



# ANNUAL REPORT 2019

## LAO NATIONAL UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE PROGRAMME (UXO LAO)



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Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme



2019 Operations			
Tasks	Achievements	Unit	% Work Plan Completed
Mine Risk Education	358	Village Visits	85%
Non-Technical Survey	108	Village Survey	93%
Technical Survey	4,372	Hectares	96%
Area Clearance	3,040	Hectares	95%
Confirmed Hazardous Areas (CHAs) Clearance	2,872	Hectares	N/A
UXO Found and Destroyed	53,441	UXO Items	N/A

## 2019 Resources

- 1,409 personnel, including 1,209 staff members in provincial operations;
- 371 female personnel, including 310 in operations;
- 807 metal detectors;
- 142 four-wheel vehicles and 72 motorcycles;
- 153 hand-held brush cutters;
- 7 brush cutter machines;
- 2 trailer trucks;
- 1 crane truck;
- 3 heavy trucks with tail lift;
- 2 boats;
- 1 mobile workshop;
- 1 ambulance;
- 1 national office and training center in Vientiane;
- 9 provincial offices in Attapeu, Champasak, Huaphan, Khammuane, Luang Prabang, Salavan, Savannakhet, Sekong and Xiengkhuang.



## FOREWARD

### National Programme Director, UXO Lao



On behalf of UXO Lao, it is my pleasure to introduce this annual report outlining the organization's progress in 2019. The report details the outcomes of all UXO Lao activities with support from our donors and implementing partners in nine of the most contaminated provinces in Lao PDR. UXO Lao has proudly continued to contribute to the Government's efforts to remove the UXO obstacle for development in line with the 8<sup>th</sup> Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (8NSEDP).

During 2019, UXO Lao managed to improve the quality of technical survey operations, data management systems and improve its efficiency of reporting completed field operations with technical support from our development partners; UNDP, Tetra Tech, QSI, JICA, JICS and JMAS. In addition, we also managed to expand the annual work plan formulation for clearance operations through a prioritization process with software development and technical support from JICA. This will enable UXO Lao to enhance our clearance work plan consistency across the organization.

UXO Lao continued its response to post-flood clearance in Sanamxay district, Attapeu province, which was badly affected in 2018 by the Xepien-Xenamnoy Saddle Dam collapse. In addition, UXO Lao also responded to many flooded areas in the southern provinces of Laos in 2019 caused by heavy rainfall. As an organization, we are committed to ensuring as many people living in these affected provinces are resettled on clear and safe land and have access to fields for agricultural production and remain in close contact with the local authorities to carefully monitor and respond to any UXO items found by locals. This is done through the undertaking of roving tasks and mine risk education to increase the awareness of UXO for these communities.

In 2019, there was a change in UXO Lao senior management, and I am honoured to have joined the largest national UXO organization in Lao PDR as the National Programme Director to UXO Lao. I am committed to leading this organization and improving the operational efficiency and effectiveness in addressing the UXO obstacle to development in line with the policies and guidance of the Government of Lao PDR.

In 2020, UXO Lao will aim to clear more land to be utilized for safe agricultural and community development purposes which in turn, will contribute to the overall positive socio-economic growth for the people of Lao PDR. In addition, Mine Risk Education (MRE) activities will be conducted in many villages across nine provinces in conjunction with the Non-Technical Survey (NTS) activity ensuring locals nationwide are aware of the dangers associate with UXO contamination. The Technical Survey (TS) activity is targeted per province where the terrain varies and will focus on ensuring the closure of Confirmed Hazardous Areas (CHA).

Finally, I would like to thank all of our donors, partners and stakeholders for their ongoing generosity and support to UXO Lao, which contributes to overall support to the UXO sector in Lao PDR and we look forward to many more successful years in the future.

**Bounphamith Somvichith**

## FOREWORD

### Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP



On behalf of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Lao PDR, I am proud to support and commend the Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme (UXO Lao) for the progress and achievements in 2019 and the planned 2020 Work Plan.

Since its establishment in 1996, UXO Lao, UNDP and other key stakeholders have worked diligently to tackle the UXO obstacle in nine of the most contaminated provinces. UXO Lao implements the 2017-2021 project to the UXO sector titled; *“Moving towards achieving SDG 18 – Removing the UXO obstacle to development in Lao PDR”* which was launched by

the Government of Lao PDR (GOL) and UNDP and has been implemented to date with great success. The project provides an overview of the requirements of the National Regulatory Authority to the UXO/Mine Action Sector (NRA) and UXO Lao operating under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. It aims to continue the GOL's efforts to achieve the targets set in the unique and localized Sustainable Development Goal 18 (SDG18), the 8<sup>th</sup> National Social and Economic Development Plan (NSEDPlan) and the five-year UXO sector plan.

The work undertaken by UXO Lao in 2019 demonstrates the critical importance for a national humanitarian operator with capacity to tackle the UXO problem in conjunction with the relevant Ministries, partners and local authorities. During the past two years (2018 and 2019), many provinces in Lao PDR were badly affected by catastrophic flooding which displaced thousands of citizens, leaving many without a home or secure livelihood. UXO Lao proved its swift responsiveness and efficiency in these critical times of need when land had to be cleared immediately for resettlement purposes and agricultural production. It is also important to acknowledge the support from development partners such as Australia, Canada, USA and other INGOs who provided additional resources to alleviate the impact of UXO contamination by offering post-flood disaster relief. UXO Lao, in this way, ensured as many people could live in resettlement areas free from UXO to help rebuild their lives.

As we know, UXO is a cross-cutting issue that hinders all aspects of sustainable growth in Lao PDR and in order to achieve the SDGs, in particular SDG18, and advance Lao PDR from a Least Developed Country (LDC) status, we must ensure as many lives are safe from UXO through the provision of quality Mine Risk Education (MRE) paired with efficient survey and clearance tasks. Furthermore, for those affected by UXO-related accidents either directly or indirectly, strengthened victim assistance mechanisms are necessary to ensure individuals can try lead safe, happy and productive lives. With this said, UNDP is committed to our partnership with UXO Lao, the NRA and the GOL, to ensure that the essential UXO activities conducted yields the best possible outcome for the sustainable socio-economic development of Lao PDR.

**Balasubramaniam Murali**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During and after the Second Indo-China war, thousands of people in Lao PDR were exposed to and affected by the dangers of Unexploded Ordnance (UXO). Almost seventy percent of Laos' 7 million population live in rural and poor areas and the existence of these unexploded items affects their wellbeing, livelihood and education while also hindering infrastructural and socio-economic development.

In response to the impact of UXO contamination, Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme (UXO Lao) was established by the Lao Government in conjunction with UNDP, UNICEF and other stakeholders in 1996. The organization operates under the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MoLSW) and has for over two decades worked hard to reduce the impact of UXO. High contamination of UXO poses a significant threat to human security and has a long-term negative impact on the development potential of affected communities. Nine provinces in Lao PDR are considered highly-contaminated with unexploded cluster sub-munitions and other type of munitions and UXO Lao focuses its operations within these provinces. The worst-impacted areas are poor, rural and remote and UXO needs to be cleared to make more land available for agriculture and development while aiming to reduce the number of UXO casualties in Lao PDR.

Some of the key highlights and achievements in the sector include a notable 92% decline in the number of UXO-related casualties from 2008 to 2019, from 302 to 25, proving the work completed by all UXO operators in Lao PDR has had a noteworthy impact in saving lives. This substantial decrease in the number of victims is linked to the effective transmission of Mine Risk Education and the clearance of Confirmed Hazardous Areas throughout these heavily contaminated provinces.

In terms of challenges, UXO Lao encountered funding shortfalls to support some teams operating in the field during 2019. Heavy flooding during rainy season also caused many teams to temporarily halt their operations thus, affecting the achievement of the annual targets. With this said, UXO Lao averaged between 85%-95% achievement of the 2019 annual targets, with Mine Risk Education (85%), Non-Technical Survey (93%), Technical Survey (96%) and Area Clearance (95%).

Regarding key visits, UXO Lao had the pleasure of welcoming royalty, many high ranking officials and diplomats to Lao PDR in 2019, providing guests with an insight into the essential work and operations of the organization which in turn, created worldwide public awareness of the UXO issue in Lao PDR.

In this report, lessons learned and challenges were also identified and highlighted. The main challenges for UXO Lao in 2019 included a lack of community support to cut dense vegetation prior to survey and clearance operations and the technical survey activity was not fully compliant with the National Survey Process due to the availability of a limited number of teams. The National Survey Procedure that focuses on village-based surveys was also still proving difficult for UXO Lao. Furthermore, changes in UXO clearance regulations resulted in a lower production of cluster sub-munitions found per hectare on average per province and month.

The impact stories included in this report captured from both UXO victims and UXO Lao beneficiaries emphasize the importance of resource mobilization to the sector and demonstrates how important efficient UXO operations are which better the lives of people through employment, safe agricultural production, improved wellbeing and safety. With continued support from donors in 2020 and the coming years, UXO Lao will be in a position to achieve significant outputs and progress towards removing all UXO contamination from Lao PDR.

