
- The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare should be invited to make a presentation on

the alignment of victim assistance with the Lao Decree on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

2. Capacity-building

2.A The Gender Mainstreaming Training Manual in the UXO Sector in Laos should be reviewed and updated where necessary and rolled out for NRA, Unit 58 and UXO Lao staff, focusing first on the gender and diversity UXO focal points and then wider staff and provincial, district and village level personnel working on UXO issues.

2.B Draw from the extensive guidance tools already developed by GICHD/GMAP to address gender and diversity issues in priority-setting, recruitment and training, quality management, contracts, grant management and victim assistance.

3. UXO sector policy and programming

3.A In line with the Fourth NPAGE, all data should be segregated by sex, age, disability, ethnicity, place of residence and socioeconomic status, especially in reference to the UXO sector.

3.B All clearance processes should include community consultation. These consultations and EORE sessions should involve representatives of all parts of the community (women, men, boys, girls, the elderly, youth, ethnic groups, people with disabilities, those who are illiterate and people in remote areas, especially with high levels of UXO contamination). Announcements of sessions must be made in the languages of ethnic groups in the area, with additional mechanisms to inform at-risk or marginalized people. Sessions must consistently be held at times that ensure the maximum attendance of all sections of the community, with consideration given to holding separate meetings for women/men, youth/the elderly, scrap metal collectors, ethnic groups or others in order to increase the likelihood of attendance and participation.

3.C Consistently include knowledge for all villagers on processes to request UXO clearance and available victim assistance services, and ensure everyone has access to EORE. This is especially true of those who are more vulnerable such as the poor, those with lower

levels of education and literacy, ethnic groups, women, people with disabilities and residents of remote areas. Consider mobile teams to provide information on EORE, available victim assistance and UXO clearance process information.

3.D UNDP's support for the EORE review could integrate the findings of this study for the knowledge, attitudes and practices survey, strategic plan, standard operating procedures, baseline and endline data and support for practices, specifically noting the issues of language and literacy. Activities should take place in locations where at-risk populations are likely to attend, at times convenient to them, and could include incentives to attend (see the 2008 Gender Action Plan in Annex 3).

3.E Include the participatory UXO mapping activity in EORE sessions in groups of males and females of various ages with group discussion on the differences between men's and women's knowledge and the importance of getting both perspectives.

3.F Victim assistance data should be disaggregated consistently and aligned across the sector.

4. Human resource policies and processes

4.A Conduct a review of personnel policies at the NRA, Unit 58 and UXO Lao, and develop a practical guideline to increase the employment of women. This should be aligned with the Fourth NPAGE outcome of women comprising 25 to 30 percent of management positions.

4.B UNDP programme targets for women should be modified from increasing all female clearance teams to increasing the number of women in mixed teams to 30 to 35 percent by 2025, ensuring a mixed team never travels with one woman. An employment quota should be adopted comprising a minimum of 10 percent of positions for ethnic groups and 5 percent for people with disabilities.⁸⁷ Require personnel departments to collect this data where possible, while respecting the choice and consent of staff members to disclose this information.

4.C Develop a code of conduct or equivalent document to ensure a whole-of-population,

rights-compatible complaints mechanism. It should be safe, confidential, transparent and accessible to ethnic groups people who are illiterate. Sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse policies should be annexed to employment contracts.

4.D Enforce the no alcohol policy when personnel are working the following day as a safety protocol and for greater effectiveness and efficiency in the work. Local villagers should be informed by village authorities of this policy to ensure alcohol is not offered as a form of appreciation for the work of mine action teams as personnel may otherwise feel caught in an uncomfortable social situation.

8

GENDER AND DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2023-2026

The Gender and Diversity Action Plan 2023-2026 is designed to meet the strategic priority of the Government and the UNDP UXO programme, which is:

By 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, will benefit from more inclusive, resilient, transformative and sustainable socioeconomic and demographic opportunities to reduce poverty and inequalities.

The plan is based on solid evidence from:

- Integration of the analysis and recommendations of a substantial number of gender and UXO assessments conducted in Lao PDR since 2008
- Identification and analysis of the core gender and diversity elements of international UN standards and consequent commitment of the Government of Lao PDR
- An extensive literature review of international research into gender and diversity issues in the UXO sector and guidelines provided by GICHD/GMAP
- An identification of core government policies and regulations addressing essential gender and diversity issues and the rights of women, people with disabilities and ethnic groups, especially those living in poverty
- Key informant interviews with major stakeholders in the UXO sector
- Field-based key informant interviews, focus group discussions, participatory activities with local groups of diverse women and men, and household interviews

The previous gender and UXO assessments in Lao PDR represent a significant investment of time and resources. Analysis of these documents indicates that only 5 of over 100 recommendations made in them have been implemented. Senior leadership at the NRA, Unit 58 and UXO Lao; capacity-building for staff; and budget commitments are required to ensure that study findings and recommendations are used. Accordingly, a Monitoring and Evaluation Results Framework accompanies this Gender and Diversity Action Plan and is presented in the final section of this report.

The Gender and Diversity Action Plan provides specific strategies and activities to feed into

the Government and UNDP UXO programme, Supporting Effectiveness and Efficiency in the UXO Sector to Contribute to the Achievement of SDG 18 and SPF III. Some activities within the plan go beyond the roles of the NRA, Unit 58, UXO Lao, the LWU and UNDP as they entail a whole-of-sector approach.

A shared understanding and discussion of these issues is important alongside shared responsibility and accountability.

The plan and results framework are aligned to the thematic areas of the summarized key recommendations in the previous section and refer to these recommendations where relevant.

8.1 Gender and diversity UXO policy and coordination mechanisms

Implementation mechanism

Internal Gender and Diversity Focal Points

The implementation of recommendations in the Gender and Diversity Action Plan that relate directly to the Government and UNDP UXO programme will require allocated staff time with an associated accountability mechanism and support for capacity development. The assignment of an Internal Gender and Diversity UXO Focal Points is proposed as a mechanism for coordination with gender and diversity UXO focal group in parties responsible for project delivery. This should include at a minimum the NRA, Unit 58, UXO Lao, LWU, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and UNDP. It is suggested to include national staff: senior female and male technical focal points for the core team where possible (one main point of contact and one secondary contact to address attrition and institutional memory, preferably a national senior female and middle-management male). The members need to be able to feed in and back from all working areas of the UXO sector, including non-technical survey, technical survey, clearance, information management, human resources, policy, EORE and victim assistance. Internal gender and diversity UXO focal points should be established in the NRA/Unit 58 and UXO Lao to share agendas prior to meetings and for debriefings afterwards.

Government members of the field mission team should be included in internal gender and diversity UXO focal groups as they have active knowledge of gender and diversity issues in the UXO sector at the local level. It is recommended that Ms. Saisamone, as a female Level 3+ EOD Officer, be included from UXO Lao, and that there should be a minimum of one woman from the LWU. In line with GMAP best practice principles, gender focal points require clear terms of reference and a commitment to dedicate 10 percent of staff time to the task. This group should meet every quarter, at least for the first year of the Gender and Diversity Action Plan.

Development of a gender and diversity strategy for the NRA, Unit 58, LWU and Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare

The development of a stand-alone gender and diversity strategy for the NRA, Unit 58 and UXO Lao is an important initiative. This was a recommendation of the 2014 GMAP assessment⁸⁸ and the 2018 UN Women/LWU assessment as below:

Based on national standards and the forthcoming gender equality law, and with the assistance of **LWU, NRA/UXO Lao to develop a gender policy and gender mainstreaming strategy specific to the operational work of their organization.** This would be aimed at having a positive gender equality impact on the beneficiaries of UXO operations. A draft could be prepared, and a workshop held to finalise the text. The final product could be shared with other UXO operators as a good practice – Section 6.1.1. of the Annex 6. Field Tools

Once the internal gender and diversity UXO focal points are assigned and a managing agent (the gender and diversity UXO focal group) is established, and following the recommendations above, a gender and diversity strategy should be developed for the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, NRA, Unit 58, UXO Lao and LWU. The Gender and Diversity Action Plan can represent this strategy as it provides a set of activities with indicators and responsible stakeholders. Aligned to the plan, tools for implementation should include:

- ➔ Reference to international standards, including the United Nations Mine Action Strategy 2019–2023 Cross-Cutting Strategic Outcome 2, on mine action programmes addressing the specific needs of women, girls, men and boys from diverse groups, while facilitating their empowerment and inclusion (see Section 2.1 of this report for a full list of contributing outcome areas and outputs)
- ➔ Reference to the use of existing gender and diversity guidelines developed by UNMAS and GICHD/GMAP
- ➔ Identification of further gaps in the sector to address issues of disability, poverty and ethnic groups in Lao PDR as recommended in this report

Gender and Diversity UXO Working Group

The notion of creating a working group or forum to address gender issues in the UXO sector is not new. It was a recommendation from both the 2008 MAG and 2018 UN Women/LWU assessments:

- Continuing to engage donors and operators in an on-going dialogue to ensure that gender is integrated into UXO action (MAG 2008).
- Establish a gender network among UXO operators to support the above recommendation, for sharing on good practices and implementing the gender mainstreaming strategy across the UXO sector. One option could be that another technical working group (TWG) on gender coordinated by NRA be created and one of its roles could be to support gender mainstreaming in the other TWGs on land clearance, risk education and victim assistance (UN Women/LWU 2018: 6.5.1).

Building from these recommendations, a Gender and Diversity UXO Technical Working Group could be created to engage all donors active in the sector as well as wider government and international and national NGO providers, including those active on EORE and victim assistance. This will encourage a whole-of-sector approach on gender and diversity issues as many issues and recommendations discussed in this report apply across the sector.

instruments to conduct gender analyses and incorporating the results in their work

- 95 percent of respondents stated it could be useful to establish a gender working group

These findings align with those of the field mission for this study, which identified a clear lack of knowledge and understanding of gender and diversity issues in the UXO sector from the national to the village level. Only one person interviewed during the field mission attended training based on the UN Women/LWU training manual on gender and UXO. The manual should be updated with the findings of this study and broadly rolled out to staff in UNDP implementing partners and provincial and village authorities. Addressing the needs of district and provincial staff was identified in the MAG 2008 assessment:

Build the capacity of District/Provincial staff to monitor activities—collect, analyze, and use data which is disaggregated by sex and age (4.2.2).

An additional suite of capacity-building activities is proposed for different stakeholders, including two gender and diversity trainings being run by GICHD in the third and fourth quarter of 2023. Table 9 highlights suggested capacity-building activities.

The implementation of activities in the action plan is beyond the capacity of the NRA, Unit 58, UXO Lao, LWU, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and UNDP alone. As such, it is suggested that the recommendations of this report be presented to the Gender and Diversity UXO Technical Working Group to identify where activities can be collectively executed or led by other stakeholders, and to prioritize activities of immediate relevance and concern.

As UNDP co-chairs the UXO Sector Working Group, together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy of the United States of America, a suggested first step would be to present the report and Gender and Diversity Action Plan to this group for discussion. Once the Gender and Diversity UXO Technical Working Group is endorsed, terms of reference will need to be developed. It is recommended that the NRA chair the group with UNDP and LWU support. It should meet quarterly, with minutes providing an update on the delivery of action plan activities. The final meeting of the year could be extended to act as an annual meeting. Minutes should provide an annual report with an updated action plan and a clear outline of activities, accountable personnel, budgets and timing for the following year.

The gender and diversity UXO focal group meetings should be held every two months to develop the agendas for the Gender and Diversity UXO Technical Working Group and to monitor implementation of the action plan.

8.2 Capacity-building

The 2014 GMAP assessment examined gender issues at the NRA, UXO Lao, UNDP, MAG and HALO Trust. The process involved male and female staff from various areas, such as operations, administration, victim assistance and mine risk education; more than half of respondents had worked within their organization for more than three years. Findings included:

- 76.9 percent said that their organization does not offer enough or any opportunities to strengthen gender knowledge
- 77 percent said that they do not have enough tools and guidance to mainstream gender
- 92 percent thought there is no or not enough information on and practice in using

Table 9: Capacity-building activities for UNDP implementing partners and stakeholders

Target group	Activity
Senior management	GICHHD ran a leadership course for middle to senior managers in late 2023. Moving forward, one middle and one high-level manager could attend the course (preferably one male and one female English-speaking Lao national staff member) and report back to the Gender and Diversity UXO Technical Working Group. (Note: the course is online and in English. It is directed at middle to high-level managers with restricted attendance.)
UXO programme staff	Update and roll out the UN Women/LWU gender and UXO training to a wide cohort of staff at the NRA, Unit 58 and UXO Lao. A free online training course, Introduction to Gender and Diversity Issues in Mine Action, is available from the GICHHD website in English. The aim of this three-part course is for learners to identify where and why gender and diversity matter in mine action. ⁸⁹ See: https://training.gichd.org/ . Ensure that key male and female gender and diversity focal points (and where possible, prioritize those with disabilities and from ethnic groups) attend the GICHHD ARMAC training for gender and diversity focal points in the third quarter of 2023 and share their learnings with the Gender and Diversity UXO Technical Working Group. (Note: This is an English language course with a restricted number of participants.)
National to village-level authorities engaged in UXO processes	Development of succinct and simple briefing sheets for national to village-level authorities on core gender and diversity issues in UXO.
Female UXO field staff	A mentoring programme for female staff is suggested to build the capacities of women working in the NRA, Unit 58 and UXO Lao. Mentees should include newly recruited women to increase the gender balance in field teams. Additionally, current female staff could be mentored by senior female or male staff (where women are not in senior positions) to foster an increase in the number of women in management positions.

8.3 UXO sector policy and programming

The first step to ensure UXO programming is responsive to gender and diversity issues is to understand how diverse groups of people are affected differently and have valuable specific knowledge of UXO in their communities. Programming must ensure that all people are included in all consultation mechanisms to access their knowledge and provide them with information on all stages of UXO clearance as well as victim assistance services. This requires consistent disaggregated data and analysis to tailor the most effective programming. Data collection has been a theme throughout this report, an issue regularly raised by previous gender and UXO assessments, as identified below:

- In Lao PDR, all operators should collect relevant data in a sex and age disaggregated way and submit to NRA through IMSMA in a timely fashion. Then the data should be analysed from a gender

and diversity perspective and reports should be produced that can inform programming (GMAP 2014).

- Use NRA sex disaggregated data collected in UXO operations to analyse the relevant gender issues and integrate in the design of projects and activities; Include gender indicators and targets in implementation plans and strategies of the UXO sector operators in relation to non-technical survey beneficiaries, land clearance priorities and victim assistance; and 6.3.2 Monitor and use the information collected on gender indicators in annual reporting and evaluation exercises (UN Women/LWU 2018: 6.3.1, 6.3.2 and 6.3.2).

The Gender and Diversity Action Plan calls for data collection across the sector through the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA), including, but not limited to, participants registered for all community consultations, EORE activities and the survivor tracking system.

Community consultations are an international standard requirement for UXO programming. Findings from this study indicate that notices for community consultations are targeted at household heads. Combined with traditional social norms and gender roles, this limits women's attendance, with the field work indicating that men do not necessarily share this information with their wives and families.

In addition, loudspeaker announcements are not consistently available in local languages and do not reach those in remote locations that are often in high-risk areas. The MAG 2008 gender and UXO assessment called for UXO operators to visit villages to physically inform households of an upcoming meeting. To ensure people in remote locations (especially the poor and people from diverse ethnic groups) can access information, mobile services could inform them about UXO and clearance processes, EORE and victim assistance services. These could be rolled out with assistance from UXO operators (including Unit 58, UXO Lao and international NGOs) who make household visits.

EORE needs to adopt specific tailored strategies and materials, in various languages and mediums accessible to people who are illiterate. It should encompass information on processes to request

UXO clearance and on NRA and local victim assistance services, including the hotline with expanded access to language translation.

Community consultations and EORE sessions need to consider appropriate times and places to ensure the comprehensive representation of all members of the community. International research has found that providing information separately for women and men, youth/the elderly, ethnic groups and others may increase the likelihood of attendance and participation. The field work also found that people were more likely to attend sessions offering an incentive such as notebooks and pens or T-shirts. This tailored and incentive-based approach is the basis for the concept of a boys' soccer festival to address one of the hardest-to-reach and highest risk population groups.

There is a need for consistent disaggregated victim assistance data across the system with increased awareness of and access to psychosocial counselling for men and family members more broadly.

