

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Duration of the proposed extension (time requested, risks and assumptions)

- Lao PDR is the second signatory of the Convention on Cluster Munitions which signed the Convention on 3rd December 2008 and ratified on 18th March 2009. Lao PDR hosted the First Meeting of State Parties (1 MSP) in 2010, where the State Parties adopted the Vientiane Declaration and Vientiane Action Plan (2011-2015). This has become as the road map for State Parties to implement the CCM.
- According to CCM Article 4 the deadline is 1st August 2020.
- Past experience proved that survey and clearance are difficult, complicate tasks and time consuming. With current capacity and resources available, the clearance capacity rate in Lao PDR is about 5.000 hectares per year on average.
- More than 8,000 square kilometers are believed to be cluster munition contaminated area. Practically, when conducting survey and clearance, the team operate in a non-discriminated manner especially before the adaptation of the new Survey and Clearance Procedure (before 2014).
- Funding gaps remain prevalent for UXO sector which often disrupt the operation.
- Based on the scale of Cluster munitions contamination and the clearance capacity rate since 2010, to clear all known Cluster munitions contamination within the 2020 deadline is unrealistic.
- During the Eighth Meeting of States Parties (CCM8MSP) in September 2018, Lao PDR stated that it would not be able to comply with the 2020 deadline and therefore would need to request an extension.
- Lao PDR submits an Article 4 Extension Request for five years.

2. Extent of the contamination with cluster munitions

The National UXO Socio-Economic Impact Survey conducted in 1996-97 found that 86 of the 133 districts in 15 of the 18 provinces in the country (about 25 percent of all villages) have been contaminated by UXO include Phonslay, Luangnamtha, Bokeo, Oudomxay, Luangprabang, Xiengkhuang, Houaphan, Xaysombun, Vientiane province, Vientiane Capital, Bolikhamxay, Khammouane, Savannakhet, Salavan, Champasak, Sekong and Attapeu, with nine provinces heavily affected namely: Attapeu, Champasak, Houaphanh, Khammouane, LuangPrabang, Saravan, Savannakhet, Xekong, and Xiengkhuang. Total areas estimated to be contaminated by cluster munitions is not possible to identified due to the nature of Unexploded Ordnance However, the initial estimated cluster munitions contaminated area in Lao PDR is greater than 8,000 square kilometers.

3. Rationale and resource mobilization.

With the sector's current resources and survey and release practices, the progress towards reaching a residual level of contamination as provided for in the CCM is decades away. Faster survey and area clearance would ensure greater numbers of people living in rural and poor areas would be free from fear of UXO. In this context, most international operators accept that Lao PDR is a special case in respect to the sheer volume and spread of contamination.

UXO clearance in Lao PDR has received technical and financial support from the government of Lao PDR, UNDP and international donors, such as Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, European Union, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Norway, New Zealand, , Switzerland, Thailand, the United States of America and United Kingdom with the total of 260,000,000 US Dollars from 2010-2017. However, funding at present remains relatively limited compared to the identified needs and is often unpredictable and provided on a short-term basis. As the task of survey and clearance is a costly and time-consuming process, it is necessary to receive the concerted efforts from all stakeholders

In order to fulfill CCM obligations, sufficient human, technical and financial resources are required. The maintenance and upgrading of the Information Management systems is crucial to ensure quality, credibility, and transparency. The volume of data increases in a significant manner with the increased survey efforts.

4. The status of work conducted in past 9 years period (2010-2018).

Since the 2010 entry-into-force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Lao PDR has been working with all stakeholders fulfilling obligations to make progress in the area of UXO clearance and UXO/Mine risk reduction.

The number of hectares of land cleared for productive use between 2010 and 2018 by all operators was a total of 41,088 hectares. This includes all land cleared by humanitarian operators, commercial operators, and the Humanitarian Clearance Teams of the Lao People’s Army.

The land cleared by the UXO sector is divided into land cleared for agriculture and land cleared for development. In fact, it results from a successful transition to more efficient methodology of UXO clearance across the country. The previous approach to clearance was based on requests, with operators responding to the requests of land users to clear their land. This meant that the focus of clearance did not necessarily reflect the highest contamination, and also meant that, due to the nature of cluster munitions incident, return visits to villages were common. This was an old and inefficient approach in terms of removing the maximum number of hazards from contaminated areas in the least amount of time – though it did result in the clearance of many thousands of hectares of land for safe use.

The new approach, which has been included in the Lao PDR UXO Survey Procedures, is focused on evidence-based survey and the subsequent clearance of Confirmed Hazardous Areas (CHA). Since 2015, all five humanitarian clearance operators have adopted this approach.