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

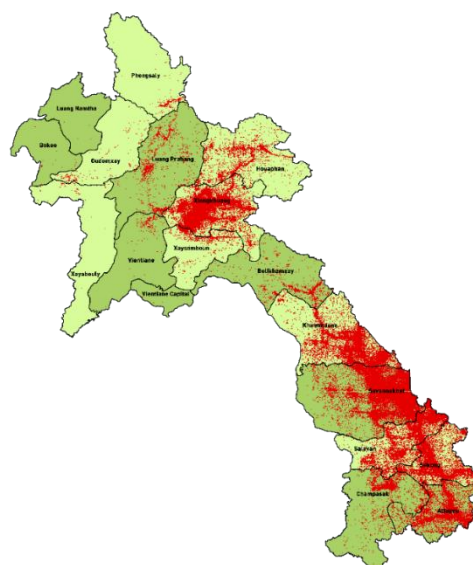
AC	Area Clearance
ACCPAC	A Complete and Comprehensive Program for Accounting Control
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AMS	Application Management Services
ATP	Attapeu Province
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BLU	Bomb Live Unit
CHA	Confirmed Hazardous Area
CM	Cluster Munition
CMAC	Cambodian Mine Action Centre
CO	Country Office
CPS	Champasak Province
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DOS	Department of State
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
EU	European Union
GPS	Global Positioning Systems
GMS	General Management Support
GOL	Government of Lao PDR
HP	Huaphan Province
HRH	His/Her Royal Highness
HQ	Headquarter
HR	Human Resources
HRMS	Human Resource Management System
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IM	Information Management Unit
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
ISC	Ito Supporting Comity
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JICS	Japan International Cooperation System
JMAS	Japan Mine Action Service
KG	Kilogram
KM	Khammuane Province
LAK	Lao Kip
LDC	Least Developed Country
LPB	Luang Prabang Province
MM	Millimeter
MoLSW	Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MRE	Mine Risk Education
M <sup>2</sup>	Meters Squared

<b>NIM</b>	National Implementation Modality
<b>NMFA</b>	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>NO</b>	National Office
<b>NPA</b>	Norwegian People's Aid
<b>NPD</b>	National Programme Director
<b>NRA</b>	National Regulatory Authority for UXO/Mine Action Sector
<b>NSEDP</b>	National Socio-Economic Development Plan
<b>NTS</b>	Non-Technical Survey
<b>N/A</b>	Not Applicable
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance
<b>ODOP</b>	One District One Product
<b>OPS</b>	Operations Unit
<b>PIU</b>	Public Information Unit
<b>POPI</b>	Programme Office and Public Information
<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance
<b>QC</b>	Quality Control
<b>QLA</b>	Quality of Life Association
<b>QSI</b>	Quality Solutions International Limited
<b>Q&amp;A</b>	Questions and Answers
<b>RTIM</b>	Round Table Implementation Meeting
<b>RV</b>	Roving Task
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SIG</b>	Sterling International Group
<b>SK</b>	Sekong Province
<b>SLV</b>	Salavan Province
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium Enterprise
<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedure
<b>SOS</b>	Spirit of Soccer
<b>SSC</b>	South-South Cooperation
<b>SVK</b>	Savannakhet Province
<b>SWG</b>	Sector Working Group
<b>TC</b>	Training Center
<b>TS</b>	Technical Survey
<b>TT</b>	Tetra Tech
<b>TWG</b>	Technical Working Group
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar
<b>UXO</b>	Unexploded Ordnance
<b>UXO Lao</b>	Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme
<b>WWM</b>	World Without Mines Foundation
<b>XK</b>	Xiengkhuang Province



## 1. THE UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE (UXO) PROBLEM IN LAO PDR

During the Second Indochina War (1964-1973), more than two million tons of explosive ordnance were dropped on Laos, making it, per capita, one of the most heavily-bombed countries in the world. Cluster sub-munitions, or ‘bombies’, are the most common form of Unexploded Ordnance (UXO). It is estimated that up to 30 percent of the cluster munitions dropped failed to explode and even today, these continue to threaten the lives and livelihoods of the people in Lao PDR. There have been over 20,000 UXO-related casualties since hostilities ceased, resulting in debilitating injuries, loss of livelihood and all too frequently, death.



High contamination of UXO poses a significant threat to human security and has a long-term negative impact on the development potential of affected communities. Nine provinces in Lao PDR are considered highly-contaminated with unexploded cluster munitions. The worst-impacted areas are poor, rural and remote and UXO needs to be cleared in order for socio-economic development to take place.

UXO contamination has a significant effect on the development of Lao PDR, especially for the poor and vulnerable farming communities, for whom land contamination reduces the possibilities of becoming self-sufficient. The development of major infrastructure and development projects such as schools, hospitals and water facilities are also hindered by the costs and challenges of UXO clearance.

With the need for both trauma and long-term care, the treatment of UXO victims can place a burden on the individual and their families as a result of country’s limited medical facilities. Even those who recover from their wounds cannot always carry out the work needed in a subsistence-farming village.

## 2. LAO NATIONAL UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE PROGRAMME (UXO LAO)

### 2.1 Background and Mandate

The Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme (UXO Lao) was established in 1996 by the Government of Lao People’s Democratic Republic with the support of UNDP, UNICEF, and other stakeholders. UXO Lao works in nine of the most UXO-contaminated provinces in Lao PDR: Attapeu, Champasak, Huaphan, Khammuane, Luangpabang, Salavan, Savannakhet, Sekong, and Xiengkhuang.



UXO Lao is the largest humanitarian UXO clearance operator in Lao PDR and its mandate is:

1. **Reduce the number of UXO casualties and accidents;**
2. **Increase the amount of the land available for food production and for other socio-economic development.**

## 2.2 UXO Lao's Activities

UXO Lao achieves its mandate by conducting the following activities:

### A. Community Awareness or Mine/UXO Risk Education (MRE)

These activities aim to increase the awareness of people living in UXO-affected areas to the dangers of UXOs through various educational activities, for instance; songs, dances, plays, Q&As and puppet shows.

### B. Non-Technical Survey (NTS)

NTS involves reviewing all UXO-related data on a village-by-village basis and consulting with as many households as possible to locate all known UXO contamination in the village. NTS identifies UXO for roving tasks and cluster munition evidence for follow up technical survey (TS). NTS also generates sketch maps of villages showing UXO related information such as previous clearance, confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and evidence points.

### C. Technical Survey (TS)

TS normally follows NTS by using the cluster munition (CM) evidence points as the starting points from which detectors search systematically outwards in all directions to find the limits of the CM contamination. Boxes of 50 by 50 meters are used to manage and control the TS task. Boxes are searched until either a CM is found or 50% of the area is covered. If a box contains CM evidence, then the search continues in the adjacent boxes. Once the boundaries of the CM contamination have been identified the contaminated area is recorded and reported to the NRA as a CHA.

### D. Area Clearance (AC)

UXO Lao's primary focus for AC is the clearance of CHAs, however as a GOL organization, UXO Lao sometimes carries out donor-approved AC for development projects. AC involves dedicated teams detecting and clearing land to a depth based on the intended land use. For agriculture, this depth is normally 25 centimeters. During AC, all UXOs are removed from the cleared area to the required depth of clearance.

### E. Roving Tasks

Roving or spot tasks involve the on-demand removal and destruction of UXOs when they are reported by villagers or survey teams.

### 3. UXO LAO 24 YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENTS (1996 – 2019)

- More than 13,200 risk education village visits conducted, reaching over 3,800,000 audience members.
- Over 13,000 UXO items found from community reports through Non-Technical Survey.
- More than 3,700 sites of CHAs established through Technical Survey, covering over 31,000 hectares.
- Over 44,000 hectares of land cleared for safe use, of which, more than 38,300 hectares were allocated for agriculture and more than 5,700 hectares were utilized for development projects.
- More than 1,670,000 UXO items destroyed, of which, 72% were CM bomblets.



#### 4. ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2019

The following table shows UXO Lao's operational achievements during 2019.

Provinces	Operational Achievements					
	Mine/UXO Risk Education (villages)	Non-Technical Survey (villages)	Technical Survey (hectares)	Area Clearance (hectares)	Roving Tasks (visits)	UXO Destroyed
Luang Prabang	1	22	351	121	87	3,323
Huaphan	50	12	424	141	117	3,200
Xiengkhuang	48	14	1,279	663	309	19,537
Khammuane	56	12	308	342	126	6,611
Savannakhet	48	11	1,122	620	138	7,675
Salavan	36	8	277	210	48	3,342
Sekong	21	5	138	169	20	2,346
Champasak	50	12	176	158	68	3,856
Attapeu	48	12	297	617	98	3,551
<b>Total</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>4,372</b>	<b>3,040</b>	<b>1,011</b>	<b>53,441</b>

##### Mine/UXO Risk Education



UXO Lao has nine MRE teams, each operating in one of the nine most heavily-contaminated provinces in Laos. These teams undertake village visits to disseminate information and materials to increase the awareness of UXO risks among communities. The continued efforts to ensure the awareness of risks has contributed to the major decline in the number of UXO accidents and casualties over the past decade. The mine/UXO risk education teams' activities include puppet shows and games targeting children as new generations need to be informed of the dangers of UXO items. Refresher

activities for older villagers were also conducted by the MRE teams to ensure these residents are not taking undue risks in their daily lives. In 2019, UXO Lao undertook 358 such visits, reaching 254,573 audience members, including: 69,980 men, 68,148 women, 57,445 boys and 59,000 girls.

##### Non-Technical Survey

Similar to the UXO Lao MRE teams, nine Non-Technical Survey teams operate across nine provinces. NTS involves analyzing all historical clearance data to determine which tasks can be used as evidence for TS and village visits are conducted to check and verify the results of the data analysis and to find new CM evidence points. NTS generates sketch maps of villages with UXO contamination marked on them, as well as reports with GPS coordinates of all CM "evidence points", which are then provided to the National Regulatory Authority for the UXO/ Mine Action Sector (NRA) to enter into the national UXO database. These evidence points will later be followed up by the Technical Survey teams.