Three significant activities are occurring in the UXO sector and should be addressed while the Gender and Diversity Action Plan is established. The three include the revision of national standards, the UNDP-funded EORE guidelines review and the NRA review of UXO clearance prioritization criteria:

- ➔ Revision of national standards: The revision includes a suite of gender and diversity issues addressed in the IMAS (see Annex 5). This can be supplemented by guidance from the UNMAS Strategy 2019-2023 and its cross-cutting Strategic Outcome 2 and the recommendations of this report.
- ➔ UNDP-funded EORE guidelines review: The EORE review should integrate findings and recommendations of this report (summary recommendations 3A to 3E) and the actions outlined in the 2008 Gender Action Plan for the NRA.
- ➔ NRA review of UXO clearance prioritization criteria: This activity will impact the entire sector and must integrate key gender and diversity considerations facing poor and illiterate people in rural remote areas, especially women, people with disabilities,

ethnic groups and those who do not speak the Lao language and/or are illiterate to ensure the most at-risk and marginalized people are prioritized for clearance.

8.4 Human resource policies and processes

The development of a human resources policy and guidelines on gender for the NRA and UXO Lao was recommended in the UN Women/LWU 2018 assessment, with several strategies for increasing the number of women in the sector also suggested in the MAG 2008 assessment.⁹⁰

Sections 7.1 to 7.3 of this report endorse a gender and diversity review of personnel policies and practices for the NRA, Unit 58 and UXO Lao, with specific areas to be addressed outlined in summary recommendations 4.A to 4.D. These include but are not limited to developing a strategy for setting targets to have women comprise 30 to 35 percent of mixed clearance teams; to ensure a minimum of 10 percent for ethnic groups and 5 percent for people with disabilities in terms of employment in the sector; and 25 to 30 percent of women in management by 2025 in line with the Fourth NPAGE.

This section also addresses strategies to ensure safe workplace conditions for pregnant and post-partum women as well as female UXO personnel in the field, including travel and accommodation, stereotypes and perceptions by local communities. As all UXO operators face these issues, a whole-of-sector approach should be developed to address them. Further research is necessary to identify strategic, feasible and effective strategies informed by women's lived experience. GICHD plans to release a report on gender-disaggregated data in the UXO sector based on a recent study conducted in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand. It entailed a survey and focus group discussions in Lao PDR with almost 300 operations staff from MAG and UXO Lao, with field work conducted in several provinces.

Section 3.1 of the Results Framework (NRA/Unit 58/UXO Lao policy and procedures) addresses issues of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse with a safe, confidential, transparent and accessible complaint mechanism through a code of conduct or equivalent document.

Gender and Diversity Action Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Results Framework

The Monitoring and Evaluation Results Framework can guide implementation of the Gender and Diversity Action Plan, converting the narrative into clear outputs with targets and/or indicators, data sources for verification, suggested timeframes, accountable stakeholders to lead activities, suggested review points and associated budget estimates.

The framework aligns to the four outputs, indicators and data sources in the Government and UNDP UXO programme. These are highlighted in blue. It also aligns to the outputs for the UNMAS Strategy 2019-2023 and cross-cutting Strategic Outcome 2, on mine action programmes addressing the specific needs of women, girls, men and boys from diverse groups, while facilitating their empowerment and inclusion.

The majority of activities are scheduled over two years of implementation, after which many are expected to be ongoing, with lessons learned from their implementation. With consideration of the need to build staff capacity, broaden access to finance and deepen buy-in from wider sector stakeholders, a review of the Gender and Diversity Action Plan is recommended at the two-year mark, with the workplan revised for the following two years.

In Table 10, additional alignment is referenced against the previous GMAP Gender Action Plan developed for the NRA in 2014. The final column indicates alignment with the current Gender and Diversity Action Plan.

Table 10: The Gender Action Plan for the NRA developed by the GMAP in 2014

Objectives	Tasks	Indicators	Responsibility	Reference in proposed Gender and Diversity Results Framework
More gender and diversity balance among staff in the UXO sector, including at the decision-making level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender and diversity analysis at the provincial level Use the LWU and LYU network (representatives in villages) to access women and youth at the local level 	Operator reports Data in IMSMA	RA, operators	Addressed in Section 4. Use of Local Women Union (LWU) and Local Youth Union (LYU) useful inclusion
Women, girls, men and boys in affected communities are informed about released land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve women, girls, men and boys in handover ceremonies 	Not listed	Clearance Unit, NRA	Addressed in Section 3.1
Victim assistance is gender sensitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present victim data by sex and age in reports Analyse Survivor Tracking System (STS) to get victim assistance needs by gender and age, and use findings to design/tailor services with partners (ministries of education, health and labour and social welfare) Develop qualitative/quantitative monitoring tools to measure impacts on survivors 	Not listed	Victim Assistance Unit, NRA	Addressed in victim assistance section 4.5
Quality management/monitoring and evaluation of the whole UXO programme is gender sensitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline and expectations Gender-sensitive Post Clearance Impact Assessment (PCIA) survey process 	Not listed	Not listed	Addressed in Section 3.2
Gender is mainstreamed in MOUs with operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss with operators and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Develop guidelines Ask for a code of conduct 	MOUs are gender sensitive	Research unit, NRA	Addressed in Section 3.1
UXO sector annual report presents sex- and age-disaggregated data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sex- and age-disaggregated data for mine risk education and victim assistance, staff composition 	Annual report available	Programme Unit	Addressed in Sections 3.3 and 3.4

Monitoring and Evaluation Results Framework for the GAD Action Plan

#	Output	Target or Indicator	Data	Timing	Accountability	Review	Budget
1. GAD UXO policy and coordination mechanisms							
1.1	Identification of GAD UXO Programme Advisor to implement the GAD Action Plan in first year	GAD UXO Programme Advisor appointed to work with implementing agencies (NRA, UXO Lao, Unit 58) and LWU to guide, advise and facilitate the implementation of GAD action plan	Contract executed	Year 1: Q3	UNDP UXO unit	3-month probation report Annual performance appraisal	\$8,000 plus office space
1.2	Establishment of Internal GAD Working Group with NRA, Unit 58, LWU, MoLSW and UNDP	UNDP, NRA, Unit 58 and UXO Lao & LWU GAD Focal Points identified. TOR of GAD focal points address key aspects of role, function and responsibilities for implementing GAD action plan, with acknowledgement that 10% of their total time spent is on this role	Internal GAD Working Group minutes Staff TORs and appraisals	Year 1: Q2	NRA	Annually	Staff time
1.3	Development of a GAD UXO Action Plan for NRA, Unit 58 and UXO Lao	A GAD Action Plan is developed addressing key recommendations from previous gender and UXO assessment recommendations and alignment with international UN and GICHD/GMAP GAD standards.	Endorsed Plan	Year 1: Q2-3	UXO Sector Working Group members MoLSW and UNDP to chair Lead: NRA	Biannual tracking Annual reporting	Staff Time
1.4	GAD TWG strengthens interest in, and implementation of GAD issues in a whole of sector approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TOR developed Quarterly meetings held Presentation given by GICHD on employment case study of MAG and UXO Lao 	GAD TWG TOR and minutes	Year 1: Q3, Q4	NRA, Unit 58, UXO Lao, MoLSW, LWU and UNDP	Quarterly tracking Quarterly meeting minutes	Staff time USD 2,100 for 2023, \$4,200 each additional year

9 MONITORING AND EVALUATION RESULTS FRAMEWORK FOR THE GAD ACTION PLAN

2. Capacity building							
#	Output	Target or Indicator	Data	Timing	Accountability	Review	Budget
	This capacity building section is aligned to and can feed into UNDP Programme Output 3: Improved capacity of the NRA in strategic direction for the sector, supervision (oversight, monitoring, QA), data use and resource-mobilization (RM) including discourse on alternative financing modalities	3.1 Frequency of QA missions by the NRA to UXO operators per year 3.2 Percentage of total Provincial Regulatory authorities (PRAs) engaged in provincial planning process 3.3 Availability of the NRA RM strategy 3.4 Alternative financing discussion paper on UXO sector is distributed	3.1 NRA QA mission report/ QA mission 3.2 NRA Annual Progress Review report/ Document review 3.3 NRA RM strategy/ Document review 3.4 MEL documents/ discussion paper				
			Suggested integration of GAD issues: 3.1 QA missions include a set of questions to address GAD issues with NRA management making it mandatory to have all monitoring visit reports (including VA and EORE) to address how EORE and VA organisations are addressing GAD issues at the field and collect either best practices or lessons learned. QA missions distribute the 2-page Gender and UXOs briefing sheet 3.2 NRA annual progress report and results framework for SPF III include a section addressing implementation of GAD Action Plan 3.3 RM strategy includes a budget for the implementation of GAD Action Plan activities 3.4 Alternative financing discussion paper includes GAD budget line				
2.1	Increased GAD capacity built by key UNDP programme implementing agencies and associated stakeholders	Training manual updated with recommendations from this study # trainers (disaggregated by sex, ethnicity and disability) who have completed the training of trainers	Revised manual Training course reports Baseline and follow-up surveys indicating capacity levels	Year 2: Q1 Ongoing	LWU and NRA	Biannual tracking Annual reporting	\$10,000 estimate
		# subsequent training sessions conducted # NRA, Unit 58 and UXO Lao staff trained # provincial, district and village leaders trained (all lists disaggregated by sex, ethnicity and disability) % of participants that demonstrate increased knowledge from training programme					

2.2	Strengthened capacity of NRA/Unit 58/ UXO Lao GAD UXO Focal Points	# attendees who completed the course from NRA/Unit 58/UXO Lao % of participants that demonstrate increased knowledge from training programme	Training course assessment reports Presentation from GAD Focal Point Training course participants to the GAD TWG Baseline and follow-up surveys indicating capacity levels	Year 1: Q3	NRA/Unit 58/UXO Lao	Annual Report	
2.3	NRA/Unit 58/ UXO Lao staff attend the Inclusive Leadership Course directed at middle to high level managers in Q4 2023.	NRA/Unit 58/UXO Lao staff attend the Inclusive Leadership Course directed at middle to high level managers in Q4 2023.	Presentation from training course participant/s to the GAD TWG	Year 1: Q4	NRA/Unit 58/UXO Lao	Annual Report	Staff time
2.4	Increased capacity built in NRA/ Unit 58/UXO Lao/UNDP UXO Unit through online learning modules	60% of NRA/Unit 58/ UXO Lao/UNDP UXO Unit English speaking staff complete the Introduction to GAD issues in Mine Action online course by the end of the project	Update on staff completing training recorded in Internal GAD Working Group minutes	Ongoing	NRA/ Unit 58/ UXO Lao, MoLSW and UNDP	Quarterly	Staff time
2.5	Increased understanding of basic GAD issues in UXO sector through provision of briefing sheets	# 5-page briefing sheets outlining core GAD issues in the UXO distributed to national and provincial staff working in the UXO sector # 2-page briefing sheets distributed to national and provincial staff Increase in knowledge of key GAD issues on briefing sheet	Field mission reports Pre and post quiz scores given online at TWGs / staff meetings where briefing sheets are distributed, and/or data gathered from QA reports	Year 2: Q1	UNDP and NRA	Annual Report	Dependent on who authors the briefing sheets, production could be in-house from UNDP?

3. UXO sector policy and programming

3.1 NRA/Unit 58/ UXO Lao policy and procedures

This aligns with UNMAS Strategy 2019–2023 Cross-cutting Strategic Outcome 2
 Output 1.4: Ensuring that institutional risk mitigation capacities cater to the specific needs of women, girls, men and boys, while specifically recognizing the role and capacity of women as agents of change in households and within affected communities
 Output 3.2 Advocating for a gender and socially inclusive approach in the development of national policies, legal frameworks and plans for mine action

#	Output	Target or Indicator	Data	Timing	Accountability	Review	Budget
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	This aligns with UNDP Programme Output 4: A stronger legislative environment supporting CCM compliance and hastening land release and other UXO services for communities	.1 Number of laws and/or policy documents (SPF III, prioritization plan, PM Decree) developed, revised and/or advocated by the NRA	Laws and policy documents; NRA Annual Progress report Document review			Suggested integration of GAD issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GAD issues to be integrated consistently as a cross cutting issue across all laws and policy documents. NRA Annual progress report and results framework for SPF III includes a section on the implementation of the GAD Action Plan 	
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3.1.1	GAD issues are integrated into the National Standards aligned to IMAS and UNMAS Strategy 2019–2023	# of GAD recommendations present in revised standards aligned to gad issues in IMAS (see annex 5)	Revised National Standards	Year 1: Q2	NRA and UNDP to develop GAD submission	When Standards released and documented in annual report	Staff time
3.1.2	International standards on GAD in the UXO sector are upheld and facilitated through the active implementation of a Code of Conduct and transparent confidential complaints mechanism	Code of conduct or equivalent document created which addresses relevant unmas standards on sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse with a safe, confidential, transparent, and accessible complaint mechanism Complaint mechanism is established with clear plan for management Staff understand the code of conduct and find the complaint mechanism to be “safe, confidential, transparent, and accessible”	Code of Conduct annexed to employment contracts Surveys after 6 months of complaint mechanism launch to see if staff understand the CoC and complaint mechanism, find it to be “safe, confidential, transparent, accessible.”	Year 2: Q1	HR units NRA, Unit 58 and UXO Lao	Annual Report	Minimal cost due to proformas available

3.2 Clearance process – from village request process, non-technical survey, technical survey, clearance, handover
 This aligns with the UNMAS Strategy 2019–2023 Cross-cutting Strategic Outcome 2
 Output 1.1: Ensuring gender and age sensitive approaches to the surveying, prioritization and procedures for handover of cleared land

#	Output	Target or Indicator	Data	Timing	Accountability	Review	Budget
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	This section aligns with the UNDP Programme Output 1 Prioritized survey and clearance enable more high-priority land to be released from UXO/mines	Indicator 1.1: A national prioritization plan is fully integrated into NS Indicator 1.2: Area of land (h) a) surveyed and b) released (by UNDP funded teams) Indicator 1.3: Availability of a platform for discussing innovative ideas		1.1 Plan and NS Document review 1.2 IMSMA Survey 1.3 Project MEL documents Process monitoring		Suggested integration of GAD issues: 1.1 See 3.2.1 below 1.2 Ensure comprehensive and systemic collection of disaggregated data in line the NPAGE 2021-2025 (see 3.2.2 below) 1.3 Inclusion of GAD in initiatives such as EORE joint sector soccer festival for boys as an innovative idea	
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3.2.1	National prioritization plan integrates key GAD considerations facing those most at risk including the poor, women, PWD, ethnic groups and their families	Presence of key GAD considerations in National Prioritization Plan (Relevant considerations for different groups, including motivation) # of consultations with relevant identity groups for their input on key GAD considerations they face	Revised prioritization plan	Year 1: Q2	UNDP and NRA	When plan released	Staff time
3.2.2	Increased disaggregated data collected and harmonised across the government system for all aspects of UXO work	# of IMSMA database categories disaggregated by sex, age, disability, ethnicity, place of residence (village) and socioeconomic status (as per NPAGE 2021-2025)	IMSMA surveys and database	Ongoing	NRA with other government agencies	UXO Sector Annual reports	Not known

3.2.3	Community consultations are designed to ensure full representation of diverse members within villages	Planning procedure added to community consultations to obtain village demographic data and communicate with village leadership to include appropriate proportions of diverse groups in consultation group. # women, ethnic groups and PWD registered for community consultations across UXO surveying, prioritization and procedures for land clearance in line with demographic data above Evidence that notices for community consultations has been extended to ethnic languages as relevant for loudspeaker announcements. This can be documented in reports including reference to language used and strategies to reach remote areas.	Project MEL documents QA mission reports Process monitoring reports GAD TWG minutes	Ongoing	NRA, Unit 58, UXO Lao	Should be included in UXO sector annual reports	Staff time
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3.3 EORE

This aligns with UNMAS Strategy 2019–2023 Cross-cutting Strategic Outcome 2

Output 1.2: Ensuring that risk education programmes target the specific behaviours of at-risk women, girls, boys and men; and

Output 1.3: Facilitating incorporation of gender, age and other social, economic, cultural and religious considerations in risk education programmes

#	Output	Target or Indicator	Data	Timing	Accountability	Review	Budget
	This aligns with UNDP Programme Output 2: Reduced risk-taking behaviour by at-risk group(s)	Indicator 2.1: Availability of updated EORR national standards Indicator 2.2: Increase in percentage of individuals (disaggregated by age, gender, ethnicity, and geography) from target at-risk groups changing KAP			EORR standards Document review KAP survey report KAP survey	Suggested integration of GAD issues: Recommendation for the current EORE review being conducted by the UNDP programme incorporate summary recommendations 3A-3E and the activities cited in the 2008 Gender Action Plan for the UXO sector (Annex 3) see 3.3.1 below	

