

# Korea pledges ongoing financial support for UXO clearance

**A specialist team gives a UXO clearance demonstration for guests during a field visit last week.  
Times Reporters**

The Republic of Korea will provide US\$5.5 million for the second phase of a plan to improve unexploded ordnance (UXO) survivors' quality of life after the first phase finishes this year.

Korean Ambassador to the Lao PDR, Mr Shin Sung-soon, told media of his country's commitment during a visit to Xieng Khuang province on Friday with representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the National Regulatory Authority (NRA) of Laos.

He visited the province to learn about the UXO situation there and to monitor victim assistance activities that Korea has supported since 2014.

Mr Shin Sung-soon said the Korean government will continue to support the second phase in pushing forward the Lao government's efforts to remove UXO in farming areas as well as supporting people who were injured in UXO-related accidents by funding vocational training.

This would be done through UNDP with US\$3 million and US\$2.5 million for bilateral assistance via KOICA.

The second project is expected to be implemented over four years from 2019 to 2022.

Mr Shin Sung-soon stressed the need for Laos to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 18: Lives Safe from UXO, and meet the challenges in funding UXO clearance. He hoped the financial support from Korea would be a model for other nations to follow.

Since 2014, KOICA has supported the National Regulatory Authority, which is in charge of policymaking, coordination, and quality assurance relating to unexploded ordnance.

The support is channelled through a UNDP partnership and aims to reduce the impact of UXO, ensuring economic support for UXO-affected people and strengthening the capacity of the NRA.

The main components of the project are mine risk education activities, capacity building and NRA office operations, vocational training and economic support for UXO survivors, humanitarian teams of the Lao People's Army for UXO clearance, and quality assurance and quality control activities.

With this support, the government has established five humanitarian UXO clearance teams in the Lao People's Army which are working in provinces not covered by UXO Lao.

In addition, the NRA has provided vocational training and economic support for UXO survivors in the provinces of Xieng Khuang, Savannakhet and Huaphan.



The US Ambassador (middle), Korean Ambassador (third from right), Director General of NRA (fourth from right) took photo with a UXO victim and local authority officials in Paek district, Xiengkhouang province.



Korean Ambassador and Director General of NRA observed the UXO clearance demonstration in Paek district, Xiengkhouang province.