Throughout 2019, NTS was conducted in 108 villages in 9 provinces, with more than 2,300 UXO items found, including 1,732 cluster sub-munition bomblets representing 75% of the total UXO found. In addition, over 500 other types of UXO items and 24 aircraft bombs were found during this activity.

### Technical Survey



In 2019, UXO Lao implemented technical surveys to establish CHA's based on evidence points of physical CM contamination. By doing so, UXO Lao was able to establish a total of 321 sites of CHA's, covering 4,372 hectares of contaminated land. Through the TS activity, a total of 6,500 UXO items were found and disposed of, including 5,278 cluster sub-munition bomblets representing 81% of the total UXO destroyed which were included in the roving task outputs. There are 16 UXO Lao TS teams operating to establish the full extent of cluster sub-munition strikes in contaminated areas. This

approach contributes to the national effort to establish an overall baseline of the total extent of UXOs in Lao PDR. Once complete, such effort will enable the Government of Lao PDR to make projections about the costs and timeline of the overall task of clearing the country of its remaining UXO.

### Area Clearance

UXO Lao is the largest humanitarian clearance operator in Lao PDR and with the current funding support, UXO Lao contributes to over 60% of the clearance outputs in the UXO sector as a whole.

During 2019, 81 UXO Lao clearance teams across nine provinces cleared 3,040 hectares of UXO contaminated land. This covered 2,978 hectares for agriculture, and 62 hectares for development projects, which included educational facilities, community roads, water services, and other infrastructure.



The criteria for prioritization of clearance that UXO Lao takes into account existing villages, districts, provincial and national development plans and priorities. All land is cleared to a depth corresponding with its intended use, however, if no land use is specified the default clearance depth of 25 centimetres is applied. Most agricultural land is cleared to this default depth. On completion of clearance, the land is formally handed over to the landowner/user and a certificate is provided. Cleared land handovers are required to be witnessed by village authorities.

## Roving



Roving or Spot Tasks involve the on-demand removal and destruction of UXOs when they are reported by villagers or the NTS teams who destroy them on a call-out basis.

In 2019, UXO Lao conducted 1,011 visits to 464 villages across nine provinces. A total of 12,302 UXO items were destroyed through this activity including: 8,132 cluster munitions bomblets, 72 large aerial bombs, 12 mines and 4,086 other UXO items.

## 5. CASUALTIES

In 2019, there were 20 UXO accidents in Lao PDR, causing 9 deaths and 16 injuries. From 2008 to 2019, the number of casualties reduced by 92% from over 300 casualties in 2008 to 25 in 2019. The provision of quality mine risk education by operators such as UXO Lao in the nine provinces is attributed to the major decline of UXO accidents and casualties in Lao PDR. The following table summarises the casualty figures from 2008 to 2019, with details of the demographic breakdown.

Year	Accidents	Injuries				Deaths				Total Casualties
		Man	Woman	Boy	Girl	Man	Woman	Boy	Girl	
2008	186	99	22	67	15	66	8	20	5	302
2009	77	50	8	25	3	25	1	6	2	120
2010	75	33	8	47	7	9	1	9	5	119
2011	64	32	9	34	4	6	0	14	0	99
2012	36	17	11	11	2	6	1	6	2	56
2013	18	9	2	12	5	5	0	7	1	41
2014	22	8	5	9	7	4	0	12	0	45
2015	27	15	1	16	1	6	1	2	0	42
2016	35	17	3	24	5	2	0	8	0	59
2017	19	12	11	8	6	3	0	0	1	41
2018	17	4	4	8	5	2	0	1	0	24
2019	20	5	2	4	5	8	0	1	0	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>973</b>

Note: In Lao PDR, a child is classed as person of 18 years or younger.

## 6. UXO DESTRUCTION

The number of UXO items destroyed through area clearance and roving operations in 2019 was 53,441 items (41,139 and 12,302 items respectively).

Cluster munition bomblets or 'bombies' are the most common type found in Lao PDR. UXO Lao switched from the former request-based approach to evidence-based survey and clearance in 2015 which resulted in an increase of CM bomblets found per hectare. In 2019, the total number of bombies destroyed was 39,971 items.



On average, 10 cluster munition bomblets were found per hectare across 9 provinces. The following table summarizes the number of cluster munition bomblets found per hectare cleared in each province.

Number of cluster munition bomblet found per hectare per province in 2019										
Monthly	LPB	HP	XKH	KM	SVK	SLV	SK <sup>1</sup>	CPS	ATP	Average
January	15	16	16	10	6	8	0	10	2	<b>10</b>
February	17	18	11	7	10	10	0	18	4	<b>12</b>
March	21	14	10	10	7	8	0	14	4	<b>11</b>
April	21	13	12	11	6	10	0	9	5	<b>11</b>
May	19	12	20	9	6	12	2	15	3	<b>11</b>
June	16	12	11	9	6	10	8	19	8	<b>11</b>
July	16	9	23	6	7	16	3	8	4	<b>10</b>
August	14	9	15	12	7	9	7	21	4	<b>11</b>
September	16	7	26	0 <sup>2</sup>	6	7	10	22	9	<b>11</b>
October	16	12	28	9	8	17	7	22	2	<b>13</b>
November	8	9	19	15	0	10	23	21	2	<b>13</b>
December	6	11	18	17	9	10	25	10	2	<b>12</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10<sup>3</sup></b>

## 7. UXO LAO IMPACT STORIES

### 7.1 Clearance to support development projects

In 2019, UXO Lao cleared over 60 hectares for development projects including schools, health facilities, water services, roads, temples, irrigation, bridges, plantations, meeting halls and for new villages. These projects were supported by a broad range of actors in the development sector. A few selected examples are shared below:

#### Secondary School Construction in Hin Boun District, Khammuane Province



In June 2019, UXO Lao conducted clearance for an area of 10,297 m<sup>2</sup> in Hua Na village, Hin Boun district with support from the World Without Mines (WWM) Foundation. The area to be cleared was requested by the Office of Education and Sport in Hin Boun as they planned to construct a new secondary school building with support from JICA. The existing classroom building was constructed in 2012 and made from a mix of wood and bricks without cement plastering. The offices and classrooms were very small for the teachers and

<sup>1</sup> From January to April, there were no achievements reported due to lack of funds which resulted in the suspension of clearance teams' operations for this period, therefore no average CM bomblets found per hectare is listed or included in the average calculation.

<sup>2</sup> In September, KM had heavy rain rainfall and flooding, therefore, the operations by the clearance teams' were temporarily paused.

<sup>3</sup> An average for the overall number of CM bomblets found and destroyed per hectare is calculated based on the information provided by the UXO Lao database unit as of 24 March 2020. In total, 31,839 CM bomblets were found and destroyed during the clearance activity of 3,040 hectares in the 9 provinces in 2019.

students, therefore, priority was given to this new school building by the Office of Education and Sport of Hin Boun.

Clearance for the new building took place for two days (4-5 June 2019) and 13 UXO items were found including 6 Mortars (8mm) and 7 Shells (20mm).

The Deputy Principal of Hua Na Secondary School, Mr. Khonphanom Soumalay, explained that the construction of the new school building began in November 2019 and is expected to be completed by April or May 2020. The new school building will contain 4 large classrooms and 2 office rooms for the teachers and principal. Once complete, the school will accommodate around 200 students from 9 nearby villages (currently there are 120 students (65 girls) and 6 teachers). It is hoped that the new school will be available at the start of new term beginning September 2020.

#### **Land cleared to support a water supply project in Luang Prabang Province**

With support from the Norwegian Government through Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) in Laos, UXO Lao Luang Prabang cleared land to support a water supply facility in Buamwane Village, Viengkham district. This project was requested by the Buamwane village authority with support from ADB and the Lao government and the clearance of 4.2 hectares took place from 13 to 22 November 2019.

Mr. Phiaheu Xaychaleun, the technical officer from the Office of Public Works and Transport in Viengkham District explained: "We plan to start the construction of the water supply facility in July 2020 and once that project is complete, we will use the water from Xeng River, which is the main water source in Viengkham District, to link the water facility for seven villages including: Buamwane, Sae, Vangbai, Viengkham, Vangherne, Hatyao and Donekhoun. A total of 675 families will benefit from this project (3,417 people including 1,721 women)".



#### **7.2 Clearance to support agricultural production**

Throughout 2019, UXO Lao cleared over 2,900 hectares of agricultural land across 9 provinces, ensuring people can live safely and work in the fields without worry and fear.

##### ***Tea farm beneficiary, Yordpieng Village, Pek District, XK Province***



Mr. Khamphan Synouanpien, 63 years old, lives in Yordpieng village, Pek district, XK province with his wife and son. Yordpieng village is on a hilly area of land and covered with green tea trees. Khamphan is from a poor family and his primary income comes from growing rice to sell. In 2006, news of cultivating a green tea farm reached Khamphan when a businessman visited Yordpieng with information of the famous Phousan tea and brought with him tea seeds from China to plant tea trees. Mr. Khamphan was really interested in this opportunity as he saw it as a means to earn extra income.

After learning this information, he travelled to Paksong district in Champasack Province and stayed there for nine days to learn more about the techniques of tea production and managing a tea farm at a workshop.

