

LAO PDR NATIONAL UXO/MINE ACTION STANDARDS (NS)



Chapter Thirteen UXO and Mine Risk Education

National Regulatory Authority for
the UXO/Mine Action Sector in Lao PDR

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UXO and Mine Risk Education (UXO/MRE)

1. Introduction

UXO/Mine Risk Education (UXO/MRE) is an integral component of UXO/mine action in Lao PDR. UXO/MRE refers to activities which seek to reduce the risk of injury and death from UXO by raising awareness and promoting behavioural changes amongst at risk groups. The aim of UXO/MRE is to reduce the risk from UXO to a level where people can live safely and to assist in the re-creation of an environment where economic and social development can occur free from the constraints imposed by UXO contamination.

2. Scope

This chapter describes the minimum requirements for the conduct of UXO/MRE in Lao PDR.

3. Abbreviations used in this National Standard

Where the abbreviation UXO/MRE is used in this NS it refers to risk education about both UXO and mine hazards.

Where the abbreviation UXO is used alone it refers to unexploded ordnance, which in accordance with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) also includes mines.

4. International Treaty Requirements

“Certain international treaties impose legal obligations on States Parties to provide MRE. The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention obliges States Parties—in a position to do so ... to provide assistance for mine awareness programs. The Convention on Cluster Munitions requires that States Parties conduct—risk reduction education to ensure awareness among civilians living in or around cluster munition contaminated areas of the risks posed by such remnants. Protocol V to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons requires that States Parties and parties to an armed conflict take all feasible precautions in the territory under their control affected by explosive remnants of war to protect the civilian population, individual civilians and civilian objects from the risks and effects of explosive remnants of war.... These precautions may include warnings [and] risk education to the civilian population...”¹

5. Compliance with Humanitarian Principles

All UXO/MRE is to be carried out in accordance with the humanitarian principles of:

- a. Protection, care and respect for human beings, which includes:
 - (1) Protecting life and health.
 - (2) Preventing and reducing suffering.
 - (3) Respect for human beings.
- b. Neutrality. Not taking sides in any hostilities or in controversies based on political, racial, religious or ideological identity. Transparency and openness are important to remaining neutral.

1. From IMAS 12.2 Mine Risk Education.

- c. Impartiality. Assistance is provided to all those who are suffering without discrimination. However, important to this principle is that those with the most need should be assisted first.

6. Components of UXO/Mine Risk Education

UXO/MRE in Lao PDR comprises four complementary and mutually reinforcing components:

- a. Data gathering. Data is gathered on the UXO threat, dangerous areas, the impact on the civilian population, including victim and incident data, and knowledge of the threat and safe behaviour. Data is used in order to understand and analyse the extent of the threat and the impact; to identify target groups; to support other UXO action in Lao PDR, in particular land clearance, explosive ordnance disposal and victim assistance; and for monitoring and evaluating the impact of UXO/MRE activities and mine action in general.
- b. Public information dissemination. Public information dissemination as part of UXO/MRE refers primarily to public information activities which seek to reduce the risk of injury and death from UXO by raising awareness of the risk among individuals and communities and by promoting behavioural change. It is primarily a one-way form of communication transmitted through mass media.
- c. Education and training. Education and training activities in UXO/MRE refers to all educational and training activities which seek to reduce the risk of injury and death from UXO by raising awareness of the risk to individuals and communities and promoting behavioural change. Education and training is a two-way process, which involves the imparting and acquiring of knowledge, attitude and practices through teaching, learning and practicing. These activities may be conducted in formal and non-formal environments.
- d. Community initiatives. Community initiatives refer to activities and initiatives developed by local communities to manage the UXO risk in their vicinity. Community initiatives may be supported by outside organisations or government departments, but the responsibility for these initiatives lies with the local community. Examples of community initiatives could include developing local frameworks of what is and what is not acceptable and responsible behaviour in a village, or scrap metal dealers defining and promoting safe practice principles in their business.

UXO/MRE may be carried out in conjunction with other UXO/mine action or may be carried out as a stand-alone UXO/mine action activity. UXO/MRE organisations should actively seek opportunities to ensure MRE is well integrated with other UXO/mine action activities, such as EOD roving response tasks, and with other development activities that may be external to the UXO/mine action sector, but which may also help to reduce risk.

7. General Responsibilities of UXO/MRE Organisations

General responsibilities of UXO/MRE organisations operating in Lao PDR include:

- a. Working with communities to identify risk taking behaviour, the possible consequences and the provision of alternatives or strategies to minimise risks.
- b. Encouraging the participation of local communities in defining clearance needs and priorities.

