



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

# EVALUATION

OF THE UNDP CONTRIBUTION TO  
**MINE ACTION**

**COUNTRY CASE STUDY:**  
Lao People's Democratic Republic

Independent Evaluation Office

United Nations Development Programme





*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

# **EVALUATION**

OF THE UNDP CONTRIBUTION TO  
**MINE ACTION**

COUNTRY CASE STUDY:  
Lao People's Democratic Republic

**EVALUATION OF THE UNDP CONTRIBUTION TO MINE ACTION  
COUNTRY CASE STUDY: LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**

Copyright © UNDP 2016, all rights reserved.  
Manufactured in the United States of America.  
Printed on recycled paper.

The analysis and recommendations of this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Development Programme, its Executive Board or the United Nations Member States. This is an independent publication by the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) would like to thank all who contributed their time and effort to make this country case study possible. This country case study supports a broader evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Mine Action, and is one of three country case studies conducted (Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mozambique and Tajikistan).

The overall evaluation team was led by Alan Fox and included Charles Downs as Principal Consultant. Jo Durham contributed to the development of a Theory of Change for UNDP mine action. Dilnoor Panjwani developed the global portfolio analysis and provided research support. Sonam Choetsho, Concepcion Cole, Flora Jimenez, Antana Locs and Michelle Sy provided logistical and administrative support. Sasha Jahic managed the production of the report.

Each country case study included a team of international and national consultants. The Lao People's Democratic Republic case study was led by Jo Durham with Paul Davies, assisted by Visanou Hansana, Vatsana Somphet, and Vanphanom Sychaleun.

The IEO wishes to acknowledge the many people at UNDP and among its partners working on mine action across the globe who provided information, commented on report drafts and provided logistical support to the case study teams. Particular thanks goes to the UNDP headquarters management and staff overseeing the mine action programme: Stan Nkwain, Owen Shumba and Nathalie Prevost; and to the management and staff of the UNDP country office in Lao People's Democratic Republic. Special thanks go to the villages that hosted our visits and the individuals who patiently answered all our questions and were so welcoming and hospitable.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Executive Summary</b>  | <b>vii</b> |
| <b>Section 1. Introduction</b>  | <b>1</b>   |
| Country Background  | 1          |
| Armed Conflict and UXO Contamination  | 3          |
| National Mine Action Programme Partners   | 4          |
| <b>Section 2. Development of National Mine Action Strategy and UNDP Support</b>   | <b>7</b>   |
| <b>Section 3. Key Evaluation Questions and Results</b>  | <b>11</b>  |
| UNDP Relevance to the UXO/Mine Action Effort in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic  | 11         |
| UNDP Contribution to Results  | 16         |
| <b>Section 4. Reflections on a Theory of Change for UNDP Support to Mine Action</b>   | <b>33</b>  |
| UNDP’s Role in Relation to Immediate Results  | 33         |
| Immediate Results to Outcomes   | 34         |
| Outcomes to Impact  | 34         |
| <b>Section 5. Limitations</b>   | <b>41</b>  |
| <b>Section 6. Conclusions</b>   | <b>43</b>  |
| <b>Annexes</b>  |            |
| Annex 1. Acronyms   | 47         |
| Annex 2. Persons Met  | 49         |
| Annex 3. Theory of Change   | 51         |
| Annex 4. Chronology of Mine Action in Lao People’s Democratic Republic  | 53         |
| Annex 5. Community Case Studies   | 57         |
| Annex 6. Community Profiles   | 59         |
| Annex 7. Research Guidance and Tools Used for Community Case Studies  | 67         |
| Annex 8. Documents Consulted  | 71         |
| <b>Figures</b>  |            |
| Figure 1. Cluster munitions (CM) per hectare/Other items of UXO per hectare, lifetime of UXO Lao (excludes other operators) | 23         |





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following violent conflict, the continued presence of landmines and UXO, for example bombs and cluster munitions as well as other explosive remnants of war, pose a serious public health risk and a threat to future development.<sup>1</sup> Since the late 1980s, mine action has been the international community's response to this hazard. The term 'mine action' differentiates humanitarian demining activities from those with a military purpose. Mine action aims to create a post-conflict environment where people can not only live safely, free from the constraints of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO),<sup>2</sup> but also benefit from an increasing focus on the promotion of livelihoods.<sup>3</sup>

Despite over two decades of the involvement of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in mine action, there have been few evaluations of the impact on affected communities.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, the purpose of this evaluation was to determine, to the extent possible, the impact of the UNDP work in mine action undertaken in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Per capita, this country was the most heavily bombed country in the world as a result of aerial bombardment by the United States military during the Viet Nam War. This evaluation is one of three country case studies and contributes to the impact evaluation conducted by the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), *Evaluation of the UNDP Contribution to*

*Mine Action* (2016), which was part of the IEO approved work programme 2014–2015.

UNDP established a formal UXO/mine action programme in the country in 1995 when, with the United Nations Children's Fund, it assisted the Government to establish a national UXO/mine action programme. The programme operates in nine of the most affected provinces, namely, Huaphan and Luang Prabang, Savannakhet, Attapeu and Sekong, Khammouane and Champasak.

This qualitative evaluation was framed around the criteria of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development: relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and impact. It was also informed by a theory of change approach (see Annex 3). The evaluation was based on an extensive literature review, a structured questionnaire administered to eight former UNDP technical advisory staff, and interviews with 50 key informants in the capital, Vientiane, including via Skype. In addition, the evaluation team visited eight villages (three in Saravan Province, three in Attapeu Province, and two in Xieng Khouang Province) where UXO clearance had taken place in 2010 or before. Data were collected in community mapping/focus group discussions (eight female groups and eight male groups), interviews with eight village heads, 16 interviews with direct

---

1 Andersson, N., Dasousa, C.P., Paredes S., 'Social costs of landmines in four countries — Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia and Mozambique' (British Medical Journal; 311(7007):718-721, 1995); Bolton, M., 'Foreign aid and landmine clearance'. London: I.B. Touris & Co Ltd, 2010; Rutherford, K.R., 'Disarming states, the international movement to ban landmines'. Singapore: Praeger Security International, 2011.

2 United Nations Mine Action Service, IMAS 07.11: 'Guide for the management of mine risk education'. New York: UNMAS, 2003.

3 Horwood, C., 'Ideological and analytical foundations of mine action: Human rights and community impact'. Third World Quarterly. 24(5):939-54, 2003.

4 Maslen, S., 'Mine action after Diana: Progress in the struggle against landmines'. London: Pluto Press, 2003; Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), Sourcebook on socio-economic survey. 1st ed. Geneva: GICHD, 2011.

beneficiaries and 9 interviews with survivors of UXO incidents.

**Relevance:** Most respondents interviewed felt that UXO/mine action was still relevant to the needs of the country, as evidenced in government development strategies and plans. While a few questioned UNDP's ongoing relevance to the sector, most indicated that they valued the role that UNDP continues to play in mobilizing funds for the national programme. UNDP also played a crucial role in facilitating the participation of the Government in the Convention on Cluster Munitions. In 2008 Mozambique became the second State to sign the Convention and in 2010 hosted the First Meeting of States Parties, in Vientiane. This level of commitment to UXO/mine clearance was important to the country, given its needs, and relevant to the work of UNDP as well as of most donors. Nevertheless, several in-country donors have commented that the quality of policy dialogue on the issue has not been very courageous and that UNDP could be more active in facilitating greater transparency and accountability, together with timelier and more complete reporting. In particular, several donors have said that UNDP has not been very effective in advocating for pro-poor, inclusive and equitable UXO clearance linked to socioeconomic development in contaminated areas. Some also have thought that at times UNDP has been reactive rather than proactive, citing the establishment of the National Regulatory Authority (NRA) as one example. It could be argued, for example, that the NRA was established in response to donor demands and a prioritization of 'best practice' over 'best fit' for context.

**Effectiveness and UNDP contribution to results:** Most of UNDP's efforts have gone towards developing institutional capacity. Evidence of this capacity-building can be seen in the development of the institutional arrangements, Prime Ministerial decrees, policies, prac-

tices and systems that are required for the effective functioning of a UXO/mine action programme. UNDP has been less effective, however, at systematically developing management capacities, including the following: accountability and transparency mechanisms; quality management, monitoring and evaluation; pro-poor, gender-sensitive prioritization; stakeholder communication; data management; and use of adaptive management capacities. More positively, UNDP has coordinated and developed technical capacity, with most respondents reporting that UXO Lao provided a competent UXO clearance service. The effectiveness of some of the survey and clearance methods, however, was questioned and there are many examples of areas having been cleared that were found to have limited or no UXO. While the argument for this has often been that even the perception of UXO can prevent land use, this argument does not stand up to critical inspection in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, where contaminated land is commonly cultivated.

UNDP support for victim assistance has been mainly limited to covering staff salaries in the Victim Assistance Unit of the NRA and providing some support to the Victim Assistance Technical Working Group. In general, UNDP has paid very little attention to promoting gender equity and South-South cooperation. While UNDP has supported some study tours to Cambodia, it has not made use of advisers from the global South to assist in capacity development in the NRA and UXO Lao; almost all such advisers come from the global North.

**Outcomes to impacts:** A review of the data and available reports suggests that there are very few differences between pre- and post-clearance land use.<sup>5</sup> The NRA survey of victims revealed that by the start of the formal UXO action programme in 1995, the actual number of casualties was around 300 per annum and stayed at this figure until relatively recently, excluding a slight

---

5 National Regulatory Authority, Post-Clearance Impact Assessment, Vientiane, 2010.

increase in casualties around 2004–2008. This suggests that UXO action had a limited impact on casualty rates. In the communities visited, however, respondents were very happy that there had been UXO clearance in their village and they held UXO Lao with respect. Overwhelmingly, the most important benefit for women and men was a sense of safety and peace of mind, and the ability to live and work without having a constant underlying concern about safety for themselves and their children due to UXO injury. The extent to which the livelihoods of UXO survivors and their families have changed as a result of victim assistance is impossible to assess, but evidence suggests that the change brought about by victim assistance is minimal, given the lack of data on needs, the lack of a coordinated approach to service delivery, and low coverage. Despite this, the impact may be significant for some individual families who have been able to access services.

**Sustainability:** UNDP interventions are likely to be sustainable in most aspects of UNDP’s contributions to the UXO/mine action sector, provided the overall international funding to the sector is not reduced too rapidly. The primary output, or product, of the UXO project is land cleared of UXO to a depth of 25 cm and this product can be considered sustainable and as having enhanced land value. In their current form, however, neither the NRA office nor UXO Lao are sustainable without donor funding. The capacity of the NRA and UXO Lao to raise their own funds through cost-recovery mechanisms or directly from donors or government is also limited. In addition, exit strategies are not included in project contracts or the contracts of individual experts. Project documents, for example, do not include exit strategies linked to performance measures, monitoring systems and incentives, and individual advisers’ terms of reference do not include performance indicators for capacity development.



## Section 1

# INTRODUCTION

Following violent conflict, the continued presence of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) — for example bombs and cluster munitions, as well as other explosive remnants of war (ERW) — pose a serious public health risk and a threat to future development.<sup>6</sup> Since the late 1980s, mine action has been the international community's response to this hazard. The term 'mine action' differentiates humanitarian demining activities from those with a military purpose. Mine action aims to create a post-conflict environment where people can live safely, free from the constraints of landmines and UXO.<sup>7</sup> First

framed as a humanitarian response to allow the safe return of displaced people and to save lives, mine action has shifted over time to a focus on development and in particular the contribution to poverty reduction and promoting livelihoods.<sup>8</sup> However, there have been few evaluations of the impact of mine action on affected communities.<sup>9</sup> The purpose of this evaluation was to determine, to the extent possible, the impact of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) work in mine action undertaken in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The evaluation is one of three country case studies and contributes to



*Blu-26 remnants marked in the Yang Bong fields in Asingtai (New) Village, Samouy District, Saravan Province. Photo credit: UNDP/ Paul Davies*

- 
- 6 Andersson, N., Da Sousa C.P., and Paredes S., 'Social costs of landmines in four countries — Afghanistan, Bosnia, Cambodia and Mozambique'. *British Medical Journal* (1995) 311(7007):718-21.; Bolton, M., *Foreign aid and landmine clearance*. London: I.B. Touris & Co Ltd, 2010; Rutherford, K.R., *Disarming states, the international movement to ban landmines*. Singapore: Praeger Security International, 2011.
- 7 United Nations Mine Action Service. IMAS 07.11: Guide for the management of mine risk education. New York: UNMAS, 2003.
- 8 Horwood, C., 'Ideological and analytical foundations of mine action: Human rights and community impact'. *Third World Quarterly*. 2003;24(5):939-54; Maslen, S., 'Mine action after Diana: Progress in the struggle against landmines'. London: Pluto Press, 2003.
- 9 Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, *Sourcebook on socio-economic survey* (1st ed.). Geneva, 2011.

the impact evaluation of the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of UNDP on the UNDP contribution to mine action. This impact evaluation is part of the IEO work programme in 2014-2015, approved by the UNDP Executive Board.

## COUNTRY BACKGROUND

Lao People's Democratic Republic is a lower-middle-income country situated in South-East Asia, sharing borders with Cambodia to the south, Thailand to the west, Myanmar and China to the north, and Viet Nam to the east. The country has a Human Development Index of 0.569, ranking 139 out of 187 countries on the Index.<sup>10</sup> The demographic transition is under way, with the population having grown from 4,871,000 in 1995 to an estimated 6,803,699<sup>11</sup> in 2014. Alongside this, the country is experiencing rapid socioeconomic change as it becomes increasingly road-linked via key south-to-south and north-to-south transport corridors, and integration into the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

In 1893 the country was integrated into the French colonial empire and the country's border formally delineated by France as part of French Indo-China. Under the French, Laos was subject to benign neglect, with limited effort spent to develop the economy, improve social welfare or develop administrative capacity.<sup>12</sup>

Over time, the Lao people led an independence movement, declaring independence after the Second World War. Laos was under the supervision of Japan until 1945, after which time the

country returned to being a French Protectorate. In the 1950s, civil war broke out. The country was eventually drawn into the conflict between the the United States of America and the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam in the North.<sup>13</sup> The escalation of the Viet Nam War in the 1960s led to an intense bombing campaign by the United States military, which lasted for nine years (1964 to 1973). The victory of the Vietnamese and the Pathet Lao in 1975 led to the reunification of the country and establishment of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.<sup>14</sup>

The new Government inherited a country severely damaged by nine years of continuous aerial bombardment, an economy that had been artificially maintained by American aid,<sup>15</sup> and limited administrative capacity. Facing near economic collapse in 1979, the Government started to introduce economic reforms.<sup>16</sup> Since then, gross domestic product per capita has steadily increased, rising from around \$362 in 1995 to \$2,879 in 2011. At that point, the country was reclassified from being low-income to lower-middle-income. The country remains heavily reliant on official development assistance, which has increased sharply. From 2005 to 2008, it rose from \$301,940,000 to \$495,590,000. In 2013 it stood at \$421,000,000.<sup>17</sup>

Economic growth has brought improved socioeconomic indicators, including that for poverty, with the national poverty headcount declining from 46 percent in 1992 to 28 percent in 2008.<sup>18</sup> Economic growth has had limited impact on the structure of the labour market, however.

---

10 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-1-human-development-index-and-its-components>, accessed 12 August 2015.

11 CIA Factbook <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>, accessed 12 August 2015.

12 Evans, G., *Lao peasants under socialism and post-socialism*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1995. N.d. [published in its original version by Yale University Press, 1990].

13 Ibid.

14 Evans, G., 1995.

15 Stuart-Fox, M., *The politics of ritual and remembrance: Laos since 1975*. Canada: University of British Columbia 2000.

16 Evans G., 1995.

17 <http://data.worldbank.org/> accessed 19 August 2015.

18 Lao Ministry of Planning and Investment/World Bank, 2010.

Subsistence agriculture and related activities remain key livelihood activities, engaging approximately 71 percent of the population.<sup>19</sup> Rural/urban disparities have also increased, as has the Gini coefficient, from 0.30 in 1992 to 0.36 in 2008. Seven chronically poor provinces have been identified: Phongsaly, Luang Prabang, Huaphan, Xieng Khouang, Savannakhet, Sekong and Attapeu.<sup>20</sup> Of these, Luang Prabang, Huaphan, Xieng Khouang, Savannakhet, Sekong and Attapeu provinces have been identified as among those most impacted by UXO and have a UNDP-supported UXO/mine action programme. Most of the UXO in these provinces is located in rural areas, where many inhabitants are chronically poor in relative terms and are food insecure.<sup>21</sup>

Initially focused on the humanitarian need to save lives, contemporary UXO policy has been linked with the Government's rural development and poverty eradication policy. This policy focuses on increasing productivity and on concentrating resources and services in Focal Development Areas (FDAs). Implementing the policy involves relocating people to these development areas, which often require UXO clearance. Improved access to infrastructure is seen as a key driver of poverty reduction,<sup>22</sup> and in UXO-contaminated areas, clearance is often seen as a prerequisite for infrastructure investment. Contract farming particularly has become a mechanism for alleviating rural poverty, and remains central to future rural development plans. Large-scale concession areas are also part of the rural development plan and the Government is promoting smallholder rubber

production as a way of stabilizing shifting cultivation, and increasing the income of upland farmers. The results of the FDA programme, however, have been mixed, and some donors have expressed concern over the use of UXO funding for a programme that may lack adequate social safeguards.

## ARMED CONFLICT AND UXO CONTAMINATION

Following the end of colonial rule in Laos, the 1950s were marked both by civil war and attempts to secure neutrality for Laos, both by domestic and international leaders (for example at the Geneva Peace Conference in 1954). By the early 1960s, Laos found itself increasingly subsumed into the conflict in neighbouring Viet Nam. Most of the current UXO contamination in the country is the result of this Viet Nam War-era bombing campaign by the United States military (1964-1973).<sup>23</sup> The intensity of this campaign was such that per capita, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has the distinction of being the country with the heaviest UXO contamination in the world.<sup>24</sup> It is estimated that a total of 2 million tons of explosive ordnance was dropped on the country, including over 270 million explosive sub-munitions, commonly referred to as 'cluster munitions', or 'bombies' in the country. Much of the bombing was along what became known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail. This trail ran along the Lao/Viet Nam border and was used to channel support from the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam to nationalists in South Viet Nam. Much of the UXO is in these areas, which are predominately rural.<sup>25</sup>

---

19 World Bank, World Development Indicators. World Bank, 2012.

20 UNDP, Country analysis report: Lao People's Democratic Republic. Vientiane, 2012.

21 Epprecht M., Minot N., Dewina R., Messlerli P., and Heinimann, A., *The geography of poverty and inequality in the Lao PDR*. Berne: Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research North-South, Geographica Bernensia, and Washington, D.C.: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), 2008.

22 Davading S., Background paper: 'Lao PDR: Growth Analysis for a Small Resource-Rich Transition Economy'. Vientiane: World Bank, 2010.

23 National Regulatory Authority, Post-clearance impact assessment. Vientiane, 2010.

24 An estimated 2-3 million tons were dropped on the country.

25 Handicap International, 'Living with UXO', final report, national survey on the socio-economic impact of UXO in the Lao PDR. Vientiane, 1997.

The United States Department of State has provided the country with available strike-site data for the period 1964–1973. While the data are useful, they contain some inaccuracies. Although they indicate possible contamination sites, the data do not allow for an estimation of the failure rates of the various munitions dropped (although there are estimates of a 10–30 percent failure rate<sup>26</sup>). As a result, it is difficult to obtain an accurate assessment of hazardous UXO areas from the bombing data alone. Each cluster munition strike site, however, is estimated to have left a contamination footprint of up to 12 hectares. The recently adopted Cluster Munition Technical Survey (CMTS) should help to provide a more detailed estimate of contaminated areas. The survey is being implemented by the international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in UXO surveying and (in a hybrid form) by UXO Lao with UNDP support.

Immediately following the end of the Viet Nam War, UXO injuries were estimated to be about 1,500 per annum but by 1995 had stabilized to around 300 per annum and remained relatively stable, until around 2004, when there was a short-term upswing in this trend. The increase in the number of casualties is likely to be explained by an increase in the price of scrap metal, with people engaging in deliberate handling of UXO for its metal content.<sup>27</sup> Following the global financial crisis of 2008, as commodity prices decreased in general, so did the price of scrap metal, and the informal scrap metal-recovery trade slowed down. The number of UXO incidents has since declined steeply, and new casualty rates are below the NRA target of 75 injuries per annum. As elsewhere, males of working age are disproportionately harmed. Not all injuries result in long-term impairments, but it is estimated that 11 percent of disabilities in the country are due to UXO injury, making it

the third known cause of disability. Some caution is needed in interpreting UXO injuries and disabilities, however, as there is no systematic injury surveillance system or database of people with disabilities.

## **NATIONAL MINE ACTION PROGRAMME PARTNERS**

UNDP has partnered with a range of actors to provide support to the UXO sector over the years. United Nations organizations that UNDP has worked with include the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN-Habitat and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. In the early years of the programme, UNICEF was an important partner in establishing the Trust Fund and supporting mine risk education (MRE). Key government partners in MRE have been the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, and the Ministry of Education and Sport. The UNDP-supported National Regulatory Authority (NRA) has a MRE unit, as does UXO Lao. UXO Lao also undertakes direct delivery of MRE. In addition, various international organizations have delivered MRE over the years, including Save the Children USA, Handicap International (HI), Mines Advisory Group (MAG), World Education, Care International, Catholic Relief Services, and the Spirit of Soccer.