3.3.1	EORE standards review integrates GAD findings and recommendations for this study	# OF GAD RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENT IN REVISED EORE STANDARDS CONTENT OF GAD RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENT IN REVISED EORE STANDARDS, ESPECIALLY FOCUSED ON ETHNIC LANGUAGE AND LITERACY	EORE standards Report KAP Survey KAP survey report	Year 1: Q. 2	UNDP and NRA	When plan released and	Staff time
3.3.2	Specific tailored EORE programmes be developed for different at-risk target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EORE program designed for at-risk boys/young men out of the formal education system Boys' soccer festival held as EORE activity Further tailored programs designed for at risk groups identified by the GAD TWG # of tailored EORE sessions held per identity group 	EORE strategy for at-risk boys/young men EORE strategy for other at-risk target groups GAD TWG Minutes	Year 2. Q3-4 Year 3. Q1 Year 4	This could be a joint donor and national counterpart activity	Annual reports	\$20,000? \$10,000? TBC

3.4 Victim Assistance

This section aligns with the UNMAS Strategy 2019–2023 Cross-cutting Strategic Outcome 2

- Output 2.1: Ensuring that assistance is gender responsive, addresses specific gender and age needs and requirements, and is inclusive of all members of the affected population
- Output 2.2: Supporting participatory, consultative and age and gender disaggregated approaches to data collection, analysis and monitoring in support of multisector assistance strategies
- Output 2.3: Advocating for and supporting gender parity among health, rehabilitation and social-support workers to ensure that the specific needs of women, girls, boys and men are addressed; and
- Output 2.4: Taking into consideration the principle of 'do no harm' so that inclusive and empowering assistance does not exacerbate the exposure of risks to gender based violence

#	Output	Target or Indicator	Data	Timing	Accountability	Review	Budget
3.4.1	Victim assistance is GAD responsive drawing from consistent disaggregated data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim assistance data is disaggregated by sex, age, disability, ethnicity, place of residence (village) and socioeconomic status (as per NPAGE 2021-2025) and aligned across the sector including the Survivor Tracking System • EORE includes information on NRA and local VA services including the hotline with expanded access to language translation • Increased access for men and boys to psychosocial counselling 	Survivor Tracking System EORE programme documents Hotline records COPE psychosocial reports	Ongoing	MoLSW NRA, COPE	Annual reports	Unknown

4. Human resource policy and practices

This section aligns with UNMAS Strategy 2019–2023

Output 3.3: Advocating for gender equality and non-discrimination in employment and decision-making opportunities in mine action programming

#	Output	Target or Indicator	Data	Timing	Accountability	Review	Budget
4.1	Increasing the diversity of staff within implementing partners to reflect and serve local village populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GAD review of personnel policies and hiring practices for NRA, Unit 58 and UXO Lao • Target of 30-35% of women within mixed clearance teams by 2025 • Target of a minimum of 10% ethnic groups and 5% PWD in employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel policy review report • HR data • HR data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 2: Q1 • Ongoing • Ongoing 	NRA/Unit 58/ UXO Lao	Annual reports	Policy review currently unknown
4.2	Addressing the perceptions, challenges and practices of female UXO staff in the field is built from a strong evidence base	Research report on perceptions, challenges and practices of female UXO staff in the field	Research report	Year 3	UNDP/LWU/ NRA and other sector actors	Annual report Year 3	US\$30,000? (Suggest multi donor funding)
4.3	Increased number and seniority of women in the UXO sector is enhanced	Target: 25-30% of women in management by 2025 in line with the NPAGE 2021-2025 # women mentored on entry to employment # currently employed women mentored to more senior positions # women appointed to more senior positions per year	HR staff reports	Year 2:Q1	NRA/Unit 58/ UXO Lao	Annual Report	Only staff time if current staff are mentors



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Annex 1: List of stakeholders consulted

Field Mission stakeholders consulted in Vientiane

	Name	Sex	Age	Ethnic	Disability	Organization	Position/Responsibility
I	Meeting 01: NRA team in Vientiane at the NRA meeting room 2nd floor Date 23 January 2023						
1	Vilaphon Phathavong	M	28	Lao Luom	No	NRA	VA team
2	Mekhala Sihalat	F	33	Lao Luom	No	NRA	Technical staff
3	Chansamone Sihalat	M	33	Lao Luom	No	NRA	Technical staff
4	Bouala	F	34	Lao Luom	No	NRA	Technical staff
II	Meeting 02: Victim Assistance stakeholders in Vientiane at NRA's meeting room 2nd floor Date 24 January 2023						
1	Bouakham Tham-mavong	F	37	Lao Luom	No	NRA	Technical of check and approval information (IM unit)
2	Siathone Phum-mavong	F	52	Lao Luom	No	Centre Medical and Rehabilitation	Vice Director of CMR
3	Sichanh Sithiphon	M	50	Lao Luom	No	HI	Vice Director of HI
4	Phouvanh Phanthan-vong	F	27	Lao Luom	No	LDPA	Coordinator
5	Malaymuong Sisamouth	F	35	Lao Luom	No	LDPA	Financial staff
6	Mek Phout-daxay	F	33	Lao Luom	No	World Education	Curriculum and training development coordinator
7	Chomchai Phianam	F	33	Lao Luom	Yes Physical	Lao Disabled Women's Development Centre	Project staff
III	Meeting 03: EORE stakeholders in Vientiane at NRA's meeting room 2nd floor Date 24 January 2023						
1	Mek Phout-daxay	F	33	Lao Luom	No	World Education	Curriculum and training development coordinator
2	Vienglivay Vongkham-muntee	F	41	Lao Luom	No	Halo Trust	Admin manager
3	Xalanya Keo-chomsy	F	34	Lao Luom	No	Youth Union	Admin
4	Portia Krahaf	F		UK	No	MAG	Acting CD
IV	Meeting 04: Unit 58 - EORE and NTS team at NRA's meeting room 2nd floor Date 24 January 2023						

1		M	30	Lao Luom		Unit58	EORE and NTS technical staff
2		F	26	Lao Luom		Unit58	Technical staff
V	Meeting05: Unit58 - Clearance and TS team at NRA's meeting room 2nd floor Date 25 January 2023						
1		F	27	Lao Luom	No	Unit58	Clearance
2		M	30	Lao Luom	No	Unit58	Clearance
3		M	31	Lao Luom	No	Unit58	Clearance
4		M	43	Lao Luom	No	Unit58	TS-Team leader
5		M	43	Lao Luom	No	Unit58	AC-Team leader
VI	XKh-Victim Assistance stakeholders at Xiengkhoung Provincial Social Welfare office (2nd floor meeting room) date 30 January 2023 from 14:00-15:30 PM						
1	Lar Noukham	F	30	Lao Luom	No	PDDA	Financial staff
2	Siamphone Boutsady	M	50	Lao Luom	No	PIU-KOICA	Provincial Coordinator
VII	XKh-UXOs Laos (EORE, NTS, Clearance Men team and TS) team meeting at Provincial UXOs Lao office meeting room (09:00- 12:00) Date 1st February 2023)						
1	Monesy	F	37	Khmu	No	UXO Laos	RE staff
2	Nengchang	F	38	Hmong	No	UXO Laos	RE staff
3	Sonephet	M	49	Lao Luom	No	UXO Laos	
4	Khamla Nanthavong	M	42	Lao Luom	No	UXO Laos	Driver
5	Bounlom	M	53	Lao Luom	No	UXO Laos	Clearance
6	Somphan	M	30	Lao Luom	No	UXO Laos	Clearance
7	Pockee	F	27	Lao Luom	No	UXO Laos	Clearance
8	Sunphavanh	M	38	Lao Luom	No	UXO Laos	Clearance
9	Khamla	M	43	Lao Luom	No	UXO Laos	Clearance
10	Siphone Vongphachanh	M	35	Lao Luom	No	UXO Laos	Clearance
11	Thongkham Phimmavong	M	48	Lao Luom	No	UXO Laos	EORE team leader
12	Phonesavanh Phimmavy	M	49	Khmu	No	UXO Laos	TS team leader
13	Sisouphan Nanthansin	M	48	Lao Luom	No	UXO Laos	NTS team leader
14	Vanhdee Nanthansen	M	55	Lao Luom	No	UXO Laos	AC staff
VIII	XKh-UXOs Laos Clearance women team meeting at Kham District, Xiangkhouang Provincial UXOs Lao office meeting room (16:00- 17:30) Date 2nd February 2023)						
1	Khanthaly Phommachanh	F	43	Lao Luom	No	UXO Laos	Clearance - team leader
2	Vonekham Keophanouvong	F	30	Lao Luom	No	UXO Laos	Clearance
3	It Sisomphone	F	28	Lao Luom	No	UXO Laos	Field nurse

4	Sonesai Bounphachanh	F	23	Lao Luom	No	UXO Laos	Clearance
5	Lattavanh Sengbandith	F	24	Lao Luom	No	UXO Laos	Clearance
6	Tengon Vongxay	F	36	Lao Luom	No	UXO Laos	Team deputy
7	Saisamone	F	46	Lao Luom	No	UXO Laos	SEOD

Stakeholders consulted in Bolikhamxai and Xiangkhouang

	NAME	SEX	AGE	ETHNIC	DISABILITY	POSITION
I	Village 01: Thongsean Village, Khamkert District, Bolikhamxay Province Date 27 January 2023					
1	Mr. Luk-tanaphasuk Keatavong	M	44	Lao Luom		PRA Bolikhamxay Province
2	Mr. Houmpheng Phumsee	M	40	Lao Luom		LSW Khamkert district, Bolikhamxay
3	Mr. Bounmee	M	57	Lao Luom		LSW Bolikhamxay Province
4	Mr. Chongyiaxiong	M	39	Hmong		
5	Mr. Khamkeo Suvanhddee	M	44	Lao Luom	yes	
6	Mr. Mai Pangtouthang	M	31	Hmong		
7	Miss. Noukha	F	35	Hmong		
8	Miss. Seelor	F	40	Hmong		
9	Miss. Leevue	F	34	Hmong		
10	Mr. Bouakeo Soudthidxai	M	47	Lao Luom		
11	Miss. Lindalee	F	16	Hmong		
12	Miss. Kham	F	64	Moui		
13	Mr. Douavue	M	18	Hmong		
14	Mr. Briapaaxiong	M	60	Hmong		
15	Mr. Maivang Pangtoua	M	31	Hmong		
16	Mr. Cong	M	38	Hmong		
17	Mr. khammea	M	61	Lao Luom		
18	Mr. Xiongengvue	M	63	Hmong		
19	Mr. Maa	M	60	Lao Luom		
20	Mr. kouavue	M	35	Hmong		
21	Mr. Cheuvue	M	32	Hmong		
22	Miss. Pakouxiong	F	28	Hmong		
II	Village 02: Phonsaat Village, Khamkert District, Bolikhamxay Province Date 28 January 2023					
1	Mr. Changyeng Khaxueyang	M	46	Hmong		

2	Mr. Chantha Xanabounmee	M	56	Khmu		
3	Mr. khenkong Xaysoumboun	M	37	Khmu		LSW Khamkert district, Bolikhamxay
4	Mr. Bounmee	M	57	Lao Luom		Teacher
5	Mr. khaisuksamai	M	36	Lao Luom		
6	Mr. Xeetha Phommathud	M	58	Lao Luom		
7	Mr. Luk-tanaphasuk	M	44	Lao Luom		LSW Province
8	Mr. Xayphone Xaynyaluek	M	60	Kha		
9	Mr.Vanh	M	32	Kha		
10	Mr. Beng	M	34	Kha		
11	Mr. khouak	M	43	Kha		
12	Mr. Thid Phonmabud	M	36	Kha		
13	Mr. Nyung	M	70	Kha		
14	Mr. Khoue	M	47	Kha		
15	Mr. Sou	M	41	Kha		
16	Mr. khamkeng	M	62	Kha		
17	Mr. Kahouak	M	22	Kha		
18	Miss. Sone	F	40	Kha		
19	Miss. Lea	F	20	Kha		
20	Miss. Pheng	F	58	Kha		
21	Miss. Khenmee	F	70	Kha		
22	Miss. Soum	F	35	Kha		
23	Miss. Tik	F	31	Kha		
24	Miss. Khen	F	34	Kha		
25	Miss. Lieng	F	35	Lao		
26	Miss. Sonekeo	F	69	Kha		
27	Miss. Xang	F	75	Kha		
28	Miss. Kham-sone	F	39	Kha		
III	Village 03: Pungman Village, Phoukoud District, Xiengkhuang Province Date 31 January 2023					
1	Mr. Bouannyong	M	50	Lao Luom		
2	Mr. Seephandon Xainyakea	M	42	Lao Luom		
3	Miss. Bouapha Nunthavong	F	56	Lao Luom		
4	Mr. Sengkeo	M		Lao Luom		
5	Miss. Khamkeo	F	32	Lao Luom		
6	Mr. Thongxi Bounthavong	M	62	Lao Luom		
7	Mr. Chanvanh Soumchidtavong	M	46	Lao Luom		
8	Miss. Lea	F	37	Lao Luom		

9	Miss. Phend	F	45	Lao Luom		
10	Miss. Phoud	F	35	Lao Luom		
11	Miss. Ae	F	31	Lao Luom		
12	Miss. Vang-kham	F	29	Lao Luom		
13	Miss. Bouanma	F	36	Lao Luom		
14	Miss.Chansouk	F	40	Lao Luom		
15	Miss. Souphi	F	42	Lao Luom		
16	Mr. Vanhpheng MOUNTHA-SONE	M	54	Lao Luom		
17	Mr. Vanhsee Nanthavong	M	70	Lao Luom		
18	Mr. Soudtah Phaiyalun	M	69	Lao Luom		
19	Mr. Xiengkham Kingkhamkon	M	49	Lao Luom		
20	Miss. Saopham Tham-maleevone	F	48	Lao Luom		
21	Miss. Kham-pheng Vahnnavong	F	46	Lao Luom		
22	Miss. Chan-pheng Sinthavong	F	84	Lao Luom		
	Meeting with Director General of NRA					
	Mr. Chomyaeng Phengthongsawat	M		Lao Luom		
III	Village 04: Poua Village, Phoukoud District, Xiengkhuang Province Date 01 February 2023					
1	Miss. Khammon Dalavong	F	62	Lao Luom		
2	Mr. somphan Ouanvily	M	58	Lao Luom		
3	Miss. Noi	F	49	Lao Luom		
4	Miss. Sudsadee Seethongkham	F	19	Lao Luom	yes	
5	Miss. Dee Sonevily	F	48	Lao Luom		
6	Miss. Bouaphan	F	33	Lao Luom		
7	Miss. Thummanoi	F	49	Lao Luom	yes	
8	Miss. Somdee Phummalee	F	71	Lao Luom		
9	Miss. Chan Chanthavong	F	40	Lao Luom		
10	Miss. Damdee	F	65	Lao Luom	yes	
11	Mr. Bouahoum Somphana	M	53	Lao Luom	yes	
12	Mr. Bouakham Volaphead	M	66	Lao Luom		

13	Mr. Khamsing Oudthinya	M	57	Lao Luom		
14	Mr. Seng Phin-masone	M	41	Lao Luom		
15	Mr.Sone	M	31	Lao Luom		
16	Mr.Dam-bouankhing	M	54	Lao Luom		

Annex 2: Gender and UXO sector assessments in Lao PRD by theme

1. Policy

GMAP GENDER AND UXO ASSESSMENT 2014

NRA should consider drafting and adopting a stand-alone policy on Gender and Diversity for the UXO sector, as a document to be referred to in the National Standards and used to communicate, both internally to staff and externally to partners, stakeholders and donors, the vision, values and practices in terms of gender and diversity that the NRA strives for.

Strategy and standards recommendations:

- Clarify what the gender and aid effectiveness targets in the Annual work plan of the national strategy “Safe Path Forward II” are. The strategy should contain some background on basic gender issues relevant for the programme, such as:
 - o Relevant national legislation on gender equality
 - o Casualties, MRE and VA beneficiaries data presented by sex, age, ethnic group
 - o Reference to the need for MRE and VA to be provided in a gender and diversity sensitive way. A gender and diversity analysis of the provinces in which the UXO programme operates should be conducted, to detect and tackle any issues that may be identified. This means looking at the different roles and responsibilities that different groups have within the communities (who does what), the different mobility patterns (what areas do they move around in), the access to and use of resources (who owns/uses the land), the participation in information gathering/priority-setting (do both men and women participate and speak at village meetings), the levels of literacy/education (what kind of language/materials for MRE need to be used), the needs of female and male survivors and their families.
 - o Specific strategies should be put in

place to ensure that women and people from ethnic minorities are included in information gathering and priority-setting meetings, and that their voices are heard. For example, there should be explicit reference to the need for survey teams to be mixed and possess the necessary linguistic skills to be able to communicate with all groups at the community level.

