

# LAO PDR NATIONAL UXO/MINE ACTION STANDARDS (NS)



## Chapter Fourteen UXO and Mine Victim Assistance

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

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## **UXO and Mine Victim Assistance (VA)**

### **1. Introduction**

The provision of assistance to victims of UXO and mines is one of the five fundamental components of UXO/mine action. As such UXO/mine action programmes must ensure that assistance for victims is included in the planning, development and implementation of the programme.

Victim Assistance (VA) covers more than just the medical care to treat the results of a UXO or mine accident. VA must also cover the rehabilitation of victims and their full reintegration into society. Additionally, VA does not just involve personnel injured by these devices; VA also includes families and communities that have suffered as a result of UXO.

UXO victims in Lao PDR join other People with Disabilities (PWD) to make up one of the poorest sectors of society. It is these sectors that the Government of Lao PDR (GOL) seeks to assist as it implements its development strategies and plans. The needs of PWD must be addressed so that they are able to take their full place in society and to achieve their full potential.

The Lao PDR National Regulatory Authority (NRA) as the authority for the control and regulation of UXO/mine action in Lao PDR, has a responsibility to ensure that the needs of victims of UXO are addressed within the UXO/mine action sector. However, the needs of UXO victims should not be addressed in isolation, efforts to assist victims of UXO must be integrated with national efforts to assist PWD in general.

### **2. Scope**

This National UXO/Mine Action Standard (NS) provides guidelines and procedures for the provision of UXOVA in Lao PDR.

While this NS specifically refers to UXO VA, it is acknowledged that UXO VA must be integrated with the general assistance to PWD in Lao PDR.

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

### **3. Applicability**

This NS applies to organisations carrying out or intending to carry out UXO VA in Lao PDR.

### **4. Definitions**

The following definitions relate to UXO VA:

- a. A victim is an individual who has suffered harm as a result of a UXO accident. It thus includes those killed by UXO.

Note: In the context of victim assistance, the term victim may also include dependants of a UXO casualty.

- b. Victim assistance refers to all aid, relief, comfort and support provided to victims with the purpose of reducing the immediate and long-term medical, economic, social and psychological implications of their trauma.<sup>1</sup>

In a wider context VA refers to all care and rehabilitation activities that aim to meet the immediate and long term needs of victims and their families.

#### **4.1. Medical Terminology**

The following UXO VA medical terminology is used in this NS:

- a. Orthotics. The profession that deals with the use of specialised mechanical devices to support or to supplement weakened or abnormal joints or limbs.
- b. Prosthetics. The production and application of artificial body parts. Prosthetics may also be described as biomechanics.

### **5. UXO VA – Groups of Activities**

UXO VA is made up of seven complementary groups of activities that cover assistance to a victim from the time of a UXO accident through to the full reintegration of the victim as a fully functioning member of society.

Also included in the groups of activities are advocacy for the rights of UXO victims and data collection to provide the basis for the prioritisation and planning of effective and sustainable VA programmes.

The UXO VA groups of activities are described below.

#### **5.1. Emergency Medical Care**

Emergency medical care covers the activities that will support a UXO victim from the moment that an accident occurs through to the provision of definitive surgical care resulting in the victim's condition being stabilised. Emergency medical care includes emergency assistance at the scene of the accident, transfer to hospital(s), surgery and recuperation from surgery.

#### **5.2. Continuing Medical Care**

Continuing medical care is the ongoing medical care provided from the time that a victim's condition is stabilised after surgery through to a time when a victim is able to live in reasonable comfort with the injuries sustained. In some cases such medical care may be necessary throughout the life of the victim.

#### **5.3. Physical Rehabilitation**

Physical rehabilitation includes the provision of prosthetic and orthotic devices, wheelchairs and walking aids, as well as the training in their use. Not all surviving UXO victims will need physical rehabilitation.

#### **5.4. Psychological and Social Support**

Psychological and social support includes the counselling and advisory support provided to UXO victims and their families in order to assist them to adjust to their new status and to cope with their new circumstances.

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1. The two definitions above are adapted from IMAS 04.10.

Note: Such support may also be provided to families of victims that did not survive a UXO accident.

### **5.5. Employment and Economic Integration**

Employment and economic integration involves activities such as vocational training and job placement to provide economic independence for victims and their families. In some cases specific industries or businesses may be established to provide employment to UXO victims or support may be provided to start up small businesses.

### **5.6. Advocacy for the Rights of UXO Victims**

Disabled people, who are very often marginalised, must have legal protection against discrimination, and assurance of an acceptable level of care and access to services. In order for this to be realised, advocacy for the rights of UXO victims must be actively carried out.