As survey quantifies the extent of contamination in Lao PDR, there will be a need to ensure that there is early follow up clearance in priority areas. This will require a significant increase in clearance resources in order for Lao PDR to meet its obligations under Article 4 of the Convention. Cumulatively, there are 9,284 CHAs established in total by the end of 2018 or equivalent to 85,829 ha of CHAs remaining to be cleared.

The result of this survey and clearance process is that resources are directed away from the clearance of low- or no-contamination land and towards conduct clearance of cluster munitions strikes, across land boundaries where necessary. The last columns in the table below demonstrates the vast improvement in cluster munitions found per hectare cleared (CM/ha) for the period 2015-2017. The evidence-based survey procedures were officially approved early 2015.

Area Clearance and UXO destruction figures per Year, 2010-2018*							
Year	Hectares	Bombies	Bombs	Mines	Other UXO	Total	CM/ha
2010	3,599 ha	28,744	484	193	27,290	56,711	7.9
2011	4,668 ha	32,904	144	96	142,532	175,678	7
2012	4,951 ha	38,840	156	55	27,688	66,739	7.8
2013	4,457 ha	42,632	124	82	31,230	74,068	9.5
2014	5,508 ha	38,096	194	138	22,296	60,724	6.9
2015	3,042 ha	75,471	195	43	28,465	104,174	24.8
2016	3,869 ha	89,919	181	25	19,899	110,024	23.2
2017	4,800ha	93,633	123	38	26,283	120,077	19.5
2018	6,202 ha	78,323	147	28	18,898	97,396	12.6
Total	41,088 ha	518,368	1,748	698	344,654	865,468	

- Note: data resource is from IMSMA database.

As noted above, most clearance by humanitarian clearance operators is for agricultural use. The result of such clearance is that land users are able to use the land that has been cleared fully and grow crops without fear of UXO accidents. Anecdotal evidence has shown that such clearance has allowed an intensified use of land, resulting in the creation of additional jobs. Agriculture remains a key sector in the economy of Lao PDR.

5. Preparation of future work and the status of work already conducted under national clearance and demining programs during the initial 8 years period and any subsequent extensions.

5.1. Status of work already conducted under national clearance and demining programs during 8 year-period.

Over the past 8 years, much progress and achievement has been made to meet the objectives of Vientiane and Dubrovnik Action Plans. Nearly one million of cluster munitions and sub-munitions have been destroyed, thousands of hectares of land contaminated by cluster munitions have been cleared, UXO victims have been provided with assistance needed in various forms, and awareness about the risk of cluster munitions has been widely shared. These achievements are results of consistent efforts, dedication and collaboration of all States signatories, States Parties and supportive States to the Convention as well as international and civil society organizations and stakeholders that committed to making our world free from cluster munitions.

Nevertheless, despite the progress and achievements made to date, the implementation of the Convention in the past eight years has also been impeded by many challenges. The technical, technological, financial assistance needed for clearance and survey have not yet met the demand, therefore, we, as a States Party have to redouble our efforts in order to achieve our common goal of making this world free from threats posed by cluster munitions.

In an effort to implement Vientiane and Dubrovnik Action Plans, throughout the last eight years, the Lao Government has adopted a 10-Year National Strategy on addressing UXO problems (Safe Path Forward II, 2011-2020) and integrated UXO Sector into the National Development Agenda especially the national policy on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication including in the 7th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2011-2015) and current 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2016-2020) .

In implementing the mentioned national policies and strategies, 41,088 hectares of land have been cleared and 518,368 cluster munitions have been destroyed. Medical and rehabilitation assistance has been provided to UXO survivors, among them more than 1,027 people have been economically and socially reintegrated. Risk education activities have been conducted in 15,422 villages across the country (including re-visits). As a result, the number of the UXO casualties has been steadily reduced from 109 in 2010 to 21 people in 2018. This achievement could not be possible without continued support and assistance provided by the international community and development partners.

5.2. Preparation of future work during subsequent extensions.

The NRA with support of UNDP has developed criteria and planning guideline to align the prioritisation of clearance with human development. In the coming years, it is essential to finalize, publish, and implement a policy of clear and transparent prioritisation tasks. This opportunity will build on the output-level success of the new survey process already observed in the increased number of cluster munitions destroyed. This result will contribute significantly to national development. The first extension work would allow the National Regulatory bodies and all operators to set higher targets and try to adapt innovative methodology as well to address challenges to meet the goals. The lesson learnt would strengthen capacity and ability of operation teams to expand the survey where the CHA will be identified with more area. This extension will also increase the awareness of international community on the progress of the UXO clearance and challenges that Lao PDR facing. This will provide in-dept understanding for various stakeholders hence, open for more partnership and collaboration amongst the UXO contaminated countries and development partners to support Lao PDR in order to fulfil the CCM obligation.