- A Gender and Diversity Policy for the UXO sector would be a very valuable reference document for the strategy and all the relevant national mine action standards. The policy could draw on the UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action programmes and be tailored to the Lao PDR context. GMAP would be available to advice and participate in the drafting process, if necessary.
- Another key issue is to incorporate any costs that may arise by mainstreaming gender internally and into operations in the budget and in proposals to donors. Donors who are committed to gender equality should not penalise extra costs.

UN WOMEN/LAO WOMEN'S UNION GENDER AND UXO ASSESSMENT 2018

6.1.1 Based on national standards and the forthcoming gender equality law, and with the assistance of LWU, NRA/UXO Lao to develop a gender policy and gender mainstreaming strategy specific to the operational work of their organization. This would be aimed at having a positive gender equality impact on the beneficiaries of UXO operations. A draft could be prepared, and a workshop held to finalise the text. The final product could be shared with other UXO operators as a good practice.

6.1.2 Design and implement an internal NRA and UXO Lao human resources policy on gender. This could promote gender equality internally in NRA and UXO Lao which in turn could have a positive gender equality impact on the beneficiaries of NRA and UXO Lao work. This could cover the following:

6.1.3 Design and adopt guidelines on gender sensitive human resources procedures for NRA and UXO Lao, including responsibility for gender mainstreaming in the job descriptions of technical, managerial and project and work

planning staff: a draft could be prepared, and a workshop held to finalise the draft; ‘

6.1.4 Establish targets to reach gender balance in NRA and UXO Lao within set time frames at different levels, in particular at decision making levels. This could include expanding the number of all women’s teams and more women in mixed teams in land clearance operations and for the non-technical surveys;

6.1.5 Adopt measures for work-life balance and prevention of sexual harassment;

6.1.6 Provide leadership training to both men and women where there are a greater number of women participants than men, for example 80 per cent women and 20 per cent men. This would give more women a chance seeing they are less represented in decision making positions, but also provide opportunities for men. This arrangement also gives the possibility for women and men to better understand each other’s constraints.

6.1.7 Coach women staff in NRA and UXO Lao before and after appointing them to decision-making positions to ensure that they are able to succeed.

2. Coordination

UN WOMEN/LWU GENDER AND UXO ASSESSMENT 2018

6.5 Institutional arrangements to strengthen gender mainstreaming in the UXO sector

6.5.1 Establish a gender network among UXO operators to support the above recommendation, for sharing on good practices and implementing the gender mainstreaming strategy across the UXO sector. One option could be that another technical working group (TWG) on gender coordinated by NRA be created and one of its roles could be to support gender mainstreaming in the other TWGs on land clearance, risk education and victim assistance. There was strong support from most interviewees and workshop participants that the consultant met for establishing such a network.

If it is agreed that this could help accelerate

gender mainstreaming, decisions would need to be made on the membership (men and women from each operator, LWU, level of authority, etc.), which organization could lead/chair the network (NRA or it could rotate annually), as well as drafting and endorsing clear terms of reference and accountabilities.

3. Data and operations

MAG Gender and UXO Assessment 2008

A number of recommendations therefore are also resented for the consideration of the NRA:

- Existing GOL policies and development plans should be used as a basis for reviewing the national UXO strategy and draft standards.
- Gender indicators should be included in the UXO strategy for the sector
- Translate and disseminate the UN gender guidelines. The guidelines could be disseminated through a series of workshops (Implemented)
- Hold operators and their management teams accountable to developing and achieving gender related objectives
- The EC gender guidelines provide useful recommendations against which existing strategies, standards and practices can be reviewed. As applied to the NRA, these should include:
 - o Requesting operators provide statistics disaggregated by sex and combined with qualitative information on the situation of women and men for the target population;
 - o Reviewing proposals and reports to ensure gender considerations have been taken into account; including gender in monitoring and evaluation systems;
 - o Continuing to engage donors and operators in an on-going dialogue to ensure that gender is integrated into UXO action.

GMAP GENDER AND UXO ASSESSMENT 2014

Information Management Recommendations:

- In Lao PDR, all operators should collect relevant data in a sex and age disaggregated way and submit to NRA through IMSMA in a timely fashion. Then the data should be analysed from a gender and diversity

perspective and reports should be produced that can inform programming.

- Gender and diversity indicators should be identified by each Unit at NRA for the whole UXO sector and the data requirements to measure them and monitor progress should be communicated to the Information Management Unit, which will try to ensure that the data is available.

Quality Management/Monitoring & Evaluation recommendations:

- Once QM of non-technical survey starts to be conducted, questions on how all sources of information (women, girls, men and boys) are accessed should be included
- GMAP has provided suggestions/comments on how the format for MOU with NGOs issued by MoFA can be more gender sensitive (see Annex 2). If agreed by NRA managers, the topic will be included in the agenda of the NRA board member meeting which will take place in Jan 2015 (see Action Plan in Annex 3)
- During accreditation of operators, SWPs/SOPs related to human resources and Code of Conduct should be checked to ensure compliance with national labour law and gender and diversity sensitivity

4. Staffing

MAG Gender and UXO Assessment 2008

4.5. Clearance Personnel, Employment Opportunities and Gender

4.5.1 Operators must build long term strategies to train and promote (based on merit) female staff into leadership and management roles.

4.5.2 Organizations must include “Women Applicants are Encourage to Apply”, in all job opening advertisements regardless of position and a range of media should be used to advertise; especially radio. Selection criteria must not be too narrowly defined to exclude potential female applicants.

4.5.3 Organizations must ensure that both women and men on interview panels—if no women are available from within the organization then arrangements should be made with organizations such as LWU or development

partners to take part in the interview process. Having a women on the panel can increase a female candidates confidence and enable her to show her potential.

4.5.4 The NRA should develop a database of the trained female and male mine action staff in Lao PDR which should include, clearance staff, survey, community liaison staff, risk educators / community awareness staff. This would also allow women who leave the sector for child bearing to return at a later date.

4.5.5 Operators must be required to monitor application, selection and acceptance of personnel with relation to women vs. men. This will help to ensure operators are equally accessing men and women from the labour pool.

4.4.6 Operators must monitor retention of female/male staff and carry out exit interviews in order to find out why the employee is leaving. This will enable a better understanding of retention and enable operators to develop solutions.

4.5.7 Operators must have leave policies so that women/men can take compassionate leave for childcare and maternal/paternal leave policies.

4.5.8 Operators must provide separate sleeping/bathing facilities for female and male staff, where possible in a separate location.

4.5.9 Operators must disseminate information on procedures with regards to reporting harassment—lines of communication must be clearly defined as well as plans for taking action, in this regards it is imperative that female staff can report to a woman. A female is more likely to report harassment from a male colleague to a woman than a man.

In order for the sector as a whole to contribute to poverty eradication and development goals in a meaningful way however, it is crucial that the NRA take the lead by making deliberate steps to mainstream gender into UXO action across the sector. The recommendations of this report provide practical ways forward

GMAP GENDER AND UXO ASSESSMENT 2014

Recruitment and training recommendations

All organisations should ensure that working conditions are suitable for women and people with disabilities. For example, people with disabilities are encouraged to apply in vacancies, but premises of NRA, as well as those of most operators, are not accessible and disability-friendly. Conditions need to be in place and advertised for people with disabilities to consider applying for positions in the UXO sector.

The operators will have to deal with the challenges identified around the recruitment and promotion of more female staff in operational positions in the field in a context-sensitive and specific way and there may be different solutions in different provinces. While it is beneficial to have more gender balanced staff in all positions, it is particularly important that the survey teams are gender-balanced, as the presence of women in the teams will encourage more affected women to come forward and report contamination, impact, land use and KAP (knowledge, attitudes and practices). This is especially important in Lao, as the non-technical survey, impact assessment and KAP information is all gathered at the same time. Apparently, it is easier to find women who have the required qualifications in bigger urban centres, however they seem to be less interested in working out in the field. It might be necessary to do some targeted recruitment and to advertise the positions in an appealing way for women, for example by using women already working in similar positions as role models and highlighting aspects of the employment package that can appeal to them (for example: career prospects, child allowances, flexible working arrangements, attractive maternity leave provisions, etc.).

Induction to new staff should include gender issues, CoC, and an explanation of the complaint mechanism.

Internal rules and policies recommendations

All organisations should have a CoC clearly stating what kind of behaviour is appropriate with colleagues, beneficiaries and partners, and what will not be tolerated by the organization, including sexual harassment and sexual

exploitation and abuse. The CoC should be in Lao for nationals and English for international staff and all staff should read it and sign it together with the employment contract and be briefed on it during the induction.

A safe, confidential, transparent, and accessible complaint mechanism for breaches of the CoC should be set up, with at least a man and a woman as referral people. It is recommended that an anonymous staff survey is conducted once a year and that any arising issues are addressed.

UN WOMEN/LWU GENDER AND UXO ASSESSMENT 2018

6.2 Gender tools and training adapted to the UXO sector

6.2.1 Lao Women's Union to design together with NRA gender mainstreaming tools in the Lao language that are specific to the UXO sector. These tools could focus on mainstreaming gender in the non-technical survey, risk education, land clearance planning and victim assistance programs and activities.

6.2.2 Adapt relevant existing UXO gender materials in the Lao language, such as the United Nations Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes.

6.2.3 Provide training of trainers on the tailor-made tools in Vientiane and in selected provinces, in order to provide gender training to a greater number of UXO staff later on. A pool of trainers to be trained on the tools could be selected from LWU, NRA and UXO Lao trainers and other operators' trainers and gender experts in Lao PDR.

6.2.4 Conduct gender training of NRA and UXO Lao staff by the above-mentioned trained trainers. Training activities could also be done together with other UXO operators to create synergies and cross learning.

6.2.5 Mainstream relevant gender issues into the ongoing training programmes of NRA and UXO, such as operational work, especially relating to the non-technical surveys, risk education and land clearance planning.

6.3 Mainstreaming gender into UXO work and implementation plans

6.3.1 Use NRA sex disaggregated data collected in UXO operations to analyse the relevant gender issues and integrate in the design of projects and activities.

6.3.2 Include gender indicators and targets in implementation plans and strategies of the UXO sector operators in relation to non-technical survey beneficiaries, land clearance priorities and victim assistance.

6.3.2 Monitor and use the information collected on gender indicators in annual reporting and evaluation exercises.

5. Communications

GMAP GENDER AND UXO ASSESSMENT 2014

Communication/Reporting recommendations:

Public awareness and advocacy events

Ensure representation of men and women on panels at public awareness events Invite men and women to public awareness events and track data on their participation. Invite women's organizations and religious leaders to participate in public awareness and advocacy events.

Internal and external publications and reporting

Encourage operators to report beneficiary statistics disaggregated by age and sex and to develop and publicize case studies on all age and sex groups

Audio and visual material

Ensure the portrayal of all age and sex groups as equal and active participants in all aspects of life: in the workplace (men and women) and as beneficiaries of activities (all). Challenge gender-stereotype by using images that show women and men in non-traditional and non-stereotypical roles and professions to avoid disseminating subliminal messages about gender norms. For TV and radio broadcasts, conduct an analysis to identify which age/sex groups would have access to that type of media at different times of the day and plan the diffusion of broadcasts

accordingly. Highlight good practices and initiatives in terms of gender mainstreaming in reports to donors and annual reports.

6. Clearance processes

MAG Gender and UXO Assessment 2008

4.1. Gendered Impacts of UXO Contamination and Post Clearance Impacts

4.1.1 Community teams must have a gender balance to enable male to male and female to female interaction and be trained in gender awareness and specific techniques of interviewing women, men, girls and boys of differing linguistic groups. Given that gender mainstreaming is relatively new in HMA, this gender awareness training would be best outsourced to local gender specialists.

- SOPs and ToRs for community team members for example, must specifically state that they are required to carry out their work as per the prescribed recommendations listed below.

4.1.2 Operators must carry out both pre and post clearance assessments which deliberately aim to incorporate gender perspectives and promote an inclusive approach. It is essential for operators to carry out pre clearance assessments in order to better understand the post clearance gendered impacts to ensure that benefits are equitable.

- For pre clearance impact assessments the questions must be able to elicit specific impacts for women, men, girls and boys.
- For post clearance assessments the questions must be designed to gauge the benefits (and possible negative impacts) the clearance has had on women, men, girls and boys.
- Gender analysis frameworks such as the access and control and activity profile highlighted in the literature review, can also be used to understand the gendered impacts of UXO contamination and post clearance

4.1.3 Data Gathered—as with pre and post clearance assessments—must be disaggregated by sex and age as also recommended by the EC gender guidelines.

4.2. Gender in the clearance process

4.2.1 Participation in any community meetings must be carried out in either groups of women, groups of men, individual women, or individual men.

- To ensure that illiterate or people with poor linguistic skills can participate, meetings must be carried out in simple verbal dialogue (with interpretation into local languages where possible)

- Operators must ensure that the participants are from a broad sector of the community, including the poorest sectors, and not only the educated or members of higher status families.

Male and female staff of UXO operators must visit the village to physically inform households of an upcoming meeting and its topic and clearly disseminate information with regards to the purpose of the meeting and work with community members to select the best time and day for the meeting to take place. Delivery of a letter to the village chief is not considered sufficient prior notification of the topic of the meeting as it is likely that the information will not be disseminated fully when provided in this way.

- For any meeting it is essential that the audience is fully aware of and informed about the meetings objectives and processes—as for the prioritization process meetings it is imperative that the audience is aware of the process and the selection criteria, etc.
- Special efforts must be made to include a cross section of women in villages that have been merged into larger administrative units and staff need to understand the potential challenges in achieving equitable participation in such cases. This could include holding a series of meetings in the village in different locations, for example, sub units of the village. It may also be possible to offer to transport people to the meeting location.

4.2.2 Organizations must work closely and help build the capacity of District/Provincial staff to manage plans and understand UXO action and development incorporating gendered impacts.

- Monthly District/Provincial meetings between all operators, development agencies and Authorities to plan and coordinate activities. Planning should also include an analysis of the different situations and impacts of activities on men, women, boys and girls.
- Build the capacity of District/Provincial staff to monitor activities—collect, analyze, and use data which is disaggregated by sex and age.

4.2.3 Organizations when handing over cleared land must ensure that the landowner and the family (e.g. wife, boys and girls and other family members) as well as other female and male community members are present and a full explanation is given of what has been cleared and for what type of land-use (this will depend on the depth of clearance).

- All cleared land being handed over must be clearly marked and explained to community members.

7. Land release

GMAP GENDER AND UXO ASSESSMENT 2014

Land Release and Handover recommendations:

- Specific suggestions for the new Lao PDR UXO Survey Procedures, focusing especially on NTS, are the following:
 - o Include a reference that survey should be conducted in accordance to the UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes
 - o Include a paragraph on the selection and training of NTS teams
 - o Before village visits, sex and age disaggregated data (SADD) should be obtained on relevant issues such as demographic, poverty, perceptions about UXO contamination in the village
 - o A thorough gender and diversity analysis should be carried out to determine what gender and diversity issues need to be taken into account in order to make ‘all reasonable effort’ (IMAS 8.10) for survey teams to access all sources of information (men, boys, girls, women) in affected communities.

- o Make sure that the village survey conclusion, CHA report and sketch map are shared with women, girls, boys and men in the village
- o Including the following questions in the NRA QM Inspection Checklist - UXO Survey Process
 - ✓ Did the field visit involve checking all possible sources of information, including women, girls, boys and men?
 - ✓ Were women, girls, boys and men in the affected village properly briefed on the NTS results, CHA established and the sketch map?
- o Record participation in NTS by sex and age and analyse this information
- Make sure that women, girls, boys and men are consulted in priority setting processes for clearance
- Make sure that all people (women, girls, boys and men) in the community are informed about cleared/released land through a proper handover ceremony and easily available documentation (for example: a sketch map of released land is exposed at the village meeting centre).

8. EORE

2004 NRA LAO PDR GENDER ACTION PLAN

- Review, revise and develop MRE messages for at least 4 at risk groups
- Develop specific strategies for high-risk groups

Gender sensitive objectives:

- Ensure that groups at risk are appropriately identified
- Ensure all individuals, regardless of age, sex, education, literacy status or socio-economic status, have access to MRE
- Ensure messages and strategies are targeted to identified groups
- Enhance the participation of male and female community members in MRE planning and monitoring
- Ensure men and women have equal access to the employment opportunities and benefits associated with MRE initiatives.
- Ensure participation of at-risk groups in the messaging and strategy development

Activities

- Assess the necessity of MRE in UXO affected areas and to ID the specific target groups
- Analysis of data collected (i.e. KAP, baseline survey, satisfaction survey, etc.) to ensure disaggregated by sex, age and actual cause of incident
- Review and update tools for data collection to ID and correct weaknesses
- Field test tools
- Refreshment training for MRE teams
- Quality assurance on implementation of gender sensitive programs and delivery
- Conduct meetings with village leaders to obtain agreement on involvement of women and children
- Revise and review National Standards and SOPs to reflect gender perspectives
- Review existing makeup of team and develop a gender sensitive HR strategy to address gaps (recruitment, retention and staff development)

Inputs

- Activities are conducted at convenient times and venues
- Commitment and attitude
- Funding support for training and gender advice
- Technical support to offer training and overlay, assessment, monitoring, evaluation)
- National commitment to implement gender mainstreaming strategies
- Interagency committees (UN, women’s groups, national focal points)
- Sufficient human resources to implement activities
- Sufficient staff entitlements
- Appropriate and adequate gender sensitive logistics arrangements

MAG GENDER AND UXO ASSESSMENT 2008

4.3. MRE

4.3.1 MRE Needs Assessments should gather data, disaggregated by sex, age and ethnicity, so that the knowledge, practices and attitudes of the different risk groups are clearly defined.

