



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

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No:...../NRA.O.CL

Vientiane Capital, date: 09 AUG 2016

**Record of Clearance Technical Working Group  
(TWG) Meeting, Quarter II/2016 on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2016.**

**I. Purpose:**

To discuss about Technical Issues, Standards, Procedures and the Implementation of UXO Surveys and Clearance in Quarter II/2016 of the UXO Operators including the Humanitarian UXO Clearance Organizations and UXO Clearance Companies.

**II. Time and Venue:**

The TWG meeting was commenced at 08:30 am and closed at 15:30 pm of 28<sup>th</sup> July 2016 in the meeting room of NRA Office, chaired by Mr. Bounphamith Somvichith, Deputy Director General of NRA, in charge of Operations.

**III. Meeting Participants:**

Totally 25 representatives from Humanitarian UXO Clearance Organizations, the Army Humanitarian UXO Clearance Group, Private UXO Clearance Companies, Representatives from Donors and concerned staff from NRA Office (Registration sheet is enclosed).

**IV. Outline of the Topics of the Meeting:**

The participants in this TWG Meeting have discussed on the main 8 topics as:

1. Reviewed some issues that already discussed in the last TWG meeting.
2. The destruction of UXO found during NTS and the insufficient supplying of Explosive.
3. The permanent markings on the cleared site and on the TS site.
4. The Movement of Cluster Munitions.
5. Results of conducting QC on NTS and TS work of QM Team of NRA to some UXO Operators.
6. Conclusion, the first half of 2016 and work plan for the Second half of 2016 of Operators.
7. The requirement of DCA for UXO Destructions in Phongsaly Province.
8. The most efficient communication between Operators, Local People and Authorities.

**V. The Outline of Discussion:**

• **Issue agreed in the last TWG meeting, Quarter I/2016:**

1. Four Survey Report Formats that already updated and NRA officially announced to operators to use; these are: Non-Technical Survey (NTS) Report, Technical Survey (TS) Report, Roving Task Report and Clearance Completion Report. So far, every organisation has already used unanimously, except NPA which still used

their own format, which it has been noticed that there is some information that could not be covered, especially the information about "Doner". Therefore, NPA should follow and use the formats that NRA already announced to use.

- **Some Outstanding Issues from the last TWG meeting, Quarter I/2016:**

2. **The Destruction of UXO during Non-Technical Survey (NTS).**

In the last TWG, this topic has not yet agreed. Due to it is very important, it relates to the safety of the teams and people in communities. Therefore, this meeting all participants unanimously agreed that: all UXOs found during NTS must be destroyed within 48 hours. If it is necessary to leave it until overnight, the operator must inform local authority and organise to guards it.

For the shortage of explosive among operators, NPA and UXO Lao have planed to meet and discuss with concerned parties, especially Ministry of National Defence. Also NRA would discuss with Army Coordinator in NRA Office too.

3. **The Updating of National Standard:**

Especially, is relevant to the permanent markings on the cleared site, previously not yet agreed. In practice, operators have applied markings in different ways as per determined by their organizations. It causes difficulty when QM teams try to find the start point when conducting Quality Control the site. Therefore, this meeting all participants agreed that: the permanent marking on the cleared site must use concrete post or use UXO fragment burry in the start point only and take coordinate (GPS). For the other points such as: reference and turning points can use GPS value and mesure in metre or bearing. Markings in the Technical Survey site do not need to use permanent marking for each point, only use GPS.

4. **The movement of Clster Munitions (CM):**

It is an issue that in not uniformly practiced, in Standard of Operating (SOP) of opeartors, the moving of CM is not allowed. In practice, mostly national staff are the persons who moved CM, especially UXO Lao, because of some reasons such as: sometimes the explosive and the other destruction equipment is not sufficient, CM was found in the economic tree garden or undemeat the people's house, and there are many presumtions that might be possible for operators for moving CM, such as: sometimes, some organisations when they found many CMs scattered nearby to each other, they like to move them into the same place for destruction in the same time because they don't want to waste time runing firing cable. Some organizations, in clearance sites, the UXOs found would be gathered to the same place as well for destroying the same time because they don't want the fragments fall down on the cleared areas and afraid the quality assurance will not be passed.

Therefore, the better solution for this issue is that we must have a meeting again among operators and NRA Office to determine together what types of CMs can be considered moveable and under what state or conditions. NRA will develop a manual for determination types of CMs that maybe "moveable" or "absolutely can't move" to ensure

safety when conducting UXO destruction and will serve as a rule for following up across operators.

NPA will send a draft questionnaire form to operators to study and make decision within the organisational level first, then send it to NRA for calling operators for meeting to discuss and adopt it. This issue must be finalized soon, latest within quarter IV, 2016. Propose operators send their comment on this issue to Clearance Unit, NRA Office; Mr. Phommachanh, Mr. Bouaphet and Mr. Bouaphanh. While we have not yet got any agreement on this issue, operators have been allowed to carry out as previous time but must ensure that it is safe.