6. Summary work plan for period of extension.

Since 2015, the survey efforts by using non-technical and technical survey methodology have already started by all five humanitarian operators, the NRA will ensure the quality of the survey results and the proper use of the end of survey report introduced in 2018.

❖ Survey (Non-Technical Survey and Technical Survey).

Based on the capacity, resources available 25 NTS teams are currently serving in the UXO sector in Lao PDR. We plan to conduct the NTS in 1,463 cluster munitions remnant contaminated villages with total estimated cost of 4 million U.S. dollars. Technical Survey is used to identify and map Confirmed Hazardous Areas (CHA) for future clearance. This is the crucial step to define the extent of cluster munitions contamination and begin to plan operations. For the next 5 years of the extension, Lao PDR will focus on 2,873 villages with total estimated cost of 38 million U.S. dollars and will conduct re-TS in case of report of new evidence of cluster munitions found in the future during the request extension period as necessary.

❖ Cluster Munitions Clearance.

Based on the CHAs of cluster munitions identified during the TS and recorded in IMSMA, there are 9,284 CHAs, equivalent to 85,829 ha. We predict that during the extension period, the number of CHAs of cluster munitions will increase. Based on the current clearance step with an annual figure of 5,000 ha, it appears that the ratio of clearance and survey is unbalanced. Therefore, the number of CHAs will increase in the future.

- **Estimation 1** with existing resources: from 2020-2025, the clearance will have 108 team operate in CHA 5,000 Ha with the estimated cost of 12.5 million USD per year.
- **Estimation 2** with additional resources to meet the identified needs as of December 2018 (Identified Confirmed Hazardous Areas): the number of CHA cleared will increase from 6,000 Ha with estimated cost of 15 Million USD in 2020 to 10,000 Ha with 25 Million USD in 2021 and goes up to 80,000 Ha in 2020-2025 with a total estimated cost of 200 Million USD on the five-year period of the extension request.
- **Estimation 3** with additional resources to meet the identified needs as of December 2018 and the needs (Confirmed Hazardous Areas) which will be identified in the period from 1 August 2020-31 July 2025. In 2020, the clearance will operate at 12,000 Ha with estimated cost of 30 Million USD and keep increasing annually. For this estimation, the total area would be cleared from 2020-2025 is 160,000 Ha with estimated cost of 400 Million USD.

Remark: This Estimation 3 is a projection, the accurate number of hectares of Confirmed Hazardous Areas (to be cleared) will be the result of the upcoming survey efforts in the period from 1 August 2020-31 July 2025.

7. Total area containing cluster munitions remnants at the time of entry into force of the Convention and any additional areas containing cluster munition remnants discovered after such entry into force.

The initial estimate of land contaminated by cluster munitions is approximately 847,000 ha (8,470 Km²), **but the ongoing survey efforts will confirm the actual extent of the cluster munitions contamination.** After the entry into force of the convention on Cluster Munitions in August 2010 and in compliance with Article 4 of the Convention, a new cluster munitions survey was prepared and launched, starting with six provinces, but with the goal to expand to a National Cluster Munitions survey covering all provinces contaminated by cluster munitions. This National Cluster Munitions survey will identify the location of the cluster munitions contamination and to quantify the problem and define the extent of this cluster munitions contamination. It is already understood that the level of contamination in Lao PDR is vast.

8. Total area containing cluster munitions remnants cleared since entry into force of the Convention.

After the convention on cluster munitions entered into force on 1 August 2010, a new methodology of evidence-based survey has been designed, tested, improved and implemented by all five humanitarian clearance operators (namely UXO Lao, NPA, MAG, Halo Trust and HI) since 2015, when the survey procedures were approved.

We know what has been cleared since the entry into force on 1 August 2010, all achievements being recorded in the national database maintained by the NRA Office. During the 9 years period, 41,088 ha of land was cleared.