4.3.1 All MRE materials should take into account gender, culture and language, activities and relevant risk behaviors depicted.

4.3.2 MRE messages and activities should target high risk groups defined by sex, age, behavior and livelihood activities.

4.3.3 Participation in any MRE sessions must be carried out in either groups of women, groups of men, individual women, individual men or together (as in individual household groups or groups of scrap metal collectors, for example).

4.3.4 Risk education teams should comprise of female and male team members to allow for male to male and female to female interaction.

4.3.5 Risk education teams should comprise of members with abilities to deliver messages in the languages of linguistic groups of the target populations or train local communicators that will be able to deliver the messages in the local language.

4.3.6 Local communicators (e.g volunteers, CA/MRE teams) must be trained to address gender issues and needs when delivering MRE sessions; for example in environments such as peer-to-peer, adult to child, child to adult, village volunteers, etc.

GMAP GENDER AND UXO ASSESSMENT 2014

Mine Risk Education recommendations:

- Continue to use and analyse SADD on victims to inform the risk education strategy and to direct the providers of MRE to tailor activities in an age and gender sensitive way
- Continue to present SADD for beneficiaries and measure impact of risk education for women, girls, boys and men (behaviour change)

9. Victim assistance

MAG GENDER AND UXO ASSESSMENT 2008

4.4. Victim/Survivor Assistance and Gender Related Issues

4.4.1 Gender balanced community teams must be trained in what services are available for victims/survivors at the local, district, provincial and national level and be able to communicate

these services to affected people, both men and women”.

4.4.2 VA providers need to both understand and address issues of self-esteem and confidence and not only focus on the physical injuries (for example men generally suffer more loss of self-esteem than women).

- Information should be disaggregated by sex and age.

4.4.3 VA providers should provide follow up services to men, women, boys and girls being mindful that females may need longer term support and be less likely to remarry

GMAP GENDER AND UXO ASSESSMENT 2014

Victim Assistance recommendations:

- Present victim data by sex and age in reports
- Analyse the Survivor Tracking System to get VA needs by gender and age – use findings to design/tailor services accordingly with partners (MoE, MoH, MLSW)
- Develop qualitative/quantitative monitoring tools of impact of assistance on survivors (by sex and age)

UN WOMEN/LWU GENDER AND UXO ASSESSMENT 2018

6.4 Gender sensitive UXO victim assistance

6.4.1 Assess from NRA’s national data base on victims, who received what training and equipment and identify the women UXO victims and the wives and mothers of those killed or injured by UXO accidents.

6.4.2 Select one or two provinces where women UXO victims live and assess the skills needs of these women and provide training at the village level where there are no other such service providers, using LWU’s pool of trainers at the provincial level. Training could include handicrafts, tailoring, animal husbandry, weaving, financial literacy and business start-up. The women victim assistance program should be coordinated with the respective NRA provincial offices and also with CSOs working on victim assistance in the area.

Annex 3: Lao PDR Gender Action Plan 2008

Planned mine action activities for your programme in the coming 12-18 months	Gender-sensitive Objectives of the activities (What are the aims of these activities?)	
Review of Strategic plan Gender Study (Feed into Strategy) Pre/post Clearance Advisory Team (Joint Poverty/UXO Unit Project) Work planning 2008 Provincial level- ensuring that priorities are within existing priority areas X## Hectares in the next 12 months X## Roving tasks X## CA in Tasks	To promote that the mine action policy framework is gender sensitive (takes into account needs and different experiences of women, boys, girls and men) To ensure that gender dimension is taken into account in priority consideration To review selection process to promote the inclusion of gender considerations in the prioritization of land to be cleared (at all levels) - PPCIA To promote that all have equal access to benefits of clearance employment opportunities and training	
Activities (How will you do it?)	Inputs (What's needed?)	
Mid-term Review strategic plan (2003-2013)- Government ownership for review -- Ensure that Gender considerations are given a heavy weighting in the ToR for the consultants. -- Identify areas where gender balance can be achieved -- Identify where gender considerations (Priorities) can be enhanced -- Perhaps a specific Gender Balance objective -PPCAT Finalization of assessment tools/methodologies (will include sex, age desegregated data). -Work plan developed using revised priorities & PPCIA informatio	Financial Resources for Review. Funding for Gender study (secured) PPCAT Project developed & funding Gender Advisor	
Time frame (How long will this activity take?)	Indicators (How will you know you are achieving your objectives?)	Evaluation
Strategic Review Process Planning – 6 m Impl – 3 m Approval - ? Gender Study Planning 3 m Impl – 10 weeks PPCAT Plan over 12 m Impl - Indefinite Work Plan 2008 Plan 2 m Impl - 2008	Inclusion of Gender perspective into plan Indicators will be developed from the Gender Study Inclusion of Gender in TWG Minutes Inclusion of Gender in MOU's Gender included in analysis of pre/post clearance data & highlighted in final report Break down of beneficiaries by quantitative sex-disaggregated data/age/ community etc... Annual report showing Gender break-down of beneficiaries.	Review of Strategic plan is an evaluation in itself Sector working group Review of minutes of TWG (CL, CA, VA & SR) of new MOU's

Planned mine action activities for your programme in the coming 12-18 months	Gender-sensitive Objectives of the activities (What are the aims of these activities?)
<p>MRE (CA in Laos) -Development of the National Accident/Survivor Database and data collection System</p> <p>-Based on MRE assessment, review and revise MRE country strategy</p> <p>-Review, revise and develop MRE messages for at least 4 at risk groups</p> <p>-Develop specific strategies for high risk groups</p> <p>-Provide training in M&E</p> <p>-Develop M&E plan</p> <p>-Develop competency framework for MRE officers</p> <p>-Capacity building for MRE staff</p>	<p>Ensure that groups at risk are appropriately identified</p> <p>-Ensure all individuals, regardless of age, sex, education, literacy status or socio-economic status, have access to MRE</p> <p>-Ensure messages and strategies are targeted to identified groups</p> <p>-Enhance the participation of male and female community members in MRE planning and monitoring</p> <p>-Ensure men and women have equal access to the employment opportunities and benefits associated with MRE initiatives.</p> <p>-Ensure participation of at risk groups in the messaging and strategy development</p>

Activities (How will you do it?)	Inputs (What's needed?)
<p>Assess the necessity of MRE in UXO affected areas and to ID the specific target groups</p> <p>-Analysis of data collected (i.e. KAP, baseline survey, satisfaction survey, etc.) to ensure disaggregated by sex, age and actual cause of incident</p> <p>-Review and update tools for data collection to ID and correct weaknesses</p> <p>-Field test tools</p> <p>-Refreshment training for MRE teams</p> <p>-Quality assurance on implementation of gender sensitive programs and delivery</p> <p>-Conduct meetings with village leaders to obtain agreement on involvement of women and children</p> <p>-Revise and review National Standards and SOPs to reflect gender perspectives</p> <p>-Review existing makeup of team and develop a gender sensitive HR strategy to address gaps (recruitment, retention and staff development)</p>	<p>-Activities are conducted at convenient times and venues</p> <p>-Commitment and attitude</p> <p>-Funding support for training and gender advice</p> <p>-Technical support to offer training and overlay, assessment, monitoring, evaluation)</p> <p>-National commitment to implement gender mainstreaming strategies</p> <p>-Interagency committees (UN, women's groups, national focal points)</p> <p>-Sufficient human resources to implement activities</p> <p>-Sufficient staff entitlements</p> <p>-Appropriate and adequate gender sensitive logistics arrangements</p>

Time frame (How long will this activity take?)	Indicators (How will you know you are achieving your objectives?)	Evaluation
<p>Completed includes Sex disaggregated)</p> <p>TBD</p>	<p>-Reports submitted from MRE teams and partners are disaggregated by sex, age and cause of accident</p> <p>-KAP surveys results include information that is specific to men, women and boys and girls</p> <p>-Number of focus group discussions conducted with different constituency groups to ID specific at risk behaviour among various beneficiary populations have been reached by MRE, broken down by age, sex</p> <p>-Number of suitably qualified male and female staff providing MRE to target groups: men, women, boys and girls</p> <p>-Revised materials are understood by target populations</p> <p>-Monthly reports show figures to indicate data on involvement by men, women, boys and girls in activities</p> <p>women, boys and girls in activities</p>	<p>Review of Strategic plan is an evaluation in itself Sector working group</p> <p>Review of minutes of TWG (CL, CA, VA & SR) of new MOU's</p>

Annex 4: Gender action plan for NRA, Lao PDR, September 2014 (GMAP 2014)

Objectives	Tasks to achieve objectives
More gender and diversity balanced staff in the UXO sector, including at decision-making level	Make working conditions suitable for women and people with disabilities Draft and adopt CoC and complaint mechanism
Identify needs for training on gender at Vientiane and province level	Ask all area responsible to identify needs in their area
National strategy is gender and diversity (G&D) sensitive	Discussions on G&D at sector working group, TWG, policy forum
Relevant national mine action standards are gender and diversity sensitive	Discussions at TWG, for approval by NRA Board
Relevant SOPs (NTS, prioritisation, handover, MRE, VA, QM, IM) are gender and diversity sensitive	Draft NTS report Draft guidelines for NTS SOP Discussions with TWG and at NRA
SADD is analysed and used to inform programming	
Operators make 'all reasonable effort' (IMAS 8.10) to access all sources of information (men, boys, girls, women) in affected communities	Gender and diversity analysis at provincial level Use LWU and LYU network (representative in village) to access women and youth at local level
Women, girls, men and boys in affected communities are informed about released land	Involve women, girls, men and boys in handover ceremonies
VA is gender sensitive	Present victim data by sex and age in reports Analyse STS to get VA needs by gender and age – use findings to design/Luomlor services accordingly with partners (MoE, MoH, MLSW) Develop qualitative/quantitative monitoring tools of impact on survivors
QM/M&E of whole UXO programme is gender sensitive	Baseline and expectations Gender sensitive PCIA Survey process
Gender is mainstreamed in MoUs with operators	Discuss w operators and MOFA Develop guidelines Ask for CoC
UXO Sector AR presents SADD	SADD for MRE and VA, staff composition

Resources available	Resources needed	Who is responsible
GMAP's recommendations		Deputy Director Support HR Unit
NRA area responsible		7
GMAP's recommendations		Deputy Director Policy
NRA Board Trust Fund Steering Committee GMAP's recommendations		
		Deputy Director Support QA/QC, NRA HR Unit, NRA TWG
ISMA		Deputy Director Support QA/QC, NRA TWG
LWU LYU		MRE Unit VA Unit Clearance Unit
	Rural Development Office Village/Dev Committee	NRA Operators
LVIS STS Project with KOICA	Data from operators	Clearance Unit, NRA
		VA Unit, NRA
Time		Research unit, NRA
Programme Unit		Programme Unit

Annex 5: IMAS references on gender and diversity

IMAS 07.14 First Edition (February 2019) Risk Management in Mine Action

5.9 Age, gender and diversity. The likelihood and consequences of different risks may vary greatly between different age and gender groups and persons with disabilities, as well as between different ethnic, cultural and religious groups. Risk managers should recognise and take into account such differences when identifying, analysing, evaluating and treating risks. Sex and age disaggregated data (SADD) should be collected and used to support the effective identification, assessment, analysis and treatment of risk. Risk managers should ensure that women, girls, boys and men are appropriately included in consultation and participation processes and procedures within mine action risk management systems.

Non-Technical Survey: IMAS 08.10 First Edition (Amendment 4, February 2019)

6.3. All reasonable effort: c) Demonstrating that the collection of information in the field was planned and conducted by competent and accredited survey teams, with the capability to reach all relevant information sources including women, girls, boys and men;

7. Non-technical survey methodology d) Non-technical survey teams should include sufficient resources, skills, knowledge and capabilities to carry out non-technical activity effectively and efficiently, and in particular to be able to engage in communication with local authorities, other interested parties and all sources of information, including women, girls, boys and men.

8.2. Assessment and classification of sources j) information from people and institutions offering first-hand sources of information. Such sources of information may include women, girls, boys and men in the affected communities, military, police, EO victims and all relevant witnesses to the deployment of EO or accidents etc.;

9. Survey team requirements: Non-technical survey teams should include sufficient

resources, skills, knowledge and capabilities to carry out non-technical activity effectively and efficiently, and in particular to be able to engage in communication with local authorities, other interested parties and all sources of information, including women, girls, boys and men.

11. Community involvement Local participation should be fully incorporated into all stages of the land release process, including non-technical survey, in order to obtain agreement from all relevant stakeholders and to ensure that land is used appropriately after it has been released. Community involvement should include men, women and children living or working in or near the suspected area and where appropriate, owners of land.

13.2 Survey organisation: g) consult closely with men and women in the affected communities, as required, with regards to all decisions made by non-technical survey;

TECHNICAL SURVEY, IMAS 08.20 First Edition (Amendment 4, February 2019)

9.2. Demining organisation

The organisation undertaking technical survey shall:

g) consult closely with both men and women of the affected communities about all decisions made during technical survey.

Post Clearance Documentation: IMAS 08.30 Second Edition (Amendment 5, June 2013)

The demining organisation or its nominated community liaison representative shall ensure that details of all demining activities in the area and the implications for the men, women and children are provided to the mine affected community.

Note: The demining organisation should brief the local community and the proposed beneficiary of the cleared land on the task when it is complete and has been formally handed over to the NMAA. Such a briefing should include a subjective confidence demonstration and an explanation of the residual risk for men, women and children. Clearance requirements: IMAS 09.10 Second

Edition (Amendment 6, January 2020)

Note: Community Liaison is intended to ensure the mine action programmes are sensitive and responsive to community needs and priorities including the special needs of men, women, boys or girls. It should also ensure that the mine-affected communities understand and support mine action.

5.2. Demining organisations

The organisation undertaking clearance shall:

e) ensure that the mine affected community is fully cognisant of all demining activities in the area and the specific implications for the men, women and children of the community.

Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE): IMAS 12.10 Second Edition (Amendment 3, September 2020)

The term 'Explosive Ordnance Risk Education' (EORE) refers to activities which seek to reduce the risk of injury from EO by raising awareness of women, girls, boys and men in accordance with their different vulnerabilities, roles and needs, and promoting behavioural change. Core activities include public information dissemination, education and training.

4.3.3 Data gathering about at-risk communities

Casualty data should be disaggregated by outcome (injury or death), sex, age, disability, geographic location, time, cause and place of accident, type of EO, whether the community had prior knowledge of the hazard, whether the community had received any education in safe behaviour, any Victim Assistance (VA) support received, and socio-economic needs.

4.3.4 Community liaison

Community liaison should ensure that community members are aware of the existing threat and are involved in identifying their own risks and determining their own priorities for mine action assistance. It may also support communities to develop locally appropriate solutions to reduce the risk in their communities. Community liaison should also ensure that mine action programmes address community needs and priorities and involve community members including women, girls, boys, and men, and including those from marginalised groups in the setting of priorities

as a means of informing design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of mine action operations.

4.3.5 EORE support for survey, marking and clearance of EO

In terms of clearance, EORE operators should: d) inform women, girls, boys and men about areas that have been cleared and those that remain hazardous, including marking of cleared and uncleared areas.

4.3.6 EORE support for victim assistance

VA refers to a set of activities addressing the needs and rights of EO victims and comprises data collection, emergency and ongoing medical care, rehabilitation, psycho-social support, socioeconomic inclusion, and laws and policies. EORE may facilitate the provision of assistance to EO victims including survivors, as well as, wherever possible, other persons with disabilities. In particular, EORE operators may: a) identify EO victims including survivors and other persons with disabilities in need of assistance;

5.2. The conduct of needs assessments

The process of data gathering and analysis should be transparent. The process of a needs assessment should ensure the participation of women, girls, boys and men from the at-risk community and include marginalised and other hard-to-reach at-risk groups (persons with disabilities, elderly, out-of-school children, etc.).