In 2007, he began growing his tea trees but quickly came across danger and within months, Khamphan had found nine bombies and one mine on his tea farm. To remove and destroy these lethal objects, he collected them and threw them into a pit, lighting a fire on top. He was so afraid but saw no other option but to conduct his own home detonation.

Most of the land was badly affected by UXO contamination and therefore, Mr. Khamphan requested the village chief to contact UXO Lao XK to come and clear his land. 2,290m<sup>2</sup> of Khamphan's land was cleared by UXO Lao from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> December 2019 where 18 bombies and 2 artillery munitions were destroyed. "The UXO Lao clearance team saved me and my family's life, now I do not worry about UXOs - I can use axes and machines freely on the land. Thank you so much for making me feel safe and hopefully the UXO Lao team will come back to clear more land to extend my tea farm". Since his land was cleared, Khamphan and his family can produce and sell 800-900kg of dry and processed tea per year with the price of 1kg selling for approximately 100,000 LAK.

Phousan tea is the most well-known tea that originates from XK and Yordpieng village itself is a key producer of the product. There are many large tea farms in XK and the provincial authority would like Phousan tea to be certified as part of the One District One Product (ODOP) initiative which aims to promote economic growth for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Lao PDR. In 2017, Khamphan attended an exhibition called 'Original Source of Lao Tea Products' at the Landmark Mekong Riverside Hotel, Vientiane Capital and he regularly participates in other events and trade fairs in XK and nationwide. In addition, he had hoped to showcase his tea products at the National Games that was planned to be held in XK province from 22<sup>nd</sup> March to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, however, this had to be postponed due to the COVID19 outbreak.

Smiling, Khamphan shared with the team; "Every morning and evening, I drink a cup of tea from my farm and am so proud to produce the best tea around!" In future, Mr. Khamphan hopes to expand his tea farm and compete in the tea market against other famous tea products such Phongsaly tea and other imported tea products. He also hopes that someday, his tea farm can be developed to sustain eco-tourism.

### Clearance for agriculture growth



Mr. Seth Vixay 55, lives in Houaykong Village, Nambak district, Luangprabang province. He makes a living by growing rice and vegetables (corn and seeds) to support his family of five people. Houaykong village is heavily contaminated with UXO and the availability of rice is seriously hindered on account of this. As a result, Seth's family has to spend more money as they do not have enough rice to feed themselves for the entire year.

"I've cultivated my land since 1987 and never knew if there were cluster munitions or not because I don't know



what they look like. That being said, I am always careful when I prepare my land to grow rice.” Seth shared.

At the end of 2018, the UXO Lao TS teams came to Houaykong village and established it as a priority for land clearance. After the TS activity was completed, the clearance teams began clearing Seth and his neighbor’s land from 3 - 24 October 2019. The land clearance covered 11,840 m<sup>2</sup> of which, 4,500 m<sup>2</sup> was Seth’s land. 41 UXO items were destroyed including 36 CM bomblets (30 items were found on Seth’s land). 3 families in the area benefited from this clearance (18 locals including 8 women).

Before his land was cleared, Seth produced on average 1,800kg of rice per year depending on the weather. Since his land was cleared, he now produces 4,000kg of corn and 1,800 – 2,000kg of job’s-tears (millet) per year and sells some at the market. On average, he now earns around 10 million LAK per year.

Seth expressed his gratitude to UXO Lao; “thank you for making my land free from UXO and now my family can work on the land without fear from UXO. If there are no natural disasters and we have enough water, I’m sure that our rice production will increase and we can earn more income by selling our produce”.

### *Removing killer crops for saving lives*

Mr. Mek Olaphin is 75 years old and lives in Nhommalath Tai village, Nhommalath district, Khammuane province. His family were one of the beneficiaries from land clearance in 2019 with support from the World Without Mines Foundation. His family earns a living by growing rice and raising livestock.

In 2018, Mek’s land was selected by UXO Lao Khammuane to be included in the work plan for clearance activity. This included a total area of 3 hectares, 2 of which are located within a large CHA of 32.7 hectares.



Mek explained that he first started cultivating the land in 1986 he found a lot of cluster sub-munitions. Whenever he discovered these items, he usually picked them up by hand and threw them into a nearby stream until he found no more items which made him believe that his land was free from UXOs.

However, when a UXO Lao team informed him about UXO items found on his land during TS work in 2015, the UXO issue made him and his family very worried again.

In October 2019, a clearance team visited the land and took 12 days from 4 until 15 October 2019 to clear his land. The team found 25 UXO items, including 13 x BLU26 and 12 x 20mm shells on this land. The cleared and safe area is now used for growing rice and cassava to sell.

“Nowadays, I’m too old to do hard work, so my daughters and sons-in-law mainly work in the rice field. I still like to fish, especially during rainy season because it’s a lot easier to catch fish when the water level rises. In addition, I also take care of my cows during rainy season as the animals can get sick easily”.

### 7.3 Land cleared to rebuild lives post-flood

On July 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018, the Xepien-Xenamnoy Saddle Dam in Sanamxay district, Attapeu province breached, releasing a huge quantity of water (approximately five billion cubic meters of water) which in turn, flooded vast areas of Sanamxay district. When the dam breached, hundreds of houses and buildings were submerged under water and severely damaged with many locals having to climb and sit on the roofs of their houses or in trees while waiting for help. The flood severely damaged agriculture and infrastructure such as paddy fields, vegetable crops, livestock farms, roads, bridges, etc. This terrible tragedy resulted in deaths, injuries and many missing individuals; hundreds of families were displaced lacking the basic necessities such as food, potable water, clothes and essential medicines.

Immediately after the flood and upon request of the Governor of Attapeu, UXO Lao deployed an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and clearance teams to conduct emergency operations in Sanamxay district under the funding support from the Government of Australia (5 teams) and the Government of USA (11 teams). The teams were deployed in six villages most affected by the flood including Hinlath, Mai, Tamoryord, Thae, Thasengchanh, and Samongtai. All of which were contaminated with UXO, including cluster sub-munitions.

In 2019, UXO Lao continued working to clear land to rebuild lives post-flood with the funding support from the Government of Australia and Canada through UNDP, by deploying five clearance teams to provide essential UXO clearance in Attapeu province. A few examples are provided below:

**Mr. Linthong Bangmala**, is a 50 year old farmer and lives with his wife, daughter and grandchild. After the Xepien-Xenam Noy Dam collapsed, his house was destroyed and in October 2018 many of his neighbours from the village decided to move to higher land in Thahin village, Sanamxay District.

In November 2018, the community worked together in cutting and burning vegetation to construct their new wooden houses. “We were very worried and afraid that this area was still contaminated with UXO while we were scorching the ground, but we had no choice else as there was no other place for us to go”, Linthong explained.



In July 2019, a UXO Lao clearance team supported by the Australian Government began clearing the community's land, provided to them by Lao Government for agricultural growth. “When UXO Lao finishes the clearance operation, I hope to cultivate and grow vegetables, raise livestock and knit fishing nets to sell at the local market to earn income for my family,” he explained. When discussing the support from the Government of Australia with UXO Lao's POPI unit, Linthong expressed his appreciation; “I am so grateful to the Australian Government for the support of UXO clearance to the flood-affected areas to ensure our land is free from UXOs. My neighbours and I now feel safe and we can try rebuild our lives post-flood.”

**Mr. Marn Smarn** is a 38 year old father of three children, living in Nongkhae village, Sanamxay district. He makes a living by growing rice and raising livestock to support his family of five. Mr. Marn and his family own 1.5 hectares of paddy fields and every year prior to the flood, the family produced between

170-180 sacks of un-milled rice. Unfortunately, due to the dam collapse, the whole area of his rice field was submerged under water and he could not grow any crops.

He shared with the UXO Lao team that on the day of the flood, he was on his way home from the forest when he saw many people rushing out of the village while the water level around them was rising higher and higher. He immediately ran home as fast as he could and brought his wife and children to a nearby village where other locals gathered for safety. Shortly after, he returned home to take his remaining 11 buffalos and swam across the river to the higher land. Unfortunately, 2 of them died during flash floods before he returned.



During this time, he was separated from his family for 10 days because the water level still too high and when it reduced, he eventually met his family and was extremely happy they were safe. When the villagers returned to their home, they saw that many things were damaged including rice mills, tractors, motorbikes and others.

He was afraid to use and farm his land for fear of finding a UXO item and thankfully after reporting his concern to the village authority, a UXO Lao clearance team was requested to visit his land. With funding support from the Government of Canada, the UXO Lao team cleared his

land and thankfully, no UXOs were found.

“I was really afraid to use my land for farming, however, after the land was cleared by a UXO Lao team I feel confident again. Thank you to the Government of Canada for the support on UXO clearance in Attapeu province and also thanks UXO Lao for making my land safe” shared Marn.

#### 7.4 UXO victims

**Location: Doung village, Kham district, Xiengkhuang province.**



Mrs. Somsy, 74 years old, lives in Doung village, Kham district, XK Province. She lives a simple life at home with her son and nephews and enjoys listening to the local radio in the small hut at the front of her home. She seems to have a good life with her family in Doung, but unexpected things can happen.

On 24 October 2019, Somsy was cleaning around the house as she did every day and lit a fire to burn some dry leaves that were scattered around. While she was walking away from the small fire, the heat detonated an unexploded bomb which was under the pit and the explosion reached up to 5 meters away. Unfortunately, Somsy was badly injured and immediately sent to Kham district hospital and transferred to the provincial hospital for further treatment where she spent three weeks in intensive care. Her face, chest, thigh and foot were badly damaged by the explosion and she now suffers with tinnitus and cannot walk by herself because of a pain in her foot. As a result of this accident, a local Civil Society Organisation (CSO) called ‘The Quality of Life Association (QLA)’ based in Phonsavan town visited Somsy and covered all treatment costs for her.