**5. Report on the results of conducting Quality Control to operators:**

Mr. Vilaysack Vongsayachanh, Head of QM Unit, NRA Office reported to the meeting that: currently there are 22 UXO operators across the country including private commercial companies both domestic and foreign companies. Of this, there are 6 Humanitarian UXO Clearance Organizations including Army Group Humanitarian UXO Clearance, 16 Private UXO clearance companies, 4 of these are foreign companies. In 2016, following annual work plan of QM Unit of NRA, since January to June 2016 we have conducted Quality Control (QC) such as Oumma UXO Clearance Company in Nong, and Vilaboury District and AusLao UXO Clearance Company for NamNgiem Project. In addition, we also have conducted quality control on UXO Lao and MAG totally 8 times, of this, 4 is UXO Lao.

Due to Quality Control on Non Technical Survey (NTS) and Technical Survey (TS) is new work for QM Unit of NRA, there for he would like to share experience with the meeting on the results of the first conducting QC of TS work on CHA site of NPA in Nachad village, Boualapha District, Khammouan Province. At the same time the team also conducted Quality Control on NTS work of NPA in 3 villages of Nongno, Nongseng and Dou village, Boualapha District, Khammouan Province, as following details: Before visiting we had conducted information analysis on NTS and TS from the information received from NPA reports.

- **Conducted QC on CHA site in Nachad village, Boualapha District:**

One 11 year old boy came to report to our team that he found CM, while he was digging cassava. Our team followed him to look at and found that this CM is in the cleared site of MAG which this site has just finished within this year, the coordinate point is about 5 metres different. This CM is in green box and we also found another 37 mm shell in this CHA which we assume that it might be moved from somewhere else.

- **Conducted QC on the NTS work of NPA in Nongno, Nongseng and Dou villages, Boualapha District:**

Our team interviewed people in these 3 villages, found that NTS in these 3 villages already complete by NPA but not yet TS. We conducted checking the paper found that: there is a village sketch map, information was recorded and there was a meeting with villagers. It has been noticed that, meeting with villagers, most of villagers did not attend because there are still a lot of CMs were found, some places where the NTS team of NPA could not access by motorcycle they did not go, they did not walk to those points.

The NTS team of NPA briefed to villagers that: the NTS in this village is complete, next step there would be TS team to come for TS but don't they didn't know when, if there is no funding they would not come any more.

Based on the report of villagers to our team: the UXO destruction conducted by NPA used only a few staff, there is no hailer, no radio communication. This, is against the procedures of the UXO Disposal. All information above is only a part of information we have got while we were visiting and QC the sites, it is real information that our team got reported from people and local authorities.

On this issue, the chairman of the meeting guided that: NRA must discuss with NPA when the report sent to NPA.

**6. Conclusion of the implementation of work for the first half of 2016 and work plan for the second half of 2016 of UXO operators:**

Based on the information and figures of the operators we have received from IMSMA, (please see annex enclosed). At the same time NRA proposed the operators who have not yet sent this information to NPA, please hurry and send as soon as possible.

**7. The requirement of Danish Church Aid (DCA) for UXO Destruction Work in Phongsaly Province:**

Mr. Per Gradin, Country Director of DCA Lao which his organization has implemented Mine Risk Education Activities in Phongsaly Province, especially in 2 Districts of Mai and Khoua. Due to there have been many reports from people related to the UXO found and DCA team went to identify the truth found that there was a lot of UXOs have contaminated, which is necessary to solve out and respond to the requests of the people. At first, by consulting with NRA, agreed DCA conducted gathering information and evidence. Due to DCA staff have not trained on this technical aspect therefore DCA has once again coordinated with NRA, NPA and UXO Lao to develop information collecting form and based on the previous roving task reports. Then DCA started collecting information since February 2016 in 32 villages. Spending about 2 hours in each village. It is very short time, the team could get report about UXOs found about 2,000 items and still have some 7 village more not yet reported. DCA team took coordinates and took pictures of those UXOs and documented them where they can do. Therefore, next step we would find out the ways how to respond to the people's requests, but who would be carried out was not yet known and etc.

This issue, the chairman of the meeting advised that. DCA must conduct surveys. Currently, NRA has discussed with Sterling International and UXO Lao for seeking how to solve and help.

**8. Good communication with people and authorities in local:**

Mr. Simon, Country Director of MAG Lao raised an issue related to the misunderstanding of local and people in the local to survey process: NTS and TS, which this issue, he think that it should be also involved with NRA as well, especially, the NRA Provincial Office to disminate and communicate to village level to understand more to the process of the surveys apart from the operators'teams.

At the same time, representative from MMG also raised this problem too, people did not give cooperation more than that people also asked for high compensation in case of some agricultural products were damaged by the UXO activities of the company in the its areas, event a small and low price they still demanded higher than its normal and truly cost.

Many organizations have similar view on this matter, authorities concerned should play more roles on the communication with communities. Handicap international also had commented that, due to her organization has faced similar problem for sometimes so she wanted, how we can do to make sure that in the authority level and our team leaders understand issues in the same way.

Chairman of the meeting, has acknowledged the problem, based on previous information, the authorities in each level also know this problem, especially in the case of MMG. Therefore, this issue would be discussed again among operators and NRA. NRA will invite representative from operators for meeting and discuss next week.

**VI. Conclusion:**

The TWG meeting closed about 15:30 pm.

**Chairman of the Meeting**  
  


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Mr.Bounphamith SOMVICHITH

**Meeting Recorder**  
- Bouaphanh Phanthasone.....  
- Bouaphet Phommavong.....  