9. Total area containing cluster munitions remnants to be cleared during the proposed extension.

There is a focus on survey for the period of this extension (2020-2025), with the survey in six first provinces to be conducted to the greatest extent possible and other provinces will also have to be surveyed to get a National Cluster Munitions Survey to quantify the actual extent of the remaining Cluster Munitions contamination. In parallel, area clearance should take place hand in hand with the survey activity to ensure safety of the Lao people. At current level of clearance capacity, the country will not be able to clear the identified Confirmed Hazardous Areas in the next five years period (2020-2025). Based on the CHAs of cluster munitions identified during the TS and recorded in IMSMA, there are 9,284 CHAs, equivalent to 85,829 ha. We predict that during the extension period, the number of CHAs of cluster munitions will increase. Based on the current clearance step with an annual figure of 4,500 ha. With existing resources from 2020-2025, the clearance will have 108 team operate in 4,500 Ha CHA with the estimated cost of 12 million USD per year. To deal with the UXO/Cluster Munitions issue in a reasonable timeframe, we will have to scale-up the clearance capacity in the coming years. To do so we need more international support to the UXO Sector, including to the national operators.

10. Circumstance that have impeded the ability of the Lao PDR to destroy all cluster munitions remnants located in all areas during eight-year period and any impede its ability during the proposed extension.

- **The magnitude of the cluster munitions contamination in the Lao PDR is an essential point.** Directly linked to this point, there is a lack of resources to deal with the cluster munitions contamination in a timely manner, it means not only a lack of financial resources but also lack of fully trained human resources and modern equipment. The methodology has evolved and positively improved the operations, but more attention also should be brought to the development of new technology and innovative approaches.
- **The new Survey Procedures and Clearance require sustainable resources.** The successful transition to evidence-based survey and clearance has yielded a major increase in efficiency as measured in terms of cluster munitions found per hectare cleared and has enabled a systematic approach to completing the first national survey of known cluster munitions contamination. However, the transition has revealed difficulties in terms of the operational and management aspects of the procedure. There are three main challenges that Lao PDR faces. Firstly, the existing clearance capacity cannot meet the demand of land cleared. Secondly, the number of cluster munitions found per hectare is now much higher, meaning that more explosives are needed for destruction. Explosives in Lao PDR are among the most expensive in the region, it is imperative that donors are aware of the increased financing needs to cover this part of operational costs. Thirdly, following the new survey procedure, it is required that clearance teams have the new knowledge and necessary equipment to operate in difficult areas such as steep hillsides and dense jungle terrain. It also requires strong monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the physical obstacles does not reduce the actual quality of the survey and clearance work.
- **New survey and clearance methodology needed to be understood correctly at all levels.** Since the adoption of the new survey and clearance process in 2014, it has affected the planning and operations nationwide. This also affects the understanding of beneficiaries (villagers) and development partners. Under the previous methodology, the villagers submit the clearance request to the operator (i.e UXO-Lao), then the operator assesses the request area and conduct the clearance within the approved area. Under the new methodology, the request from villagers might not be fulfilled unless the request area is a part of the Confirmed Hazardous Area (CHA). As a result, the villagers need to be informed by the operators about this approach as well as the development partners because the number of beneficiaries might not be as high as using the previous methodology. It is important for villagers to understand the concept of the new process and to adapt their behavior accordingly. To ensure the concerned parties understand the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 18 as the domestic goal which aims to increase the knowledge of Confirmed Hazardous Area (CHA) and the survey process, all stakeholders (NRA, line ministries, local authorities and operators) should be active in educating the local communities. In addition, all development partners should also be made aware of this new approach. Therefore, resources should be mobilized to support this target alongside with the UXO clearance activities and concrete action implemented.

- **The new evidence-based approach to survey and clearance has made progress on clear task prioritisation an essential next step.** More than 9,284 CHAs, equivalent to 85,829 hectares of Confirmed Hazardous Areas had been established through technical survey. This amounts to several years of work at the current (2018) clearance capacity within the UXO Sector. Planned survey activities in the coming period from 2018 onwards are likely to produce further CHAs four times faster than they can be cleared. This means that tasks will need to be prioritized.

11. The humanitarian, economic, social and environmental implications of the proposed extension.

Lao PDR has severely suffered from UXO contamination. One important significance of the proposed extension is to continue clearing UXO for elimination of fear amongst the people. People can return to living normal lives, free from the threat of UXO. The country has a population of 6.5 million people and about 67 percent live in rural areas where many households' income relies on agricultural activities. The perpetuating of UXO clearance will contribute to the release of large areas of farmland and the recovery of communities who can obtain opportunities to improve their livelihood. It also will enhance community development, contribute to eradicating poverty, and support the effort to graduate from the Least Developed Country (LDC) status as well as to fostering the achievements of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

12. Provide full contact details of the national focal person.

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