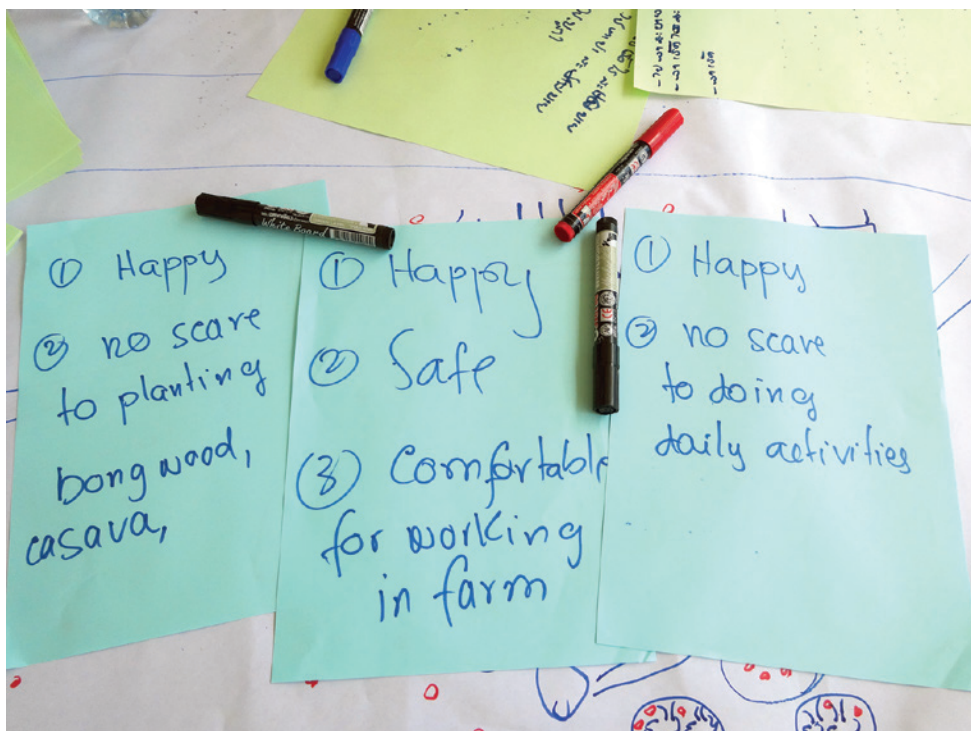
UNDP development partners over the two decades of UXO/mine action in the Lao People's Democratic Republic have included Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, Finland, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. In terms of UXO clearance, UNDP/UXO Lao implementing partners have included Gerbera, HI, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA),

---

26 Failure rates for munitions used in Lao PDR have varied between 10–30 percent; failure rates for munitions used in Lebanon in 2006 were reported to be approximately 50 percent.

27 UNICEF, Mine Risk Assessment. Vientiane, 2006.





*Outcomes of focus group discussion with beneficiaries on the impact of clearance, Asingtai (New) Village, Samouy District, Saravan Province. Photo credit: UNDP/Paul Davies*

World Vision, the Belgian military and the New Zealand military.

UNDP has provided limited direct support to victim assistance (VA), although it does support the NRA's Victim Assistance Unit. Australia has provided some support, including funding a national, retrospective household-level UXO survivor/victim survey. World Education has provided medical care to UXO survivors and has trained medical-service providers (from surgeons, nurses and lab technicians to village health volunteers) in emergency medical techniques. Other actors in Victim Assistance over the years include the National Committee for Disabled People (NCDP), the Centre for Medical Rehabilitation (under the Ministry of Health), the Association for Aid and Relief, the Government of Japan, Cooperative Orthotic and Prosthetic Enterprise, HI Belgium, and the Lao Disabled Peoples Association.

At the provincial and district levels, UXO Lao has also worked with other UNDP partners, including the World Food Programme (WFP), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Poverty Reduction Fund and UN-Habitat. Partnering with these United Nations (and other development) organizations sometimes leads to deploying resources to communities to undertake small tasks such as clearance for school latrines, fish ponds or small plots of land, leaving other priority areas in the community uncleared.<sup>28</sup>

Commercial operators in 2013 included ASA Power Engineering Co., Ltd, Phonhsackda UXO Clearance Co., Ltd, Sibounhueang UXO Clearance Co., Ltd, Sengphet UXO Clearance Co., Ltd, XTD UXO Clearance Co., Ltd, Bactec Lao, Ltd, Milsearch Lao EOD Sole Company Limited, and the Engineering Department, Ministry of National Defence in association with MMG Lane Xang Minerals, Ltd.

<sup>28</sup> National Regulatory Authority, Post-clearance impact assessment, Vientiane, 2010.



## Section 2

# DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL MINE ACTION STRATEGY AND UNDP SUPPORT

### **PRIOR TO UNDP ENGAGEMENT (1975–1995)**

Prior to UNDP engagement in UXO clearance efforts in 1995, UXO clearance was undertaken by the military, with technical training and equipment from Viet Nam and the Soviet Union. UXO clearance was also undertaken by commercial companies, including Milsearch, a joint private venture with the Lao military, funded by private investors or donors. Other interventions were also undertaken on the periphery of development projects by local de-miners with support from the military, but in many cases villagers were left to undertake clearance themselves.<sup>29</sup> In this early post-conflict phase of reconstruction and development, concerns for UXO rested primarily with provincial-level officials, while at the national level other concerns dominated.

In 1974, based on reports of UXO, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) imported five metal detectors to help refugees returning to the Plain of Jars in the province of Xieng Khouang; the programme was discontinued because of difficulties in maintaining the detectors. In 1975, following reports of fatalities and injuries resulting from cluster munitions, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and AFSC started a shovels project in Xieng Khouang, producing and providing thousands of shovels to farmers to use as safer tools than traditional hoes to cultivate UXO-infested land.<sup>30</sup> Working with the Lao Committee for Social and

Veterans Affairs in Xieng Khouang, MCC also partnered with 12 Soviet experts on an 18-month project and attempted mechanical clearance with an armoured tractor and flail.

Following at least a decade of effort, but with limited achievement, MCC contacted MAG, one of the early international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) working in the emerging sector of mine action. Together with the Lao Committee for Social and Veterans Affairs, they began a UXO removal project in Xieng Khouang, heralding the start of the formal UXO/mine action programme. MAG's initial technical reconnaissance in Xieng Khouang in 1993 relied on mine clearance rather than on explosive ordnance disposal using specialists with battle area clearance experience. Consequently, the initial MAG project adopted procedures and equipment more appropriate to minefield clearance than battle area clearance. While MAG subsequently adopted an approach more akin to battle area clearance, elements of a mine clearance approach persisted in the sector, including in UXO Lao into the 2000s.

### **DEVELOPMENT OF A FORMAL UXO/MINE ACTION PROGRAMME (1995–2002)**

With increasing visibility of the UXO issue and advocacy from MCC and MAG, UNDP and UNICEF established with the Government the Lao PDR Trust Fund for UXO clearance on 1 August 1995. The intent was to mobilize

29 Handicap International, 'Living with UXO', final report, national survey on the socioeconomic impact of UXO in the Lao PDR. Vientiane, 1997. Bolton M., 'Foreign aid and landmine clearance', London: I.B. Touris & Co, Ltd, 2010.

30 MCC, Timeline of Mennonite and Quaker work on cluster munitions.

funds and build the capacity of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare to plan, monitor and record the activities funded by the Trust Fund, and any other related activities, including private ventures. Projects financed through the Trust Fund could be executed through a range of entities, providing the focus was on affected communities. Projects could include the following activities: UXO clearance and associated awareness-raising; research into effective clearance techniques; food security or income-generating activities where food shortages were a result of UXO contamination; exploring the potential to develop a national commercial UXO clearance capacity; technical and management capacity-building; and strengthening health service capacities to manage casualties, from the acute trauma phase through to rehabilitation.

The Prime Minister's Decree Number 49, dated 13 February 1996, allowed the establishment of the Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme (UXO Lao) under the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare to coordinate activities related to UXO clearance and community awareness. The Ministry acted as the Chair of the Committee, and UXO Lao acted as the Secretariat until 2000, when a Prime Ministerial decree handed responsibility over to the newly created National Steering Committee Office. UXO Lao also became a service provider, and with UNDP support the programme was established in the nine provinces deemed to be the most contaminated according to a 1997 HI Socio-Economic Survey funded through the Trust Fund.

To enhance technical and management capacity of UXO Lao and mobilize financial support, UNDP secured support from international actors in each of the nine provinces where the programme was operational. These included Gerbera (Houaphan and Louangphabang

Provinces), HI (Savannakhet), NPA (Attapeu and Zekong), World Vision (Khammouan) and later the Belgian military (Champasak). MAG, who upon the establishment of UXO Lao had initially continued as the only other not-for-profit service provider, handed over staff and equipment to UXO Lao in 2000, making UXO Lao the sole not-for-profit provider.

### **CRISIS, REASSESSMENT AND REFORM (2002–2008)**

In 2002, a serious decline in funding, partly due to donor concerns regarding the lack of a credible estimate of the extent of UXO contamination as well as accountability issues, resulted in the letting go of a large number of staff. In response, UNDP and UXO Lao commissioned an evaluation of the sustainability of the Lao mine action entities.<sup>31</sup> The evaluation recommended separating the planning, coordination and regulatory functions of UXO Lao to another entity and opening the sector to more private and commercial actors, establishing a quasi-market.<sup>32</sup> This division of labour was consistent with that promoted by UNDP and other United Nations agencies and led to the establishment of the NRA in 2004. NRA was responsible for sector coordination and, with UXO Lao, was positioned as a service provider. Also in response to the evaluation, UNDP and the Government developed the first national strategic plan (Safe Path Forward 2003–2013).

### **INTEGRATION OF MINE/UXO CLEARANCE AND DEVELOPMENT (2008–2014)**

A UNDP-supported 2008 midterm evaluation recommended that the Safe Path Forward be revised to better account for the work of all operators and to include a focus on development and

---

31 Keeley, R., Allcock A., Singthilath, T., and Kongsaysy, M., Mission to Assess Future Sustainable Options of the Lao UXO Trust Fund and the UXO Lao Mine Action Programme, September 2002.

32 Delivery of public goods designed to reap the assumed efficiency gains of free markets without losing the equity benefits of traditional systems of public administration and financing.

poverty reduction.<sup>33</sup> UNDP supported the NRA to coordinate a participatory process to revise the strategy, which resulted in The Safe Path Forward II 2011–2020, approved in 2012.

At the same time, support also solidified for the Convention on Cluster Munitions. In 2008, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic had become the second State to sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions and in November 2010 hosted the First Meeting of States Parties. At this meeting, the UNDP Trust Fund pledged support to the full implementation of the Convention. The

country announced its Millennium Development Goal 9 (MDG 9) on UXO/mine action (see Box 1). Several additional measures were taken to improve mine action and implement the Convention. One was changing the reporting lines of the NRA (Prime Minister’s Decree No. 604/PM, dated 8 November 2011). Initially under the authority of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the NRA was placed under the authority of the Prime Minister’s Office. The Safe Path Forward II also allowed the market to be opened to private providers (those operating both for profit and not for profit).

**Box 1. Millennium Development Goal 9 (Lao People’s Democratic Republic)**

**Millennium Development Goal 9 on the reduction of UXO impact by 2020**

*Reduce the impact of UXO in accordance with the National Strategic Plan for the UXO sector, The Safe Path Forward II.*

**Target 9a:** *Ensure the complete clearance of UXO from priority/high value agricultural land by 2020*

**9.1** *20,000 hectares released from UXO contamination*

**Target 9b:** *Reduce substantially the number of casualties as a result of UXO incidents*

**9.2** *Number of casualties reported as a result of UXO incidents*

**Target 9c:** *Ensure that the medical and rehabilitation needs of all UXO survivors are met in line with treaty obligations under the Convention on Cluster Munitions*

**9.3** *Provision of proper assistance to UXO survivors*

33 Griffin, R., Keeley, R., and Sayyasouk, P., *UXO Sector Evaluation Lao PDR*, 2008.



## Section 3

# KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

### **UNDP RELEVANCE TO THE UXO/MINE ACTION EFFORT IN THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**

**Key evaluation question 1. Relevance: To what extent was UNDP support to mine action relevant to the needs of countries supported? Did support vary among countries and over time to reflect different national contexts? Have programmes been implemented on a scale that allowed for the expected impact? Is the scope and extent of UNDP global engagement in mine action consistent with its mandate and linked to other support efforts?**

**Was UNDP support in mine action relevant to country needs and consistent with UNDP's poverty reduction mandate? Did UNDP respond to changing needs for support as national contexts changed?**

#### **RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT**

UXO/mine action has been an important aspect of UNDP's work since 1995, and UNDP is seen as both an important actor in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and government partner. The support provided by UNDP in establishing and supporting the sector accords with the priorities of both the Government and UNDP. UNDP's senior leadership played a critical role in establishing the initial UXO Trust Fund, allowing UXO/mine action to scale up from ad hoc efforts in one province to an organized programme in nine of the most affected provinces.

Since 1995, UXO/mine action has been part of the United Nations country programme of cooperation with the Government in which UNDP has played a key role. UNDP initially carried out UXO/mine action under its Bureau of Crisis

Prevention and Recovery. The recent merging of this Bureau with the Bureau for Development Policy helped to mainstream UXO/mine action into poverty reduction efforts, thereby making the work in this section more relevant to the needs and priorities of the country. The relevance of UXO/mine action to development is reflected in government development strategies and in the incorporation of reporting lines of the NRA and UXO Lao into the National Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (NCRDPE).

This change is a clear indicator that UXO/mine action is considered a cross-cutting issue in the Government's rural development agenda. Under this arrangement the NRA reports to the NCRDPE while UXO Lao continues to report to the NRA. The Government has also clearly linked UXO/mine action to its rural development and poverty eradication plans. Over time the UXO programme has increasingly been included in poverty reduction plans. For example, the 1996–2000 Socio-Economic Plan had only one sentence related to UXO clearance, whereas the 6th, 7th and (draft) 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plans (NSEDPs), however, included the UXO programme in relation to poverty reduction.

The relevance of UXO clearance to poverty reduction, however, has not been supported by rigorous analysis. While one study showed a correlation between UXO impact and poverty, the causal linkages were unclear. According to one study at the province and district levels, correlations between the number of clearance tasks and positive development in one case were contradicted by reverse or negative correlations in a similar case, even after controlling for variation in outcome due to different degrees of contami-

nation.<sup>34</sup> An impact assessment in four provinces also found limited evidence to support the claim that UXO clearance contributes to improved livelihoods and poverty reduction. A Lao Census of Agriculture 2010/2011<sup>35</sup> asked village heads in rural areas about the main constraints faced by farmers in the village. Over 1,100 rural villages, or approximately one in six rural villages, reported having UXO contaminated agricultural land, and yet this was not included among the nine most common constraints.

UNDP plays a critical coordinating role through the Round Table Process and co-chairs the donor working groups for the UXO sector. This provides a relevant forum for promoting dialogue between key stakeholders and the Government, and is the primary platform for forwarding the aid effectiveness agenda. This agenda is based on, among other declarations and partnerships, the Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation Framework, and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. Having a separate sector working group for UXO is important to achieving MDG9 and implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, but seems at odds with the cross-cutting relevance of UXO/mine action to poverty reduction and development, as proposed in government and UNDP documents.

Most of the donors interviewed indicated that they valued the role that UNDP can play in facilitating more open, informed debate on critical development issues, in a politically helpful manner. This was seen as an important means for contributing to more effective UXO/mine action policy and links with socioeconomic development. At various times of the programme's lifespan, however, donors have reported being not very satisfied with the quality of such policy dialogue. They expressed the opinion that UNDP has not been sufficiently courageous in questioning government policy. In order to continue support for the Trust

Fund, there needs to be greater transparency, and timelier and more complete reporting that moves beyond outputs to outcomes and impacts.

Several donors also said they felt that UNDP has not been very effective in advocating for pro-poor, inclusive and equitable UXO clearance linked to socioeconomic development in contaminated areas. Nor has it done enough to develop effective governance and the adaptive capacity of the sector, and particularly the UXO Lao project, to respond to a changing environment. Also of particular concern was the extent to which safeguards were applied and monitored in situations where UNDP-funded UXO clearance supported resettlement. In these situations, they questioned whether UNDP had ensured that donor funds were not used to support commercial land concessions and contract farming.

Some of these issues relate to the broader social-political and economic system within which UXO/mine action occurs and require change at the more systemic level. Further, while the Government indicated that it valued the Fund as an important mechanism, some government officials said that the Government could take more ownership of the Fund. There was also some tension expressed in the varying views of the purpose of the Fund. The Fund was established to support the full implementation for the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and implicitly MDG9, while the priorities of UNDP and most donors are linked with economic development and poverty reduction. These latter objectives, however, are not directly consistent with the Convention. Therefore, a pervasive theme of this evaluation was the difficulty of reconciling the obligations under the Convention, which relate to the humanitarian nature of UXO/mine action, with the priorities of UNDP and most donors, which are to promote socioeconomic development.

While sometimes seen as reactive, rather than proactive, UNDP nevertheless has responded

---

34 Programme Review 2003-2011: UNDP support to NRA and UXO Lao, UXO sector, LAO PDR, p.26.

35 Agricultural Census Office, May 2012.



to the donor concerns expressed in 2002 and 2008 regarding transparency, accountability and effectiveness by commissioning evaluations and acting on their recommendations. Despite this, a number of recurring donor issues could poten-

tially undermine the relevance of UNDP to the sector. Some respondents also questioned UNDP's relevance to the sector as more actors have entered the arena. The donor issues raised are listed in Table 1.

| <b>Table 1. Donor feedback on work of the UXO sector: 2002, 2008, 2015 and ongoing</b>   |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>2002</b>  | <b>2008</b>  | <b>2015 (and ongoing)</b>  |
| <b>Coordination</b>  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perceived lack of coordination, and oversight of army and commercial providers</li> <li>Conflict of interest with UXO Lao as a coordinator and implementer</li> <li>Donor wish to be able to fund other providers (not just UXO Lao)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor donor coordination and policy dialogue</li> <li>Concerns about efficacy of NRA as a regulator</li> <li>Systemic issues in regard to the efficacy of Government systems resulting in delays</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor donor coordination and policy dialogue</li> <li>Concerns of NRA micro-managing rather coordinating the sector</li> <li>Delays in memorandums of understanding and perception that private for-profit providers are fast-tracked</li> <li>Many sector-level meetings but few tangible outcomes</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Planning</b>  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of quantification of UXO contamination</li> <li>Estimates of how long it will take to clear Lao PDR of UXO are not based on evidence; limited credibility</li> <li>No strategic plan</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of quantification of UXO contamination</li> <li>Estimates of how long it will take to clear Lao PDR of UXO not based on evidence; limited credibility</li> <li>Process of prioritizing unclear</li> <li>Concerns about the relevance and effectiveness of the Safe Path Forward I</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of quantification of UXO contamination</li> <li>Estimates of how long it will take to clear Lao PDR of UXO not based on evidence; limited credibility (being addressed by the CMTS)</li> <li>Lack of safeguards and verification of post-clearance land use; concern that resources could be used to support private sector-led development initiatives</li> <li>Lack of safeguards where UXO clearance supports resettlement initiatives</li> <li>Lack of workplan to achieve Safe Path Forward II</li> </ul> |
| <b>Trust Fund management</b>   |  |  |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor reporting and linked to outputs (quantitative only) with no reflection on outcomes or impact</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delays in the activation of the NGO window</li> <li>Limited evidence that UNDP is safeguarding aid investments and ensuring impact and value for money</li> <li>Lack of timely and transparent communication</li> <li>Poor reporting and linked to outputs (quantitative only) with no reflection on outcomes or impact</li> <li>Concerns Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness being used to persuade donors not to fund INGOs (one international respondent)</li> </ul>                                      |
| <b>Government ownership</b>  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No government budget line/financial resources to the sector other than in-kind</li> <li>NRA and UXO Lao remain UNDP 'projects' not nationally owned</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No government budget line/financial resources to the sector other than in-kind</li> <li>NRA and UXO Lao remain UNDP 'projects' not nationally owned</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No government budget line/financial resources to the sector other than in-kind</li> <li>NRA and UXO Lao remain UNDP 'projects' not nationally owned</li> </ul>  |

On the positive side, UNDP played a crucial facilitating role in enabling the Government to participate in the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The Government was one of its first signers of the treaty, in 2008, and has since ratified it. At the First Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, held in Vientiane in 2010, the Trust Fund to support full implementation of the Convention was launched with strong donor support (with the exception of those donors who do not usually support Trust Fund mechanisms, preferring cost-sharing or bilateral arrangements).

Evidence of the value added by the Trust Fund mechanism is mixed, however. For some donors it has provided an effective channel for funding; these donors view it as being consistent with the Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. Also finding the Trust Fund useful are donor countries without an in-country presence. For them the Trust Fund has been particularly useful and has helped them manage the risks associated with a lack of in-country presence. However, other countries have reported that the Trust Fund was difficult to establish, and has been expensive compared to cost-sharing arrangements. The expected increase in longer-term funding following the signing of the Convention has not materialized. UNDP provides the overall institutional support and financial oversight capacity, and assists the Government in framing the work of the UXO sector within the broad development and international cooperation context.