### **5.7. Data Collection**

Data collection is needed to provide the basis for the prioritisation and planning of effective and sustainable UXO VA projects. UXO VA must include systems and procedures for the gathering of and managing information on UXO accidents and UXO victims.

## **6. Scope of UXO VA in Lao PDR**

In the context of Lao PDR, UXO VA is assistance given to the UXO victims and their immediate families.

Note: Assistance may also be provided to families of victims that did not survive a UXO accident.

UXO VA in Lao PDR includes all necessary support to enable UXO victims to... “develop their full potential so they may live as agents of their own destiny”.<sup>2</sup>

## **7. Compliance with Humanitarian Principles**

All UXO VA 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.
- 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.

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2. Pledge by the Government of Lao PDR on becoming a signatory to the ESCAP Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region.

## 8. Information Gathering

All UXO/mine action organisations operating in Lao PDR, including the NRA provincial offices, have a responsibility for gathering information on UXO accidents and UXO victims in Lao PDR and for reporting this information to the NRA. The **UXO/Mine Accident Report** and **UXO/Mine Victim Report** are to be used for such reports.

The NRA provincial office is responsible for the establishment of systems and procedures for the collection and reporting of information on UXO accidents and victims. These systems should use NRA provincial and district office and other local Government resources; the resources of UXO/mine action organisations operating within the province; and the village/community leaders to collect and pass on information.

Note: This responsibility also includes notifying all information gathering stakeholders, including local communities, of the systems for the collection of information.

The system should involve passing information by whatever means are available, from villages/communities up through the various levels of provincial government to the NRA provincial office. Information should be actively sought during routine visits by NRA provincial and district staff and other local government officials to localities, villages and organisations working within the province (not necessarily UXO/mine action organisations); and through visits to district and provincial facilities such as hospitals.

Information obtained should be summarised by the NRA provincial offices in the relevant reports (see above) and passed to the NRA. When information received is incomplete the NRA provincial office should follow up the matter to obtain a complete set of information. The NRA provincial office should ensure that when reporting information, data is not inadvertently duplicated.

### 8.1. NRA Provincial Office Responsibilities for Acting on Information

NRA provincial offices should act on UXO accident and victim information received as follows:

- a. Ensure that surviving victims or their families are advised about UXO/mine VA available, either within the province or nationally.
- b. Where applicable, notify any UXO/mine VA organisations operating in the province about surviving victims.
- c. Forward copies of **UXO/Mine Accident Reports** and **UXO/Mine Victim Reports** to the NRA head office after making comments on any action taken by the NRA provincial office on the report.

## 9. Advocacy for the Rights of Victims

UXO/mine action organisations, including the NRA, have a general responsibility to advocate for the rights of UXO victims and their families, in addition to advocating for other aspects of UXO/mine action.

Advocacy falls into three parts:

- a. Ensuring that UXO victims are treated equitably under the laws of Lao PDR.
- b. Ensuring that UXO victims avail themselves of the rights that they have under existing laws.

- c. Working to promote laws that support the rights of UXO victims under international conventions ratified by the GOL.

When UXO/mine action organisations have opportunities to discuss aspects of UXO/mine action with GOL representatives, donors and other relevant organisations, they should, where possible and appropriate, use these opportunities to advocate for the rights of UXO victims.

## **10. Strategic Planning for UXO VA**

Strategic planning for the UXO/mine action sector in Lao PDR is carried out by the NRA supported by the UXO/mine action sub-sector Technical Working Groups (TWGs); UXO/mine clearance, UXO/Mine Risk Education (UXO/MRE) and VA. Each TWG also assists the NRA in the development of sub-sector plans.

UXO VA interventions carried out in Lao PDR are to conform to the priorities included in the VA sub-sector plans.

## **11. Design and Development of UXO VA Projects**

The design and development of UXO VA projects is to conform to the following criteria:

- a. The project is to have a documented project plan.
- b. The project must address one or more of the groups of activities covered in sections 5.1 to 5.5 above.
- c. The project is to be based on a clearly identified need resulting from a comprehensive needs assessment or other formal study.
- d. The project is to conform to the priorities included in the UXO/mine action sector strategic plan and the any VA sub-sector plans developed by the NRA supported by the sub-sector TWGs.
- e. The project is to be designed and developed to achieve measurable outcomes and the means by which outcomes are to be measured included in the project plan.
- f. The project is to include monitoring and evaluation. More on monitoring and evaluation of UXO VA is included in sections 14 and 15 below.
- g. The project involves relevant stakeholders at the national, organisational and local levels.
- h. The project includes an appropriate level of co-ordination and interaction between the applicant and relevant national and local government authorities including the NRA.
- i. The design and development of the project includes consideration of mainstreaming UXO VA with general assistance to PWD.