5.3. Principles applicable to the conduct of needs assessments

The different needs of women, girls, boys, and men should be considered. Community members' perceptions and requirements may also vary according to age, gender, social, ethnic, religious and educational background, etc.

6. EORE messages and message delivery

6.1. General

All communication in EORE should be based on a carefully planned strategy that is targeted to specific at-risk groups and which is socially, culturally and age appropriate. In many situations, men and boys make up the majority of direct victims, however, this does not mean efforts should focus exclusively on males; first, women and girls are often involved in accidents

due to carrying out different types of activities, often having lower levels of knowledge about contamination in post-conflict settings, and second, they are often powerful agents for wider change, including behaviour change among boys and male adolescents/adults.

6.3. Message testing

EORE operators shall test all messages and suggested means of delivery with a representative sample of the target audiences including highly vulnerable groups before they are considered for wider dissemination. Testing that takes into account any differences in literacy and language skills, between social or cultural groups, and between women, girls, boys, and men may be done at various levels of sophistication with different costs.

Victim Assistance in Mine Action: IMAS 13.10 First edition Amendment 1, 17 January 2023

Introduction

VA is a national responsibility towards all people who have been injured, and to those living with a disability or who are especially vulnerable for other relevant reasons.

The mine action sector plays a supportive role through specific VA efforts in assisting the entities responsible as they develop the relevant, long-term national systems, procedures and processes required to support victims in an age, gender and disability inclusive manner

The collection, analysis and use of accurate sex, age and disability disaggregated data (SADDD) on casualties can help to inform prioritization of non-technical survey (NTS), technical survey (TS), and clearance, as well as coordination and targeting of EO risk education.

3. Terms and definitions

3.11 indirect victim family members of direct victims, as well as individuals and communities affected by EO

5 Roles and responsibilities

5.1 Affected states

5.1.1 National mine action authority

The NMAA or the organization acting on its behalf should:

7) Participate in existing disability coordination mechanisms and advocate for the active participation of survivors and other persons with disabilities. In the absence of such coordination mechanisms, promote and support the development and implementation of an inter-ministerial multi-stakeholder coordination committee on VA and/or disability to ensure the rights of, and equal opportunities for, victims and persons with disabilities;

8) Collaborate with relevant ministries to conduct a needs assessment of survivors and other persons with disabilities to enhance planning and programming, with a particular focus on communities affected by EO;

10) promote community-based planning processes that facilitate the meaningful participation of survivors. Facilitate links between priority-setting processes for land release operations and development actors to provide comprehensive support for survivors and indirect victims among other vulnerable people;

11) Monitor the design and delivery of risk education sessions by mine action actors or their implementing partners to ensure they are accessible to survivors and other persons with disabilities;

12) monitor messages on disability inclusion to ensure they are included in risk education, in accessible formats, to promote positive knowledge, attitudes and practices towards persons with disabilities amongst community members;

13) Promote inclusive and non-discriminatory hiring practices that provide reasonable accommodation by the mine action sector, including the hiring of survivors, persons with disabilities and indirect victims; and

14) Support the adoption and implementation of laws addressing the needs and rights of survivors

5.2 Mine action operators

Mine action operators or their implementing partners shall:

1. inform the NMAA of all their VA-specific efforts;
2. collect disaggregated data on the age, sex and disability of victims, in line with relevant data protection regulations. They shall also ensure that relevant data is shared with the appropriate national entity, and that data ethics and protection principles are respected (including confidentiality, provision of information, informed consent and security);
3. collect data on relevant existing services in the area of operations to help develop a directory of services compiled by the relevant government entity;
4. support the dissemination of any directory of services and identify and refer survivors and indirect victims to services through the provision of accessible information on available services, in coordination with the relevant ministry or authority;
5. in coordination with the Ministry of Health or other relevant health authorities, identify and facilitate access to emergency medical transport of people critically injured by EO and other persons with life-threatening injuries to a nearby healthcare facility in the areas where they are operating. If unavailable, mine action operators shall provide such transport

5.3 Survivor organizations and their representative entities

Survivors and other persons with disabilities, and their representative organizations of survivors and other persons with disabilities (including associations and networks), are important actors in VA, particularly through their efforts to:

- Guarantee and advocate for participatory principles;
- Extend institutional memory of local best practices; and
- Ensure that VA is well understood at all levels of mine action.

Organizations of survivors and other persons with disabilities have a unique perspective on their own situation and needs relating to VA.

Survivor organizations should be consulted, through the appropriate national mechanisms, in all aspects of planning, coordination, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting, in particular of activities that affect their lives. Additionally, survivor organizations engaged in the VA pillar of mine action should conduct coordinated activities cohesive with national strategic mine action developments, as appropriate.

The responsibilities of survivor organizations may include:

1. Assessing the needs of network members, disaggregated by sex, age and disability, in order to inform the development of victim assistance or disability national action plan and other policies relevant to the sectors of which VA is part;
2. Contributing to the development of relevant national strategic plans in other sectors;
3. Enable survivors and other persons with disabilities at the community level to facilitate efforts for their rehabilitation and socio-economic inclusion, on the basis of full participation and agency;
4. Conducting peer support and serve as role model for other organizations and institutions;
5. Linking and referring victims to VA services;
6. Supporting participation of survivors during initial data collection to identify victims, including survival outcomes, type of injuries, age, gender, pre-existing impairment, civilian or military personnel status and specific needs;
7. Developing partnerships and networking;
8. Collaborating with relevant government sectors, including the mine action offices and actors;
9. Representing victims at national and international meetings, conferences and other events relevant to victims;
10. Sharing experiences and good practices with other organizations;
11. Mapping and compiling detailed profiles of service providers and disseminate to relevant sectors, in coordination with NMAA/NMAC;
12. Facilitating EO risk education sessions while raising awareness of the rights of victims at the local community level; and
13. Conducting advocacy to promote victims' rights at local and national levels, with the

possibility to feed into relevant international advocacy efforts.

Annex B (informative) References

A.5 Psychological and psycho-social support

Psychological and psycho-social support is part of the mental health and psycho-social sector. It comprises:

- Psychological support: Counselling by psychology and psychiatry professionals
- Psycho-social support: Activities such as cultural, sport and leisure, whose main aim is to improve Psychological well-being; and
- Peer-to-peer support: Provision of social and emotional support by persons facing similar situations and challenges through one-on-one interactions, or family and social support group.

A.6 Socio-economic inclusion

A.6.1 General Socio-economic inclusion relates to the education, employment, and social protection sector. This broad term refers encompasses social inclusion, inclusive education and economic inclusion. Economic inclusion comprises paid employment, self-employment and social protection.

A.6.2 Social inclusion

The main components of social inclusion are:

- Personalized social support; and
- Support for healthy relationships and family life: Ensuring persons have positive relationships by changing negative family and community attitudes.

It also aims to prevent and address violence against survivors and other persons with disabilities;

- Cultural, sports and leisure activities; and
- The dismantlement of stereotyping and attitudinal barriers

A.7 Laws and policies

Principles of victim assistance

- Non-discrimination: VA should not discriminate against or among victims, or between victims and those who have suffered injuries or impairments from other causes. Differences in treatment should only be based on medical, rehabilitative, psychological or socio-economic needs of the victims, including to provide reasonable accommodation. VA should also not discriminate on the basis of other diversity factors such as, disability, gender, identity, age, ethnicity, race, religion, language, socio-economic status, or other aspects of identity.
- Participation and inclusion: Victims and their representative organizations should be consulted and participate in relevant decision-making processes and their implementation, including in policies and programmes which concern them. – accessibility: Survivors, other persons with disabilities and indirect victims, including persons with disabilities, should have access to the services they require. Where any barriers to access to those services exist, these should be systematically addressed. These barriers can relate to physical, financial, digital, or remote accessibility of services, location, legal considerations, as well as age, gender, disability and cultural norms, amongst other factors, which can restrict participation in victim assistance services. Reasonable accommodations should also be provided for those who require them.
- Vulnerability: The wider environmental and social conditions and risks for survivors, other persons with disabilities and indirect victims, can exacerbate the negative impacts of EO contamination. In particular, various barriers such as environmental and attitudinal, can put victims and persons with disabilities in situations of financial, social, physical and safety vulnerability, which can create barriers to their full and equal participation. As such, factors that put persons in situations of vulnerability shall be taken into account in relevant policies and programmes.
- Age, gender, disability, and other diversity considerations: Age, gender, disability and other diverse needs and experiences of

victims should be taken into account in the design, planning and implementation of VA-specific efforts. VA services should be adapted to the needs and realities of different groups. In order to support effective programme planning, casualty data (commonly known as victim data) and beneficiary data, should be disaggregated by sex, age and disability.

- Rights-based approach: Assistance to victims is about realizing the human rights of people injured, survivors and indirect victims in accordance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law. They should be entitled to:
 - the highest attainable standard of health, rehabilitation, inclusive education, work and employment;
 - full participation and inclusion in society;
 - adequate standard of living and social protection;
 - where appropriate pursue effective remedies against those responsible for any EO-related gross violations of international human rights, or of [serious] violations of international humanitarian law, they suffered; and
 - non-discrimination.

Guide for the evaluation of mine action interventions: IMAS 14.10 First Edition (Amendment 3, June 2013)

4. Evaluation - general

Evaluation refers to the process of determining the 'worth or significance' of an activity, policy, project, or programme. 'Worth or significance' for mine action evaluation is assessed primarily in terms of changes in the wellbeing of people (men, women and children) in mine-affected communities, areas, and countries...

5. Purpose of evaluation

Evaluation should endeavour to benefit multiple stakeholders, including men, women and children affected by mine action, donor agencies sponsoring mine action, the government and its supporting organs such as the NMAA and MAC, and the implementing agency and its partners.

6. Evaluation criteria

6.1. Criteria

Other common criteria that may be included for a mine action evaluation include:

- j) client satisfaction for both men and women; and
- k) beneficiary satisfaction.

7.3. Outcome evaluation

Note: The output may vary between beneficiaries based on gender. For example, men and women may not have the same access and use of the land once it is cleared. A gender needs analysis should be conducted to ensure that outputs are benefiting men, women and children.

10.5. Stakeholder participation

Whenever possible, beneficiaries (male and female) and other stakeholders of an intervention should participate in the planning of evaluations to foster a sense of ownership of evaluation results.

Whenever appropriate, special efforts should be made to obtain the views of women and of groups who may lack opportunities to express their views. If an evaluation requires an assessment of change in the wellbeing of beneficiaries, provision should be made for beneficiaries (or their representatives) to be consulted and, if practical, to participate in the evaluation and determine necessary follow-up actions based on the evaluation findings, recommendations, and lessons.

15.3. Mine action organisations

The organisations implementing mine action projects

1. should evaluate their own progress against the objectives and should evaluate the outcomes and, where feasible, the impact of their intervention in a gender inclusive manner for men and women. They should adequately plan for evaluations and make available the necessary resources required; and should ensure that relevant stakeholders are involved in the evaluation process. In

particular they should ensure community participation and encourage the use of the evaluation as an educational process for building the capacity of community members and the staff of the mine action organisations.

Annex 6: Field tools

Guide to all questions

All sections refer to GEDSI- gender equality, disability and social inclusion

As one purpose of the field mission included assessing change against the implementation of recommendations from previous UXO and gender studies in Lao PDR, some of the questions used these studies, and the recommendations have been included in the stakeholder tools. Additionally, some gender and diversity standards from UNMAS and GICHD/GMAP have been included to assess alignment with standards. These can be identified through the following colour coding:

- Alignment with GMAP/GICHD publication
- Alignment with UNMAS gender guidelines for mine action
- MAG 2008 gender UXO study recommendations
- GMAP NRA gender and UXO report 2014
- UN Women and LWU gender mainstreaming UXO sector recommendations

Vientiane stakeholders

5.1 NRA and Unit 58

General statistics

- How is data gathered on incidence of UXO deaths and injuries- is this disaggregated by sex, age, disability?
- What are the general trends for boys, girls, women, men, ethnic groups, especially in the villages identified for us to visit?
- What are the common activities at the time of accident for women, girls, boys and men of different groups?
- How are GEDSI issues addressed through: Accident data (SADD), KAP(B) survey, other information sources and the analysis of information

Accountability

- Policy/ strategy/approach- what has been the follow up from the GMAP/GICHD 2013 study and 2014 report recommendations? (NRA only)
- Is there a dedicated budget for GEDSI issues?
- Who is ultimately responsible for the GEDSI performance and how is this evaluated? Is this included in their TOR?
- What is the role of the gender focal points, what is their TOR and how do they report on results?
 - o How are the gender focal points selected- male/female/with disability/ ethnic groups?
 - o How much of their time is dedicated to this role, how is it assessed in annual performance review?

How do your UXO activities:

- Facilitate access of women, men, boys, girls, ethnic groups and the poor to resources, opportunities, decision-making, services
- Address the specific needs/priorities of these groups?

- Promote gender equality and the leadership of women

Does the Code of Conduct

- Define and prohibit sexual abuse and exploitation, gender-based violence, harassment, bullying and discrimination
- Define what is acceptable and unacceptable communication
- State what are acceptable and unacceptable workplace relationships
- State expected behaviours and consequences of misconduct
- Specify and explain that there is a mechanism of complaint for breaches of the code

Employment and decision making

- Within NRA departments, how many staff are: women vs men # and percent (by level of responsibility)
- How many staff have a disability: women vs men # and percent (by level of responsibility)
- Within the province and district level, what knowledge would you have on approximately of how many staff have a disability: women vs men # and percent (by level of responsibility)
- Gender sensitive HR policies- how are women encouraged in employment through
 - Vacancy announcement
 - Recruitment
 - Training
 - Maternity/Paternity leave
- What are the explicit and implicit barriers to the employment of women and men in certain roles?
- What are the barriers to the employment of people from specific ethnicities?
- What are the barriers to the employment of persons with disabilities?
- What training has been conducted at the national/ provincial/district and village on gender issues in UXOs related issues through NRA/PRA. When was this, who ran it and who was trained?
- Is there sexual harassment policy with appropriate confidential channels for reporting?

UXO officers (see Annex 5) and

- How does the procurement of equipment take into account the different needs of male and female staff. The procurement of

uniforms, boots and Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) should also be sensitive to gender, including size and type.

- How is the possibility of unintended negative consequences and the duty of care towards employees and beneficiaries, especially in relation to sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse and other forms of Gender Based Violence
- What issues are present for women and men staying together in a camp or accommodation overnight
 - o Women working outside of their community for lengthy periods of time
 - o Women travelling unaccompanied for long distances or to areas deemed dangerous

Land rights and land ownership

- What processes are used to identify the prioritisation of land for clearance? Is data on sex, age, disability and ethnicity collected on this?
- What land rights system is in force in the area of operations, both formally and in practice?
- What are the processes of proving land ownership and are there barriers for women and diversity groups from accessing that information and proof/certification? a Who are the typical landowners in the area of operations?
- Who are the primary land users in the area of operations?
- What was the past use of the land? Who used it?
- What is the expected future use once it is released?
- Are the priorities of women, girls, boys and men for post clearance land use clearly identified?
- Are there any groups in the community that could be particularly vulnerable to land grabbing?
- What are the inheritance rights within a family in case of marriage, divorce, abandonment, traditionally and legally?

Victim Assistance

- What are the risky behaviours exhibited in the context based on activities at time of accident?
- Who are the main risk takers in the

community?

- What are the reasons that they take risks?
- What financial and other assistance can UXO accident victims receive from the government?
 - o How do they find out about this
 - o Who provides this and how do villagers access it?
 - o Do you know approximately how many or percent of these are male and female?
- What other immediate source of support is provided by the province/district/village when a UXO accident occurs?
- Who provides this? (NGOs, community, family, health clinic etc)
- What consideration is provided for women headed households and women who are carers of family members with disability?
- How are the following issues from the UNMAS gender guidelines in mine action addressed:
 - o Provide safe transport for survivors and indirect victims to the different services, and for relatives to accompany women travelling alone if needed
 - o Provide mobile services and home visits when possible to reach those less mobile
 - o Employ both male and female health workers, counsellors, peer support workers, physiotherapists, etc.
 - o Develop the first aid capacity at the local level by training both women and men community members to be first responders
 - o Employ female and male survivors, other persons with disabilities and indirect victims for peer support activities
 - o Extend services to the relatives and family members of survivors and people killed
 - o Design socio-economic services to meet the needs of relatives and family members of survivors including activities for men and women: including in education, employment/ social protection, and social inclusion

How have the recommendations from the 2008 MAG gender and UXO report been addressed:

4.4.1 Gender balanced community teams must be trained in what services are available for victims/survivors at the local, district, provincial and national level and be able to communicate

these services to affected people, both men and women”.