UNDP support for victim assistance related to UXO casualties and disabilities has shown mixed results. The Government has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. While not all UXO injuries result in long-term impairments or loss of functioning, a percentage (unknown) of injuries do; therefore, the work of victim assistance is relevant to the implementation of the Convention. Yet UNDP's support and relevance in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, including those with UXO-related disabilities, has not shown consistently positive results. While victim assistance is included in United Nations Mine Action Strat-

egies, the Safe Path Forward II and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (article 5), little UNDP effort has been directed to advancing support to victims of UXO casualties and their families. Moreover, the response to traumatic injury and any resultant disability remains weak and poorly coordinated, with limited coverage.

In addition, while the NRA maintains a database of reported UXO injuries, the extent of its completeness is unknown. Importantly, the database is not linked to any other injury surveillance systems in the country, nor is it possible to measure the burden of UXO injury using relevant public health measures. This lack of reliable figures limits the relevance of the database as a planning and resource-allocation tool. While responding to acute trauma and disability may not be seen as part of UNDP's core business, the organization has a commitment to UXO/mine action and equality. Therefore, the organization could more effectively work with other partners, including in joint fund mobilization, to ensure the progressive realization of the rights of victims of UXO casualties and their families in accordance with article 5 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

**To what extent did UNDP partner with other actors to provide this support? Did UNDP link mine action support to other country support mechanisms (e.g., anti-poverty, post-crisis recovery, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, cash for work, community development, etc.)?**

UNDP has had sustained partnerships with several organizations in support of UXO/mine action — in particular UXO Lao and the NRA. Initially UNDP facilitated cooperation between UXO Lao and international implementing partners to support the development of UXO Lao's technical capacity. Working with the NRA and UXO Lao, UNDP has facilitated both formal and informal relationships and the sharing of information and methodologies. The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) has provided support in development of information management, particularly

the Information Management System for Mine Action. Other partners, including the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action and the United States of America, through its contractors, have provided support in developing the national standards and in other operational areas, and most recently for planning for quantifying the scope of UXO contamination in compliance with the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

UNDP has linked mine action to other United Nations and UNDP programming through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, but the linkages are tenuous. UXO Lao has prioritized land clearance for some WFP activities and in support of the Lao PDR Poverty Reduction Fund. UNDP and the Government have worked to link UXO/mine action to the Government's rural development and poverty eradication strategies and plans, and achievement of the MDGs, in particular MDG1.

### **GENDER EQUITY AND SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION**

In general, UNDP has paid very little attention to promoting gender equity and South-South cooperation. The first gender assessment in the sector, for example, was not conducted by UNDP until 2008<sup>36</sup> and there is limited evidence that the research findings have been translated into practice. The assessment revealed that (a) women's participation in the clearance prioritization process was low, (b) women were often unclear of what land had been cleared, why and to what depth, and (c) UXO clearance did not necessarily support a more enabling environment for women. The UNDP-supported Safe Path Forward II, in its strategic objective 4 (Ensure effective leadership, coordination and implementation of the national programme), includes a major action that specifically relates to the 2008 assessment: "Formulate an annual sector workplan 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 workplan includes gender targets and that the assessment recommendations are implemented.<sup>37</sup> To date, however, there has been limited progress on implementing the recommendations, and UNDP has not effectively mobilized its own or in-country resources to promote gender equality in UXO/mine action.

The understanding of a gender perspective in the sector is limited primarily to recruiting women and disaggregating data by gender. UNDP has not systematically provided gender analysis and training, or monitored the extent to which gender is taken into account in policies and the implementation of UNDP-supported UXO/mine action programming. For example, there are no strategic tools for pro-poor gender-sensitive planning, and in ensuring gender equality task identification and prioritization processes. Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that UNDP has built the capacity of the NRA or UXO Lao (or the wider sector) to provide an enabling environment for women and men to participate in local planning, prioritization and decision-making. While linking INGOs involved in UXO/mine action with UXO Lao and the NRA has been important in improving UXO clearance methods, these INGOs have also demonstrated limited commitment to effectively integrating pro-poor, gender-sensitive policies and practices into UXO/mine action. For this reason, it has not been possible to harness their efforts to support change.

UNDP has not fully utilized the potential of South-South cooperation and partnership. While it has supported some study tours to Cambodia, most South-South cooperation has been supported by Japan. Further, UNDP has not made use of advisers from the global South to assist in

---

36 Irish Aid, UNDP Lao PDR and Mine Advisory Group, 'Assessment of Gender Perspectives in UXO Action in the LaoPDR'. Vientiane, 2008.

37 National Strategic Plan for the UXO Sector in the Lao People's Democratic Republic 2011–2020: The Safe Path Forward II.

capacity development in the NRA and UXO Lao; almost all advisors come from the global North.

**What steps have been taken by country offices to ensure that mine action programming results can be reported through the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2014–2017? What changes in mine action programming approach and content are required by UNDP to ensure that mine action programming is inextricably linked to the organization’s mission/vision?**

UXO/mine action is an important part of the UNDP-Government programme of cooperation, and the country office is committed to providing support to this priority of the Government. The office has mapped UXO/ mine action support programme to link to Outcome 1: Growth and development, and to the UNDP Strategic Plan Outcome 3: Access to basic services.

## **UNDP CONTRIBUTION TO RESULTS**

**Key evaluation question 2. Effectiveness: Has UNDP been able to address the national and local capacity development agenda in designing and implementing mine action programmes? Were the targeted government capacities, policies, services and laws developed? To what extent did UNDP assistance contribute?**

**Has government institutionalized the programmes, policies, services and laws developed to conduct mine action? Does this include specific attention to reduction in socioeconomic inequality?**

### **STRENGTHENING COUNTRY OWNERSHIP, AND THE CAPACITY OF NATIONAL MINE ACTION INSTITUTIONS**

Strengthening country ownership and the capacity of UXO Lao, and more recently the NRA, has consistently been identified as a central goal of UNDP’s work. Most of the capacity-

building at the institutional level has concentrated on developing the ‘hard rules’ — the institutional arrangements, policies, practices and systems that allow for effective functioning of UXO/mine action. UNDP’s support, for example, has helped develop technical capacity, policies, services and a legal framework for UXO/mine action. UNDP has supported delegations from the NRA, UXO LAO and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to attend the international meetings of Mine Action Programme Directors and United Nations Advisers, and this has provided support in networking and remaining up-to-date with mine action developments.

Overall, however, there has been limited emphasis on systematically developing management capacities, including: quality management, monitoring and evaluation; pro-poor, gender-sensitive prioritization; stakeholder communication; data management; and use of adaptive management capacities. Some in-country international respondents also felt that UNDP’s ability to influence national accountability and transparency mechanisms was limited. To a degree, as discussed earlier, the effectiveness of institutional capacity-building is mediated by the wider socio-political context in which UXO/mine action occurs and requires broader, longer-term systemic change as well as the development of a democratic civil society. While UNDP has expertise in these areas, its technical advisers in the UXO programme typically do not. This has limited UNDP’s ability to influence governance mechanisms.

Where UNDP has engaged in management capacity-building, it has done so typically through ad hoc, generic trainings, which are often neither tailored to context nor competency-based, and provide no support in transferring learning to the workplace. Until 2014, evaluating the relevance of capacity-building efforts had also been hampered by the lack of both a systematic needs assessment of capacity and a strategic capacity-development plan.<sup>38</sup>

---

38 UNDP, UXO Lao Interim End of Phase Report 2010–2012.

Moreover, UXO Lao and the NRA have different versions of the Information Management System for Mine Action database, and not all relevant data are able to be entered into the NRA version of the database. In addition, neither database reflects the current administrative structure of the country. For example, older data refer to villages that no longer exist because in recent years, villages have been merged. Information gaps and inconsistencies limit the database's effectiveness for planning and resource allocation. Indeed, there is little evidence that UNDP has developed the capacity of either UXO Lao or the NRA to manage and use data for these purposes.

UNDP played an active role in the establishment of the NRA and recruitment of its senior management. Nevertheless, it took two years for the Government, UNDP and donors to reach an agreement on the appointment of a Director. UNDP effectively assisted the NRA to coordinate the sector by establishing quarterly Technical Working Groups for which it provided agendas and minutes. Over time, UNDP handed over the chairing of meetings to the designated NRA Chair. The working group mechanism was generally well recognized and appreciated by actors in the sector. There was widespread agreement that sectoral coordination is, and should remain, a core function and mandate of the NRA.

The Victim Assistance Technical Working Group has been particularly appreciated and has provided an effective forum for organizations working in the area of disability to meet, but has not had the capacity to assist the disability sector to scale up its activities. One report also noted that while the higher-level sector working group and the lower-level technical working groups are important, there is a need for strategic middle ground between the purviews of these groups. The effectiveness of the NRA was questioned by some people interviewed. Several said that the NRA has taken on a management rather than a regulatory role and it

has struggled to effectively regulate the clearance work of the army and some commercial operators.

UNDP management capacity-building has been particularly weak in the area of developing and implementing relevant safeguards to protect the rights of beneficiaries. It also been weak in developing relevant participatory processes, such as those used by the World Bank Poverty Reduction Fund support to National Socio-Economic Development Plan process, or the UNDP National Governance and Public Administration Reform project. The World Bank Poverty Reduction Fund, for example, was reported to work closely with communities and district authorities in planning.<sup>39</sup> Further, while the NRA has taken an active role in coordinating disability organizations, given the lack of capacity of the National Committee for Disabled People to do this, the role of UNDP in this appears to have been limited.

Another area of concern is the funding of mine action and transition to greater government ownership. Donors noted the limited commitment of government funds to the sector. Moreover, the government financial support is given mostly in-kind and through the provision of tax exemptions. There has also been limited consideration of transition strategies, although the Government plans for the military to manage any residual risk. The military are already doing some humanitarian clearance, and a new UNDP-supported project will train more teams.

UNDP's technical support has helped to develop a national UXO clearance capacity that is generally considered competent and effective and is well respected at the local level. Some international respondents, however, noted that not having an international technical adviser at the provincial level has contributed to inefficiencies. Nevertheless, UNDP-supported work continues to be carried out only in nine of the contam-

---

39 Note that it was beyond the scope of this evaluation to observe this process and while one of the evaluation team members met with the World Bank, the team did not interview the Government or other stakeholders, including direct beneficiaries, to verify how this works in practice.

## Box 2. Examples of UNDP-supported technical capacity-building

- Effective advocacy when UXO Lao was established in 1996 to get implementing partners to provide support and technical capacity-building to provincial offices; throughout the lifespan of the programme, coordination of technical advisers provided by other entities
- An effective technical capacity-building for 30 Senior Explosive Ordnance Disposal staff (Level 4–2 in the NRA and 28 in UXO Lao)
- A transition to more discriminating detectors that have the capacity to enhance clearance efficiency
- Development of workplans and annual planning processes for the government programme
- Improvement of surveys, including the enhanced technical survey in 2007,<sup>40</sup> the district-focused approach to UXO clearance,<sup>41</sup> and the more recently approved Cluster Munition Technical Survey<sup>42</sup>
- Facilitation of technical support for the development of the National Standards, initially drafted in 2006
- Historical and current data entered into the Information Management System for Mine Action by the NRA, including injury data
- Technical accreditation process for UXO clearance developed
- UXO Lao capacity developed to plan and undertake UXO clearance and community-awareness activities in accordance with National Standards

inated provinces, and the capacity of UNDP and that of its partners to deliver UXO/mine action to all of those in need remains limited. The box above provides examples of technical capacity-building.

Technical capacity-building has been developed in conjunction with other partners noted above but UNDP coordination has been an important contributor to this process. UNDP coordination of the work of five United Nations volunteers deployed to provincial UXO Lao offices (Houaphan/Louangphabang, Xieng Khouang, Champasak, Attapeu and Savannakhet) to support administrative capacity in 2000 also helped to establish basic administrative processes. Between 2010 and 2012, UNDP also provided a Programme Finance Technical Adviser to UXO Lao.

Where implementing partners have provided technical support, via the provision of a technical adviser to a provincial UXO Lao office, they have

generally been coordinated by the UNDP-supported UXO Lao technical adviser in Vientiane. National Standards started being drafted in 2006 with the help of an adviser from the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action, and drafting standards were developed on behalf of the NRA, with funding from the Government of Australia. Approval of these standards, however, was a very protracted process, and quality in the meantime was based on self-regulation.<sup>43</sup>

At various times the work of advisers to the Mine Risk Education Unit and the Victim Assistance Unit in the NRA (non-UNDP project staff) has been coordinated by the Vientiane-based technical adviser supported by UNDP. More recently, however, this Vientiane-based technical adviser has not effectively coordinated or managed the non-UNDP advisers. This has resulted in fragmented advice being shared with technical staff and mixed messages being sent to UXO Lao and the NRA. A lack of consensus among UNDP

40 UNDP-UXO Lao Interim End of Phase Report 2010–2012.

41 Programme Review 2003–2011: UNDP support to NRA and UXO Lao, UXO sector, LAO PDR.

42 Approval was delayed, however, by divisions within UNDP.

43 GICHD, 'Lao PDR Risk Management and Mitigation Model'. Geneva, 2007.

technical advisers has at times also contributed to the lack of coordination and mixed messages.

The extent to which the Government has institutionalized the programmes, policies, services and laws that regulate the sector can be seen through its decrees, resolutions and decisions. UNDP supported the Government to establish the UXO programme, and a number of decrees, resolutions and decisions have been approved in order to regulate the sector.

The Prime Minister's Decree No. 75 of 5 June 1995, for example, established the UXO Trust Fund, founded with UNDP and UNICEF support. Subsequently, as shown in Box 3, other decrees have been issued to institutionalize and regulate the sector. An important development was the Prime Minister's Decree No. 406 of 8 November 2011, which appointed a new NRA Board of Directors. This new NRA Board is chaired by the Minister of Defence. This shift in institutional alignment further integrates the UXO sector into the broader poverty reduction efforts of the Government. It also links UXO/mine action in the government structure with reduction in poverty, and by implication, socio-

economic inequality. UNDP has also supported the NRA in developing the two strategic plans for the sector (Safe Path Forward I and II).

The Lao People's Democratic Republic has not acceded to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, also known as the Mine Ban Treaty, or Ottawa Convention. The treaty's mine clearance obligation and deadline under article 5 have been given as the main reasons for not signing the convention. The country has also indicated that it is concerned about the possible diversion of resources from UXO clearance activities and capacity to meet the obligations under both this Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. While not a signatory, the country sent a representative to the States Parties Meeting for the Ottawa Convention in 2007, and also sent one to the June 2011 Ottawa Convention's inter-sessional Standing Committee meetings. At this 2011 inter-sessional meeting, the Government representative told States Parties that the country would be able to become party to the Convention in the coming years.<sup>44</sup> In July 2011, the country provided its first voluntary Ottawa Convention article 7

### Box 3. Relevant decrees of the Prime Minister governing the UXO sector, 1995–2015

- Decree No. 75 of 5 June 1995 established the UXO Trust Fund, with UNDP and UNICEF support
- Decree No. 49 of 13 February 1996 established the Trust Fund Steering Committee and the Lao National UXO Programme
- Decree No. 406 of 8 November 2011 outlined the composition and the roles and responsibilities of the NRA Board
- Decree No. 33 of 17 March 2004 established the NRA and made UXO LAO an operator
- Decree No. 604 of 8 September 2011 placed the NRA under the authority of the Prime Minister's Office and the National Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication. Under Decree No. 604, all operators work under the oversight of the NRA. Decree No. 604 replaced Decree No. 33 of 17 March 2004
- Notification No. 093/NRA of 19 November 2012 requires all development projects to undertake a UXO survey in suspected contaminated areas, and clearance as necessary. Notification No. 93 also states that survey and any necessary clearance must be built into the development project plans, included in project budgets and undertaken by accredited operators<sup>45</sup>
- Decree No. 43 of 3 February 2015 appointed the NRA for the UXO Programme

44 Landmine Monitor, 2015: [www.the-monitor.org](http://www.the-monitor.org).

45 Lao PDR UXO Sector Action Plan.

report and stated that it would continue to destroy mines when they are found during the course of UXO clearance.<sup>46</sup>

UNDP support was also critical in supporting the Government’s decision to participate in the Convention on Cluster Munitions process, as noted above. In 2010, during the First Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, held in Vientiane, UNDP assisted the Lao delegation in increasing their effectiveness in formal meetings by drafting and presenting strong and coherent official statements in plenary sessions on key areas (clearance, victim assistance and mine risk education), as well as on issues related to national implementation measures, compliance and cooperation, and assistance. The delegation used the Meeting as an opportunity to host an event sharing the new Vision and Strategy, and unveiled the country’s Millennium Development Goal 9. They guided the formulation of the 2010 Vientiane Declaration, ‘No Cluster Munitions: From Vision to Action,’ with detailed actions set out in the subsequent Vientiane Action Plan.<sup>47</sup> The Government has also encouraged neighbouring States that are not yet Parties to join the Convention.

While to date there is no national legal framework for the Convention, a UNDP national consultant was hired to act as senior legal adviser to the Secretariat of the President of the First

Meeting of States Parties, and this will help to ensure that the Lao People’s Democratic Republic complies with its reporting obligations. Table 2 below shows the status of Lao participation in relevant treaties. The NRA has also developed National Standards in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), with the support of UNDP and other partners. These have been translated into English and Lao, and are reviewed every three years. UNDP has been less effective in promoting victim assistance and implementation of article 5 of the Convention. It has also been less effective in promoting issues related to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the social model of disability advocated by that Convention; several stakeholders refer to this as a ‘policy vacuum’.

**To what extent is socioeconomic impact accepted as a major criterion for priority-setting and assessing the results of mine action? Is the landmine problem understood in terms of socioeconomic impact?**

#### SURVEY, PRIORITIZATION AND UXO CLEARANCE

Through two decades of continual support to UXO/mine action in the country, UNDP has made a positive contribution to the reduction of UXO, in particular through its support to UXO

**Table 2. Status of relevant treaties**

| Treaty   | Status     |
|--|------------|
| Ottawa Convention                                      | Not joined |
| Convention on Cluster Munitions                        | Ratified   |
| Convention on Conventional Weapons                     | Ratified   |
| Convention on Conventional Weapons/Amended Protocol II | Not signed |
| Convention on Conventional Weapons/Protocol V          | Signed     |
| Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities  | Ratified   |
| 2010 United Nations General Assembly resolution 65/48  | In favour  |

Source: Landmine Monitor, 2015: [www.the-monitor.org](http://www.the-monitor.org).

46 Terms of Reference: UXO Sector Evaluation Lao PDR, 2008.

47 UNDP, ‘Beyond the Horizon: Reducing UXO Impact for Poverty Reduction in Lao PDR’, 2012.



Lao. Prior to 1995, UXO clearance activities were ad hoc, small-scale, and limited in effectiveness. The establishment of the Trust Fund and UXO Lao allowed operations to be significantly scaled up to include the nine provinces most affected according to the Handicap International Survey. From having very limited capacity in 1995, UXO Lao is now one of the largest Lao organizations and is able to competently provide UXO survey and clearance services. It is very unlikely that this level of coverage would have been achieved without UNDP support. The approach to clearance taken by the programme when it first started was informed largely by early methods used in landmine clearance and was often slow and inefficient. Starting in around 2004, however, UNDP and its partners, in particular NPA, started to trial different survey and clearance methods using detectors better suited to a UXO environment. For example, UNDP-supported detector trials around 2007 were reported to have contributed to an increase in clearance productivity.

In 1995, approximately 300 hundred people were being injured by UXOs. Most of these were in some of the poorest areas of the country with very limited access to acute physical trauma care. Because of this, the programme initially focused on risk reduction and the humanitarian need to save lives. In accordance with many other mine action programmes and United Nations, donor and government emphasis on the achievement of the MDGs, however, over time the focus shifted to supporting poverty reduction and development, as reflected in the Safe Path Forward and government National Socio-Economic Development Plans.

The priority areas for clearance were agricultural land, local infrastructure and other development projects. The tasks typically were identified using a request-based process involving a local government organization, development organization

and individual households. Since the outset, and partly due to the absence of a technical survey, the process for identifying land for clearance has been request-based. For UXO Lao, the process was, until recently, for the provincial Labour and Social Welfare offices, in coordination with UXO Lao, to send out letters annually to key provincial offices such as education, health, and agriculture and forestry, asking for any requests for clearance. These requests were collated and added to individual household requests generated at the village level. Areas identified were then surveyed and prioritized based on criteria such as access, type of task, resource availability, fit with UXO Lao's mandate, and so forth. These elements were then put into a provincial workplan.

Currently, the process is essentially the same, except that the coordination process is now the responsibility of offices dealing with rural development and poverty eradication, with UXO clearance linked to provincial and district plans.<sup>48</sup> International respondents, in particular, argued that the prioritization process was poorly documented and opaque. Certainly, despite a shift to rural development and poverty eradication, there is a lack of clear, pro-poor, gender-sensitive prioritization criteria across the sector.

A review of the database suggests that often clearance has taken place on land that was already in use, sometimes for several years, despite known UXO contamination. In addition, a number of sites have been cleared with no UXO found afterwards.<sup>49</sup> One possible explanation for this is that the targets developed in the UNDP-supported Safe Path Forward I committed UXO Lao to increase its productivity in terms of hectares of ground declared UXO-free (to a depth of 25 cm in accordance with National Standards) every year, rather than clearing confirmed hazardous areas.