- c. Encouraging the cooperation of local communities in assisting the UXO clearance effort by providing information on UXO hazards to NRA provincial and district offices and UXO/mine action organisations. This will also include advising communities of the systems and procedures for the reporting of UXO.

Note: The NRA is responsible for ensuring the establishment and maintenance of systems for the collection and reporting of UXO/mine action related information and for notifying all information gathering stakeholders of these systems. See **Chapter 24 of NS Information Management**. This responsibility includes ensuring that reports are followed up on and feedback on the status of the report is provided to the community.

- d. Reporting details of new UXO victims to the NRA head office and the NRA provincial office and where possible, UXO/mine Victim Assistance (VA) organisations operating in Lao PDR. The UXO/Mine Accident Report and UXO/Mine Victim Report are to be used.
- e. Advising UXO victims of the assistance able to be provided by UXO/mine VA organisations operating in Lao PDR.
- f. Coordinating with all relevant stakeholders and participating at NRA UXO/mine action sector and UXO/MRE sub-sector meetings and working groups. This includes contributing to the development of the sector and sub-sector strategic plans.

UXO/MRE organisations also have a general responsibility for gathering information on the risks of UXO in Lao PDR and their effect on communities. UXO/MRE organisations that receive information about any of the situations indicated below should report the details to the NRA head office and the NRA provincial office:

- a. UXO/mine accidents. The UXO/Mine Accident Report and UXO/Mine Victim Report are to be used.
- b. Mined areas. The Mined Area Report is to be used.

Note: The details included in the **Mined Area Report** require some investigation of the areas, which are beyond the capability of UXO/MRE or UXO mine VA organisations. UXO/MRE and UXO mine VA organisations are to fill out the general details parts of the report based on the information they receive and forward the incomplete report to the NRA offices.

- c. UXOs. The details that should be reported are:
 - (1) Location of the item(s) by map reference or GPS reading. A sketch of the location should also be provided.
 - (2) Type and quantity of item(s). If known, the common name should be provided, if not a detailed description should be provided. If possible, photographs should also be provided.
 - (3) Details of the affect that the UXO is having i.e. restricting land use or posing a risk to communities.
 - (4) Any marking systems used and if known, who emplaced the marking systems.
 - (5) Contact details of local personnel who may assist in locating the item(s).

There is no designated format for the reporting of UXOs. This information is to be passed to the NRA provincial office(not to the NRA head office) by whatever means is available.

8. Principles of UXO/MRE

All UXO/MRE activities are to conform to the 8 accepted principles of UXO/MRE:

- a. Stakeholder involvement. Stakeholders are to be involved in each stage of an UXO/MRE project to ensure that:
 - (1) The needs and priorities of UXO-affected communities and groups are addressed.
 - (2) Government of Lao PDR (GOL) development strategies and plans are taken into account.
 - (3) UXO/mine action supports and enables humanitarian and development activities.
- b. Coordination. UXO/MRE activities are to be well coordinated, both between and within projects.
- c. Integration. UXO/MRE activities should, where possible, be integrated with the other UXO/mine action, humanitarian and development activities.
- d. Community participation and ownership. Members of the target communities should be provided the opportunity to participate in every stage of UXO/MRE activities to encourage ownership and appropriateness of activities.
- e. Information management. UXO/MRE projects are to contribute regular reports to the NRA head office so that data can be stored in the NRA national database and allow for the efficient and effective distribution of information to the NRA provincial offices, UXO/mine action organisations and other UXO/mine action stakeholders.
- f. Appropriate targeting. UXO/MRE projects are to be planned and implemented to target high risk areas (high contamination and high casualties) and high risk groups. Projects must also take account of the different needs, priorities, gender norms and cultural values of target communities and the age and sex of target groups within those communities.
- g. Education. UXO/MRE activities are to employ effective educational methodologies appropriate to the target communities and target groups within those communities.
- h. Training. All risk educators, whether community, government or NGO, should receive appropriate training and support to conduct activities. All project personnel carrying out UXO/MRE are to have been trained, or have the appropriate qualifications and experience, for the UXO/MRE activities they are to undertake.

9. Design and Development of UXO/MRE Projects

All UXO/MRE projects are to have a documented project plan. The design and development of UXO/MRE projects is to be carried out to ensure that the project plan:

- a. Is based on a clearly identified need as identified through a comprehensive needs assessment or other formal study.
- b. Conforms to the priorities included in the UXO/Mine Action Sector Strategic Plan and the UXO/MRE Sub-Sector Strategic Plan, developed by the NRA supported by the sub-sector TWG.