4.4.2 VA providers need to both understand and address issues of self-esteem and confidence and not only focus on the physical injuries (for example men generally suffer more loss of self-esteem than women).

- Information should be disaggregated by sex and age.

4.4.3 VA providers should provide follow up services to men, women, boys and girls being mindful that females may need longer term support and be less likely to remarry.

How have the recommendations from the 2014 GMAP report for NRA been implemented?

- As mentioned in the recommendations for internal issues, a Gender and Diversity Policy for the UXO sector would be a very valuable reference document for the strategy and all the relevant national mine action standards. The policy could draw on the UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action programmes and be tailored to the Lao PDR context. GMAP would be available to advice and participate in the drafting process, if necessary.
- Gender and diversity indicators should be identified by each Unit at NRA for the whole UXO sector and the data requirements to measure them and monitor progress should be communicated to the Information Management Unit, which will try to ensure that the data is available.

Land Release and Handover recommendations:

- Specific suggestions for the new Lao PDR UXO Survey Procedures, focusing especially on NTS, are the following:
 - o Include a reference that survey should be conducted in accordance to the UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes
 - o Include a paragraph on the selection and training of NTS teams⁹¹
 - o Before village visits, sex and age disaggregated data (SADD) should be obtained on relevant issues such as

demographic, poverty, perceptions about UXO contamination in the village

- o A thorough gender and diversity analysis should be carried out to determine what gender and diversity issues need to be taken into account in order to make 'all reasonable effort' (IMAS 8.10) for survey teams to access all sources of information (men, boys, girls, women) in affected communities.
- o Make sure that the village survey conclusion, CHA report and sketch map are shared with women, girls, boys and men in the village
- o Including the following questions in the NRA QM Inspection Checklist - UXO Survey Process:
 - ✓ Did the field visit involve checking all possible sources of information, including women, girls, boys and men?
 - ✓ Were women, girls, boys and men in the affected village properly briefed on the NTS results, CHA established and the sketch map?

Victim Assistance recommendations:

- Present victim data by sex and age in reports
- Analyse the Survivor Tracking System to get VA needs by gender and age – use findings to design/tailor services accordingly with partners (MoE, MoH, MLSW)
- Develop qualitative/quantitative monitoring tools of impact of assistance on survivors (by sex and age)

How have the recommendations from the 2018 UN Women and LWU gender assessment of the UXO sector been implemented?

6.1.1 Based on national standards and the forthcoming gender equality law, and with the assistance of LWU, NRA/UXO Lao to develop a gender policy and gender mainstreaming strategy specific to the operational work of their organization. This would be aimed at having a positive gender equality impact on the beneficiaries of UXO operations. A draft could be prepared, and a workshop held to finalise the text. The final product could be shared with other UXO operators as a good practice.

6.1.2 Design and implement an internal NRA and

UXO Lao human resources policy on gender. This could promote gender equality internally in NRA and UXO Lao which in turn could have a positive gender equality impact on the beneficiaries of NRA and UXO Lao work. This could cover the following:

6.1.3 Design and adopt guidelines on gender sensitive human resources procedures for NRA and UXO Lao, including responsibility for gender mainstreaming in the job descriptions of technical, managerial and project and work planning staff: a draft could be prepared, and a workshop held to finalise the draft

6.5.1 Establish a gender network among UXO operators to support the above recommendation, for sharing on good practices and implementing the gender mainstreaming strategy across the UXO sector. One option could be that another technical working group (TWG) on gender coordinated by NRA be created and one of its roles could be to support gender mainstreaming in the other TWGs on land clearance, risk education and victim assistance.

There was strong support from most interviewees and workshop participants that the consultant met for establishing such a network.

EORE

- How do you make sure all groups are reached, heard and informed in appropriate ways- are the groups held separately for men, women, boys and girls?
- How is GEDSI addressed in > Needs & Capacities Assessment > Priorities and budget > tailor and Design > Implement > Monitor and Evaluate
- Who is at risk and why? GEDSI>The Unaware > The Uninformed > The Misinformed > The Reckless > The Forced
- Identify major threats Identify target Groups: > Boys and young men > Refugees, IDPs, travellers > Former soldiers > Farmers & Food, water and fuel collectors > Scrap metal collectors
- Who is the focus of EORE? > Female and male trainers > Influential/trusted individuals > All female/male classes >
- What materials are used that women, girls,

men and boys can relate to, feel familiar and identify with

- Where is EORE conducted for GEDSI groups > Schools > Churches > Markets > House to house > Community meeting points?
- Based on the division of labour, what are the best forums for teams to speak with the different age and sex groups?
- What is the best time of day to conduct activities with women, girls, boys or men in the affected community?
- How is it conducted for GEDSI groups > Direct presentations (provide childcare) > Public dissemination > Media (TV/radio/newspapers) > School curriculum > Focus group discussion
- ICBL's Cluster Munition Coalition, Cluster Munition Monitor 2022 states adolescent boys were identified in Lao PDR as especially difficult to reach. Can you explain why and how this is being addressed?
- In terms of languages spoken, are there any barriers to communicating with the different groups (males/females, different ethnic groups)? a Are there differences between males and females/those of diversity groups? Can teams communicate in the official language or do they need to be able to communicate in more than one local language to reach out to all groups?
- Monitoring & Evaluation: Indicators
 - o For outputs (or results): # of beneficiaries of RE by sex, disability, ethnicity and age groups (efficiency)
 - o For outcomes: # or % of men, women, boys and girls knowing what to do when they find a UXO (effectiveness)
 - o For impact: # or % reduction in UXO mortality and morbidity rates by sex, disability, ethnicity and age groups

How have the recommendations from the 2008 MAG gender and UXO report been addressed:

4.3.1 MRE Needs Assessments should gather data, disaggregated by sex, age and ethnicity, so that the knowledge, practices and attitudes of the different risk groups are clearly defined. 4.3.1 All MRE materials should take into account gender, culture and language, activities and relevant risk behaviors depicted.

4.3.2 MRE messages and activities should target high risk groups defined by sex, age, behavior and livelihood activities.

4.3.3 Participation in any MRE sessions must be carried out in either groups of women, groups of men, individual women, individual men or together (as in individual household groups or groups of scrap metal collectors, for example).

4.3.4 Risk education teams should comprise of female and male team members to allow for male to male and female to female interaction.

4.3.5 Risk education teams should comprise of members with abilities to deliver messages in the languages of linguistic groups of the target populations or train local communicators that will be able to deliver the messages in the local language. This can increase the engagement with and understanding of women as well as men, girls as well as boys who are speakers of languages other than Lao.

5.2 UXO Lao

As per NRA above, modified for UXO Lao

5.3 Vientiane EORE Stakeholders

- How do you make sure all groups are reached, heard and informed in appropriate ways- are the groups held separately for men, women, boys and girls?
- How is GEDSI addressed in > Needs & Capacities Assessment > Priorities and budget > tailor and Design > Implement > Monitor and Evaluate
- Who is at risk and why? GEDSI>The Unaware > The Uninformed > The Misinformed > The Reckless > The Forced
- Identify major threats Identify target Groups: > Boys and young men > Refugees, IDPs, travellers > Former soldiers > Farmers & Food, water and fuel collectors > Scrap metal collectors
- Who is the focus of EORE? > Female and male trainers > Influential/trusted individuals > All female/male classes >
- What materials are used that women, girls, men and boys can relate to, feel familiar and identify with
- Where is EORE conducted for GEDSI groups

- > Schools > Churches > Markets > House to house > Community meeting points?
- Based on the division of labour, what are the best forums for teams to speak with the different age and sex groups?
- What is the best time of day to conduct activities with women, girls, boys or men in the affected community?
- How is it conducted for GEDSI groups > Direct presentations (provide childcare) > Public dissemination > Media (TV/radio/newspapers) > School curriculum > Focus group discussion
- ICBL's Cluster Munition Coalition, Cluster Munition Monitor 2022 states adolescent boys were identified in Lao PDR as especially difficult to reach. Can you explain why and how this is being addressed?
- In terms of languages spoken, are there any barriers to communicating with the different groups (males/females, different ethnic groups)? Are there differences between males and females/those of diversity groups? Can teams communicate in the official language or do they need to be able to communicate in more than one local language to reach out to all groups?
- Monitoring & Evaluation: Indicators
 - o For outputs (or results): # of beneficiaries of RE by sex, disability, ethnicity and age groups (efficiency)
 - o For outcomes: # or % of men, women, boys and girls knowing what to do when they find a UXO (effectiveness)
 - o For impact: # or % reduction in UXO mortality and morbidity rates by sex, disability, ethnicity and age groups

How have the recommendations from the 2008 MAG gender and UXO report been addressed:

4.3.1 MRE Needs Assessments should gather data, disaggregated by sex, age and ethnicity, so that the knowledge, practices and attitudes of the different risk groups are clearly defined.

4.3.1 All MRE materials should take into account gender, culture and language, activities and relevant risk behaviors depicted.

4.3.2 MRE messages and activities should target high risk groups defined by sex, age, behavior and livelihood activities.

4.3.3 Participation in any MRE sessions must be carried out in either groups of women, groups of men, individual women, individual men or together (as in individual household groups or groups of scrap metal collectors, for example).

4.3.4 Risk education teams should comprise of female and male team members to allow for male to male and female to female interaction.

4.3.5 Risk education teams should comprise of members with abilities to deliver messages in the languages of linguistic groups of the target populations or train local communicators that will be able to deliver the messages in the local language. This can increase the engagement with and understanding of women as well as men, girls as well as boys who are speakers of languages other than Lao.

The ICBL's Cluster Munition Coalition, Cluster Munition Monitor 2022 states:

The report refers to several initiatives aimed to address this including the Center for International Stabilization and Recovery (CISR) conducting a study to identify improvements and best practices for risk education; a pilot project to target youth initiated by HI which includes the participation of survivors and a World Education Laos three-year risk education project targeting out-of-school children, youths, agricultural workers, and speakers of ethnic minority languages via non-formal education centers, media platforms, and using youth volunteers.⁹²

How are these addressing GEDSI issues?

5.4 Vientiane Victim Assistance Stakeholders

- What are the risky behaviours exhibited in the context based on activities at time of accident?
- Who are the main risk takers in the community?
- What are the reasons that they take risks?
- What financial and other assistance can UXO accident victims receive from the government?
 - o How do they find out about this
 - o Who provides this and how do villagers access it?
 - o Do you know approximately how many or % of these are male and female?

- What other immediate source of support is provided by the province/district/village when a UXO accident occurs?
- Who provides this? (NGOs, community, family, health clinic etc)
- What consideration is provided for women headed households and women who are carers of family members with disability?
- How are the following issues from the UNMAS gender guidelines in mine action addressed:
 - o Provide safe transport for survivors and indirect victims to the different services, and for relatives to accompany women travelling alone if needed
 - o Provide mobile services and home visits when possible to reach those less mobile
 - o Employ both male and female health workers, counsellors, peer support workers, physiotherapists, etc.
 - o Develop the first aid capacity at the local level by training both women and men community members to be first responders
 - o Employ female and male survivors, other persons with disabilities and indirect victims for peer support activities
 - o Extend services to the relatives and family members of survivors and people killed
 - o Design socio-economic services to meet the needs of relatives and family members of survivors including activities for men and women: including in education, employment/ social protection, and social inclusion

These recommendations were provided in a 2014 gender and UXO report to NRA by GMAP, how are they being addressed?

Victim Assistance recommendations:

- Present victim data by sex and age in reports
- Analyse the Survivor Tracking System to get VA needs by gender and age – use findings to design/tailor services accordingly with partners (MoE, MoH, MLSW)
- Develop qualitative/quantitative monitoring tools of impact of assistance on survivors (by sex and age)

How have the recommendations from the 2008 MAG gender and UXO report been addressed:

4.4.1 Gender balanced community teams must be trained in what services are available for victims/survivors at the local, district, provincial and national level and be able to communicate these services to affected people, both men and women”.

4.4.2 VA providers need to both understand and address issues of self-esteem and confidence and not only focus on the physical injuries (for example men generally suffer more loss of self-esteem than women).

- Information should be disaggregated by sex and age.

4.4.3 VA providers should provide follow up services to men, women, boys and girls being mindful that females may need longer term support and be less likely to remarry.

5.5 Questions for officials at provincial, district and village level

General statistics

- How is data gathered on incidence of UXO deaths and injuries- is this disaggregated by sex, age, disability?
- How many people in the province/district/village have
 - a) a disability: please provide data on sex, age, disability and ethnicity
 - b) approximately how many of these disabilities were caused by UXO accidents
 - c) have there been any deaths in the past 5 years from UXOs: data disaggregated by sex, age, disability and ethnicity

Employment and decision making

- Within your department/office, how many staff are: women vs men # and % (by level of responsibility)
- Of staff that work with PRA or associated specifically with the UXO sector, how many staff are: women vs men # and % (by level of responsibility)
- How many staff have a disability: women vs men # and % (by level of responsibility)
- Within the government as a whole at the province/district/village level, what

knowledge would you know approximately of how many staff have a disability: women vs men # and % (by level of responsibility)

- Of men and women with disabilities who are employed across the whole province/district/village where would the most women vs men be employed
- What are the explicit and implicit barriers to the employment of women and men in certain roles?
- What are the barriers to the employment of people from specific ethnicities?
- What are the barriers to the employment of persons with disabilities?
- Has there been any training conducted in the province/district/village on gender issues in UXOs related issues

Land rights and land ownership

- What land rights system is in force in the area of operations, both formally and in practice?
- What are the processes of proving land ownership and are there barriers for women and diversity groups from accessing that information and proof/certification? a Who are the typical landowners in the area of operations?
- Who are the primary land users in the area of operations? a What was the past use of the land? Who used it?
- What is the expected future use once it is released?
- Are the priorities of women, girls, boys and men for post clearance land use clearly identified?
- Are there any groups in the community that could be particularly vulnerable to land grabbing?
- What are the inheritance rights within a family in case of marriage, divorce, abandonment, traditionally and legally?

5.6 Non-technical survey teams (and EORE for Unit 58)

- What do you see as the key GEDSI issues in pre-clearance/survey
- How are initial consultations conducted with the community– who calls the meetings, how, in what language, who attend
- What information is collected for sex, age, disability and ethnicity?

- What is the process for the pre-clearance impact assessment and prioritisation process—who manages them, how are community members involved
- IMAS 08.21 states- “use mixed teams to collect information from women, girls, boys and men”- how is this implemented?
- Have both men and women been involved in identifying the problems, setting the priorities and defining the objectives?
- According to IMAS 12.10, CL should ensure the following (how are these enacted):
 - o Information sharing between mine action actors affected communities
 - o Involvement of community members (women, girls, men and boys) in determining their own risks and priorities for mine action assistance ownership and empowerment
 - o Linking communities’ unmet needs with mine action interventions in a more timely and participatory fashion more efficient and effective UXO action

(this is aligned with GMAP/GICHD standards)

Community Consultation

- Can women actively participate in a data gathering meeting where men are present?
- Can youth actively participate in a data-gathering meeting where older adults are present?
- Specifically, are there barriers facing adolescent girls’ participation?
- Can people from different ethnic/religious groups actively participate in data-gathering meetings where a majority from the dominant ethnic/religious group is present?
- Are there any barriers to participation for those living with disability in the community?
- If needed, can separate consultations for women, youth and other diversity groups be arranged?

Employment

- How many staff are: women vs men # and % (by level of responsibility)
- How many staff have a disability: women vs men # and % (by level of responsibility)
- How are women encouraged in employment through
 - Vacancy announcement

Recruitment • Training • Maternity/Paternity leave

- What are the explicit and implicit barriers to the employment of women and men in certain roles?
- What are the barriers to the employment of people from specific ethnicities?
- What are the barriers to the employment of persons with disabilities?
- How is the possibility of unintended negative consequences and the duty of care towards employees and beneficiaries, especially in relation to sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse and other forms of Gender Based Violence
- What issues are present for women and men staying together in a camp or accommodation overnight
 1. Women working outside of their community for lengthy periods of time
 2. Women travelling unaccompanied for long distances or to areas deemed dangerous
- What training has been conducted at the national/ provincial/district and village on gender issues in UXOs related issues through for non-technical survey teams? When was this, who ran it and who was trained?
- Is there sexual harassment policy with appropriate confidentially channels for reporting?

Data collection

How is GEDSI data and SADD disaggregated data collected for survey respondents for:

- Socio-economic surveys
- Knowledge, Attitude, Practices & Beliefs surveys
- Non-Technical Survey
- Contamination Impact Surveys
- Data on participants engaged through community liaison and handover activities

EORE:

How have the recommendation from the 2008 MAG gender and UXO report been addressed:

4.1.1 Community teams must have a gender balanced to enable male to male and female to female interaction and be trained in

gender awareness and specific techniques of interviewing women, men, girls and boys of differing linguistic groups. Given that gender mainstreaming is relatively new in HMA, this gender awareness training would be best outsourced to local gender specialists.