---

48 Laos-Australia Development Learning Facility, UXO Lao impact assessment readiness report. Vientiane, 2015.

49 UNDP, request for proposal 2006, cited in a report by the GICHD, 'Lao PDR Risk Management and Mitigation Model'. Geneva, 2007.

Another explanation is that in some cases land has been cleared as a pre-condition for investment by development NGOs, international organizations or donors, and yet limited or no UXO was found. This has also meant that sometimes service providers have deployed clearance assets for small development tasks such as clearing areas for weirs, latrines, gravity-fed water systems or vegetable gardens where there were no UXO, leaving other contaminated areas in the community not cleared. This was also influenced by the lack of a technical (or level 2) survey as initially planned in the first programme document and/or an inadequate technical surveying as part of task preparation.

Reasons for not undertaking the technical survey proposed within the initial Trust Fund programme document were government concerns regarding security, national capacity, the humanitarian priority of saving lives, the desire to prioritize clearance and the need to recruit more international advisers. Instead, following a compromise agreement, annual technical surveys were conducted in each province to inform the following year's workplan. This clearing of land with limited/no UXO, however, has not been unique to UXO Lao, and has been documented elsewhere.<sup>50</sup>

Evidence suggests that INGOs have been equally culpable. The sector's past justification for clearing areas with no or limited UXO was that the perception of UXO prevented land use or created fear. It seems, however, that neither donors nor service providers are tied to this (untested) assumption anymore and donors are demanding a quantification of the landmine problem.

The recognition that, globally, clearance assets were not always being deployed effectively and efficiently led to the piloting of a number of different non-technical and technical survey approaches, including in the Lao People's Dem-

ocratic Republic.<sup>51</sup> Article 4 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the strict timeframes of the Convention obliged the country to find ways of efficiently and effectively quantifying the scope of UXO contamination and increasing the effectiveness of clearance. The most significant innovation was the District-Focused Approach. This approach aimed to identify community needs and development plans, and the extent to which these were affected by UXO contamination. The DFA was intended to inform planning and resource allocation. It was not a single approach but rather a collection of approaches undertaken in different ways by various organizations. Though promoted by UNDP and non-UNDP advisers, the DFA seems to have been implemented with limited government consultation and support, and failed to take into account district and provincial planning processes. This weakness highlights the fact that UNDP and its partners sometimes operate in parallel to the NRA and government planning processes rather than in synchronization with them. It would have been preferable for UNDP and its partners to facilitate a process of frank discussion leading to strategic and operational consensus and subsequent action.

Further, two of the survey approaches piloted under the umbrella of the DFA did not attempt to quantify the scale of UXO contamination in accordance with article 4 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The Government has subsequently approved an approach piloted by NPA under the DFA umbrella. This is based on more traditional technical survey methods, and if scaled up, will enable the country to meet its article 4 obligation to quantify the scope of cluster munition contamination. This approach, however, focuses primarily on Convention obligations, with limited intent to link UXO contamination with local development priorities and needs. Unlike other DFA pilot concepts

---

50 Lardner, T., 'The GICHD land release project', *Journal of ERW and Mine Action*, Issue 12(21) Winter 2008/09.

51 Ibid.

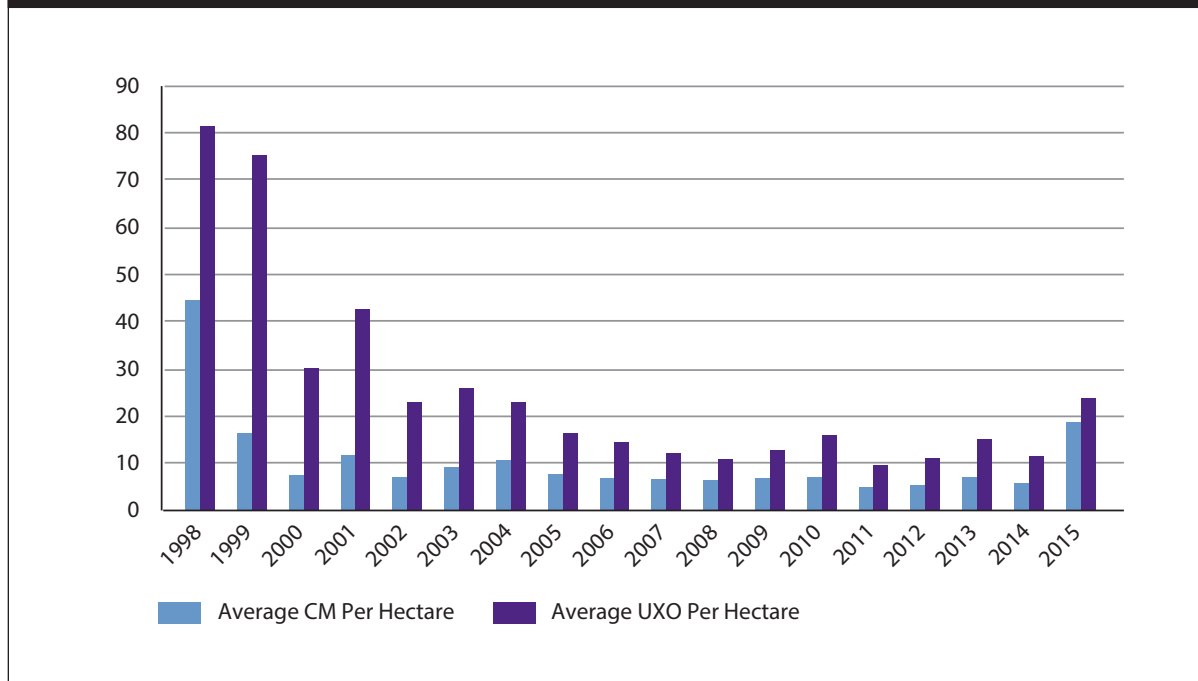
that promoted community participation, this approach showed limited commitment to such participation.<sup>52</sup>

The focus was on use of a survey initially named the Cluster Munition Remnant Survey and renamed the Cluster Munition Technical Survey when adopted by the NRA Board. While only recently approved, the method has increased effectiveness in terms of the number of cluster munitions removed per hectare (see Figure 1). The challenge will be to ensure a balance between survey and clearance resources. It will

also be important to ensure that clearance continues at the same pace but covers more UXO while the CMTS is being implemented. The draft 8th five-year NSEDP contains indicators for undertaking a CMTS in all of its priority focal development areas, and a non-technical survey in the remaining areas of the nine provinces where UXO Lao works.<sup>53</sup>

Contractors funded by the United States in UXO Lao have developed a Google Earth tool to support field operations, as well as a new survey process in UXO Lao. Maps generated from this open source

**Figure 1. Cluster munitions (CM) per hectare/Other items of UXO per hectare, lifetime of UXO Lao (excludes other operators)<sup>54</sup>**



52 These versions of DFA were welcomed in UNDP’s programme review (*Programme Review 2003–2011 UNDP Support to NRA and UXO LAO*, UXO Sector, LAO PDR, UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, Amended July 2012), and included in its current Project Agreement document (2013–2015).

53 Ministry of Planning and Investment, Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan III (2016–2020), 5th Draft. Vientiane, 2015.

54 In this evaluation, reasons were not explored for the relatively high rates of clearance of items (both cluster munitions and other UXO) per hectare during 1998–1999, followed by a decline of items found per hectare in 2000, and an increase in 2001, followed by decline and plateauing until 2015. Possible reasons could include the relatively all-year easy access to heavily contaminated sites close to province/district centres in the first two years of the programme. The decline could be at least in part due to the effect of the targets in the SPI. The increase in items found per hectare in the last 18 months is widely attributed to the adoption of CMTS, although it could also be at least in part due to the improved access to previously remote areas along the heavily contaminated border with Viet Nam.

system have been used to illustrate the village case studies included as Annex 4. It was reported to be complementary to UXO Lao's CMTS information system, which all provinces use to record technical survey progress and confirmed hazardous areas. All the data in the Google Earth tool come from the Information Management System for Mine Action and are regularly updated. The tool is also designed to support UXO Lao's planned 'village-by-village' approach to clearance and survey.

The extent to which the village-by-village approach can be adopted in practice, however, is questionable, as the approach is based on the concept of clearing each and every confirmed hazardous area in a village. Despite evidence to the contrary, the village-by-village approach seems to assume that contaminated land is not being used or that farmers will be willing to potentially lose their harvest in the interests of clearing all confirmed hazardous areas in a village. While this is recognized by UXO Lao, which has adopted a more pragmatic approach, namely, clearing individual plots in confirmed hazardous areas, this issue does not appear to have been seriously considered and has not been discussed by UNDP and other international advisers.

UNDP's effectiveness in facilitating adoption of the approach is mixed. On the one hand, UNDP was able to link UXO Lao and the NRA both formally and informally to private providers so they could learn more about the approach, and successfully advocated for its adoption. This linking with private not-for-profit providers is important because these organizations typically have more capacity to adapt and respond to change than do public sector providers. On the other hand, public disagreement within UNDP on the approach resulted in confusion, split the sector and delayed adoption of the approach. As with previous approaches, this one is further limited in its effectiveness by the lack of a clear pro-poor, gender-sensitive prioritization process and criteria, and a lack of livelihood analysis. In addition, the CMTS focuses on cluster municipalities and may not identify areas that are contaminated with other UXOs.

## **DEVELOPING AND STRENGTHENING POLICIES, SERVICES AND STRUCTURES FOR UXO SURVIVORS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

### **Has UNDP mine action support contributed to development by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (or other ministry) of policies or programmes to support mine survivors and their families?**

Prior to the establishment of the NRA, UNDP provided minimum support to victim assistance. Since then, UNDP has mainly supported victim assistance through covering staff salaries in the Victim Assistance Unit in the NRA, and providing some support to the Victim Assistance Technical Working Group. Its support to increasing the capacity of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare or other relevant ministries through policies or programmes to support UXO survivors and their families is particularly limited.

An important contribution of UNDP, along with that of some other donors, notably the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and the European Union, UNICEF and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, was the implementation of the first nationwide victim assistance survey. This retrospective household survey covered approximately 955 of the villages in the country and gathered information on injuries from UXO, landmines and other ERW that occurred between the beginning of 1964 and October 2008. While this survey provided useful information, it appears that it was not used for planning of services. Furthermore, the survey did not record if people who had survived injury were still alive at the time of the survey. In addition, the quality of the data was not good enough to be used to calculate the true burden of injury.

The Government has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and a decree has been issued to support implementation of that Convention, aligning the responsibilities of National Committee for Disabled People with the implementation of the Convention.

UNDP has had limited involvement with both the Convention and the Committee. Because of this, the Committee and several stakeholders have talked of a “policy vacuum”. There is no systematic UXO injury surveillance system (or any kind of injury surveillance system), and estimates of injuries and disabilities are thought to be underestimated.

In 2010 UNDP and the NRA hosted a workshop to try to integrate information on UXO injuries into the district health information system reporting but no concrete actions were taken. Moreover, the health information system itself is weak, with data collection at the district level mainly related to the six MDG indicators associated with MDGs 4 and 5, but not 9. Since 2012, the NRA has established a Survivor Tracking System (partly to redress the issue of the 2008 survey not collecting information on the current status of people who had survived a UXO injury) but information is thought to be incomplete, and is not used to allocate resources or plan services. Further, as injuries decrease, the cost-effectiveness of a stand-alone UXO victim assistance surveillance system is questionable.

Coverage of acute trauma care and rehabilitation is weak and ad hoc, with services poorly coordinated. The only national body that provides rehabilitation is the Centre for Medical Rehabilitation under the Ministry of Health. This rehabilitation organization operates one centre in Vientiane and four centres in the provinces. Some international NGOs and one national not-for-profit organization provide direct services to people with UXO injuries, but on a small scale and there are no estimates of unmet needs. Access to other basic social services and skills or vocational training is also limited.

With support of UNDP and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade/Aus-

AID, the NRA has recently developed a victim assistance strategy that is relevant and is aligned with a number of treaties, strategies and policies: the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention’s Vientiane Action Plan, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, MDG 9, the Incheon Strategy, the World Health Organization’s *World Report on Disability 2011*, and several Lao National Strategic Plans.<sup>55</sup> The objectives and activities contained in the strategy document, while ambitious, are well aligned and relevant.

### OUTCOMES TO IMPACTS

**Key evaluation question 3. Impact: Have the lives and livelihoods of impacted communities and citizens (women and men, girls and boys) improved as a result of demining and land release? What were the supporting or impeding factors in this regard? How did UNDP support contribute?**

**Community: Did land release benefit the poorest mine-affected members of the community? Were there unintended impacts (positive or negative) on local communities? Has post-clearance land use led to change (positive or negative) in livelihoods or living conditions of marginalized populations?**

### REDUCED RISK FROM UXO

Since the end of the war, Lao people have engaged with and worked fields contaminated with UXO. A review of the data and available reports suggests very few differences between pre- and post-clearance land use.<sup>56</sup> The NRA victim survey revealed that by the start of the formal UXO action programme in 1995 the actual number of casualties was around 300 per annum and stayed at this figure until relatively recently, excluding a slight increase in casualties around 2004–2008. This suggests that UXO action had

---

55 National Regulatory Authority, UXO/Mine Victim Assistance Strategy 2014–2020.

56 NRA Annual Reports: 2006–2014; <http://www.nra.gov.la/resources>.

a limited impact on casualty rates. It should be noted, however, that while the actual number of casualties remained constant for the first 15 years or so of UXO/mine action, the Lao population significantly increased. Instead of summary measures, future NRA victim surveys should establish a more fine-grained picture by presenting population-standardized casualty rates.

In the communities visited, respondents said they were very happy that there had been UXO clearance in their village, and they held UXO Lao with respect. Overwhelmingly, the most important benefit for women and men was a sense of safety and the ability to live and work without having a constant underlying concern for themselves and their children from UXO injury. Respondents reported being really worried about death or morbidity from UXO injury, as either would cause catastrophic shock to their livelihoods or those of their families. They also reported having a sense of happiness and freedom as one of the most significant impacts of clearance. Males and females reported that they could move around easily and access resources, and did not need to worry about themselves or their children hitting a sub-surface UXO when farming or digging for crickets and bamboo shoots to eat. This ability to move around, work their land and dig for non-timber forest products freely and without fear was highly valued. One person in a focus group discussion and community mapping exercise reported that before clearance:

*UXO is barrier for our livelihoods. When we expand our paddy field we have to notice every second our step or where we dig. We have to be gentle when we are doing everything in our land to avoid UXO.<sup>57</sup>*

For some participants, sufficient rice, which was often described as being “more beautiful” following clearance, was perceived as being indispensable for the reproduction of life, well-being, and social and economic success. In some cases,

following clearance, villages had seen additional investment in their communities through IFAD and other organizations. This very likely would not have occurred without the clearance. Nevertheless, the capacity of communities, especially poor ones, to maximize benefits of clearance and investment in their communities is determined by access to labour and other productive assets as well as access to markets.

### **INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY OF PREVIOUSLY UXO-CONTAMINATED LANDS AND IMPROVED LIVELIHOODS**

**Have the lives and livelihoods of impacted communities and citizens improved as a result of demining and land release?**

**Has post-clearance land use led to changes in livelihoods and/or living conditions of the poorest and most marginalized mine-affected members of communities?**

In the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, as documented in the first programme document in 1995, people routinely cultivate contaminated land for both subsistence needs and cash crops. Local people have developed coping strategies such as not digging too deep, working around potentially explosive items, and marking UXO, for example with sticks, and moving items they find to a place that is considered safe and out of the way of children. Indeed, farmers may reject UXO clearance despite known contamination if clearance will interfere with planting, caring for or harvesting existing crops.

In the villages visited in the course of this evaluation, almost all of the agricultural land that had been cleared had been cultivated previously, and rarely was UXO contamination given as a reason for non-use of cultivatable land.

Many people reported farming UXO-contaminated land but complained that the presence of

---

57 Focus Group Discussion, Xieng Khouang village.

UXO reduced productivity, usually because they had to farm slowly and carefully. Key informants commonly noted that most people were using the land pre- and post-clearance for the same or similar purposes. Most reported not being sure if there was any residual UXO sub-surface and understood that UXO may migrate because of flooding. Respondents asserted that there had been no conflict over cleared land, and that the people who were using it before clearance continued to do so afterwards. Local officials confirmed that there were few land conflicts, and none related to decontaminated areas.

The most common reasons for not extending the amount of land under cultivation was poverty that was related to a lack of access to productive assets such as labour, irrigation, seeds and equipment. Paradoxically, supporting the poorest households is less likely to contribute to improved harvest and income, as the poorest have the least access to productive assets to use the land effectively. Further, the poorest farmers are by nature conservative and are less likely to be able to divert efforts to cash crops for, example, because failure in this kind of venture would be catastrophic economically. Despite the fact that land use both before and after clearance was often similar, in all focus group discussions and community mapping exercises respondents reported that livelihoods had improved after clearance. When probed further, they said the most common reason for this was reduced risk of death or disability, and improved harvest because of being able to dig more efficiently. This in turn freed up more time to open more land for cultivation or to pursue other livelihood activities.

Respondents reported knowing about contamination, about which areas still had surface UXO, and about the need for reporting surface items to UXO Lao rather than moving the items themselves, as they had done previously. In Mang village, for example, respondents said that there is still contamination along the streams in the forest and in mountainous areas that people use for planting cassava and feeding animals. In another village, respondents reported not going to one

area of the forest to dig for bamboo and crickets because of UXO contamination.

Despite UXO clearance, most of the communities visited remain relatively poor, especially in Saravan and Attapeu provinces because of structural barriers, including high transport costs arising from inadequate roads, lack of education, and limited access to credit, physical assets, labour and pro-poor markets. In only one of the eight villages were economic impacts mentioned. These impacts were noted by participants in focus group discussions in Xieng Khouang Province, where villages have been connected to road networks for a longer time than have other villages. This instance shows the interaction between UXO clearance and livelihoods. As some respondents noted:

*The most important impact of clearance is we feel very happy....We are very happy because we can farm our paddy field and garden without fear of UXO so we are happy, pulling grass, happy traveling to farm...happy and everything is comfortable. Compared to previously, it was very difficult for our livelihood. After we have the UXO clearance project our livelihood is better. We get more harvest because we can dig out roots from the paddy field so we have more space to cultivate the rice. Therefore, our harvest has increased and is enough for our family, and we sometimes still have some to sell.*

*The price [of rice] has increased due to development, good transportation so exchanging is easier and comfortable to travel. Increased commerce also encourages people to extend their business, which impacts on economic standards, and nowadays sellers approach us to buy our crops. When fundamental livelihoods improve, people can gain more benefits such as more agriculture land and so more crops and more income. This leads to poverty eradication — almost 85 percent compared with the past when the UXO project hadn't started. Recently, we have had plenty of food supply, we can respond to demand and transport*

*comfortably. For instance, we have had a good road since 2000, which was constructed by the national Army. In the past the road was very hard, and although only 5–6 kilometres away, it took nearly one hour to get there but now it is about 10 minutes.*<sup>58</sup>

As this composite quote indicates, UXO removal allows people to farm more efficiently, contributing to rice security and, depending on the harvests, a surplus to sell. In villages where the rural road network has also improved and buyers come to the villages, farmers can command a higher price for their produce; in turn, this motivates farmers to increase production. While the speakers attribute an increased harvest to being able to more easily clear the scrub from their farmland, which in turn allows for more efficient land use, the comments also highlight the importance of having access to a market and labour.

In cases where the market comes to the farmers, transaction costs are reduced. This situation contrasts with that of some of the more remote villages the evaluation team visited. In Saravan Province, for example, an improved, all-weather road network is still under development. It helps to highlight that any tangible socioeconomic benefits at the community level following UXO clearance are the result of individual initiative and access to other productive assets. Often lands that have been cleared of UXO are used in the same ways as previously, typically using low productivity methods mainly for subsistence. With general socioeconomic uplift and access to productive assets, and a level of basic food security, people may switch to cash crops.

Other than support for physical clearance, there is no evidence of systematic external support from UNDP, national authorities or other actors to complement the clearance, except in some villages in Attapeu Province, where UXO Lao cleared land in support of an IFAD project. In some cases, however, where land had been used

for local infrastructure, such as a school or clinic, government resources may have been used to upgrade the facility. In this sense, UNDP's support to UXO/mine action can be seen to be contributing to human development and enlarging people's choices and opportunities so that they can participate in the development process without fear of UXO injury. The socioeconomic impact of UNDP's support to mine action, therefore, is mainly indirect and can be attributed largely to the long-term nature of the support, and the advocacy, technical advisory and other roles the organization plays at the national level. Further, as the plots of land cleared are relatively small, and no village or district in affected areas can be declared impact-free, the level of impact is confined mostly to the micro-level and is unlikely to have an impact on the economic indicators of human development.

