

UNDP Management Response
Evaluation of UNDP Support to the UXO Sector in Lao PDR
2013-2016

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Overall Evaluation Response from UNDP Management

UNDP Lao PDR management considers this a well-researched and well-grounded evaluation. It achieves most of the objectives laid out in the Terms of Reference for the task. The Terms of Reference were developed with specific inputs from donors. The evaluation has been informally discussed with a selection of key partners and has received a broadly positive response. It has also been endorsed by the Project Board at the Annual Review Meeting/Project Board in 2016.

The evaluation was discussed with UNDP's UXO Unit and some clarification was needed about the differing and distinct roles of UNDP, UXO Lao and the NRA. These clarifications have been incorporated into the latest draft and UNDP is largely satisfied with the recommendations, with some minor reservations about the assumption of roles in Recommendation 2. Some recommendations are considered slightly too specific, though all are accepted as generally reflecting the reality and the common perception by key stakeholders.

One broader reservation is that the evaluation does not fully assess the efficacy of the Trust Fund modality and does not concretely advise UNDP on what action to take in that area. This is a key issue for donors and may be seen as a shortcoming by Development Partners when the evaluation is shared.

In extension to the UXO project 2013-2016 (extended until May 2017), as also mentioned in the evaluation, a new project document effective from June 2017-2021 was signed by the Government of Lao and UNDP. The recommendations will continue to be addressed under this new project.

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 1: The UNDP, with NRA and the UXO Laos, should actively promote the allocation of resources to developing management capacities, clearly articulating how the UNDP's support contributes to programme outputs and outcomes and capacity development.

Management Response:

Agreed – UNDP recognizes the need to articulate clear measurements for progress on institutional capacity building; it has already supported the Capacity Self-Assessment of both the NRA and UXO Lao in 2014. Progress has already been made in some of the highlighted areas and UXO

Lao and NRA are formulating further plans to pursue and resource concrete capacity development outcomes.				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
UNDP will continue to support the NRA and UXO Lao to articulate and implement clear action plans based on the Capacity Assessment; UNDP will offer technical support at all stages and will coordinate with other key actors in the sector.	2016	UXO Unit	Complete	Action Plans prepared; will be presented at Project Board in Q1 2017. Key points incorporated in new Project Document.
UNDP will include capacity building outcomes in the next programme of support to the UXO sector starting in 2017.	2016	UXO Unit	Complete	New project designed with specific capacity building output.
Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 2: The UNDP should actively promote dialogue between the NRA, LNCRDPE, MPI, and other stakeholders, including province and district level planners, to articulate a transparent, systemic, and auditable process for task prioritisation, collection of relevant baseline and outcome indicators (possibly integrated into existing processes).				
Management Response:				
Partially agree – UNDP recognizes that prioritisation of tasks is a key issue for attention in the sector, and has advocated for a clearer process in its role as co-chair of the UXO Sector Working Group. UNDP will continue to offer technical support to the development and articulation of a clear and transparent process. UNDP has already shared draft guidance for prioritisation and planning with the NRA. However, UNDP would clarify that the final responsibility for such a process, or its announcement, lies with the Government of Lao PDR, and the National Committee on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication specifically. UNDP welcomes the support of other stakeholders in advocating for, and supporting, the National Committee to make progress on this as soon as possible.				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
UNDP will continue to discuss the draft prioritisation guidance with the NRA and will provide further technical assistance to encourage its finalization and implementation.	2016	UXO Unit	Complete	Prioritisation process discussed and detailed by CTA in guidance document; Government referred to roll-out in 2017 during 6 th MSP CCM.
UNDP will continue to advocate publicly for a clear and transparent process, including at the Sector Working Group and other fora.	2016	UXO Unit	Complete	UNDP and co-chair (USA) advocated for roll-out at SWG Nov 2016.
Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 3: The UNDP should support the NRA, the UXO Lao, and other relevant stakeholders, to identify how UXO/Mine Action might contribute to the SDG targets and identify what, if any, outcome or impact level data collection can be mainstreamed into other SDG data collection processes.				
Management Response:				

Agree – UNDP recognizes its leading role in supporting the Government of Lao PDR to make progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. The broader UN system in Lao PDR is working on localization of the SDGs in Lao PDR. Global expertise and collaboration with UNMAS and UNICEF will be available to clarify the role of Mine Action/UXO in this context.

Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
UNDP will design its Country Programme in line with the UNDAF and SDGs with UXO support as a key component.	2016	UNDP Lao PDR	Complete	New CPD endorsed in September 2016.
UNDP will continue to support UXO Lao and NRA to improve its collection and analysis of data at the development outcome level.	2018	UXO Unit	Initiated	Information management and M&E support included in new project.
Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 4: The UNDP should support discussions within the NRA and the Survey and Clearance Technical Working Group to review the CMTS and other approved processes under the new concept of operations to enable community voices and concerns to be heard & ensure all community members are provided with appropriate information about decisions that affect them.				
Management Response:				
Agree – UNDP is aware of the need for all community members to have appropriate information about decisions and opportunities to be heard in the process of planning. The transition to evidence-based survey, beginning with non-technical survey, will provide opportunities to monitor the extent to which different groups are represented. A post clearance assessment process will also allow some opportunity to assess the extent of community participation in UXO action. UNDP will support discussions both within the Technical Working Group, NRA and the broader UXO Sector about how this should be measured and assessed. The NRA will be responsible for articulating what measure is to be used and when it will be initiated. The extent of participation and community involvement will also be included in a monitoring and evaluation framework to be developed under UNDP's new programme.				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
UNDP will support the conduct of the Technical Working Groups and will raise the issue of monitoring participation in NTS during sessions.	2017	UXO Unit	Completed	TWGs conducted; national standards for NTS have been discussed.
UNDP will support the development of a system of post-clearance assessment for monitoring purposes.	2018	UXO Unit	Initiated	Discussions ongoing on NRA plans. Discussion on post-clearance assessment is in the agenda of the Clearance TWG planned in Q3 of 2018.
UNDP will engage a specialist to devise a Monitoring and Evaluation framework for the UXO sector with the NRA.	2018	UXO Unit	Initiated	Donor proposal submitted to cover M&E activity.

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 5: The UNDP should support discussions within the NRA and the Survey and Clearance Technical Working Group to determine how efficiency and effectiveness of the new concept of operations will be evaluated.

Management Response:

Agree – The efficiency of the new Concept of Operations is currently – informally – measured on the number of cluster munitions found per hectare of land cleared. This has already demonstrated progress on that indicator. However, UNDP will provide technical inputs at the Technical Working Groups (and at the Sector Working Group) regarding other possible measures for efficiency, including global cost comparisons, and for effectiveness, including numbers of beneficiaries, stakeholder satisfaction, or consultation.

Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
UNDP will produce a paper with suggested indicators for CMTS effectiveness and efficiency and share it with the NRA; UNDP will also raise its suggestions at the Technical Working Group.	2018	UXO Unit	Initiated	Indicators under discussion.
Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 6: The UNDP should support the NRA hold quarterly operational meetings with development partners (program manager level).				
Management Response:				
Agreed – UNDP recognizes the need for Development Partners to be informed of progress and challenges on a more regular basis than the Annual Project Board Meeting.				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
UNDP will support and encourage the NRA to convene more regular meetings, and will suggest Q3 2016 for a first quarterly meeting.	Q3 2017	UXO Unit	Completed	UNDP has encouraged NRA to have an informal DP meeting at the NRA on top of the SWG meetings and has advised to put it into the AWP 2017.
Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 7: The UNDP should support the NRA and UXO Lao to develop and implement an effective communication strategy, tailored to different stakeholder needs and focused on application of safeguards, outputs, inputs and progress against the capacity building workplans.				
Management Response:				
Agreed – UNDP recognizes the need for changes in the sector, most pressing the evidence-based approach, to be clearly communicated to stakeholders (both project beneficiaries and Development Partners). The Capacity Assessment already noted communications as an area of need for both UXO Lao and NRA.				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
UNDP will work with NRA and UXO Lao to articulate clear	2018	UXO Unit	Initiated	Communication Strategy under

actions to follow-up on the communications needs identified in the Capacity Assessment, in line with the Key Action under Recommendation 1.				development; awaiting Government guidance on future roles.
Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 8: The UNDP should support constructive dialog with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and development partners to determine if the Trust Fund and its Terms of Reference are still appropriate.				
Management Response:				
Partially agree – UNDP notes that the evaluation could have provided more clarity regarding the Trust Fund and its effectiveness/relevance. The issue of the Trust Fund Terms of Reference was raised at the Trust Fund Steering Committee Meeting in February 2015. The modality will continue to be discussed, particularly in light of the development of a new programme of UNDP support to the UXO sector.				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
UNDP will formulate the new programme of its support to the UXO sector and then consider the relevance of the Trust Fund modality to implementing it.	2016	UXO Unit	Complete	New programme developed and shared with Gol; Trust Fund discussed.
Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 9: The UNDP should continue to work with the NRA, the UXO Lao, and donors to ensure a coherent approach to the provision and coordination of technical advisory services.				
Management Response:				
Agree – UNDP has already begun taking a more sectoral approach in its own provision of technical advisory services, with all Technical Advisors now deployed to both NRA and UXO Lao. Since August 2015, a sectoral Chief Technical Advisor has been deployed, who already works closely with the key operators in the sector, as well as with the advisory capacities deployed bilaterally to NRA and UXO Lao from JICA and Sterling in particular.				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
UNDP will continue to coordinate with the key providers of advisory support through regular meetings and information sharing.	2016	UXO Unit	Complete.	Regular coordination ensured through meetings and information sharing.
Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 10: The UNDP should support the NRA and the UXO Lao to ensure a pro-poor, gender sensitive focus including gender indicators at the output and outcome level and implementing the recent GMAP 2014 action plan and recommendations related to the 2008 gender assessment.				
Management Response:				
Agree – UNDP notes that Evaluation Recommendation 4, and the planned response, partly overlap with this Evaluation Recommendation. UNDP recognizes the need to ensure that data collection and management are enhanced in a gender-sensitive manner, with the disaggregation of all				

relevant data by age and gender a minimum expectation. This will apply to programme design for 2017 onwards, and will depend on the provision by the relevant Ministries of the Government of Lao PDR of necessary and adequate data. UNDP's technical advice regarding task prioritisation includes pro-poor criteria and has been shared with the NRA for discussion.

Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
UNDP will review the GMAP recommendations during programme design and work to address the identified needs with the NRA and UXO Lao	2016	UXO Unit	Complete	GMAP used to inform new project design, gender mainstreaming discussed with NRA and UXO Lao and gender component included in new draft Project Document, 2017-2021.
UNDP will continue to support and advocate for a system of task prioritisation which focuses resources in a pro-poor manner.	2016	UXO Unit	Complete	See Issue 2.
<p>Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 11: The UNDP should further develop the capacity of the NRA and UXO Lao in all stages of the information cycle and to develop and implement a sector monitoring and evaluation framework that articulates minimum, output and outcome indicators.</p> <p>Management Response: Partially Agree – UNDP recognizes the need for the NRA specifically to improve its capacity to collect and manage data at the sector level; a Capacity Assessment of the NRA for Monitoring and Evaluation has already taken place and the findings have informed a Concept Note which will form part of the new UXO Programme to start in 2017. UXO Lao's information management also requires support but the nature of UXO Lao's reporting requirements should be articulated by the NRA, and the delivery supported by UNDP and other providers of technical assistance.</p>				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
UNDP will engage a specialist in Monitoring and Evaluation as part of its next programme to support the NRA in articulating a sector-level framework for M+E.	2018	UXO Unit	Initiated	M&E position included in the new project and key donor proposal.
UNDP will coordinate with UXO Lao's other key bilateral partners to assess and address information management technical assistance needs.	2016	UXO Unit	Complete	TORs for IM staff developed and shared; coordinated with Sterling; UXO Lao Database Unit Deputy hired. IM included in new project.
<p>Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 12: The UNDP should support the NRA and the UXO Lao to integrate, monitor, and report on appropriate elements of the UNDP's recently released Social and Environmental Safeguards into their work.</p>				

Management Response:

Agree – UNDP recognizes the need to identify and mitigate social and environmental risks to the development impact of its work. UNDP Lao PDR is working to establish a mechanism to enhance risk analysis in the framework of the Social and Environmental Safeguards (SES). In addition, the UXO Unit is implementing the SES Screening process in the development of new projects and programmes. More specifically, UNDP is working to address the identified issue of clearance for resettlement by incorporating national data on land concessions in a suggested process for task prioritisation.

Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
UNDP will establish a mechanism to localize the provisions of the global SES to Lao PDR.	2018	UNDP Lao PDR	Initiated	New Project Document includes SES screening
UNDP will incorporate SES principles in support to the design of a mechanism for task prioritisation.	2016	UXO Unit	Complete	SES used as input for prioritisation and planning guidance by CTA.
Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 13: The UNDP should continue to support the NRA to develop a strategy to transition to increased government financing of the sector. The strategy should be agreed on by the end of 2018, with implementation commencing at the beginning of 2019.				
Management Response:				
Partially agree – UNDP recognizes that a transition strategy will be needed in the long-term, but notes that no commitment to developing such a strategy has yet been made on the part of the Government of Lao PDR, and that the ambitious time-frame in this recommendation seems to some extent arbitrary. UNDP would also note that a transition, once articulated, may be triggered not by a prescribed start-date, but by the achievement of a pre-defined indicator of progress. As such, the 2019 target may not be relevant.				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Status	Tracking Comments
UNDP will continue to offer support for the development of a transition strategy.	2016	UXO Unit	Complete	Draft transition concept drafted by CTA and shared with NRA. Long-term vision outlined by NRA at SWG2016.
UNDP will advocate publicly for a clear transition strategy.	2016	UXO Unit	Complete	UNDP advocated for clear strategy at SWG2016.
Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 14: The UNDP should facilitate dialogue between the NRA, Ministry of Health, and WHO, and other relevant organizations to develop an action plan to review the quality of the incident surveillance and data collection to ensure alignment with (current or planned) injury surveillance systems, the integration of epidemiological principals into the surveillance of UXO injury; and adherence to WHO's minimal recommendation dataset for injury surveillance.				
Management Response:				
Agreed - UNDP recognizes the need to enable a system for victims' surveillance that will meet the needs of the victims, while supporting the				

Government of Lao PDR in delivering support and ensuring treaty adherence. UNDP will continue to encourage the NRA to work with the Ministry of Health and other relevant national organisations to review the current national surveillance system and enhance the current system and adhere to WHO's minimal recommendation dataset. UNDP will provide technical inputs at the Technical Working Groups (and at the UXO Sector Working Group) regarding other possible measures relating to the need for appropriate victims' surveillance.

Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
UNDP will discuss prospects for linking UXO victim surveillance with broader disability initiatives with key actors in the health field.	2018	UXO Unit	Initiated	UNDP held discussions with key VA actors.
UNDP will advocate publically for an enhanced victims' surveillance system.	2016	UXO Unit	Complete	Enhanced VA included in SDG18.