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

- a. Is culturally appropriate.
- b. Where possible, involves the intended beneficiaries in implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

- c. Draws on lessons learned from previous UXO VA activities.
- d. Reflects the ongoing and long-term nature of UXO VA.
- e. Does not discriminate against certain groups or individuals due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability or social status.
- f. Is flexible and adaptable.

## **12. Endorsement of UXO VA Projects**

Endorsement of UXO VA project plans is to be obtained from the NRA prior to the UXO VA activities commencing. This is in addition to any necessary formal agreement with GOL Ministries.

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

## **13. Accreditation of UXO VA Organisations**

All organisations intending to carry out UXO VA in Lao PDR 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 VA organisation. Such assessment will be carried out to ensure that the plan conforms to the design and development criteria included in section 11 above.

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

## **14. Monitoring (Quality Assurance (QA)) of UXO VA Projects**

### **14.1. Internal Monitoring**

Organisations carrying out UXO VA projects are to include internal monitoring of the VA in their project plan. Monitoring is to cover the progress in the implementation of the project, compliance with the requirements of the project plan and monitoring of any changes in the environment in which the project outputs are delivered. Internal monitoring should be carried out on a regular basis.

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

### **14.2. External Monitoring**

UXO VA activities maybe 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 endorsed by the NRA. The results of any external monitoring by the NRA will be formally notified in writing to the UXO VA organisation concerned.

### 14.3. 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.

### 15. Evaluation of UXO VA Projects

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

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

In commissioning evaluations UXO VA organisations should ensure that:

- a. All stages of a project cycle are covered.
- b. 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.
- e. Evaluators, including external consultants, are properly briefed and supported and behave in a professional and impartial way.
- f. The results of evaluation are disseminated as widely as possible to stakeholders including donors, NRA head office and the NRA provincial office, other UXO VA organisations and beneficiaries of a project.
- g. That results of the evaluation are applied to future UXO VA 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**.

## 16. Quality Control (QC)

UXO VA organisations involved in the manufacture of artificial body parts (prostheses) or support devices to assist PWD (orthoses) are to document and implement appropriate QC procedures to ensure that the product is fit for its intended purpose. Such procedures are to be available for inspection by NRA external QM teams as required.

## 17. Training and Qualifications

All personnel carrying out UXO VA are to have been trained, or have the appropriate qualifications and experience, for the UXO VA activities they are to undertake.

Records of training and qualifications of UXO VA staff are to be maintained by UXO VA organisations and are to be available for inspection by NRA external monitoring teams as required.

Specific details of the training and qualifications requirements for certain activities are included in the following sections.

### 17.1. Emergency Medical Care

Personnel responsible for the provision of emergency medical care at the scene of an UXO accident should have training, or other similar qualifications, in the relevant core competencies required for a trauma medic in support of UXO clearance operations. Details of these competencies are included in the NS Support Document **NRA Training Standards for Lao PDR**.

### 17.2. Physical Rehabilitation

Personnel responsible for the manufacture and fitting of prosthetic and orthotic devices are to have training and qualifications in their respective roles in accordance with standards set by the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO). Details of the standards for the three categories of professionals recognised by ISPO are included in the **ISPO Categories of Professionals** folder in the NS Support Documents included with these NS.

### 17.3. Professional Medical Care

Personnel responsible for the provision of professional medical care to UXO victims are to have training and qualifications in accordance with the training and qualifications standards established by the Ministry of Health in Lao PDR. These personnel include those responsible for providing:

- a. Surgical care, including amputation surgery.
- b. Continued medical care.
- c. Physiotherapy.
- d. Occupational therapy.
- e. Psychological counselling.

## **18. Reporting UXO VA Activities**

UXO VA organisations are to submit progress reports on their 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.

### **18.1. Report Numbering**

Each UXO VA 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.

## **19. Information Management (IM)**

The NRA manages an Information Management (IM) system database, which contains data relevant to UXO VA and in particular UXO accident and victim information.

Information from this database is available to all UXO/mine action organisations, including organisations providing assistance to UXO victims as part of a wider programme of assistance to victims in general.

Requests for information from the NRA database are to be submitted in writing to the NRA Director.

The NRA will endeavour to meet all information needs of UXO/mine action stakeholders, however in some cases there may be external restrictions imposed on NRA concerning the release of information to third parties. When such restrictions apply the requesting agency will be notified by the NRA.