#### **LIVING CONDITIONS FOR UXO/MINE VICTIMS**

**Key evaluation question 4. Impact: Have the living conditions of mine survivors and their families (women and men, girls and boys) changed significantly? Does support for mine survivors and their families extend to all persons with disabilities?**

**How, and to what extent, have the lives of mine survivors and their families improved as a result of mine action? Would the same results have been likely if UNDP had not been involved?**

**In situations where UNDP has provided direct support to mine survivors and their families, are mine survivors and their families better off than in situations where UNDP was not involved? Has the direct service supported by UNDP been replicated and expanded by others?**

The extent to which the livelihoods of UXO survivors and their families have changed as a result of victim assistance is impossible to assess. However,

---

58 Focus group discussion, Xieng Khouang village.



given the lack of data on needs, the lack of a coordinated approach to service delivery and low coverage, overall impact is minimal. Impact may be significant, however, for some individual families who have been able to access services. None of the survivors interviewed in the course of this study was supported directly or indirectly by the work of UNDP. One was reported to have received some external support but was not sure from where. According to respondents, apart from immediate medical attention — usually resulting in high out-of-pocket expenses and often cross-border travel to Viet Nam — no support was provided, and some families went into debt from high healthcare expenses. Several also reported using traditional treatment in their healing process.

## SUSTAINABILITY

**Key evaluation question 5. Sustainability: Were exit strategies appropriately defined and implemented, and what steps have been taken to ensure sustainability of results? Are the capacities, policies, services, and laws developed with UNDP support likely to continue without further UNDP involvement?**

**To what extent have capacities, policies, programmes, services and laws developed to manage mine action and reduce inequality been institutionalized, and are they likely to continue beyond support by UNDP (e.g., community impact priority-setting)?**

**Are the results of the national mine action programme, developed with UNDP support, likely to extend to additional beneficiaries even after UNDP support has concluded?**

UNDP interventions are likely to be sustainable in most aspects of UNDP's contributions to the UXO/mine action sector, provided the overall

international funding to the sector is not reduced too rapidly. The primary output or product of the UXO project is land cleared of UXO to a depth of 25 cm, and this product can be considered sustainable and as having enhanced land value. It may also avert future mortality or morbidity from UXO injury, and the associated costs from poor health and loss of labour.<sup>59</sup>

In many ways, the length of time in which UNDP has engaged with UXO/mine action is conducive to sustainability, especially as indigenous capacities have been developed to maintain and further promote UXO/mine action. A tension exists, however, between government priorities and methods and those of other actors. Government priorities and choices in how to design, direct, implement and sustain UXO/mine action are not always interpreted positively by some actors — in particular, international actors — who may have different views and priorities.

In their current form, neither the NRA office nor UXO Lao are sustainable without donor funding. The capacity of the NRA and UXO Lao to raise their own funds through cost-recovery mechanisms or directly from donors or governments is limited. Both entities are supported almost entirely by donor contributions bilaterally or through UNDP. Donor funds have not been constant over the last 20 years and this trend is likely to continue. Some donors are likely to exit the sector (or even leave the country altogether) once the country graduates to middle-income-country status, which is expected to happen in 2020. Moreover, UXO/mine action may not fit neatly into the thematic funding windows.

Other donors, including the United States, are predicted to remain, and new ones may be attracted to support the sector. Some interna-

<sup>59</sup> As of December 2014, and since 1996, UXO Lao figures show that Roving Operations had destroyed/removed 879,724 items of UXO (including 348,629 'bomblets'), and Clearance Operations had destroyed/removed 414,067 items of UXO (including 204,361 bomblets). The former ETS teams accounted for a further 2,175 items and the new Confirmed Hazardous Area survey teams 10,461 items. While Roving Teams account for 67.3 percent of all items destroyed, typically they have had only had 20 percent or less of the clearance resources of the organization.

tional respondents speculated that the United States may substantially increase funding for the sector, especially if progress is made on defining the problem — through, for example, the CMTS. The United States is likely to continue its support through bilateral agreements, however, rather than through the Trust Fund mechanism or cost-sharing arrangements with UNDP. In this case, UNDP's leverage in the sector may decrease.

For some donors, the inability of the NRA and UNDP to mobilize government resources, especially given the steady increase in gross domestic product, shows lack of government commitment and poor advocacy and leadership on the part of the UNDP. This is compounded by the lack of post-clearance monitoring and evaluation, and limited evidence that UXO clearance contributes in tangible ways to poverty reduction.

A reduction in funding may lead the Government to contribute more national resources to the sector, but it is more likely that other donors would be approached to fill funding gaps. There is also a risk that government funding could be diverted from other sectors such as health and education that arguably have a much higher return on investment than UXO clearance. Furthermore, given that all salaries are currently paid through the Trust Fund and are higher than public-sector salaries (notwithstanding project staff, who do not accrue the benefits afforded to public servants, such as pensions), it is unlikely that the technical capacity that has been built will transfer readily to the army or civil service salaries.

In the absence of a national not-for-profit service provider such as UXO Lao, NRA's notification 093/NRA<sup>60</sup> provides some assurance that development agencies will have to budget for and purchase UXO clearance services where needed. Integration of UXO clearance into the development plan-

ning and budgeting process, especially at provincial and village levels, is also important in placing UXO clearance on a more sustainable footing.<sup>61</sup> A stronger coordination with the Round Table Process between the Government and development partners, alongside a strong communication strategy for the sector by the Government and international partners, can also facilitate a sector-wide approach to securing funds.

The 2002 evaluation noted stakeholder concern regarding the absence of a transition strategy for donors. Currently there is no transition strategy (even in draft form), although the UNDP UXO Lao Interim End of Phase Report 2010–2012 (p.7) notes that one is planned in the 2013–2015 project cycle. A 2008 evaluation, however, argued that UXO contamination is a finite problem and there is no need for UXO Lao to be sustainable. Rather, once the majority of the economically significant land has been cleared, it would be appropriate for UXO Lao to close, with the Government maintaining a residual, reactive capacity. The evaluation estimates this time frame to be 16 years,<sup>62</sup> which may be a longer period than many donors would like to see without government financial inputs. The initial UXO Trust Fund agreement included provisions for supporting the development of a national commercial UXO clearance capacity, which could have been self-sustaining. However, this capacity has not been systematically developed, although a private for-profit sector is emerging.

Finally, to date, exit strategies or handover methods are not included in project contracts or the contracts of individual experts. Project documents, for example, do not include exit strategies linked to performance measures, monitoring systems and incentives. Individual advisers' terms of reference do not include performance indicators for capacity develop-

---

60 Lao PDR UXO Sector Action Plan.

61 UNDP, 'Beyond the Horizon: Reducing UXO Impact for Poverty Reduction in Lao PDR', Vientiane, 2012.

62 UXO Sector Evaluation Lao PDR June-July 2008: Final Report.

ment. While there were plans to address this in the project cycle (2013–2015), along with providing an updated monitoring and evaluation framework and a technical assistance exit strategy, this has not been done to date. While it is

acknowledged that developing sustainable capacities is one important step towards an exit strategy, without key performance indicators and measures of capacity-building being articulated, planning for exit is problematic.



## Section 4

# REFLECTIONS ON A THEORY OF CHANGE FOR UNDP SUPPORT IN MINE ACTION

The programme documents do not specify a theory of change (TOC). Initial programme documents suggest a simple theory that UXO clearance will result in uncontaminated land and that this will reduce injuries and contribute to socioeconomic development. Since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration and the linking of UXO/mine action explicitly to the MDGs and particularly MDG 1, the underlying theory has more explicitly linked UXO clearance with improved livelihoods (towards reduction in poverty). In preparation for this evaluation, IEO retrospectively developed a TOC. The TOC makes assumptions along the causal chain through which UNDP may have been expected to have a positive impact on improved livelihoods and reduced marginalization, with progress made towards poverty eradication and reduction of exclusion and inequalities. The following sections elaborate on the presumed causal linkages, summarizing UNDP's role, immediate results, outcomes and impact.

### **UNDP'S ROLE IN RELATION TO IMMEDIATE RESULTS**

The TOC assumes that UNDP support will help to enhance UXO/mine action structures. UNDP support has been effective in developing these structures, as seen by the programme moving from an isolated project in the early 1990s to one that spans nine provinces. UNDP was also active in supporting sector reform and establishing the NRA and a quasi-market. The TOC assumes that by providing UXO/demining technical and operational support, contaminated land will be identified and cleared and communities will be aware of the risk. As discussed earlier, since no

technical survey had been carried out, in some cases land identified for clearance was perceived to be contaminated but in fact had no contamination. In addition, UNDP institutional support has not included developing pro-poor, gender-inclusive prioritization criteria and has not been based on a livelihood analysis.

Improved prioritization criteria and a transparent process of applying criteria could result in more effective use of resources and enable a better reporting process for outcomes. To date, the prioritization process has not systematically included the voices of women, men, girls and boys. Because of this, and the lack of baseline data, it is not possible to evaluate whether at the outset recipient families were poor (relatively), or whether UXO contamination was impeding livelihoods. Further, other than in very broad terms, such assessment and support for improved livelihoods has not been a focus of UXO/mine action sector strategies and policies.

Any contribution to improved livelihoods as a contribution to poverty reduction is likely to result from individual household and community socioeconomic factors and aspirations rather than deliberate planning. In the absence of a technical survey, and the lack of pro-poor factors in the prioritization process, there is possibility for mis-targeting of clearance resources. In addition, while UNDP (and UNICEF) support to UXO Lao MRE teams is likely to have contributed to an awareness of the risks posed by UXO threats, the extent to which land users were aware of the residual risks and the results of the CMTS were largely dependent on the capacity of the village head to inform land users. As mentioned earlier,

in terms of victim assistance, UNDP institutional support has been limited and mainly focused on supporting the NRA Victim Assistance Unit in terms of staff salaries.<sup>63</sup>

## IMMEDIATE RESULTS TO OUTCOMES

As seen, UNDP support has contributed to increased national ownership of the programme over time, as evidenced by the issuance of relevant decrees, and importantly, by the support and ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. UNDP support to salaries at the NRA has contributed to the identification of UXO victims but not to the enhancement or development of the provision of even basic services for survivors/victims or their families. Where contaminated land has been demined it has removed the physical threat of UXO from specific plots of land (usually to a depth of 25 cm), and therefore reduced risk. Where non-contaminated land has been cleared it may have removed the perception that the land was contaminated, assuming this was effectively communicated to land users. The TOC assumes that families and communities with UXO-contaminated land lack the resources to manage UXO risks and are therefore prevented from using their land. This case study demonstrates, however, that since the end of the war, many people have developed ways to manage the risks associated with UXO.

There is limited evidence to support the assumption that removing UXO from land has resulted in more productive land use. This is first because in many cases the land was being used for the same or similar purpose prior to clearance. The difference post-clearance is that people can cultivate their land slightly faster and dig deeper, and it is easier and faster to remove scrub and roots from areas that have been fallow (lands may have been fallow due to UXO but more commonly as part of the agricultural practice of swidden — ‘slash and

burn’ clearance — and fallow). Where farmers have used their land more productively, typically it has not been due to UXO clearance but rather to personal aspirations, agency, ability to take livelihood risks, and access to productive assets as well as access to roads and markets. These important contextual factors are currently absent from the theory of change. While there is a legal framework for implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, there is no evidence that UNDP has supported the rights of people with UXO injuries or contributed to rehabilitation and improved living conditions for UXO survivors.

## OUTCOMES TO IMPACT

One of the assumed outcomes in the TOC that can be attributed to UNDP’s role is increased safety and reduced risk from the threat of UXO. The quality of the available data does not allow for a standardized measure of the burden of UXO injury, which would provide a justification for resource allocation and planning. Instead, the only measure is the estimated number of lives lost if victims had lived to normal life expectancy. While the NRA Victim Assistance Survey estimates that there are approximately 20,000 survivors of UXO injury, the quality of the data does not allow an estimation of the number of years lived with a disability. This makes estimating the impact of UXO clearance on safety and reduced threat from UXO challenging. Nevertheless, from participants’ responses it is reasonable to assume that UNDP’s support to UXO/mine action has, at an individual level at least, contributed to human development and enlarged people’s choices by expanding their opportunities.

The table below summarizes the findings based on stakeholder interviews, document review and field work in eight communities. They refer to the theory of change developed during the Inception Phase of this evaluation.

---

63 UNDP provides salaries for all UXO/NRA staff.

**Table 3. Theory of change and its relevance to the Lao People’s Democratic Republic**

|                 | <b>Theory of change</b>  | <b>Relevance</b>   | <b>Comments</b>   |
|-----------------|--|--|---|
| <b>Impact</b>   | Improved livelihoods (towards poverty eradication) and reduced marginalization (towards reduction of inequalities and exclusion) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre- and post-clearance land use was very similar</li> <li>• The livelihoods of rural communities improved as a result of UXO clearance because they felt safer and were able to use their land more efficiently</li> <li>• Livelihood improvements were important to people but were relatively small, and were a result of their own investment</li> <li>• Those with slightly more resources were able to exploit their land to greater advantage (e.g., use hand-held tractors, more labour to clear land and plant crops, access to markets)</li> <li>• No evidence of significant eradication of poverty or reduction in inequalities or exclusion because of UXO/mine action. Poverty in the areas of inquiry is due to structural barriers, geography, little access to pro-poor markets, inability to take livelihood risks, etc.</li> <li>• Although the improvements in livelihoods following UXO/mine action are small in terms of production and financial gain, they were important to communities</li> <li>• Improved sense of safety and well-being may be pre-requisites for improved livelihoods</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marginalization is a result of a number of factors that primarily relate to UXO contamination</li> <li>• Removal of UXO may contribute to reduced marginalization by lowering exposure to UXO, and potential catastrophic costs as a result of injury</li> <li>• Using economic measures of impact is likely to further marginalization as the poor are the least likely to be able to use land effectively. Removal of UXO does, however, reduce fear of death and disability while communities undertake routine, life-sustaining work</li> <li>• Context is critical in terms of the type of impacts that are likely to be observed</li> <li>• The TOC could incorporate ‘human development’ under impact. But this is not included in the portfolio for many donors in development contexts such as the Lao context, so there could be a risk in terms of funding</li> </ul> |
| <b>Outcomes</b> | Safety and reduced threat from landmines and ERW   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities expressed feelings of safety and security where land has been cleared of UXO</li> <li>• The number of injuries has decreased, but the extent to which this is due to UXO clearance rather than other factors is hard to establish</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is the principal outcome and may in turn lead to other outcomes and impacts</li> <li>• Participatory handover procedures are crucial in assuring local communities that hazard is gone</li> <li>• Alternative livelihoods due to rapid economic growth and falling profitability of the scrap metal trade may have had equal if not greater importance in reducing casualty rates in the last five years</li> </ul>   |
|                 | Productive use of previously contaminated land   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre- and post-clearance land use was very similar/the same</li> <li>• The difference is that people feel safer when farming and using the land in other ways, and do not have to be ‘careful’ with every step</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decontaminated land is used but typically for the same purpose as before clearance</li> <li>• Changes in post-clearance land use are determined by household, and community characteristics and contextual factors, not from UXO clearance</li> </ul>  |

**Table 3. Theory of change and its relevance to the Lao People’s Democratic Republic**

|                                | <b>Theory of change</b>   | <b>Relevance</b>   | <b>Comments</b>   |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Outcomes</b><br>(continued) | National landmine ban law and legal protection for UXO/ mine victims in place | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ottawa Convention has not been ratified</li> <li>• The Convention on Cluster Munitions has been ratified but has not entered into national legislation in accordance with Lao law</li> <li>• The Lao Constitution and labour law provide some protection for people with disabilities (Note that not all UXO survivors have long-term impairments/ disabilities)</li> <li>• The Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities has been ratified and a related decree passed</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both ratified Conventions are a component of national ownership</li> <li>• The Convention on Cluster Munitions contributes mainly to outputs (survey and clearance). It ignores other forms of UXO. It does not have an independent role in contributing to impact</li> <li>• Capacity to implement both ratified Conventions and relevant legislation/ policy are crucial aspects in the extent to which implementation contributes to outputs and outcomes</li> </ul>  |
|                                | Rehabilitation and improved living conditions of UXO/ mine victims            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There has been no systematic victim assistance in the country</li> <li>• There has been no significant engagement of UNDP in victim assistance</li> <li>• The NRA has a Victim Assistance Unit and a database of casualties but no capacity to fund or coordinate providers</li> <li>• The NRA, along with organizations working in disability, have been successful advocating for the inclusion of a short set of questions on disability in the 2015 census. This should provide a better understanding of the prevalence of disability in the country.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The database of UXO victims is missing a lot of data and under-records new victims, and other variables that could allow a more meaningful analysis, and calculation of a disability-adjusted life years are absent</li> <li>• The number of UXO incidents has been reduced significantly since the end of the war and had decreased by the time a formal UXO/mine action programme started</li> <li>• Injuries did not decline in the first 10 years of UXO/mine action</li> <li>• The number of injuries increased around 2004 due to an increase in scrap metal prices and then went down after the global financial crisis, and have not gone back up</li> <li>• This outcome should include support to families of victims/survivors</li> </ul> |
|                                | Demined land released   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The process for releasing land is not participatory and depends on how well the village head communicates the results. Hence not everyone is aware of what land has been released or cleared and to what depth</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The TOC should show this outcome on the principal pathway to achieving impact (if participatory)</li> <li>• To be effective land release processes must be participatory. This should be included in the TOC</li> </ul>  |



**Table 3. Theory of change and its relevance to the Lao People’s Democratic Republic**

|                                | <b>Theory of change</b>  | <b>Relevance</b>   | <b>Comments</b>  |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Outcomes</b><br>(continued) | National ownership of UXO/mine action, which is mainstreamed into relevant national body   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nationally implemented UNDP projects for UXO/mine action include the NRA and UXO Lao. The NRA coordinates UXO/mine action and reports to the Meeting of States Parties to the Cluster Munitions Convention. UXO Lao is a provider of UXO-related services</li> <li>There are expectations that UXO clearance will be integrated into the military, who already undertake commercial clearance and some humanitarian work, but specific details are scant</li> <li>Technical capacity of UXO Lao is relatively good, while the NRA capacity is weak, particularly in quality management of clearance and information management</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National ownership in UXO/mine action has been difficult, as the problem is viewed as externally caused, requiring international compensation, rather than a state funding obligation</li> <li>The UNDP/NRA could influence impact through task prioritization and clear prioritization criteria through policy directives and monitoring and evaluation</li> </ul>   |
|                                | Mine victims identified and recognized   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UXO victims and survivors have been identified by the NRA</li> <li>There is no specific support for victims</li> <li>This outcome did not receive engagement of UNDP</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The TOC should remove this outcome and incorporate it as a result. If it means having recognized status, then that is what the TOC should say</li> </ul>  |
|                                | Mine victims able to access basic and specialized services and vocational schemes          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no specific support for victims</li> <li>This outcome did not receive engagement of UNDP</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is a result (output) — if it is about actions of people, not intentions of government service providers, then this needs to be explicit in the TOC</li> <li>It should be linked to broader injury surveillance and health information systems (avoid UXO exceptionalism)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Immediate results</b>       | Contaminated land identified and demined in line with IMAS, and communities aware of risks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UXO/mine action has been ongoing for 20 years but there is no real understanding of the number of hazardous areas</li> <li>Approaches to identifying areas for clearance and determining how much land should be cleared have evolved and UXO/mine action is and should become more efficient.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The CMTS will help to resolve this</li> <li>Effective and efficient technical survey and data management is needed to identify contaminated areas</li> <li>Consider qualifying this immediate result: ‘Contaminated land identified and demined in accordance with prioritization criteria and IMAS and national standards...’</li> </ul>   |
|                                | Institutional structures developed and/or enhanced (e.g., mine action centres/authorities) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Lao UXO/mine action programme was established in 1995 when the industry was still evolving; as a result, its ineffectiveness and inefficiencies are partly a result of its history and the history of mine action globally. This also meant that a regulatory authority was not established in the first instance, and there has been tension between the NRA and the more established UXO Lao</li> <li>The NRA’s capacity for effective, pro-poor prioritization, quality assurance and information management remains weak</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There have been numerous capacity-building efforts supported by UNDP and other international actors, but this has not been systematic or based on a needs assessment or taken into account the sociocultural, political and historical context</li> <li>The focus has been on developing technical survey and clearance capacity at the expense of building adaptive capacity, monitoring and evaluation, pro-poor and gender-inclusive policies and prioritization — these should be reflected in the TOC and the pathways to achieve impact in the country</li> </ul> |