Now, Somsy still cannot walk by herself and has to use a wheelchair. She cannot hear the radio so clearly and is scared to light another fire. “My son and nephews have to take care of me now, they even bring me to the bathroom and carry me everywhere. I always knew there were lots of UXOs in our village, but I never thought an accident would happen to me as I spend so much time at my house. Thankfully, I survived this accident and am so lucky to be alive,” Somsy explained.

Somsy’s land is now included in the UXO Lao work plan for clearance and her family are scared to dig and plant trees or do anything on their land. Going forward, Somsy would like to have a hearing aid to help her listen to the radio better and she hopes UXO Lao XK will clear her land and make it safe for her and her neighbours.

**Location: Thaly Neua village, Nambak district, Luang Prabang province.**

On the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2019, an accident occurred in Luangprabang province at 10:45am. Mr. Khamkeo, from Thaly Neua village, Nambak District was killed by a cluster munition bomblet (BLU26) while digging soil to move some banana trees from the backyard of his house. No UXO accident had ever occurred in this village and shortly after the accident, the UXO Lao Luangprabang clearance team arrived at Khamkeo’s house with equipment to clear around the house to ensure that there were no other CMs on his land.



When the UXO Lao PO/PI team interviewed Khamkeo’s daughter, she explained; “On the day of the accident, my father stayed at our house with his three grandchildren. When he woke up, he went outside to dig the soil to replant a banana tree in a different location. My son wanted to go out and help him with this but my father assured him it was no problem so he went back inside and watched TV instead. A few minutes later, my son told me that he heard a loud bang: “Boom!!!” He didn’t know what the sound was and when he ran outside and saw his grandfather, he knew something terrible had happened. Blood was covering his body and he held his grandfather while shouting for the neighbor to call emergency aid”. Sadly, Khamkheo had died instantly from the sheer force of the bomb.

After this accident, the NRA office and the department of Labour and Social Welfare visited the scene of the accident and provided Khamkeo’s family with 6.5 million LAK in support. The department also provided an addition 500,000 LAK. Sadly, no amount of money will bring back Khamkheo and these lethal objects continue to pose a threat to individual lives, their livelihoods, and socio-economic development.

## 7.5 Chatting with our UXO Lao colleagues

### *An all-round qualified UXO Lao team member shares his story*



Mr. Khemphet Sypasirth is 54 years old and has two daughters who are studying at high school in Phonesavan village, Pek district. Khemphet loves his daughters very much and does everything he can to ensure they will attend university next year. Although he is the main earner of the family, his wife runs a small grocery store at the front of their house.

Khemphet has been working with UXO Lao XK for the past 26 years in different capacities. After he graduated high school, he served in the Lao military for 7 years until he saw a vacancy for a UXO Lao deminer position in

1994. He decided to apply for this position as he was already familiar with weapons and artillery from his military service and was eager to contribute to removing the UXO issue from his country. Khemphet was selected as deminer and sent on eight-week training course in Phonesavan town and after successfully passing the course, he began working with a clearance team as a deminer. His first time conducting practical clearance was very exciting and he dug into the ground without fear but ensured he was using the detector correctly. From 2003 to 2006, Khemphet regularly operated as part of the roving task team and late in 2006, he was sent to the Training Center to complete the Explosive Ordnance Disposal level 1 (EOD1) course and worked as EOD for a clearance team from 2006 to 2014. Following that, he transferred to become a team member for the TS activity up until now.

Khemphet explained; “the new concept of survey which focuses on the evidence points enables us to clear UXO contamination much faster than the older concept and more UXOs can be found and destroyed”. While discussing his next career move, Khempet mentioned that becoming a clearance team leader is his goal and he hopes that at some stage, the salary scale for UXO Lao staff increases.

**Mr. Vongxay Sengsouliya**, 44 years old, comes from Artsaphone district, Savannakhet province where he lives with his wife and 3 children. He began working with UXO Lao Savannakhet in 2004 as a deminer. “I wanted to work with UXO Lao to reduce the level of contamination in my hometown and make the land as safe as possible. I really love my job and am happy to help other people to live free from these lethal UXO items,” Vongsay shared.



After the Xepien-Xenamnoy Dam collapsed, UXO Lao HQ deployed five clearance teams from three different provinces to work in Attapeu to relieve the damage caused to the surrounding areas. Vongxay worked for over a year in Attapeu province, away from his family. He said that he misses his wife and children, but he is happy to help flood victims and clear land for resettlement and agricultural purposes. Some sites are more difficult to access for clearance because of dense vegetation, but Vongxay and his team members are dedicated to conduct vegetation cutting by themselves. When UXO Lao PO-PI visited the teams, one clearance team member had been stung by a bee near his eye, but after receiving

treatment from the on-site medic he continued to work hard until the tasks for the day were complete. It is this commitment that ensured many hectares of land were surveyed and cleared by the UXO Lao teams.

**Ms. Phengchanh Sipaserth**, 42 years old, lives in Viengxay village, Luangprabang district. In 1998, she graduated from the Health Department, Luangprabang province as a nurse. After her graduation, Phengchanh saw a vacancy for UXO Lao Luangprabang medical staff in the local newspaper and sent in an application. Fortunately, her application was successful and she began working as a medic for UXO Lao Luangprabang in 1999.



“When I told my family that I got a job at UXO Lao Luangprabang as a medic working as part of an operational team, they were worried asked me why I chose to work at UXO Lao. Aren’t you afraid to work in contaminated areas? I responded that I was a little bit scared because I never saw a UXO before. However, with training I can now identify different types of UXO and work very carefully. In my opinion, working with UXO Lao or even in the hospital is no different because at the end of the day, we help those in need and save people's lives,” Phengchanh explained.

Now with over 20 years of experience, and extensive medical training under her belt, she shares her knowledge with her UXO Lao colleagues. She never stops learning new skills and usually practices before working every day. While working as a medic for a clearance team, she has had the opportunity to welcome important guests that visit UXO Lao Luangprabang sites. Sometimes, when two clearance teams are working on the same site, there are two medics including Phengchanh who help the clearance teams work faster. Phengchanh is proud to be a part of UXO Lao staff because she can help people even if just for a small thing and can see the happiness of the locals post-clearance.

In future, Phengchanh hopes that more donors will support UXO Lao Luangprabang because there are still a lot of cluster munitions in the province not only at surface level, but also deep under the surface. She hopes that very soon, there will be no more cluster munition in Luangprabang province and that people all over Laos will live without the daily threat of UXO contamination.

## **8. PARTNERSHIPS**

In 2019, UXO Lao collaborated with and was supported by a large number of local and international partners, including:

- The National Regulatory Authority for the UXO/Mine Action Sector in Lao PDR (NRA)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- The European Union (EU)
- The Government of Australia
- The Government of Canada
- The Government of Ireland
- The Government of Japan



- The Government of Lao PDR
- The Government of New Zealand
- The Government of Norway
- The Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg
- The Government of the United States of America
- The Government of the Republic of Korea
- Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC)
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- Ito Supporting Comity (ISC)
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
- Japan Mine Action Service (JMAS)
- Japan International Cooperation System (JICS)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- Spirit of Soccer (SOS)
- Tetra Tech (TT)
- World Without Mines Foundation (WWM)

### United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

During the reporting period, UNDP provided technical advisory support to UXO Lao through the provision of an advisory team consisting of a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), a Finance Technical Specialist and a Programme and Partnerships Support Officer. The UNDP advisory team has continuously supported UXO Lao to revise and monitor the Annual Work Plan as well as ways to manage funds in accordance to the given budget line. The team provided inputs and suggestions for the preparation of the UXO Lao Annual Project Report, quarterly reports and supported the finalization of financial reporting for various donors and assisted in the future planning of funds expected.



In terms of procurement, the UNDP Country Office (CO) supported UXO Lao with the purchasing of equipment necessary to manage and undertake UXO-related activities. For example, various items and equipment such as; large loop detectors, uniforms, explosives, brush cutters, tires, MRE material, GPS, generators, medical equipment, battery chargers and megaphones.

In addition, the finance technical specialist, together with the Finance and Programme and Public Information (PO-PI) Units, conducted grant management training in Luangprabang province to strengthen the grant management capacity of UXO Lao staff in Huaphan, Xiengkhuang and Luang Prabang provinces. The Programme and Partnerships Support Officer assigned to supporting UXO Lao assisted with UNDP Public Information Unit (PIU) to devise a communication training plan to enhance the UXO Lao PO-PI team's skillset. In addition, the Officer supported UXO Lao with their social media engagement and development of a future website to increase public awareness and promote the humanitarian operator internationally. Regarding upskilling, UNDP supported a UXO Lao Logistics and Procurement Officer to receive on-the-job training from September 2019 to February 2020.

In terms of funding, UNDP assists the GoL in engaging new and previous donors in financing the UXO sector. Moreover, UNDP CO secured additional funding from the Canadian and Australian governments to support 5 clearance teams' operations to assist with the post-disaster effort in

Attapeu province. In addition, the Republic of Korea kindly contributed funds through UNDP to cover essential costs for the UXO Lao Training Center.