- c. Achieves measurable outcomes and the means by which outcomes are to be measured are included in the project plan.
- d. Includes monitoring and evaluation. More on monitoring and evaluation of UXO/MRE is included in sections 12 and 13 below.
- e. Identifies the nature of the risks that communities are taking, or are involuntarily exposed to, due to the presence of UXO hazards.
- f. Involves the target groups and other relevant stakeholders in project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- g. Is based on appropriate educational methodologies, materials and means of delivery.
- h. Takes into account any risk of potential negative side effects associated with the activities.
- i. Develops local capacity leading to long term sustainability where appropriate.
- j. Provides for co-ordination and interaction between the UXO/MRE organisation and relevant national and local government authorities including the NRA.
- k. Provides for co-ordination and interaction between the UXO/MRE organisation, and other UXO/mine action, humanitarian and development organisations.
- l. Includes specific reporting requirements.

In addition, the design and development of UXO/MRE projects should ensure that the resulting project plan:

- a. Is culturally appropriate.
- b. Draws on lessons learned from previous UXO/MRE activities.
- c. Does not discriminate against certain groups or individuals due to age, sex, race, ethnicity, religion, disability or social status.
- d. Is flexible and adaptable.

10. Approval of UXO/MRE Project Plans

Approval of UXO/MRE project plans is to be obtained from the NRA prior to the UXO/MRE activities commencing.

The requirement for approval applies to each separate UXO/MRE project, and approval will be primarily based on the project complying with the requirements of these NS. Approval of UXO/MRE projects by the NRA will be assisted by the UXO/MRE sub-sector TWG.

11. Accreditation of UXO/MRE Organisations

All UXO/MRE organisations are to be accredited to operate in Lao PDR in accordance with the requirements of **Chapter 2 of NS, Accreditation of UXO/Mine Action Organisations.**

In addition to the assessment described in Chapter 2, further assessment will be carried out on any project plans presented by the UXO/MRE organisation. Such assessment will be carried out to ensure that the plan conforms to the UXO/MRE project design and development criteria included in section 9 above.

The NRA will ensure that all personnel carrying out assessments for accreditation for UXO/MRE have appropriate qualifications, and relevant experience in conducting UXO/MRE in Lao PDR.

12. Monitoring (Quality Assurance (QA)) of UXO/MRE Activities

For UXO/MRE, monitoring should focus on the organisation fulfilling the requirements of their project plan (process indicators) and the impact of the project on the target groups (impact indicators). This should also include consideration of the external factors that affect the UXO/MRE activities and its outcomes and impact.

12.1. Internal Monitoring

Organisations carrying out UXO/MRE projects are to include internal monitoring of the UXO/MRE in their project plan. Monitoring is to cover the progress in the implementation of the project, compliance with the requirements of the project plan, measuring of project outcomes and impacts, and monitoring of any changes in the environment in which the project outputs are delivered.

Measuring the progress in the implementation of the project may include the following indicators:

- a. Education and training packages developed.
- b. Education and training delivered.
- c. UXO/MRE materials developed.
- d. Messages delivered .
- e. Information exchange:
 - (1) To affected communities about UXO/mine action activities.
 - (2) To UXO/mine action organisations (including national and provincial authorities) about UXO contamination, the effects of this contamination on communities and the risks taken by communities as a result of this contamination.

When internal monitoring identifies significant changes in the environment in which a project's outputs are delivered, the UXO/MRE organisation should review, and if necessary, amend their project plan to ensure that the UXO/MRE activities remain relevant. Significant changes to a project plan should be notified to the NRA.

Measuring the outcome or impact of a project assesses the progress towards reaching objectives and what impact the project has on the target groups. Measuring the outcome or impact of a project may include the following indicators:

- a. A reduction in the number of deaths and injuries from UXO.
- b. A heightened awareness of the risk of UXO to individuals.

- c. Attitude and behaviour change .
- d. Participation.
- e. Reporting and responsiveness.
- f. Sustainability and community initiatives.

Internal monitoring should also consider other external factors that may affect project impact. Indicators such as awareness and behaviour change have many external factors that influence them and this must be taken into consideration when measuring impact.

Internal monitoring should be carried out on a regular basis.

12.2. External Monitoring

UXO/MRE activities may be subject to external monitoring by the NRA. The aim of this monitoring is to ensure that activities are being carried out effectively and in accordance with the plan approved by the NRA. The results of any external monitoring by the NRA will be formally notified in writing to the UXO/MRE organisation concerned.

12.3. Corrective Action

When monitoring identifies any deficiencies with the management or implementation of a project, the organisation concerned is to take action to correct these deficiencies. If such deficiencies were identified by external monitoring, further external monitoring may be scheduled by the NRA to ensure the action taken is appropriate.