**Table 3. Theory of change and its relevance to the Lao People’s Democratic Republic**

|   | <b>Theory of change</b>  | <b>Relevance</b>  | <b>Comments</b>   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <b>Immediate results</b><br>(continued) | Policies, structures and services for mine victims developed, strengthened and/or provided   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no specific support for victims, and medical facilities are limited</li> <li>• Legislation for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been approved</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This has not received engagement of UNDP</li> </ul>  |
| <b>UNDP role</b>                        | Demining, technical and operational support, awareness-raising and training, quality management, provision of demining equipment, methods, etc.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNDP has provided technical and operational support, but some donors have preferred to fund advisers bilaterally without sufficient coordination mechanisms and this has sometimes contributed to fragmented advice</li> <li>• The chief technical advisers have had primarily technical mine action skills, so UNDP has not developed other capacities essential for effective management</li> <li>• UNDP has linked UXO Lao and the NRA formally and informally to private providers and innovative methods</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The emphasis of UNDP’s role on providing technical support excludes other essential areas of organizational development (and which have been missing in the country)</li> <li>• The TOC lacks reference to role of UNDP in promoting and implementing pro-poor and gender-inclusive policies</li> </ul>  |
|   | Institutional support and development: governance, policy, legal and regulatory frameworks, coordination, resource mobilization, fund management, relationship-building, national survey, etc.                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNDP has not developed other capacities essential for effective management and pro-poor, inclusive UXO clearance</li> <li>• UNDP has been instrumental in resource mobilization, fund management and relationship-building and the establishment of UXO Lao and the NRA</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This has been the most significant lacuna in UNDP’s roles in UXO/mine action in the country</li> <li>• Advocacy or lobbying to keep mine action on the agenda should also be included in the UNDP role</li> <li>• National technical and socioeconomic surveying is important</li> <li>• Pro-poor clearance requires a common understanding and consensus on the purpose and priorities of UXO action</li> <li>• Current government policies in reducing poverty relate to developing Focal Development Areas, which often involve relocation; this approach is not supported by all donors unless relevant safeguards are in place and monitored</li> </ul> |
|   | Victim assistance (including rehabilitation, advocacy, and reintegration support): physical rehabilitation, medical exams, psychosocial care, vocational training, relevant policies, laws, and institutional structures, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNDP has not fulfilled any aspect of this role aside from supporting staff salaries in the NRA</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNDP has not engaged in this</li> </ul>  |

**Table 3. Theory of change and its relevance to the Lao People’s Democratic Republic**

|                                 | <b>Theory of change</b>  | <b>Relevance</b>   | <b>Comments</b>  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>UNDP role</b><br>(continued) | Socioeconomic/ pro-poor, inclusive policy — this is not mentioned as one of UNDP’s roles |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no mention of UNDP’s role in promoting pro-poor, inclusive development. This seems an oversight, given UNDP’s mandate, and UNDP’s intended overall impact in the TOC. As stated above, prioritization policy and practice have been devolved to Lao planning structures, and take place outside a framework of policy and rules that are explicitly understood by all stakeholders (in marked contrast to the World Bank’s Poverty Reduction Fund programme, which currently is considered good practice by many donors to UNDP in the mine action sector)</li> <li>• The amount of attention given to victim assistance in the TOC seems disproportionate, especially when it is seldom a UXO/mine action priority</li> <li>• Prioritization and community engagement are crucial in UXO/ mine action and impact — it is not explicitly mentioned in the TOC</li> <li>• Promotion of gender and South-South issues is not mentioned in the TOC</li> <li>• Prioritization is influenced by socioeconomic need and affects national economic and community socioeconomic development</li> </ul> |
| <b>Assump-tions</b>             | Political situation in the country is conducive to progress in landmine and UXO removal  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This has been generally true since the start of the programme</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is an important assumption</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | National and local government partners place high priority on landmine removal           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initially, while a concern at the provincial and district level, there is limited concern at the national level</li> <li>• Ministry of Foreign Affairs placed high priority on the Convention on Cluster Munitions</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not clear that this is an important assumption</li> <li>• The Convention obligates States Parties/international community to support cluster munition removal in poorer countries; therefore, national governments do not have to prioritize efforts but merely refrain from obstructing them</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | United Nations involvement in demining has government and popular support                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government assumed the United Nations was largely responsible for mine action. Not clear that there was much popular support or that this is a concept in a country lacking civil society</li> </ul>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not clear that this is an important assumption</li> </ul>   |

**Table 3. Theory of change and its relevance to the Lao People's Democratic Republic**

|                                   | <b>Theory of change</b>  | <b>Relevance</b>  | <b>Comments</b>   |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <b>Assumptions</b><br>(continued) | Assets, including demined lands, are not misappropriated and benefits are made available to intended communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was not a problem of misappropriation of demined lands and benefits</li> <li>• This assumption presumes that the main benefit is contained in use of demined lands, whereas the principal community benefit is end of fear of death and disability from UXO</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not clear if this is an important assumption regarding effectiveness of the UXO/mine action programme</li> <li>• The lack of transparency in the prioritization process, however, can lead to perceptions of misappropriation</li> <li>• Misappropriation would have been an issue for donors</li> <li>• Access to assets and pro-poor markets are essential contextual factors in impact</li> </ul> |
|                                   |  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assumptions should be included at every level (e.g., from UNDP's role, immediate results, outcomes, impact) to take into account access to productive assets including pro-poor markets and roads</li> </ul>   |

## Section 5

# LIMITATIONS

As with all evaluations, this evaluation had some limitations. One was the impossibility of identifying and observing similar communities where UNDP was not involved, for comparison purposes. This was because over the two decades of UXO/mine action and the request-based system, it has been very hard to find villages that have had no clearance in the nine provinces where UXO Lao works. This was compounded by the lack of baseline data and difficulties in matching villages with/without clearance based on similar socioeconomic baseline data.

The shift to a village-based approach provides an opportunity for establishing a quasi-experimental design. This also points to a limitation of the programme and a lack of capacity within UNDP's UXO/mine action to develop effective monitoring and evaluation processes measures beyond hectares cleared and number of items removed. Even as this has become increasingly important, UNDP's technical capacity with the programme has not been able to address this, and the programme has continued to report at the output level only. This has also been a cause of frustration for donors. In addition, the sample size was too small to collect quantitative measures of self-reported change.

Further, while safety was often mentioned as the most important benefit, we were unable in this evaluation to measure this with validated tools. Another important factor is that in this evaluation, the expected impact was positive changes in livelihoods. However, as seen, changing livelihoods has not been a focus of the programme, and task prioritization and clearance assets have

not been directed towards livelihood change. Where positive changes in livelihoods have been observed, therefore (for example in the village in Xieng Khouang), these changes have been unintended consequences of UXO clearance rather than impacts arising from a deliberate strategy to promote livelihoods.

A number of limitations are also evident in the theory of change. These include a lack of an explicit theoretical or conceptual framework to explain capacity development from a UNDP perspective, a lack of a conceptual framework to explain livelihood change, a lack of a clear definition of livelihoods and what it encompasses, and the absence of the role of context in influencing change. Importantly, the underlying logic that UXO clearance supports livelihoods, and in so doing contributes to poverty reduction and increased inclusion, is not supported by empirical investigation. This is not to sidestep the importance of reducing the impact of UXO on human development and human rights but points to the tension in development settings rather than humanitarian ones of integrating UXO/mine action with government and donor development priorities.

Finally, the theory of change suggests that the process from capacity development inputs to positive changes in livelihoods, poverty reduction and social inclusion is relatively straightforward and linear, whereas in reality it is a complex process. Simplifying the process in this way, while attractive, does not sufficiently capture the role of individual agency or the role of history and context in shaping how capacity-building and livelihood outcomes unfold.



## Section 6

# CONCLUSIONS

This country case study is a component of the IEO evaluation of the impact of UNDP support in mine action, contained in the 2014–2015 IEO workplan. The evaluation seeks to assess the impact on mine-affected communities and people — including in particular UXO/mine survivors and their families — of UNDP capacity development and other support efforts. The UNDP-supported Lao PDR UXO/mine action programme has been in operation since 1995. UNDP has provided capacity-building, mobilized and managed resources, and coordinated and mediated among mine action actors.

UNDP's support remains relevant to the country strategies and to UNDP's global strategic objectives of promoting human development, and more specifically to the country programme document Outcome 1: Growth and development, and to Strategic Plan Outcome 3: Access to basic services. UNDP has supported technical trials, including using different detectors and survey methods, with the intent of improving efficiency and effectiveness. It has also supported research, including on gender and victim assistance, although the translation of this research into practice has been limited.

Over the two decades of support to the UXO/mine action sector, UNDP has also contributed to policy discussion and sector reform, the most significant being the establishment of the NRA. Another important achievement has been the work on the signing, ratifying and implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and linking UXO Lao and the NRA with international donors and technical advice. Both the Government and donors value the role that UNDP has played in the sector, and it is unlikely the programme would have achieved the level of national institutionalization and UXO clearance

outreach it has experienced for 20 years without UNDP support.

While donors overall support UNDP's role, the relationship with donors has not always been easy. At times donors have been frustrated by perceived lack of accountability, strategic direction and planning, and more recently by a lack of safeguards to protect people relocated through government policies. In response to these concerns, UNDP has often been reactive rather than proactive. UNDP support to victim assistance has been limited, and any improvements in the lives of UXO survivors and families of UXO victims are unlikely to be attributable to any of UNDP's work.

UNDP support has been effective in terms of building clearance and survey capacity, although survey and clearance methods have not always been as effective as they could have been. Nevertheless, the programme has responded to concerns related to effectiveness through, for example, detector and survey trials. Clearance methods have not always maximized effectiveness for three reasons: the technical survey was not conducted at the outset of the programme, a technical survey was not adequately employed to check that sites were contaminated, and landmine clearance methods used in the first few years of the programme were not as good as ones devised later on.

The decision not to undertake a technical survey at the outset contributed to areas with few UXO being cleared. This weakness was compounded by a focus on the indicator of hectares cleared as outlined in the Safe Path Forward I, and a focus on development outcomes, which led to clearance assets being deployed (mostly by INGOs) to small areas in support of the work of development partners. It is important to note, however,

that few countries have undertaken a national technical survey and the Lao country programme has broadly followed the trajectory of global mine action programmes. The recently approved CMTS goes some way towards addressing this lack of a national technical survey. Nevertheless, limited attention has been given to ensuring that the voices and priorities of women, men, girls and boys are included in any prioritization of confirmed hazardous areas.

Another issue is that UNDP has not always effectively coordinated advice from various partners, with the result that the advice given to the NRA and UXO Lao has frequently been fragmented and inconsistent. Ensuring consistent advice to these two entities, however, is not the sole responsibility of UNDP; and bilateral donors supporting advisers in the NRA and UXO Lao could improve matters by clearly stating the roles and responsibilities of advisers in their terms of reference, and by ensuring that technical assistance complements the strategic direction given by UNDP, in particular by its chief technical advisers.

UNDP has been less effective in building the management capacity of the NRA and UXO Lao. While the UXO/mine action programme does have the necessary governmental decrees to provide a management framework for the sector, these decrees on their own are not indicators measuring effectiveness. UNDP support for management capacity has not been well developed in particular in database management and use, quality management, pro-poor, gender-sensitive prioritization, and monitoring and evaluation capacity.

The lack of clarity around the process has been mentioned in several evaluations. Further, while donors have at various times been dissatisfied with UNDP's performance, it should be noted that capacity-building occurs within a complex sociocultural, political and economic system. UNDP's UXO programme cannot be divorced from the other internal national development processes. While donors may be uncomfortable

with them sometimes, such processes are rarely linear or neatly captured in performance-based log-frames. In addition, while UNDP's actions need to be aligned with both government and donor policies, this alignment should be more of a critical alignment based on evidence of what works in context.

Of concern is the limited attention given to the transition to greater government management and funding of the UXO programme, especially in light of potentially falling donor funding. The Lao People's Democratic Republic has graduated to a lower-middle-income country status, and is likely to exit least developed country status and become classified as a middle-income country by 2020. When this happens it is reasonable to assume donor aid will decrease. It is essential to plan for this reality.

From the community visits conducted during this evaluation, it is evident that the clearance of UXO from communities has had a consistent impact in terms of the elimination of fear, which has been a source of concern and has limited the daily activities of men, women, and children. Clearance engendered an attitude among the community members that one could move around freely to do whatever needed to be done. Pre- and post-clearance use of land was very similar. The use of the actual areas released provided marginal economic and other benefits to those who cultivated them, and enabled individual families to expand their subsistence gardens. However, it did not have significant implications for development indicators at the local and national levels.

The tangible socioeconomic benefits at the community level that have followed clearance are the result of the efforts of individuals and depend on access to productive assets, especially labour, as well as access to communication infrastructure and markets. The drive to link UXO/mine action with development makes sense in terms of the global commitments to the MDGs, the country's impressive economic performance over the last decade, and the Government's desire to gradu-



ate from least developed country status by 2020. These factors have existed alongside donor strategies, which relate primarily to economic development but overall are at odds with the realities on the ground. Other than the physical clearance, there is no evidence of systematic external support from UNDP, national authorities or other actors to complement the clearance.

The socioeconomic impact of UNDP's support to mine action in the country is mainly indirect and comes from the organization's long-term support to the mine action sector and its institutional role at the national level. Given limited direct government funding, UNDP and bilateral donors can be credited for the successful implementation of the programme, and any conse-

quential outcomes and impacts. However, one cannot underestimate the contribution of the Government, and its commitment in continuing to support the programme, as well as the efforts of UXO Lao and the NRA in the implementation and longevity of the programme.

The evaluation has also called into question some of the underlying assumptions of UXO/mine action, and especially the focus on development outcomes, often understood in terms of economic outcomes. The World Bank World Development Report 2015<sup>64</sup> proposes a new paradigm for development, which provides an opportunity to re-think how UXO/mine action and capacity development are conceived and implemented and what counts as effectiveness and impact.

---

64 World Bank, *World Development Report 2015: Mind, Society, and Behavior*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2015.



## Annex 1

# ACRONYMS

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| AFSC    | American Friends Service Committee                               |
| AusAID  | Australian Agency for International Development                  |
| CMTS    | Cluster Munition Technical Survey                                |
| DFA     | District-Focused Approach  |
| ERW     | Explosive remnants of war  |
| FDA     | Focal development area   |
| GICHD   | Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining            |
| HI      | Handicap International   |
| IEO     | Independent Evaluation Office                                    |
| IFAD    | International Fund for Agricultural Development                  |
| IMAS    | International mine action standards                              |
| INGO    | International non-governmental organization                      |
| MAG     | Mines Advisory Group   |
| MCC     | Mennonite Central Committee                                      |
| MDG     | Millennium Development Goal                                      |
| MRE     | Mine risk education  |
| NCDP    | National Committee for Disabled People                           |
| NCRDPE  | National Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication |
| NGO     | Non-governmental organization                                    |
| NPA     | Norwegian People's Aid   |
| NRA     | National Regulatory Authority                                    |
| NSEDP   | National Socio-Economic Development Plan                         |
| TOC     | Theory of change   |
| UNDP    | United Nations Development Programme                             |
| UNICEF  | United Nations Children's Fund                                   |
| UXO     | Unexploded ordnance  |
| UXO LAO | Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme                       |
| VA      | Victim assistance  |
| WFP     | World Food Programme   |



## Annex 2

# PERSONS MET

### GOVERNMENT OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Ki Boutsada, Chief of Operations, UXO Lao  
Phoukiou, Chanthasomboune, Director, NRA  
Bountao Chanthavonsa, UXO Victim Assistance Officer, NRA  
Thongchan Duanmalalay, Lao Disabled People's Association  
Wanthong Kamada, Deputy Director, UXO Lao  
Kingphet Phimmavong, bomb clearance coordinator, UXO Lao, Xieng Khouang  
Maligna Saignavongs, former Director, NRA  
Souban Sayasenh, Head of Cabinet  
Boungpheng Sisawath, Deputy Director, NRA  
Thiphasone, Soukhathammavong, Director, UXO Lao  
Thongdeng Singthilath, former Deputy Director, UXO Lao  
Sombath Somphone, Department of Planning and Cooperation, UXO Lao, Saravan  
Somchai, Deputy Director, Rural Development and Poverty Eradication, Saravan  
Pouvang, Chief of Administration, Saravan Province  
Bounphamit Somvichith, Deputy Director, NRA  
Somneuk Volasane, Deputy Provincial Coordinator, UXO Lao, Saravan  
Morakot Vongxay, Director for UN Division, Department of International Cooperation, Lao PDR

### UNDP PROJECT OR PROGRAMME STAFF (CURRENT AND FORMER)

Stan Brabant (by Skype), former Chief Technical Adviser, NRA  
Nils Christensen, UXO Unit Manager, UNDP  
Eric Gagnon (by Skype), former Chief Technical Adviser, UXO Lao  
Tim Horner (by Skype), former Chief Technical Adviser, NRA  
Azusa Kubota, Disaster Risk Reduction, UNDP Lao People's Democratic Republic  
Sebastian Kollach, Interim Adviser, NRA  
Tim Lardner, former Chief Technical Adviser, UXO Lao  
Ian Mansfield, Independent Consultant, former Executive Director, Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining  
Justin Shone, former Trust Fund Manager  
Kath Sweet, former Programme Adviser  
Earl Turcotte (by phone), former Chief Technical Adviser, NRA

### CONTRACTORS

Olivier Bauduin, Task Manager, Sterling (previously with Norwegian People's Aid and the Armour Group), for UNDP Technical Advisor  
Phil Bean (by Skype), United States contractor (Armour Group, Sterling), former UNDP Chief Technical Adviser  
Robert Keeley (by Skype), independent evaluator/consultant  
Nigel Orr, Sterling Adviser, United States contractor (Armour Group, Sterling), former New Zealand military secondment

## DONORS

Sawada Keisuke, Aid Coordination Officer,  
Japan International Cooperation Agency

Minyoung, Aid Effectiveness Specialist, Korean  
International Cooperation Agency

Ignacio Oliver-Cruz, Attaché, Cooperation,  
European Union

Hideyuki Onishi, Counsellor, Japan Embassy,  
Vientiane

Brent Rapson (by phone), New Zealand Aid

Vesna Roche, Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation

Phonesavanh Sethanaphaixanh, Programme  
Officer, European Union

Dulce Simmanivong, Department of Foreign  
Affairs and Trade, Australia

Kath Sweet, Swiss Agency for Development and  
Cooperation

James Toone, Deputy Head of Mission, British  
Embassy, Vientiane

Mike Toyryla, First Secretary for Political and  
Economic Affairs, United States Embassy,  
Vientiane

Dave Vosen, Deputy Head of Mission,  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade,  
Australia

Tone Wroldsen, Second Secretary, Royal  
Norwegian Embassy, Hanoi

Andreas Zurbrugg, Department of Foreign  
Affairs and Trade, Australia

## OTHERS

Sommaï Faming, Head of United Nations  
Industrial Development Organization, Lao  
Operations

Courtney Innes, Victim Assistance consultant

Leonard Kaminiski, former Norwegian People's  
Aid Technical Advisor in UXO Lao  
2004–2007

Ted Paterson (by Skype), Mine Action and  
Development Consultant, European Union  
Laos

Julien Rossard, Senior Adviser, World Bank  
Poverty Reduction Fund

Avi Sarkar, Chief Technical Adviser, South-  
East Asia Region Water for Asian Cities  
Programme & MEK-WATSAN Initiative,  
UN-Habitat

Bounpone Sayasenh, Director General of the  
Pension Department, Ministry of Labour  
and Social Welfare

Thoummy Silamphan, Executive Director,  
Quality of Life Association

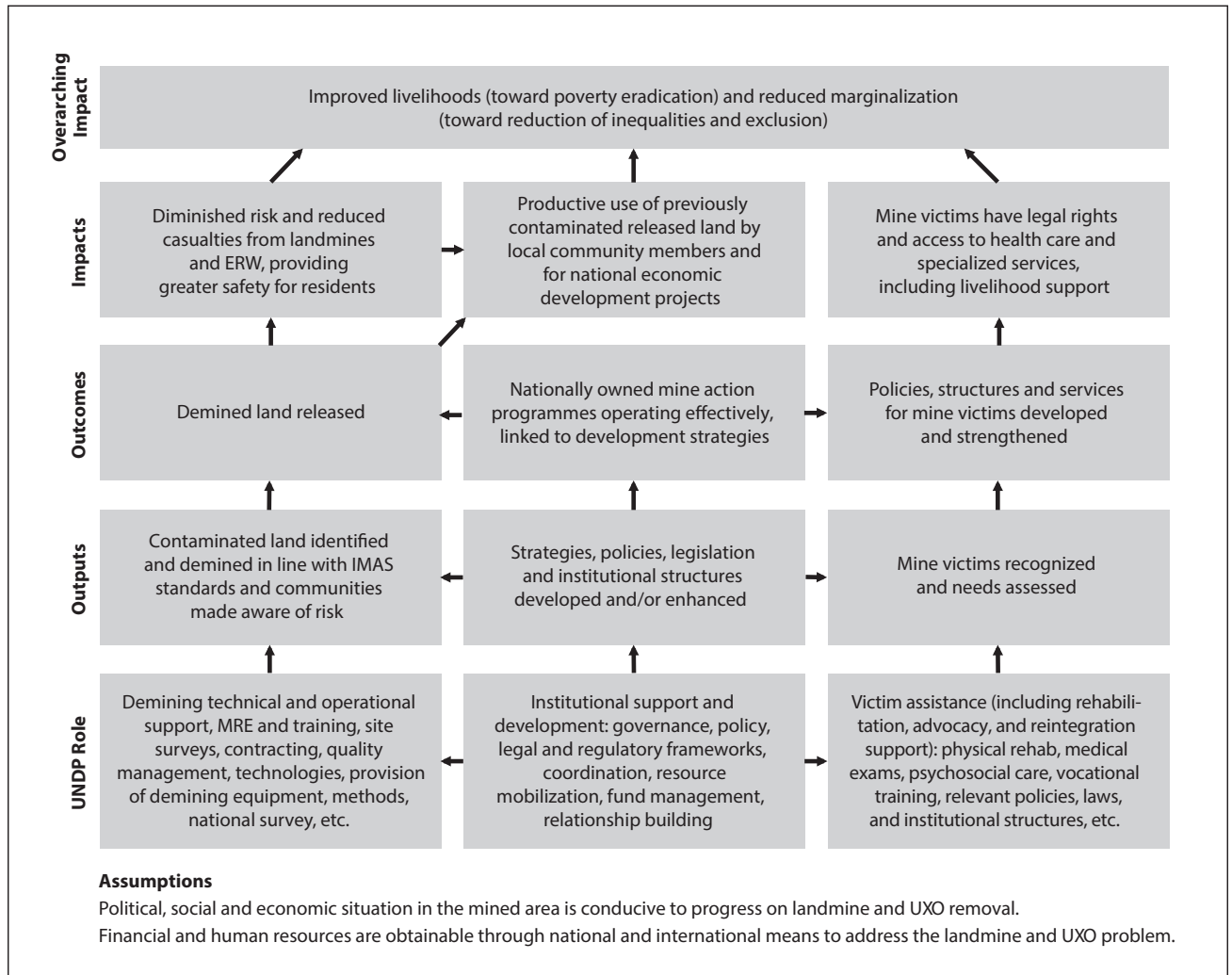
Nick Talbot, Operations Manager, and Mr.  
Jamie Graham, Programme Manager,  
HALO Trust Savannahkhet (by Skype)