#### **Tetra Tech (TT) support to UXO Lao**

Since the completion of the Sterling International Group (SIG) contract in December 2018, Tetra Tech (TT) became the new development partner of UXO Lao to manage the grant support from the U.S. Department of State (DOS). In 2019, TT continued to provide financial support to the NRA and UXO Lao and technical assistance to UXO Lao. TT's support enabled the implementation of evidence-based survey and subsequent clearance of Confirmed Hazardous Areas. TT also supported field inspections for three Quality Management mobile teams.



In addition, TT's Technical Advisors continued to monitor and support UXO Lao's operations in the areas of operations management at both HQ and field levels, quality management and information management. Significant support also focused on improving the quality of current and past technical survey, improving the quality of data for UXO Lao's data management systems and improving the speed and quality of reporting completed field work. Moreover, TT supported UXO Lao by allocating funds to cover the UXO Lao training center's staff salaries from January to December 2019.

The 5-year period of funding support from the U.S. DOS, runs from 2019 to 2023 and encompasses technical advisory support at HQ and field levels to monitor work progress and set out team-based management at field level. In addition, TT will also support the replacement of vehicles and essential field equipment to UXO Lao where the U.S DOS currently supports.

#### **Japanese Organizations' support to UXO Lao under Japan's Official Overseas Development Assistance**

##### **JICA**

UXO Lao and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) began the new phase of cooperation with a 5-year project titling "Strengthening Operational Capacity of UXO Lao Contributing to Poverty Alleviation" from 2019 until 2023. The new project covers 3 main outputs including: (1) Capacity to formulate and monitor a transparent annual work plan, giving consideration to poverty alleviation and development is strengthened; (2) IT utilization is promoted to enhance the effect of output 1 and; (3) Basic capacity for the clearance activity is improved.



Following the successful completion of the second phase project in 2019, JICA has disseminated the work plan formulation process to 4 provinces: Attapeu, Luang Prabang, Houaphan and Xiengkhuang. In addition, JICA has also supported UXO Lao by conducting management training for UXO Lao mid-level staff from HQ and Provincial Levels. This training was conducted with cooperation from TACDO Consulting Center and 24 UXO Lao members participated, including 2 females.

Moreover, JICA also conducted IT training for UXO Lao staff who are responsible for information management, logistics and procurement. 37 staff members from HQ and Provincial Offices were involved whereby the training focused on the basic utilization of Microsoft Access and Microsoft Excel programs. In addition, JICA also supported UXO Lao to strengthen the staff capacity by exchanging lessons learned and sharing experiences regarding mine/UXO action with Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) which focused on "Human Resource Capacity Development".

## JICS

With support from the Government of Japan under Japan's Grant Aid for Conflict Prevention and Peace Building, UXO Lao utilized many brush cutter machines in contaminated areas to help clearance teams prepare the clearance sites. The machines supported by JICS are currently deployed in 3 southern provinces: Sekong, Salavan and Champasak.



The function of the machines is to cut excess vegetation in overgrown areas and adjust the soil surface where conditions are suitable for growing rice paddy fields to help families grow rice as soon as the planting season begins. From July to December 2019, brush cutter teams in three provinces cleared 48 hectares of vegetation areas and 37 hectares of UXO-contaminated areas reaching 381 beneficiaries. During brush cutting and clearance operations, a total of 2,027 UXO items were found and destroyed.

## JMAS



UXO Lao collaborated with Japan Mine Action Service in implementing the Cluster Sub-Munitions Mechanical Clearance Promotion Project in Xiengkhuang Province. In 2019, UXO Lao and JMAS targeted 150 hectares of contaminated land for the machine to operate within 3 districts: Pek, Kham and Phoukoud. During the reporting period, a total of 87 hectares was cleared (58% of the target) and 1,816 UXO items were destroyed by the machines, of which, 75% were cluster sub-munitions bomblets and 25% were other

munitions.

In addition, JMAS provided technical training to fourteen UXO Lao staff members including one female. This training included the repair, maintenance and safety management of the machines and trained one new CM-mechanical clearance team to be deployed in a southern province for the next phase of the project. UXO Lao and JMAS will continue the new phase of collaboration from 2019 to 2022.

## Collaboration with the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC)

Since 2012, UXO Lao and CMAC have maintained cooperation under the South-South Cooperation (SSC) programme supported by JICA with the aim of strengthening institutional capacity and human resources for both organizations. In 2019, UXO Lao and CMAC successfully completed the first training program which focused on "Human Resource Capacity Development" under the SSC phase three project which began in 2019 and runs until 2023.



For this training, 3 CMAC staff members and 7 UXO Lao staff members including 2 females were involved. The training program was conducted 'On-The-Job' to enable staff from both organizations to exchange their experiences and explore different ideas, as well as the challenges they have encountered for human resource management. The training focused on contracting and salary scales, human resource database management, policies towards outstanding persons, life insurance and measures against violators. The training took place between 8 – 19 July 2019 in Cambodia and from 22 July to 2 August 2019, in Lao PDR.



### Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

From 2015, UXO Lao has collaborated with Norwegian People's Aid. As the fund manager, NPA has helped to closely monitor field operations and managing the budget allocation for UXO Lao in Luang Prabang Province for which, funds are provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA). NPA covers the costs of survey, clearance, mine risk education combined with the non-technical survey and office staff and running costs in this province. UXO Lao and NPA will continue the partnership and work closely in Luang Prabang since the new commitment from the NMFA was confirmed for 2020.



### International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)



In March 2019, a delegation from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva, Bangkok and Vientiane Offices visited Luang Prabang Province to observe UXO Lao field operations and discuss possible opportunities where the ICRC can provide technical support with regards to medical work.

## ICRC

From 5-6 August 2019, the ICRC provided support to UXO Lao with the provision of the training for 20 UXO Lao medical staff from 9 provincial offices and the UXO Lao training center in Blast Trauma Care. This course was designed to train the clearance teams' medical staff in first aid response to casualties from UXO explosions. This course enhanced the medics' understanding of the immediate action to undertake and process in case of such unexpected situation. With the training provided, UXO Lao medical staff learned new techniques for providing essential first aid in case of accident as well as the lifting and transporting of those injured. The training also enhanced the medics' understanding of the equipment generously provided by the ICRC in 2018.

### Spirit of Soccer (SOS)

In 2019, UXO Lao continued its collaboration with the Spirit of Soccer (SOS) for the provision of mine risk education through football in Salavan province. The objective of the project is to reduce fatalities and injuries, caused by UXO by learning about the dangers of UXOs through playing football games for those attending primary and secondary schools in Salavan. In addition, the activities helped children understand how to report the UXO items if found in their communities. The project also supports a training course for football trainers to ensure ongoing sustainability after the project cycle finishes. Moreover, SOS provides footballs, UXO posters, risk education learning materials and books to the target schools.



The target for 2019 was 50 schools to be visited in 7 districts including: Salavan, Ta Oy, Toum Lan, Lao Ngam, Kongsedon, Samuay and Vapi. Throughout 2019, UXO Lao and SOS conducted 42 such visits to the target schools, reaching 4,630 students, including: 2,314 boys and 2,316 girls. In addition, the team also provided 4,568 writing notebooks to the students and 164 footballs for the schools.

## 9. CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

In 2019, a number of challenges and lessons learned were faced during the course of the year and are summarized below:

### Field Operations

In 2019, UXO Lao encountered certain operational issues while conducting activities in the field. Firstly, vegetation cutting was the main obstacle for survey and clearance operations, as the teams had to cut

dense vegetation by themselves, even though some hand-held brush cutter and blades were provided. Due to the limited number of equipment provided, an increase in the number of days spent cutting vegetation affected clearance outputs and the achievement of annual targets.

Secondly, the NRA at provincial level should assist with ensuring locals fully understand the current survey and clearance methodology in order to enhance community involvement in cutting vegetation. Furthermore, these operational processes should be fully explained to locals as there were many cases that villagers misunderstood the survey and clearance processes and thought that the land was already cleared when in fact, it had been technically surveyed.

UXO Lao will work closely with TT in order to resolve the vegetation cutting issue, particularly in relation to the formation of specific vegetation cutting teams to support clearance operations.

#### **Technical Survey 'Clean-Up'**

From 2015 - 2019, UXO Lao set an annual target for the technical survey activity of about 800 hectares per team per year, however upon implementation, the TS teams could not achieve as planned, due to a number of obstacles encountered. This includes dense forests and vegetation, geographical conditions, flooding and landslides during monsoon season. Thus, UXO Lao has reduced the target from 800 ha between 2015-2018 to 300 hectares in 2019. However, the target was still difficult to achieve due to a TS 'clean-up' activity that was required as a number of sites were not completed in their entirety.

Since 2019, UXO Lao began the implementation of the TS 'clean-up' which aims at correcting existing and incomplete CHAs created since the evidence-based survey commenced in 2015. The 'clean-up' activity involves continuing the TS activity until all UXO contaminated land in the area is processed. Often the contamination is so vast that the CHAs keep expanding, sometimes over 100 hectares. According to the new technical survey regulation, TS team must conduct the survey until all UXO contamination land in the area is identified and surrounded with the green boxes before they can closed the site, however, this remains difficult in some areas for UXO Lao, particularly in high contamination areas, for example in Xiengkhuang and Khammuane provinces, where the CHA often keeps expanding. Therefore, UXO Lao will consult with the NRA office to solve such challenges in the future.