Further guidance on monitoring of UXO/MRE is included in **IMAS 12.10 Mine Risk Education**.

13. Evaluation of UXO/MRE Projects

UXO/MRE organisations are to include external evaluation as part of any UXO/MRE project design, development, planning and implementation. Evaluation of UXO/MRE should where possible cover:

- a. Relevance and appropriateness. The extent to which the project meets the particular needs, expectations and priorities of the target group, NRA, implementing organisation and, where applicable, the donor.
- b. Effectiveness. The extent to which the project achieves its objectives and goals.
- c. Efficiency. The extent to which the project has achieved its outputs (qualitative and quantitative) in relation to the inputs, in particular resources and costs.
- d. Impact. The long-term benefits of the project to the target group and other stakeholders, whether directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.
- e. Sustainability. The probability that the benefits achieved by the project will continue after inputs such as external funding and personnel assistance cease.

In commissioning evaluations UXO/MRE organisations should ensure that:

- a. All stages of a project cycle are covered.

- b. Where possible and relevant, all stakeholders are involved in the evaluation and the evaluation benefits all stakeholders.
- c. A systematic and objective approach to evaluation is applied.
- d. Written terms of reference for the evaluation are prepared and agreed by all relevant stakeholders. External consultants/evaluators are selected through a transparent selection process.
- e. Evaluators, including external consultants, are properly briefed and supported and behave in a professional and impartial way.
- f. The results of the evaluation are disseminated as widely as possible to stakeholders including donors, NRA offices, other UXO/MRE organisations and target groups of a project.
- g. That evaluation results and recommendations are applied to future UXO/MRE projects carried out by the same organisation in Lao PDR.

Further guidance on evaluation is included in **IMAS 14.10 Guide to the evaluation of mine action interventions** and **IMAS 12.10 Mine Risk Education**.

14. Training and Qualifications

All risk educators, whether community, government or NGO, should receive appropriate training and support to conduct activities. All project personnel carrying out UXO/MRE are to have been trained, or have the appropriate qualifications and experience, for the UXO/MRE activities they are to undertake. Records of training and qualifications of UXO/MRE project staff are to be maintained by UXO/MRE organisations and are to be available for inspection by NRA external Quality Management (QM) inspection teams as required.

15. Reporting UXO/MRE Activities

15.1. Progress Reporting

UXO/MRE organisations are to submit progress reports on their UXO/MRE activities from the previous month in accordance with **Chapter 24 of NS, Information Management**. The format to be used is the Monthly Progress Report, which shows details of what is to be included in the report.

15.2. UXO/MRE Activity Reporting

Due to the variety of activities that may be carried out as part of UXO/MRE, specific requirements for UXO/MRE activity reporting will be determined by the NRA during the UXO/MRE project approval process. Generally, two types of reports will be required.

15.2.1. UXO/MRE Activity Report

The **UXO/MRE Activity Report** is used to report the completion of routine UXO/MRE activities. When required, the **UXO/MRE Activity Report** is to be filled out by the organisation concerned and submitted to the NRA head office in accordance with **Chapter 24 NS, Information Management**. Details of the information to be reported are included in the report form.

15.2.2. Narrative Reports

Narrative reports may be required (as determined by the NRA), for MRE projects or campaigns that continue over an extended period. Narrative reports may cover the complete UXO/MRE project or significant phases in a project. For curriculum-based risk education in schools, progress reports will be submitted periodically at relevant times in the school year as agreed with the NRA.

Normally, the reporting requirements included in any UXO/MRE project design (see section 9 above) will satisfy the reporting requirements of the NRA.

15.3. Report Numbering

Each UXO/MRE organisation will be allocated a three letter code by the NRA. This three letter code is to be prefixed to the organisations task numbering system and used in all reports that originate from that organisation.

16. Medical Support to UXO/MRE Activities

The medical support provided to UXO/MRE field teams is to conform to the requirements of **Chapter 16 of NS, Medical Support to UXO Clearance Operations.**

17. Personal Safety of UXO/MRE Personnel

UXO/MRE organisations are to comply with the following requirements regarding the safety of their personnel:

- a. UXO/MRE personnel are to receive appropriate UXO recognition and awareness training before deploying to work in UXO affected areas.
- b. UXO/MRE personnel are to be familiar with all marking systems used in Lao PDR, including improvised marking systems.
- c. All UXO/MRE activities are to be conducted from known safe areas.
- d. UXO/MRE personnel visiting a clearance worksite are to follow the instructions of the clearance worksite supervisor.
- e. UXO/MRE personnel are not to handle UXO.