- SOPs and ToRs for community team members for example, must specifically state that they are required to carry out their work as per the prescribed recommendations listed below.

4.1.2 Operators must carry out both pre and post clearance assessments which deliberately aim to incorporate gender perspectives and promote an inclusive approach

It is essential for operators to carry out pre clearance assessments in order to better understand the post clearance gendered impacts to ensure that benefits are equitable.

- For pre clearance impact assessments the questions must be able to elicit specific impacts for women, men, girls and boys.
- For post clearance assessments the questions must be designed to gauge the benefits (and possible negative impacts) the clearance has had on women, men, girls and boys.
- Gender analysis frameworks such as the access and control and activity profile highlighted in the literature review, can also be used to understand the gendered impacts of UXO contamination and post clearance

4.1.3 Data Gathered—as with pre and post clearance assessments—must be disaggregated by sex and age as also recommended by the EC gender guidelines.

4.2. Gender in the clearance process

4.2.1 Participation in any community meetings must be carried out in either groups of women, groups of men, individual women, or individual men.

- To ensure that illiterate or people with poor linguistic skills can participate, meetings must be carried out in simple verbal dialogue (with interpretation into local languages where possible)

Core areas of questioning/discussion: (note if possible both female and male heads of household will be asked the same questions separately)

General

Hours spent daily on tasks (addressing seasonal difference)

Knowledge of, and involvement in process for prioritisation of land clearance:

- How was the prioritisation decided and by whom; what community dialogue was conducted; where was it held; how did people find out about it; whose decision was it for them to attend; did they attend, and if so, explain the process of the meetings and ongoing decision-making processes

Knowledge of, and involvement in EORE:

- Who in your community do you see as most at risk of mine/UXO accidents and why- gender/age/ daily tasks/ employment/personal characteristics?
- Have you/ other family members received EORE; where was it held; how did they find out about it; whose decision was it for them to attend; how relevant was the information for their needs; whose needs were targeted- men/boys/girls/women- were different messages provided for these groups given their different risk levels; what mediums were used, was disability access available or attempts to include people with disability, was consideration given for convenient timing for women to attend; who else was there: what ethnic groups, ages, levels of village seniority and ages; are there any suggestions for improvements; any other comments?

Victim Assistance:

- What support is required for injured family member within the household and who provides this (average hours per day/week); to address support for person with disability have any other tasks or roles been adopted by other family members; what services and support are provided in the community/friends/extended family and how well do they meet their specific needs as a women/man/girl/boy; what has been the impact on employment/ income/ marriage/ access to education for family member/ability to conduct daily tasks/ self esteem
- What stigma or discrimination do they experience/ believe their family member experiences both at a personal and community level; have there been changed dynamics in the household- what are these and how have they been addressed- any support services for this?
- Are they/ the family member with disability put at any additional personal risk due to their disability;
- What additional services or sources of support would they benefit from; do they have additional issues they would like to raise.

UXO Clearance officers:

- What do you know of the demining teams and how they work; are the male/female/mixed teams; what do you/your spouse/ other community members think of having mixed teams/all female/all male teams in your community? What do you see as the benefits and disadvantages of these for the teams themselves and your village?
- Would you/your wife/ daughters want to work as a deminer; what would be the benefits and disadvantages of this work from your perspective and that of other family and community members; who would make the ultimate decision for women in your family becoming a deminer?

Women in decision making:

- What decision making roles do you/women in your household have in terms of the household; community engagement; access to leadership roles generally in the community as well as specifically

in the demining process currently being conducted in your community; what are the main barriers you/ women in your family/ women in the community face in accessing decision making roles at various levels of society/within mine action/ within career progression?

Land ownership

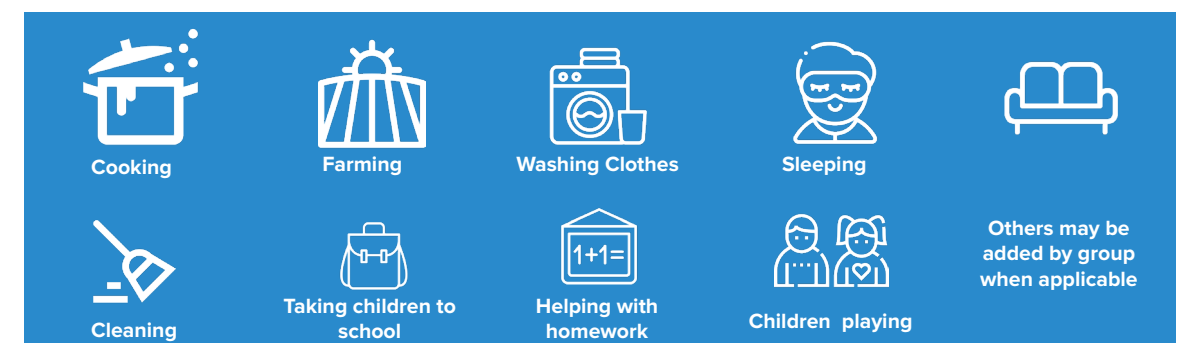
- Whose names are on the land ownership documents; if both names are not on land ownership documents, why is that: are you/ is your wife aware of land ownership rights/ what would happen to land if the husband passed away?
- If mines have been or are present on your land how this affected your income, mobility, access to farming and crops or other issues that impact on your daily life?
- If your land will be cleared, what do you see as the priority use for the land; is this the same as your husband/ wife; what are the differences; who will make the final decision?

5.9 Focus Group Discussions with village women and men: Field Tool 1 - Daily Calendar

Directions: In male-only and female-only groups the participants were asked to identify the core activities of key members of their household each regular day (an average farming day)

ACTIVITY	Grandmother 60 (as per group identifica- tion)	Father 45	Mother 43	Son 20	Daughter 18	Son 16	Son 14	Daughter 12
Early morning								
Late morning								
Early afternoon								
Evening								

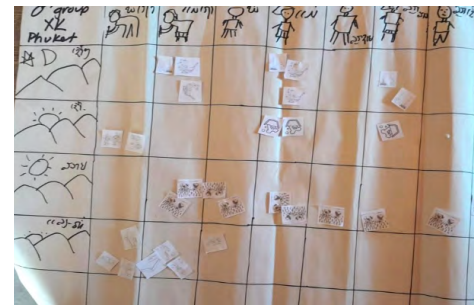
To ensure those who were illiterate could actively participate the following symbols were used for them to stick onto the chart paper:



In addition, the following questions were asked by the facilitator during discussions when the daily calendar was completed:

- Who in the family attends meetings? What type of meetings?
- Who in the family goes to the healthcare clinic? What for?
- What are the major sources of income for the household, what are they from and who earns the money?
- Who decides major financial decisions?
- Whose names are on any land titles you have?

Examples for male and female group calendars are included below:



5.10 Focus Group Discussions with village women and men: Field Tool 2 – Mapping UXO presence and clearance

Directions: Again, in male-only and female-only groups the participants were asked to draw a map of their village and mark in places where:

- Any UXO accidents have taken place in the past 5 years- who was killed or injured- their sex, age, ethnicity and the type of injury
- UXO clearance has occurred (in blue)
- UXOs still remain (in red)
- Other landmarks of relevance to you

Examples of maps with the participants from the men and women's groups are shown below
Note this activity also did not require literacy skills from group members.



They were also asked the following questions after the maps were completed: For the process of clearance: Did anyone in your households attend a community meeting on UXO clearance? Who attended from your household? How did they find out about it? Who made the decision on who from the household would attend?

5. 11 Focus Group Discussions with village women and men: Field Tool 3 – EORE group discussion with photos

Have you been given information/training on UXO risks?

- If so, who provided this training and how did you find out?
- Who in your family attended the meeting?
- Who decided who attended?

What advice do you give the following people in your family to protect them from UXO accidents:

- Wife
- Mother
- Husband
- Father
- Son
- Daughter

What do you think would be the different life impacts for a girl and boy UXO accidents on their:

- Education
- Employment
- Marriage
- Self esteem
- The way they are treated in the community
- Their access to services



ENDNOTES

- 1 Government of Lao PDR 2012.
- 2 GICHD 2014, p. 3
- 3 UNMAS 2019a, p. 8.
- 4 Second Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention, 11 December 2009.
- 5 The accepted term in the sector in Lao PDR is unexploded ordnance or UXO as this encompasses other explosive remnants of war beyond land mines. The literature review found the term 'mine action' is commonly used; this terminology is maintained in the resources quoted.
- 6 Maputo Plan of Action, paragraph 21.
- 7 Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action 2018, p. 321.
- 8 The Fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction was held in Oslo from 26 to 29 November 2019.
- 9 Action #3.
- 10 The Fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction: "How to Implement and Monitor Gender Mainstreaming in the APMBC: Practical Recommendations" was held in Oslo from 26 to 29 November 2019.
- 11 Developed by Suzette Mitchell, co-author of this paper.
- 12 UNMAS 2019a, p. 1.
- 13 Government of Lao People's Democratic Republic 2021b, p. 79.
- 14 NRA 2021, p. 16.
- 15 GICHD 2014b, p. 25.
- 16 The source of the gender action plan for the UXO sector in Annex 3 is likely to be this document; however, there is no institutional memory in the NRA or UNDP on the authoring organization.
- 17 The recommendations that have been implemented are: "1) Lao Women's Union to design together with NRA gender mainstreaming tools in the Lao language that are specific to the UXO sector. These tools could focus on mainstreaming gender in the non-technical survey, risk education, land clearance planning and victim assistance programs and activities. 2) Adapt relevant existing UXO gender materials in the Lao language, such as the United Nations Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes. 3) Provide training of trainers on the tailor-made tools in Vientiane and in selected provinces, in order to provide gender training to a greater number of UXO staff later on. A pool of trainers to be trained on the tools could be selected from LWU, NRA and UXO Lao trainers and other operators' trainers and gender experts in Lao PDR. 4) Conduct gender training of NRA and UXO Lao staff by the above-mentioned trained trainers. Training activities could also be done together with other UXO operators to create synergies and cross learning" (UN Women/LWU assessment 2018: 6.2.1, 6.2.2, 6.2.3 and 6.2.4).
- 18 Downs and Fox 2016.
- 19 Ibid, p. 9.
- 20 Durham 2016, pp. 26 and 31.
- 21 Note: the authors of this review were unable to locate this document.
- 22 UNDP 2019, pp. 14 and 53.
- 23 Ibid, p. 113.
- 24 Village authorities in Thongsean said the local population was 81 percent Hmong and 19 percent Moui. In Phonsaat, authorities said the population was 30 percent Khmu and 70 percent Hmong. Authorities at both villages in Xiengkhouang Province stated that the population was 100 percent Lao-Luom.
- 25 Agreed at a UXO Lao technical working group meeting in July 2022.
- 26 When meetings were held with all women's groups, only the female field mission teams attended. Male team members and authorities had discussions in a separate area.
- 27 The men from the LWU assisted in the facilitation of seven of the men's groups as the first group session required their observation of the process and tools in action.
- 28 This was due to unforeseen travel time to meet the UXO Lao all women clearance team.
- 29 This set of domains has been used by USAID n.d..
- 30 World Bank 2020, p. 16.
- 31 World Bank 2022
- 32 Government of Lao PDR 2021, p. 19.
- 33 Law Insider. See: www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/four-months#:~:text=More%20Definitions%20of%20Four%20months&text=Four%20months%20for%20purposes%20of,per%20month%20for%20four%20months.
- 34 Article 83 (Revised).
- 35 Articles 8 and 13.
- 36 UNICEF 2020, p. 17.
- 37 Ironside 2017, p. 23.
- 38 National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute 2020.
- 39 World Bank Data portal. See: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS?locations=LA>
- 40 Gender and Employment in Mine Action by the Numbers, Mines Action Canada. See: https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/minesactioncanada/pages/284/attachments/original/1581427985/Employment_Paper_Final_letter.pdf?1581427985.
- 41 ReliefWeb 2022.
- 42 Bini and Jones 2014, p. 15.
- 43 Newton-Small 2016.
- 44 Lao Statistics Bureau 2016.
- 45 USAID 2018, p. 6.

46 As identified in the previous section, Article 27 states: "State and society shall promote employment and consider giving priority to persons with disabilities by accepting those meeting the conditions to work in the position, determined every year by the concerned entity."

47 CARE 2020, p. 21.

48 Ibid, p. 22.

49 USAID n.d.

50 CARE 2020.

51 USAID 2022, p. 18.

52 Nilsson, Rozes and Garcia 2015.

53 IMAS 0711 First Edition (Amendment 5, February 2019) Land Release Item 5. The land release process; 5.1. General, point (h).

54 Ibid., Section 8.2. All reasonable effort.

55 Ibid., Item 13.2. Demining organisation, point (f).

56 Kalamar 2017, p. 46.

57 Ibid.

58 CARE 2020, p. 24.

59 UNICEF 2020, p. 92

60 GMAP 2013, p. 5.

61 USAID 2022, p. 21.

62 The Global Development Research Center. See: www.gdrc.org/gender/framework/g-framework.html.

63 UNICEF 2021.

64 ILO 2018.

65 IMAS 13.10 Victim Assistance in Mine Action: Amendment 2023, para 5.1: 10

66 Ibid., para 5.2: 4

67 ICBL 2021, p. 2.

68 The same report notes the extent of disaggregation by sex has decreased significantly in recent years due to global conflicts, with 33 percent having an unknown sex in 2015 to 2019 compared to 12 percent being unknown from 2010 to 2014. In 2019, the deaths were reported as: 43 percent female and 36 percent male. The data for Lao PDR differs significantly but given that the sex is unknown for 33 percent of cases, these comparative data are not seen as accurate.

69 Jones and Breili 2015.

70 IMAS EORE: 12.10, second edition 2020, paragraph 6.

71 National Commission for the Advancement of Women 2015, p. 6.

72 WHO 2021.

73 National Commission for the Advancement of Women 2015, pp. 2 and 8.

74 Pimhidzai n.d., pp. 3 and 10.

75 CARE 2020, p. 13.

76 GMAP 2013, p. 6.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid., p. 17.

79 Lark and Wolsey 2022, p. 1.

80 Ibid.

81 GMAP 2013, p. 10.

82 Duprat and Pecak 2014, p. 19.

83 USAID 2018, p. 11.

84 Ibid, p. 15.

85 Kalamar 2017, p. 46.

86 Ibid.

87 Lao Statistics Bureau 2016.

88 "NRA should consider drafting and adopting a stand-alone policy on Gender and Diversity for the UXO sector, as a document to be referred to in the National Standards and used to communicate, both internally to staff and externally to partners, stakeholders and donors, the vision, values and practices in terms of gender and diversity that the NRA strives for... The policy could draw on the UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes and be tailored to the Lao PDR context. GMAP would be available to advice and participate in the drafting process, if necessary" (GMAP 2014).

89 Each of the three modules takes approximately two hours; however, the course can be paused at any time and the programme will bookmark

your progress. It is accessible for persons who are visually impaired. The course features descriptions and subtitles that can be read by assistive electronic devices and software. The GICHD issues an electronic certificate of achievement for this eLearning. This document attests that the learner has successfully completed all three modules and achieved a score of at least 70 percent in the post-course tests.

90 "Design and implement an internal NRA and UXO Lao human resources policy on gender. This could promote gender equality internally in NRA and UXO Lao and design and adopt guidelines on gender sensitive human resources procedures for NRA and UXO Lao, including responsibility for gender mainstreaming in the job descriptions of technical, managerial and project and work planning staff; a draft could be prepared, and a workshop held to finalise the draft" (UN Women/LWU 2018: 6.1.2 and 6.1.3). "Organizations must include 'Women Applicants are Encourage to Apply', in all job opening advertisements regardless of position and a range of media should be used to advertise; especially radio. Selection criteria must not be too narrowly defined to exclude potential female applicants; and organizations must ensure that both women and men on interview panels" (MAG 2008: 4.5.2 and 4.5.3)

91 Proposed text: In compliance with IMAS 08.10, non-technical survey teams should include sufficient resources, skills, knowledge and capabilities to carry out non-technical activity effectively and efficiently, and in particular, to be able to engage in communication with local authorities, other interested parties and all sources of information, including women, girls, boys and men. In the context of Lao PDR, this means selecting both women and men for the survey teams who are able to communicate with the affected people in their local language. The non-technical survey teams need training to use suitable equipment in compliance with prevailing safety and operational standards and appropriate skills and techniques to conduct interviews with women, girls, boys and men in the affected villages.

92 Ibid. pp. 72-73.



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