#### **Reduction of Cluster Munition Bomblets Found Per Hectare**

The cluster munition bomblets found per hectare during clearance dropped from an average of 22 items in 2015 to 10 items in 2019 due to the following reasons:

1. UXO Lao introduced the CM evidence-based survey and clearance in 2015, whereby the organization has since established thousands of CHAs covering over 30,000 hectares through the technical survey activity. The clearance teams following the technical survey process cannot proceed as timely or fast for areas to be cleared. Every year, through the prioritization process, 1 large CHA can be divided into 2-3 tasks depending on what is selected and included in the annual work plan. For example, the selected areas that were cleared in 2016 may have had many more unexploded cluster munition items in them than the surrounding area (cleared in 2018 and 2019), as a result of the density in contamination.
2. Cluster sub-munitions and other UXOs were possibly destroyed during the Technical Survey activity.

3. Changes in clearance operation, due to new clearance regulation, states that when a clearance team conducts full clearance and finds CM at the boarder of the site, they must extend the clear area to 50 m<sup>2</sup> to ensure no CM remains near the parameters. When an area extends, sometimes only 1 or 2 CM is found near these areas, this results in a lower average of CM found per hectare when calculating the total CM found with the total areas cleared per province and month.



## 10. CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPENDITURES IN 2019

The following Financial Reports indicate actual funds received by UXO Lao during the year 2019 from UNDP-managed fund sources, bilateral and other fund sources. This includes expenditure incurred per costs classification, by donor, by activity and by location, and compared with that as projected based on UXO Lao's Annual Work Plan.

### Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme (UXO Lao)

#### Summary of Funds Received (in USD)

For the Year Ended 1 January - 31 December 2019

Summary of Funds Received (in 2019)				
Fund Sources	Earmarked	Unearmarked	Total	% of Total
<b>UNDP-Managed Funds</b>				
New Zealand	1,236,431.00		1,236,431.00	12%
European Union	848,567.00		848,567.00	8%
Australia	292,533.00		292,533.00	3%
Ireland		270,329.50	270,329.50	3%
UNDP TRAC2	250,000.00		250,000.00	2%
Canada	113,179.00		113,179.00	1%
Luxembourg		82,965.00	82,965.00	1%
Republic of Korea	15,000.00		15,000.00	0%
	<b>2,755,710.00</b>	<b>353,294.50</b>	<b>3,109,004.50</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Bilateral Funds</b>				
US – Tetra Tech (TT)	4,388,141.59		4,388,141.59	43%
Japan Int'l Cooperation System (JICS)	2,080,660.53		2,080,660.53	20%
Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)	475,032.00		475,032.00	5%
World Without Mines Foundation (WWM)	200,872.00		200,872.00	2%
ITO Supporting Comity (ISC)	21,900.00		21,900.00	0%
	<b>7,166,606.12</b>		<b>7,166,606.12</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>Government Contribution and Others</b>				
Government of Lao PDR	12,911.88		12,911.88	0%
Various – LPB Sales Proceeds, Training Fees		2,908.97	2,908.97	0%
	<b>12,911.88</b>	<b>2,908.97</b>	<b>15,820.85</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,935,288.00</b>	<b>356,203.47</b>	<b>10,291,431.47</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>% to Total</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme (UXO Lao)**  
**Summary of Actual Expenditures by Cost Classification and per Fund Source (in USD)**  
**For the Period Ended 1 January - 31 December 2019**

Summary of Actual Expenditure by Funding Source (in USD)					
Fund Sources					
Expenditures	UNDP- Managed Funds	Bilateral Funds	Gov't Contribution & Others	Total	% to Total
<b>Personnel Costs</b>	1,404,969.41	4,421,677.82	1,814.05	5,828,461.28	70%
	<b>1,404,969.41</b>	<b>4,421,677.82</b>	<b>1,814.05</b>	<b>5,828,461.28</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>					
Rental and Maintenance	258,831.37	351,278.78	399.35	610,509.50	7%
Fuel		428,203.04		428,203.04	5%
Utilities	23,855.12	83,747.95	3,414.25	111,017.32	1%
Stationeries and Other Office Supplies	21,638.69	70,687.42	131.56	92,457.67	1%
Travel	47,688.52	7,796.10	19.66	55,504.30	1%
Security/Explosive Storage	13,925.47	41,704.14	3.01	55,632.62	1%
Printing, Publications and Promo Materials	13,011.91	13,138.32	1,321.36	27,461.59	0%
Telephone/Internet/Fax Charges	3,441.42	19,858.09	565.66	23,865.17	0%
Insurance		14,121.51		14,121.51	0%
Freight and Postal Handling	1,478.36	8,186.55	4.63	9,669.54	0%
Sundries	25,097.70	30,601.08	2,899.85	58,598.63	1%
	<b>408,958.58</b>	<b>1,069,322.98</b>	<b>8,759.33</b>	<b>1,487,040.89</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>Special Operating Expenses</b>					
GMS and Implementation Support Service	151,973.08			151,973.08	2%
Trainings, Workshops and Conference	12,323.67	155,347.43		179,796.43	2%
Licenses	21,338.26	11,790.09	12,125.33	33,128.35	0%
Foreign Currency (Gain) Loss	7,650.95			7,650.95	0%
Bank Charges	2,185.73	3,720.09	246.82	6,152.64	0%
Audit Fees	2,096.00	3,500.00		5,596.00	0%
	<b>197,567.69</b>	<b>174,357.61</b>	<b>12,372.15</b>	<b>384,297.45</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Non-Expendable Equipment</b>					
Safety and EOD Equipment	215,661.36	165.36		215,826.72	3%
Office and Computer Equipment	4,522.92	23,927.44		28,450.36	0%
Transportation Equipment	31,000.00			31,000.00	0%
Communication Equipment	16,268.88	2,270.06		18,538.94	0%
Furniture	4,888.90	11,877.66	866.10	17,652.66	0%
	<b>272,342.06</b>	<b>38,240.52</b>	<b>866.10</b>	<b>311,468.68</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Expendable Materials</b>					
EOD Supplies	90,369.15	46,923.34		137,292.49	2%
Explosives	13,501.00	95,032.54		108,533.54	1%
Personnel/Medical Supplies	8,820.56	97,447.53		106,268.09	1%
MRE Supplies		18,581.80		18,581.80	0%
	<b>112,690.71</b>	<b>257,985.21</b>		<b>370,675.92</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,396,528.45</b>	<b>5,961,584.14</b>	<b>23,831.63</b>	<b>8,831,944.22</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>% to Total</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme (UXO Lao)**  
**Projected Expenditure (per AWP) vs. Actual Expenditure – Overall (in USD)**  
**For the Period Ended 1 January - 31 December 2019**

<b>Budget vs. Actual Expenditure – Overall (in USD)</b>					
<b>Fund Sources</b>					
	<b>UNDP- Managed Funds</b>	<b>Bilateral Funds</b>	<b>Gov't Contribution &amp; Others</b>	<b>Unfunded</b>	<b>Total</b>
Projected Expenditures (per AWP)	2,078,245.00	8,074,958.00		1,763,971.00	11,917,174.00
Actual Expenditures	2,396,528.45	5,961,584.14	23,831.63		8,381,944.22
Projected vs. Actual Expenditures	<b>(318,283.45)</b>	<b>2,113,373.86</b>	<b>(23,831.63)</b>	<b>1,763,971.00</b>	<b>3,535,229.78</b>
Actual Expenditures/Projected Expenditures, including unfunded (%)	<b>115%</b>	<b>74%</b>		<b>0%</b>	<b>74%</b>
Actual Expenditures/Projected Expenditures, excluding unfunded (%)	<b>115%</b>	<b>74%</b>		<b>N/A</b>	<b>83%</b>



**Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme (UXO Lao)**  
**Projected Expenditure (per AWP) vs. Actual Expenditure by Donor (in USD)**  
**For the Period Ended 1 January - 31 December 2019**

Summary of Projected Expenditure vs. Actual Expenditure by Donor (in USD)			
Fund Sources	Projected Expenditures (per AWP)	Actual Expenditures	Actual Exp./Projected Exp. (%)
<b>UNDP Managed Funds</b>			
New Zealand	1,112,269	1,138,952.56	102%
Ireland	264,277	371,193.96	140%
European Union	474,892	317,261.37	67%
Australia	36,177	261,694.01	723%
UNDP TRAC2		234,560.29	
Canada	104,522	114,427.13	109%
Republic of Korea		15,673.85	
Luxembourg	86,108	(57,234.72)	-66%
	<b>2,078,245.00</b>	<b>2,396,528.45</b>	<b>115%</b>
<b>Bilateral</b>			
US – Tetra Tech (TT)	4,684,809.00	3,925,130.66	84%
Japan Int’l Cooperation System (JICS)	2,714,080.00	1,387,288.38	51%
Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA)	475,032.00	456,264.91	96%
World Without Mines Foundation (WWM)	201,037.00	175,038.22	87%
ITO Supporting Comity (ISC)		17,861.97	
	<b>8,074,958.00</b>	<b>5,961,584.14</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>Government Contribution and Others</b>			
Government of Lao PDR	12,911.88	12,801.61	99%
Others	4,401.61	11,030.02	251%
	<b>12,911.88</b>	<b>23,831.63</b>	<b>185%</b>
<b>Unfunded</b>	<b>1,763,971.00</b>		<b>0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,930,085.88</b>	<b>8,381,944.22</b>	<b>70%</b>

**Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme (UXO Lao)**  
**Projected Expenditure (per AWP) vs. Actual Expenditure by Activity (in USD)**  
**For the Period Ended 1 January – 31 December 2019**