Samnieng Thammavong (Victim Assistance  
Team Leader, Integrated UXO Victim  
Assistance Support Project), World  
Education

Ernst Woest, Technical Field Manager, Mines  
Advisory Gorup, Xieng Khouang

## Annex 3

# THEORY OF CHANGE







## Annex 4

# CHRONOLOGY OF MINE ACTION IN LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

| Year | Event   | External context |       | International support: Operations | International support: Capacity-building | UNDP support |
|------|---|------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|--|--------------|
|      |   | Int'l            | Nat'l |                                   |  |              |
| 1995 | Prime Minister's (PM) decree establishing the National Committee for Disabled People (NCDP)   |                  | x     |                                   |  |              |
| 1995 | Lao PDR UXO Trust Fund established  | x                | x     |                                   |  | x            |
| 1996 | UXO Lao established (under Ministry for Labour and Social Welfare), national public institution with autonomous financial status within the Ministry                              | x                | x     |                                   |  | x            |
| 1996 | Decree establishing the Trust Fund Steering Committee and the Lao National UXO Programme  | x                | x     |                                   |  | x            |
| 1996 | Impact of UXO contamination survey Handicap International (HI)  | x                | x     |                                   |  | x            |
| 1996 | Gov't approved a UXO programme for Huaphan, to be implemented by GERBERA/ Potsdam Kommunikation, funded by German bilateral assistance  | x                | x     | x                                 | x  | x            |
| 1997 | Implementing Partners (IPs) implement programmes (MAG, HI, NPA, Gerbera, Belgian military)  | x                | x     | x                                 | x  | x            |
| 2000 | MAG handed over staff and equipment to UXO Lao  | x                | x     | x                                 | x  | x            |
| 2002 | IPs advisers to UXO Lao, UXO Lao manage operations and human resources  | x                | x     | x                                 | x  | x            |
| 2002 | UXO Lao decides not to expand further   | x                | x     | x                                 |  |              |
| 2002 | Decline in funding  | x                | x     | x                                 | x  | x            |
| 2002 | UNDP and UXO LAO commissioned an assessment of the UXO Sector in September 2002   | x                | x     |                                   |  | x            |
| 2002 | PM Decree relieved the UXO Lao Director of the role of secretariat for the National Steering Committee and handed it over to the newly created National Steering Committee Office | x                | x     |                                   |  | x            |
| 2003 | Laotian Constitution guarantees persons with disabilities receive social security benefits and time off work in the event of incapacitation or disability                         | x                |       |                                   |  |              |
| 2004 | Safe Path Forward I   | x                | x     |                                   |  |              |

| Year | Event   | External context |       | International support: Operations | International support: Capacity-building | UNDP support |
|------|---|------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|--|--------------|
|      |   | Int'l            | Nat'l |                                   |  |              |
| 2004 | National Regulatory Authority established; UXO LAO becomes an operator                    | x                | x     | x                                 |  | x            |
| 2004 | Market opened to other players  | x                | x     | x                                 |  | x            |
| 2004 | Beginning of a series of detector and survey trials                                       | x                | x     | x                                 | x  | x            |
| 2006 | Amended Labour Law of Lao People's Democratic Republic includes persons with disabilities | x                |       |                                   |  |              |
| 2006 | National Standards drafted  | x                | x     | x                                 |  |              |
| 2007 | First Lao representative to the States Parties Meeting for the Ottawa Convention in 2007  | x                | x     |                                   |  | x            |
| 2007 | Development and implementation of an accreditation process                                | x                | x     | x                                 | x  | x            |
| 2007 | MRE strategy  | x                | x     | x                                 | x  |              |
| 2008 | Safe Path Forward I stats to be revised   | x                | x     | x                                 | x  | x            |
| 2008 | Gender assessment   | x                | x     |                                   |  | x            |
| 2008 | Hosted the Southeast Asian Regional Meeting on the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)  | x                | x     |                                   |  | x            |
| 2008 | Signed CCM  | x                | x     |                                   |  | x            |
| 2008 | Signed Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)                       | x                |       |                                   |  |              |
| 2008 | NRA victim survey   | x                | x     |                                   | x  | x            |
| 2008 | National Standard approved  | x                | x     | x                                 | x  | x            |
| 2009 | Ratified CCM  | x                | x     |                                   |  | x            |
| 2009 | Decree aligns responsibilities of NCDP with CRPD  | x                | x     |                                   |  |              |
| 2010 | CCM into force  | x                | x     | X                                 |  | x            |
| 2010 | CCM in Lao PDR (UXO Trust Fund) established   | x                | x     |                                   |  | x            |
| 2010 | First Meeting of States Parties CCM   | x                | x     |                                   |  | x            |
| 2010 | UXO sector MDG 9 unveiled   | x                | x     | x                                 |  | x            |
| 2011 | PM Decree No. 406 covering changes to the NRA Board                                       | x                |       |                                   |  |              |
| 2011 | First voluntary Ottawa Convention article 7 report  | x                | x     |                                   | x  | x            |
| 2011 | Strategy formulation for UXO Victim Assistance initiated                                  | x                | x     | x                                 | x  | x            |
| 2012 | Safe Path Forward II approved   | x                | x     |                                   | x  | x            |
| 2012 | First 15 army personnel received training   | x                | x     |                                   | x  | x            |

| Year | Event  | External context |       | International support: Operations | International support: Capacity-building | UNDP support |
|------|--|------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|--|--------------|
|      |  | Int'l            | Nat'l |                                   |  |              |
| 2012 | PM Decree No. 604 places the NRA under the authority of the PM Office and the National Leading Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication | x                |       |                                   |  |              |
| 2012 | Decree 093/NRA requires all development projects to undertake UXO survey in suspected contaminated areas, and clearance as necessary                   | x                | x     | x                                 |  |              |
| 2014 | Participatory capacity assessment  | x                | x     |                                   | x  | x            |
| 2015 | PM Decree No. 43 on appointing the NRA for the UXO Programme   | x                |       |                                   |  |              |
| 2015 | Cluster Munition Technical Survey approved by NRA Board  | x                | x     | x                                 | x  | x            |



## Annex 5

# COMMUNITY CASE STUDIES

The evaluation team visited eight villages in three provinces (Saravan, Attapeu, Xieng Khouang) where clearance had been undertaken at least five years prior to the evaluation. Most of the communities had had UXO clearance both before and after 2010. None were declared impact- or UXO-free. Information was gathered using semi-structured interviews with local officials, programme recipients, UXO survivors and focus group discussions using community mapping. All respondents had to be over 18, able to give informed consent and to have been resident in the village before 2010. Data were collected in community mapping/focus groups discussions (eight female groups and eight male groups), interviews with eight village heads, 12 direct beneficiary interviews and eight interviews with survivors of UXO incidents. A summary is provided below.

### SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTION IN SARAVAN, ATTAPEU AND XIENG KHOUANG PROVINCES

Interviews and community mapping/focus group discussions were undertaken in the village school or meeting place and recorded with permission. Summaries were made of each of the community mapping/focus group discussions and interviews during data collection and checked with interpreters. Summaries were subsequently checked against the interview recordings. In many of the interviews a local interpreter was needed, with interviews being translated from Lao to the local language and then into English. As such, inevitably some of the information has been lost or edited by the interpreters. In addition, photographs and videos were shot, in part documenting the evaluation process but also as a way of providing an additional form of documentation.

| Province                   | District | Village      | FGD       | Head village | Beneficiary | Survivor     |
|----------------------------|----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| Saravan                    | Samaoy   | Asing Neau   | 2         | 1            | 1 F         | 1 (F)        |
|                            |          | Asing Tai    | 2         | 1            | 2 (F/M)     | 1 (F)        |
|                            | Ta oi    | Roukayo      | 2         | 1            | 2 ((F/M)    | 2 (F/M)      |
| Attapeu                    | Xansay   | Tatkoum      | 2         | 1            | 0           | 2 (F/M)      |
|                            | Phouvong | Poungsumphan | 2         | 1            | 1 (F)       | 1 (A couple) |
|                            |          | Kang         | 2         | 1            | 2 (F/M)     | 0            |
| Xieng Khouang              | Phoukod  | Namtom       | 2         | 1            | 2 (F/M)     | 0            |
|                            | Paek     | Mang         | 2         | 1            | 2 (F/M)     | 1 (F)        |
| <b>Total</b>               |          |              | <b>16</b> | <b>8</b>     | <b>12</b>   | <b>8</b>     |
| <b>Total transcription</b> |          |              | <b>44</b> |              |             |              |



## Annex 6

# COMMUNITY PROFILES

### **BAN ASING NEURH, SAMOUAY DISTRICT, SARAVAN PROVINCE**

Visited 27 June 2015

#### **AREA PROFILE**

Saravan Province is located in the south-east of the country on the Bolaven Plateau, a coffee-growing region. There are approximately 10 distinct ethnic groups living in the province, many of which have small populations, and unique languages and dialects. Ban Asing Neurh is a rural area accessible by an all-weather road from the district town of Samouay, followed by about 5 km along a dirt road and close to the mountainous Lao-Vietnamese border. Until relatively recently, Samouay district was cut off from the provincial capital of Saravan in the rainy season. Participants were of the Pukok ethnic group and interviews were undertaken with an interpreter who spoke Pukok.

The inhabitants of this village relocated to Ban Asing Neurh in 2010 because their old village, which was about 5 or 6 km away, was flooded as a result of Typhoon Ketsana in 2009. People grow rain-fed rice and sugar cane, and after the harvest they use the land for yangbong and cassava (rotational cropping).

Prior to the villagers' relocation, UXO Lao cleared contaminated areas surrounding the houses; however, agricultural expanses generally remained uncleared. Consequently, the villagers had to clear the fields for swidden, while continuing to utilize the fields from their previous village containing yangbong and cassava. Despite

obvious signs of contamination (i.e., visual observation of surface UXO by villagers), these fields were still utilized for agricultural purposes due to food insecurity (e.g., no rice to eat).

#### **CONTAMINATION AND IMPACT**

Many of the areas in which the villagers work has been cleared of UXO; nevertheless, some areas are still contaminated (as was the land in their previous village). While today the villagers see less UXO on the surface, they are unclear regarding sub-surface UXO. UXO was reported to cause complications to livelihoods. For instance, one person lost her brother due to a UXO explosion and that affected her family as they had lost a family labour unit, increasing the burden on the other family members who are alive (e.g., added childcare responsibilities). Furthermore, she was also injured at the same time as her brother, and her productivity had decreased because of some loss of mobility.

#### **CHANGES FOLLOWING CLEARANCE**

- People are no longer scared for themselves or their children, and can move around freely without the risk of death or disability.
- Not only is it easier to clear new land for farming, but livelihoods have improved as villagers are less apprehensive and can farm more efficiently (i.e., do not have to exercise the same degree of caution).

No conflicts post-clearance were reported, with ownership remaining as per pre-clearance.

## **BAN ASING TAI, SAMOUAY DISTRICT, SARAVAN PROVINCE**

Visited 28 June 2015

### **AREA PROFILE**

Ban Asing Tai is about six km from Ban Asing Neurh. Participants were of the Pukok ethnic group and interviews were undertaken with an interpreter who spoke Pukok.

The inhabitants of Ban Asing Tai moved to this village from a village approximately 5 or 6 kilometres away, following the flooding that ensued after Typhoon Ketsana in 2009. As a result of the typhoon, the villagers had lost their houses and most of that year's harvest. Consequently, the Government supported their relocation by providing housing and land for each household.

At the beginning of the resettlement, villages were comfortable in the residential areas; however, they later experienced issues regarding livelihood as they encountered difficulties farming and expanding land due to UXO contamination. Despite the contamination, the land was still utilized for farming. Additionally, some families continued to use the old fields from the previous village, as they accessed gardens with yangbong and cassava trees. Contaminated land is utilized despite perceivable signs of UXO (i.e., surface UXO) due to food insecurity.

### **CONTAMINATION AND IMPACT**

Many of the areas in which the villagers work have been cleared of UXO. Nevertheless, some

areas within the village remain contaminated. One person interviewed was injured due to UXO, and had lost one son, and one nephew. One person reported farming land that despite previous use was contaminated. She described discovering many 'bombies', which she collected at the edge of the field, and recounted explosions of bombies resulting from the burning methods she employed to clear scrub from the land. Currently, UXO are found in the garden behind the school, and in a nearby mountain where villagers sometimes go hunting, or looking for bamboo. The most important impact of UXO was reported as death due to an explosion, because of the added burden for the remaining family members. Furthermore, villagers commented on the burden related to disability due to lowered productivity, additional expenses and reliance on family members.

### **CHANGES FOLLOWING CLEARANCE**

- People are no longer fearful for themselves or their children, and experience freedom of movement without risk of death or disability. They reported feeling safe and happy.
- It is easier to clear new land of scrub for farming (swidden and gardens) and livelihoods have improved because people are not scared and do not have to be so careful when farming.

No conflicts post-clearance were reported. Land post-clearance remained the property of the pre-clearance owner.



## **BAN HUKAYO, TA OYI DISTRICT, SARAVAN PROVINCE**

Visited 29 June 2015

### **AREA PROFILE**

Ta Oyi District is located in a mountainous area of Saravan, and is the poorest district within the province. It is located 84 kilometres from the Saravan provincial capital, and has recently become accessible by an all-weather road.

The inhabitants of this village have lived here for generations. They practice rotational cropping, growing rice first, and after the harvest growing cassava, pineapple and yangbong wood. Villagers reported previously clearing scrub land to build a new road for a private enterprise, and discovering approximately 20 bombs. Despite the enterprise informing them not to touch the UXO, they moved them themselves and collected them into one place to be destroyed.

### **CONTAMINATION AND IMPACT**

Many areas in which the villagers work has been cleared of UXO; nevertheless, some areas are still contaminated. While today the villagers see less UXO on the surface, they are unsure regarding sub-surface UXO. Regardless, they continue to farm land that they suspect may be contaminated due to issues of food insecurity. There have been five people in this village who

were directly affected by a UXO accident. Two of these people died immediately (one male, one female), and the other three survived (one male and two females).

### **CHANGES FOLLOWING CLEARANCE**

- Villagers reported feeling comfortable or more relaxed in their routine work, including gardening, farming, planting, travelling, getting firewood, fishing, etc.
- Increased income and harvest due to increased efficiency.

All female participants agreed that increasing the harvest was the most important benefit. This was because it was easier to plant following clearance as they were not scared and could expand areas under cultivation. They also reported that they felt happy to see no more bombs on the surface — they felt that they could grow crops without UXO, as they could dig and plant deeper.

There has been no conflict over the land cleared, as the land ownership remained as per pre-clearance arrangements. In terms of land accessibility, there was reported to be no gap between different families — everyone could access cleared land regardless of socioeconomic level. The biggest reported difference was access to healthy labour. Consequently, those with more adult children experienced increased wealth.

## **BAN KANG, PHOUVONG DISTRICT, ATTAPEU PROVINCE**

Visited 3 July 2015

### **AREA PROFILE**

Attapeu is the province located in the most south-eastern tip of the country. The Annamite Mountain Range separates Attapeu from Viet Nam to the east. Most of the inhabitants of this village are Brao, but there are also Yea, Talien, and Lao Loum. The main occupation of the people in the village is farming (paddy field), followed by rearing livestock. Some of residents also undertake casual work as labourers for a Vietnamese rubber and sugar cane plantation. The residents settled here after being relocated from their old village (about 1.5 km away) because of annual flooding, and the new village provides them with improved road access, electricity and water supply. In addition to the residents of the former village, six new families from a different village were relocated as well. The houses were built for the 83 families by a Vietnamese company, and one underlying motivation for the residents to move was that they feared that if they did not the Vietnamese company would use this land, too.

The villagers farm in areas contaminated with UXO for dry rice, chili, eggplant, pumpkin, cassava and sack wood. The farmers utilize rotational farming methods, with the dry rice fields planted for two years and then left fallow. Prior to planting, the land is burned to clear the scrub, and after burning the residents reported often seeing exploded bombs. The villagers commented that this does not cause accidents, as once

they start the fire, they move away until the burning is complete, returning the next day to clean the field in preparation for planting.

### **CONTAMINATION AND IMPACT**

While extended areas used for livelihood by the villagers have been cleared of UXO, some areas remain contaminated. Following the initial move, the residents reported much contamination due to limited clearance. The key impact factor was fear of death or disability due to a UXO injury, particularly in light of the extended burden on their community, lowered efficiency and high cost of treatment.

### **CHANGES FOLLOWING CLEARANCE**

- People reported being more comfortable or relaxed in their routine work, including gardening, farming, planting, travelling, getting firewood, fishing, etc.
- Villagers reported increased income and harvest as a result of efficient and effective farming post-clearance.

The key impact of UXO clearance reported was safety and the ability to develop their farms, paddy fields and gardens. Safety of their land meant not only happiness but also reassurance that they can undertake their work without fear.

There has been no conflict over the land post-clearance as ownership resides as per pre-clearance, with all residents having the same access rights to cleared land. Wealthier members of the community have access to labour and can grow cash crops.

## **BAN VONGSAMPHAN, PHOUVONG DISTRICT, ATTAPEU PROVINCE**

Visited 2 July 2015

### **AREA PROFILE**

Ban Vongsamphan, an amalgamation of several villages, has a large population of 2,775 inhabitants, good road access and a market. Most of the inhabitants of this village are Brao, with some Lao Loum. Many have lived here since 1993 while some are more recent arrivals. When people first moved here (some from a day's walk away), there was nothing here and they had to build their houses in open farmland, manually moving UXO out of the way. The villagers reported that at the beginning of resettlement many bombs surrounded the village, including around houses, agriculture areas, and the forest, with no road access. When they started farming to create paddy land it was difficult because of the surface and sub-surface UXO. In 2000 the first areas cleared were a Government office, hospital, school, and individual housing areas. These areas were already developed, but the land around was cleared with detectors (area clearance). After the central areas, rice fields and gardens were cleared, UXO Lao has come many times since 2000. However, the villagers report difficulties in determining if everything has been moved yet.

### **CONTAMINATION AND IMPACT**

Despite the fact that many of the areas in which the villagers work have been cleared of UXO, some areas remain contaminated. When the villagers initially moved here, there were many UXOs, as there had not been any clearance. Farming activities were difficult, particularly creating paddy land, due to the numbers of surface and sub-surface UXO. Sometimes, the inhabitants just collected the UXO they discovered, and moved them from their land and burned them.

The primary impact is fear of death and disability due to a UXO injury. There have been 12 UXO victims in Ban Vongsamphan. Six persons died

(three males and three females) and six survived (one female and five males). Among the survivors, injuries reported include leg amputation, deafness and internal fragments. The accidents occurred while cutting grass in the rice field, gardening, digging soil for cultivation, and making fires underneath the houses. The person whose leg was amputated was referred to the provincial hospital and was also provided with some support from a project.

### **CHANGES FOLLOWING CLEARANCE**

- Easy to develop due to no fear.
- Able to cultivate and produce.
- Happy.

Ban Vongsamphan residents reported that feeling happy was one of the most important benefits because of the effect of happiness on productivity, in contrast to working while beset with fear and worry. When the land is free of UXO, they say they work with happiness. To the villagers, UXO clearance means that people can expand their land for cultivation faster and have improved road access and facilities, including a school, and hospital. Importantly, people in the village feel more comfortable undertaking farming activities.

There has been no conflict regarding possession of the land cleared because the land is usually used by the same person who owned it before and after UXO clearance. Determining the land clearance for UXO is based on a survey drawn up by the technical team of the UXO office. After the survey, they set up the plan for the clearance, based on the requests from the people in the village on a 'first come, first served' basis. Requests for clearance made by landowners are facilitated by UXO staff who work with the owners to try to determine bomb locations prior to implementing the survey and clearance. However, land that belongs to the Government, and where it has a plan to build an office or other building must be surveyed and cleared first.