Summary of Projected Expenditure vs. Actual Expenditure by Activity (in USD)						
Activity	Projected Exp. (per AWP)	Actual Exp. (UNDP- Managed Funds)	Actual Exp. (Bilateral)	Actual Exp. (Others)	Total Actual Exp.	Actual Exp./ Projected Exp. (%)
Area Clearance (AC)	5,494,056.00	1,251,137.97	3,411,305.98	28.92	4,662,472.87	85%
Technical Survey (TS)	1,052,048.00	185,343.20	697,921.68		883,264.88	84%
Non-Technical Survey (NTS)	374,425.00	54,956.73	187,406.24	4.63	242,367.60	65%
Mine Risk Education (MRE)	277,891.00	74,314.62	179,999.59		254,314.21	92%
Quality Management (QM)	272,989.00		117,886.50		117,886.50	43%
Management/Administration*	4,445,765.00	830,775.93	1,367,064.15	23,798.08	2,221,638.16	50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,917,174.00</b>	<b>2,396,528.45</b>	<b>5,961,584.14</b>	<b>23,831.63</b>	<b>8,381,944.22</b>	<b>70%</b>

\* includes UNDP costs

**Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme (UXO Lao)**  
**Projected Expenditure (per AWP) vs. Actual Expenditure by Location (in USD)**  
**For the Period Ended 1 January – 31 December 2019**

Summary of Projected Expenditure vs. Actual Expenditure by Location (in USD)						
Location	Projected Exp. (per AWP)	Actual Exp. (UNDP- Managed Funds)	Actual Exp. (Bilateral)	Actual Exp. (Others)	Total Actual Exp.	Actual Exp./ Projected Exp. (%)
Savannakhet (SVK)	2,011,744.00		1,257,473.35		1,257,473.35	63%
Attapeu (ATP)	1,039,009.00	301,897.17	797,157.99	4.63	1,099,059.79	106%
Xiengkhuang (XK)	1,077,850.00	1,040,074.16	14,495.96		1,054,570.12	98%
Khammuane (KM)	1,086,606.00		874,186.44		874,186.44	80%
Salavan (SLV)	1,326,520.00		747,378.05		747,378.05	56%
Huaphan (HP)	821,690.00	565,527.63	107,371.60		627,899.23	82%
Sekong (SK)	981,997.00		541,745.10	3,079.37	544,824.47	55%
Champasak (CPS)	950,692.00		508,993.23		508,993.23	54%
Luang Prabang (LPB)	461,392.00		436,436.97	3,638.31	440,075.28	95%
UXO Lao National Office (NO)*	1,684,864.00	486,765.02	608,035.10	15,294.44	1,110,094.56	66%
UXO Lao Training Center (TC)	474,810.00	2,264.47	68,310.35	1,814.88	72,389.70	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,917,174.00</b>	<b>2,396,528.45</b>	<b>5,961,584.14</b>	<b>23,831.63</b>	<b>8,381,944.22</b>	<b>70%</b>

\* includes UNDP costs

## 11. KEY EVENTS AND VISITS

### Celebration of the International Day for UXO/Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action

On 4 April 2019, H.E. Dr. Khampheng Xaysompheng, the Minister of Labor and Social Welfare and Chairman of the NRA and Ms. Kaarina Immonen, former UNDP Resident Representative led a delegation for the celebration of the International Day for UXO/Mine Awareness held at the local primary and secondary school in Dang Village, Mahaxay District, Khammuane Province. The event was attended by relevant departments from MoLSW, UNDP, NRA, UXO Lao HQ, local authorities and concerned departments at provincial level. In addition, the delegates also had a chance to observe the UXO Lao MRE activity conducted for over 120 students at this school.



### Australia provided additional support to UXO Lao



On 27<sup>th</sup> of June 2019 at UN House, the Government of Australia kindly announced the contribution of an additional AUD 407,000 through UNDP to support UXO Lao for the second phase of the project to carry out UXO clearance operations in Sanamxay District, Attapeu Province. The implementation of the second phase of support started in April 2019 and was completed in December 2019. The intervention is a prime example of highly responsive recovery actions after a major disaster, where donors and development partners work hand in hand with the Government of Laos, to deliver on the

promise of Lao PDR's own national and unique Sustainable Development Goal - SDG 18: Lives Safe from UXO.

### UXO Lao welcomed the Director of Mainland Southeast Asia from the U.S. Department of State

Ms. Susan Parker-Burns, Director for Mainland Southeast Asia of the U.S. Department of State met with the UXO Lao National Programme Director during a visit to UXO clearance site in Champasak Province on 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2019. At the site, Ms. Parker and a group from the U.S. Embassy in Laos was briefed by the UXO Lao Director detailing the country's current situation in addressing UXO issues, the UXO sector and UXO Lao's achievements as a whole. The U.S Government currently supports 51 teams, representing 44% of the total UXO Lao operational teams in six provinces: Attapeu, Champasak, Houaphan, Khammuane, Salavan and Savannakhet.





### CMAC – UXO Lao successfully completed the first training program supported by JICA

On 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 2019, UXO Lao and CMAC successfully completed the first exchange program under South-South Cooperation-Phase III, supported JICA. The first exchange program focused on “Human Resource Capacity Development” and was carried out for four weeks with two sessions; two weeks spent in Cambodia and two weeks in Laos. The closing ceremony was held at UXO Lao HQ under the chairmanship of Mr. Bounphamith Somvichith, National Programme Director of UXO Lao, Mr. Yoshiharu Yoneyama, Chief Representative of JICA Laos, Mr. Prum Suonpraseth, Senior Director of CMAC together with distinguished representatives from JICA Laos, CMAC and UXO Lao staff members. At the ceremony, representatives shared what they had learned from each other during the four week on-the-job-training and at the end of the closing ceremony, certificates of completion were distributed to all training participants.



### Luxembourg's Minister for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs visit to UXO Lao



On the 13<sup>th</sup> September 2019, H.E Ms. Paulette Lenert, Minister for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs of the Government of Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, paid a visit to a UXO Lao clearance site in Luang Prabang Province. During the visit, Ms. Lenert met with the UXO Lao National Programme Director and demining team at the site. Minister Lenert assisted the UXO Lao clearance team in destroying UXO items found. The Government of Luxembourg kindly provides its support through UNDP to support NRA and UXO Lao operations totaling USD 696,864 from 2017 until 2020.

### Ito Supporting Comity provided essential MRE materials to support UXO Lao operations



On 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2019, Ito Supporting Comity (ISC) from Japan handed-over essential Mine Risk Education materials to assist the MRE operations across UXO Lao in 9 provinces valued at USD 21,900 as an in-kind contribution. The hand-over ceremony was held at the UXO Lao Training Center and chaired by Mr. Bounphamith Somvichith, National Programme Director of UXO Lao and Mr. Minoru Shitara, President of ISC, with over 15 attendees from UXO Lao and the ISC delegation. The support provided by ISC included the production of fabric banners with UXO and risk education information, hand-puppets, posters, t-shirts and writing notebooks.

## UXO Lao successfully completed the 2019 annual review meeting and planning for 2020



Between 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> of October 2019, UXO Lao successfully conducted the 2019 Annual Review Meeting and planning of its 2020 Operational Work Plan in Sepon District, Savannakhet Province. The meeting was conducted for 5 days under the chairmanship of Mr. Bounphamith Somvichith, National Programme Director and Mr. Wanthong Khamdala, Deputy National Programme Director of UXO Lao. Over 70 participants attended the meeting including UXO Lao HQ staff, UXO Lao 9 Provincial Offices, UXO Lao Training Centre staff, representatives from the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), UNDP and Tetra Tech. The meeting evaluated the implementation of the 2019 work plan and discussed methods to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the work plan for 2020. The operations covered included; HR management, assets, vehicles and field equipment management, logistics and procurement, team-based monitoring and reporting and clearance prioritization. During this meeting, representatives from MPI and UNDP discussed the Decree on Official Development Assistance (ODA), and the National Implementation Modality-Standard Operating Procedures (NIM-SOP) to UXO Lao staff, ensuring that the implementation of the project adheres to official regulations.

## UXO Lao welcomed His Royal Highness Prince of Jordan



On 23 October 2019, His Royal Highness (HRH) Prince Mired Raad Zeid Al-Hussein of the Kingdom of Jordan, in the name as special Envoy for the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention paid a visit to UXO Lao's clearance site in Had Nha Village, Pak-Ou District, Luang Prabang Province. The visit aimed at exchanging the country's experience in addressing UXO issue in Lao PDR and to promote further assistance to UXO victims. Before leaving the site, HRH Prince Mired also helped UXO Lao destroy UXO items found during the day at the clearance site.

## Round Table Implementation Meeting 2019



provided to those who visited.

UXO Lao had the pleasure of welcoming an important delegation attending the Round Table Implementation Meeting (RTIM) to a UXO clearance site in Had Nha village, Pak Ou district in Luang Prabang Province on the 25th of November 2019. During the second day of the RTIM (26th November), many members of the Government, Ministries, Ambassadors, Development Partners, INGOs visited the UXO SWG display at the NRA and UXO Lao exhibition booth at the Luang Prabang Provincial Governor's office where UXO information was shared and demonstrations of UXO Lao equipment was

### Delegates from the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus visited UXO Lao Training Center



UXO Lao welcomed over 30 delegates from the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus to the UXO Lao Training Center on 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2019. During the visit, delegates were briefed by UXO Lao on its operations, achievements and the UXO issue in Lao PDR. In addition, the delegates were also shown around the training center to observe the UXO displays, classrooms and dormitories and field training of new UXO Lao staff members from 3 provinces - Khammuane, Salavan and Sekong.