## **BAN TAD KUM, SAYSETTHA DISTRICT, ATTAPEU PROVINCE**

Visited 3 July 2015

### **AREA PROFILE**

Ban Tad Kum is in Saysettha District with good all-weather road access. Most of the inhabitants of this village are Brao, with some Lao Loum, Yea and Talien. The village was founded in 1952. During the Viet Nam War, the village was relocated, with most residents returning following the end of the conflict in addition to new inhabitants. Most people within Ban Tad Kum are of a low or medium socioeconomic level, with no one considered wealthy. The main occupations of the people in this village are farmers (paddy field), gardeners, and those who rear livestock, with some residents casual workers at a Vietnamese rubber and sugar cane plantation. Those who are not literate are the poorest, and it is harder for them to sell labour or grow enough rice to sell. Food for work supported by IFAD has been implemented in this village. For example, one year IFAD gave about 27 tons of rice to the people in the village, and the activities included making ponds and expanding the land for cultivation. Additionally, IFAD constructed a road to access the village.

### **CONTAMINATION AND IMPACT**

Many of the areas in which the villagers work have been cleared of UXO. Nevertheless, some areas are still contaminated. When they first moved here, the villagers reported, there were many UXOs and no clearance had occurred. The UXO clearance in this village commenced in 2000, and has been undertaken annually since then. Respondents were not sure how land was identified and prioritized, but assumed it was based on surveys and government policy. Some clearance, however, was based on villager identification and reporting. The respondents thought the overall amount of clearance depended on budgeting and availability.

There have been six UXO victims in this village (other informants in this village reported eight).

Among the six, there was one male who died when he removed the explosive component of the bombs. Of the other five survivors, one was female and four were males. Two of the casualties resulted from an accident that occurred as they were sitting around a campfire, while another accident blinded a man who used his knife to hit some metal he saw in the forest, causing the bomb to explode. None of the victims received any support other than from neighbours in the village who took them to the hospital. The family of the deceased person received support from other villagers who provided help with the funeral by making the coffin, and contributed food and rice.

### **CHANGES FOLLOWING CLEARANCE**

The most important benefits after the UXO clearance were reported as:

- Able to expand land under cultivation.
- Road constructed.
- Building of a school.
- Installation of bore waterhole.
- Comfortable to work at the paddy field.
- Making of ponds.

People reported feeling happiness as being one of the most important benefits post-clearance, as feelings of happiness, in contrast to working under fear, was associated with increased productivity by the residents of Ban Tad Kum.

After the clearance of the UXO, the school was built in 2007, and in 2005 the bore waterhole was installed within the village with support from the Asian Development Bank. Some IFAD projects have been implemented following UXO clearance, including improved road access to the village.

There has been no conflict over the land cleared, because the land ownership arrangements remained the same as prior to clearance.

## **BAN MANG, PHOUKOU DISTRICT, XIENG KHOUANG PROVINCE**

Visited 9 July 2015

### **AREA PROFILE**

Ban Mang is located in the Xiang Khouang Plateau, north-east of the country. Apart from floodplains, the largest area of level land in the country is located in the province's Xiang Khouang Plateau, which is characterized by rolling hills and grassland. In Ban Mang, most of the population are of Phouan ethnicity with a few of Khamu. The main occupations of the people in the village are farming (paddy field, and growing of corn, peanuts, and vegetables) and rearing livestock. Ban Mang is an old village that was founded more than 100 years ago. The village is heavily contaminated by UXO, as it located near a military base for the war and small landing strip.

During the war, the people of this village were re-located to Vientiane Province, where they lived for six years, from 1969 to 1975. After the war, they returned to their village to find that all the house and other infrastructure had been destroyed. Consequently, the residents of Ban Mang resettled utilizing their own resources. During this time, they discovered many surface and sub-surface UXO, which were either left in situ or moved to a safer place. Over time, extensive clearance has occurred in the village, starting in approximately 1991. The people of Ban Mang are categorized as being in the middle socioeconomic level. Initially, residents reported seven families that were categorized as poor. However, their financial situation has improved following the expansion of cleared land and increased productivity, together with the increased availability of labour.

### **CONTAMINATION AND IMPACT**

Prior to clearance the land was used for rice plantations, despite the obvious risk of UXO. Residents reported this as the result of limited cleared land available for farming. Following clearance, residents reported feeling safer and more comfortable working in rice farming, with the added

benefit of increased efficiency due to the use of hand tractors in place of buffalo.

Many areas in which the villagers work has been cleared of UXO. Nevertheless, some areas remain contaminated. Some of the important impacts of UXO were reported as:

- Dangerous to their lives — death, and disability.
- Health effects on humans, animals and the environment due to the chemicals within UXO explosion.
- Difficult for livelihoods.

There have been three casualties in the village (two, who died, were female; one male survived). One accident occurred when the women hit UXO while digging. One of these victims died immediately and the other died two weeks later as a result of wound sepsis. The male survivor was injured when a bomb exploded when he made a fire and he lost his finger.

### **CHANGES FOLLOWING CLEARANCE**

The impact or benefit of UXO clearance was reported as:

- Improved income of the family due to increased productivity.
- Safety, there is no risk.
- Being comfortable when working.

The most important impact of clearance is that people feel increased happiness because they can farm their paddy field and garden without fear. They reported improved harvest from the paddy fields with more space to cultivate the rice. Therefore, yield has increased to the point where there is enough to consume, not only for their families, but also for commercial sale.

No conflicts related to land clearance were reported, with ownership arrangements remaining as they were before clearance. Furthermore, the respondents reported the community's understanding of the process of UXO clearance (i.e., based on the request and reported to the head of the village to propose to the UXO district office) as a key contributor to preventing conflict.

## **BAN NAMTOM, PEK DISTRICT, XIENG KHOUANG PROVINCE**

Visited 11 July 2015

### **AREA PROFILE**

During the war, all people in this village were moved to Vientiane until 1975. After the war ended they resettled to the same village, with the addition of families from other villages (about seven families). The Government donated rice and food during the first year until people were able to start to harvest their own paddy. The UXO project was started to survey and collect information regarding UXO in 1992. The UXO team also provided information related to mine education in the community (i.e., that when people found UXO, they should not touch, collect or move it, and they have to report the UXO to the head of the village). UXO clearance has been undertaken in this village many times; however, respondents were unclear of a definitive figure. Primarily, clearance has been based on the requests from the villagers when they found UXO in their land (e.g., they write the request letter to the UXO office).

### **CONTAMINATION AND IMPACT**

At the time they returned to their village, before they received mine education, residents farmed land contaminated with UXO and reported discovering many UXO in the rice field areas and living areas. They commented that they had to dig carefully because they were afraid of UXO. When they found UXO, they moved them and

collected them in a crater and burned them. The UXO clearance project started in 1992–1994 in their village. The most important reported impacts of UXO contamination were:

- Death.
- Disability.
- The environment was destroyed because of the chemical explosion.
- Missed opportunity to do things if one became a UXO survivor (e.g., employment, education).

### **CHANGES FOLLOWING CLEARANCE**

The impact or benefit of UXO after clearance was reported as:

- Safe and comfortable to work in the paddy field or garden.
- Comfortable to earn livelihoods.
- Increased productivity from the paddy field.
- Expanded land for paddy field.

Safety was very important because it contributes to a sense of well-being when working in the paddy fields. People reported using the land whether it was cleared or not because their parents had always used it for paddy farming.

There have been no conflicts over possession of the land cleared because the land ownership had remained the same following clearance.

## Annex 7

# RESEARCH GUIDANCE AND TOOLS USED FOR COMMUNITY CASE STUDIES

## QUESTION GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWING OF INDIVIDUALS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

| Questions |   | Detail   |
|-----------|---|--|
| 1         | <p><b>Local authorities</b></p> <p>What was the impact of the UXO contamination on the district?<br/>[specific village/s, district]</p>                               |  |
| 2         | <p>How is the demined land used?</p> <p>Village<br/>Municipality<br/>District<br/>Internal/external resources<br/>Infrastructure<br/>Expansion of public services</p> | <p>Farm<br/>Grazing<br/>Personal plot<br/>Water<br/>Firewood<br/>Construction<br/>School<br/>Hospital<br/>Market<br/>Residential housing<br/>Temple<br/>Infrastructure project<br/>Access roads<br/>Power lines<br/>Bridges<br/>Water well<br/>Anything else</p> |
| 3         | <p>How has this area changed in recent years?<br/>Do you attribute the change to the clearance of UXO?</p>  |  |
| 4         | <p>Have there been any land conflicts?</p>  |  |
| 5         | <p>Have there been UXO victims?<br/>Do you know how many?<br/>Do you know who [men/women, etc.]?</p>  |  |
| 6         | <p>What support do they receive?</p>  | <p>Is there a difference between survivors and persons with disabilities?</p>  |
| 7         | <p>Where do they go to access this support?</p>   |  |
| 8         | <p>What do you think about this support?</p>  | <p>Good/bad, etc.</p>  |
| 9         | <p>Is there anything else you'd like to add?</p>  |  |

## CONTAMINATION IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR USE BY FACILITATORS

| Contamination impact assessment |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Purpose of this tool            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To map and discuss the impact of UXO contamination on the community</li> </ul>  |
| When to use this tool?          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After community mapping</li> </ul>  |
| Who should use this tool?       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitators provide instructions</li> <li>Facilitators take notes or write cards if necessary</li> <li>Facilitators complete the note-taking template</li> </ul> |
| How to use this tool?           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use this tool in groups of 6-8 people divided into pre-agreed categories</li> <li>Follow the instructions provided below</li> </ul>                               |
| Materials required              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 20 pieces of paper per group</li> <li>Several pens per group</li> </ul>   |

Introduce the activity. Explain that the mapping exercise provided an overview of the community and their resources and the extent of the contamination. The second exercise looks at how the contamination affected the community.

As outsiders to the area, we need to learn from the community about the issues and challenges that they face to ensure that we understand. Ask the participants to do the following activities:

Write down/draw the main issues that the contamination caused in your village (one issue on a separate piece of paper).

1. Arrange these in a row.
2. Discuss which of these issues directly affected the community.
3. For each issue, write down/draw how each of these issues impacted the community.
4. Discuss each of these impacts.
5. Arrange the issues in order of how serious a threat they pose.
6. Arrange the impacts under each issues in the order of how serious a threat they pose.

While the group is doing the impact assessment, the facilitators pose the following questions and take notes on their observations.

1. Did the group agree on what the issues contamination caused? Explain.
2. Was there any disagreement about how the issues impacted the community? Explain.
3. Were there any issues discussed that are not recorded on the assessment template? Explain.
4. Are there any general comments?



## SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE

| Economic profile          |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Purpose of this tool      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify and understand the characteristics of the different socioeconomic groups in the community</li> </ul>                    |
| When to use this tool?    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After community mapping and impact assessment if using all three tools</li> <li>As a stand-alone exercise</li> </ul>                |
| Who should use this tool? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitators provide instructions and take notes</li> </ul>   |
| How to use this tool?     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use this tool in groups of 6-8 people divided into pre-agreed categories</li> <li>Follow the instructions provided below</li> </ul> |
| Materials required        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flip chart paper</li> <li>Pens</li> </ul>   |

Explain to the group that you would like to learn more about the people living in the village.

1. Ask the group whether everyone in the village has the same standard of living.
2. If not, ask them to explain the different standards of living in the village — for example, they might say, poor, middle and good.
3. Show the different groups on different pieces of paper, either with words or simple pictures or symbols for money.
4. Ask them how someone from the outside would know which group each person in the village comes from. Write or draw the answers on different pieces of paper.

Consider: income-generating activities; family size; health of family members; number of income generators; size of house and land; location of house and land; belongings; level of education.

When the group is happy with the profiles, ask the following questions:

1. If people used the land when it was mined, are the same people still using the land now? If not why not, what happened?
2. Has one group benefited more than the other from the cleared land. If so, why? How?
3. To which group do mine survivors and their families belong?

Facilitators should make notes of all the information the group provides.

If possible, ask to visit households from the various groups to ask them questions.



## Annex 8

# DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

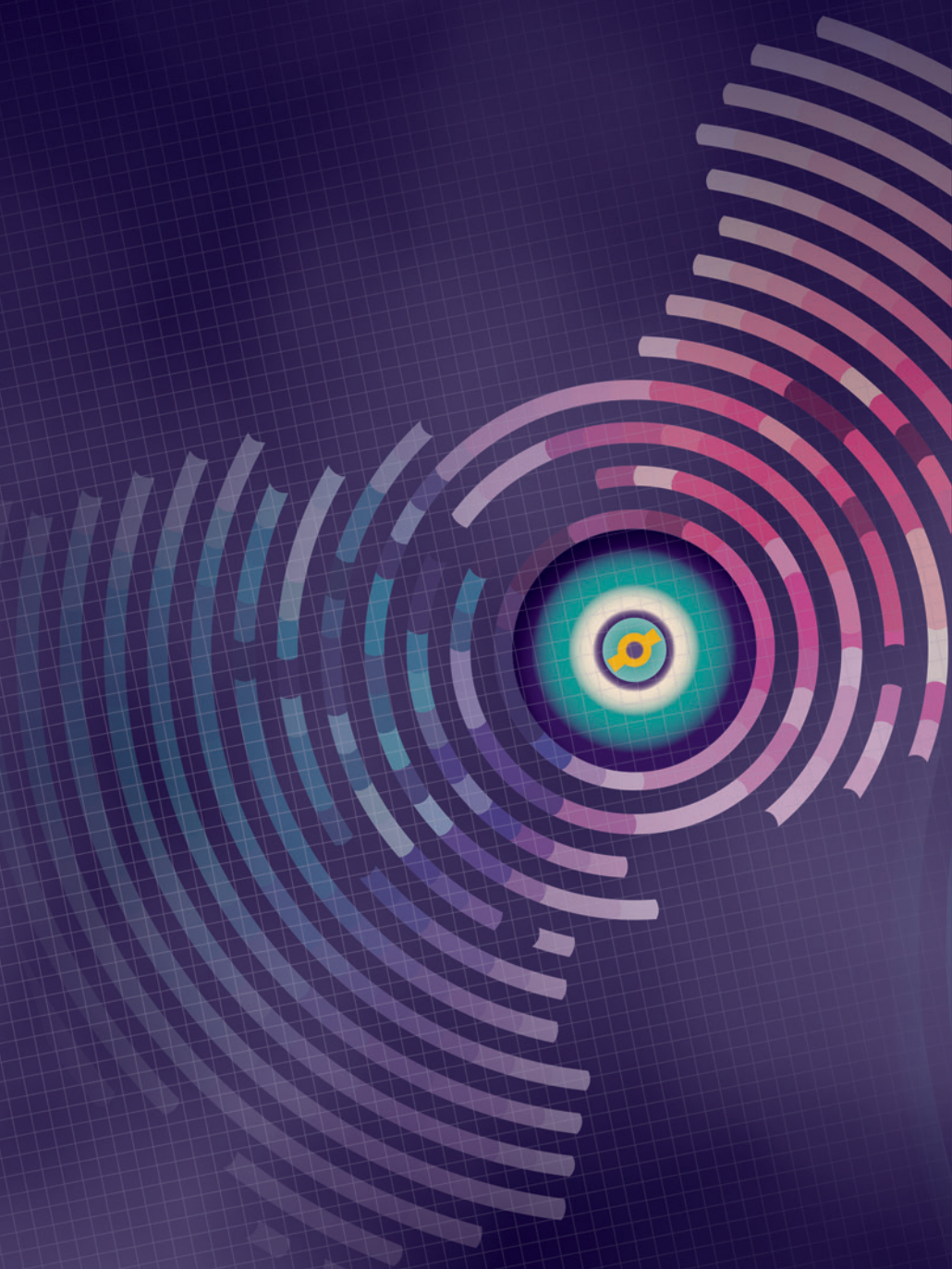
- Andersson N., Dasousa C.P., and Paredes, S. Social costs of landmines in four countries—Afghanistan, Bosnia, Cambodia and Mozambique. *British Medical Journal*, 1995;311(7007):718-21.
- Bini, A.C., and Sosamphan, T. Report on GMAP's Gender Assessment of Lao PDR UXO/Mine Action Programme, 2014.
- Bolton M. Foreign aid and landmine clearance. London: I.B. Touris & Co Ltd, 2010.
- Boddington M.A.B., and Chanthavongsa, B. National Survey of UXO Victims and Accidents (Phase 1), 2008.
- Central Intelligence Agency, *CIA Factbook 2015* [accessed 12 August 2015]. Available from: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>.
- Davading S. Background paper, 'Lao PDR: Growth Analysis for a Small Resource-Rich Transition Economy'. Vientiane: World Bank, 2010.
- Epprecht M., Minot N., Dewina R., Messerli P., and Heinemann, A. *The geography of poverty and inequality in the Lao PDR*. Berne: Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research North-South, Geographica Bernensia, and Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute, 2008.
- Evans G. *Lao peasants under socialism and post-socialism*. Chaing Mai: Silkworm Books, 1995.
- Filippino, E.M. Assessment of the 2007–2010 UXO/MRE Strategic Plan in Lao PDR. Geneva, 2010.
- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). 'Lao PDR Risk Management and Mitigation Model'. Geneva, 2007.
- GICHD, Sourcebook on socio-economic survey 1st ed. Geneva, 2011.
- GICHD, 'Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes'. Geneva, 2014.
- Government of Lao PDR, Lao Statement on Cooperation, Sep 11, 2015 in Dubrovnik, Croatia, 2015.
- Griffin R., Keeley R., Sayyasouk P. UXO Sector Evaluation: Final Report. Vientiane: UNDP, 2008.
- Handicap International, 'Living with UXO', final report, national survey on the socio-economic impact of UXO in the Lao PDR. Vientiane, 1997.
- Horwood C. 'Ideological and analytical foundations of mine action: Human rights and community impact'. *Third World Quarterly*, 24(5):939–954 (2003).
- Irish Aid, UNDP, Lao PDR and Mine Advisory Group, 'Assessment of Gender Perspectives in UXO Action in the Lao PDR'. Vientiane, 2008.
- Keely, R. et al., Mission to assess future sustainable options of the Lao UXO Trust Fund and the UXO Lao Mine Action Programme: Mission Report, 2002.
- Laos-Australia Development Learning Facility, 'UXO Lao impact assessment readiness report'. Vientiane, 2015.
- Landmine Monitor, 2015: [www.the-monitor.org](http://www.the-monitor.org), accessed 30 August 2015.
- Lardner T., 'The GICHD land release project'. *Journal of ERW and Mine Action*. 9;12(21) (2008).
- Mine Action Group, Assessment of Gender Perspectives in UXO Action in Lao PDR, 2008.

- Mennonite Central Committee, Timeline of Mennonite and Quaker work on Cluster munitions, 2011.
- Ministry of Planning and Investment. Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan III (2016–2020). 5th Draft. Vientiane: Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2015.
- National Regulatory Authority, Annual Reports (2006–2014).
- National Regulatory Authority for the Lao PDR, Post-clearance impact assessment. Vientiane, 2010.
- Government of Lao PDR, National Strategic Plan for the UXO Sector in the Lao PDR 2011–2020: ‘The Safe Path Forward II’, 2012.
- UXO Lao, UXO/Mine Victim Assistance Strategy 2014–2020, accessed July 2015.
- National Regulatory Authority for the Lao PDR, Lao PDR Unexploded Ordnance Sector Overview, 2012.
- Paterson, T., and Tollefsen, E. Lao PDR Country Mission Report: Evaluation of EC-Funded Mine Action, Asia-Pacific Region, 2008.
- Sekkenes, S. and Palmer, A., Programme Review 2003–2011: UNDP support to NRA and UXO Lao, UXO sector. Vientiane, 2012.
- Stuart-Fox M. *The politics of ritual and remembrance: Laos since 1975*. Vancouver, Canada: University of British Columbia, 2000.
- Agriculture Census Office, The Lao Census of Agriculture 2010/2011. Vientiane, May 2012.
- United Nations, United Nations Development Assistance Framework Action Plan, 2012–2015, for the Lao People’s Democratic Republic.
- UNDP, Lao PDR Trust Fund for Clearance of Unexploded Ordnance Annex 1, 1995.
- UNDP, Project of the Government of Lao PDR: Project Document, 1995.
- UNDP, ‘Hazardous ground, cluster munitions and UXO in the Lao PDR’. Vientiane, 2008.
- UNDP, ‘Beyond the Horizon: Reducing UXO Impact for Poverty Reduction in Lao PDR. Vientiane, 2012.
- UXO Lao–UNDP, Interim End of Phase Report 2010–2012, 2013.
- Sekkenes, S. and Palmer, A. Programme Review 2003–2011: UNDP support to NRA and UXO Lao, UXO sector, Lao PDR, 2012.
- UNDP and the Government of Republic of Korea. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Korea and UNDP regarding contribution to the thematic trust fund for crisis prevention and recovery, 2012.
- UNDP and the Government of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, ‘Support to Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme (UXO LAO): Annual Project Report’, 2013.
- UNICEF. Mine Risk Assessment. Vientiane, 2006.
- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). Guide for the management of mine risk education, IMAS 07.11. New York: UNMAS, 2003.
- UXO Lao, UXO Lao Work Plans (2006–2013).
- World Bank, World Development Indicators: Washington, DC: World Bank, 2012.
- World Bank, *World Development Report 2015: Mind, Society, and Behavior*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2015.





*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*



United Nations Development Programme  
Independent Evaluation Office  
220 East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10017, USA  
Tel. +1(646) 781 4200, Fax. +1(646) 781 4213

Web: [www.undp.org/evaluation](http://www.undp.org/evaluation)

Evaluation of the UNDP Contribution to Mine Action  
Country Case Study: Lao People's Democratic Republic



/UNDP\_Evaluation



/ieoundp



/evaluationoffice