

## Quarterly news roundup:

• In May, MAG HQ in Manchester received a visit from His Excellency Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Dr Thongloun was hosted by UK politicians at the Houses of Parliament, and met with the Lao support group in relation to the Oslo process. Dr Thongloun was accompanied by Mr Saleumxay Kommasith, Director General of the Department for International Organisations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

• The joint MAG/Catholic Relief Services study related to education and UXO in Khammouane has finished. The final report is due in August.

• An audio diary about MAG Lao PDR was recorded for BBC Radio Manchester

• An assessment of Post Clearance impact has been completed and the report will be presented to field staff and local authorities.

• MAG Lao PDR's new Technical Operations Manager John McFarlane has arrived and is currently going through his induction

• More than 20 staff successfully completed three separate EOD trainings and refresher courses in Khammouane

• Guests at the Novotel Vientiane are being asked to 'donate a dollar' under a new scheme organised by the hotel.



## More bang for your buck

EOD trainings and refresher courses in Khammouane

Photo: MAG Laos

**MAG Lao PDR has increased productivity by almost 90 per cent over the last year, following an overhaul of clearance methodology used in the field. This means that almost twice as much land was cleared in comparison to the previous year.**

In the past, each team had four metal detectors, and the eight technicians worked in pairs.

"Since last September, most teams have gone from four to eight detectors," says David Hayter, Country Programme Manager.

"Our costs have remained the same though as we have not hired any extra staff."

"The next phase is to add four extra technicians to each team and go from eight detectors to 12. This should improve productivity by an additional 50% over the coming year, whilst increasing costs by just 6%," he said.

Alongside the introduction of detectors MAG has also made numerous other small but important changes to the way clearance is managed, all of which have contributed to improved outputs.

MAG Lao PDR's work is made possible through the generous support of the following current and recent donors:



# Project highlights:

## Support to UXO Lao Operations Houaphanh Province



MAG Technical Adviser to UXO Lao in Huaphan Ian Mulroy ran a course on aircraft bombs in Khammouane that was attended by six UXO staff, three of whom were from Houaphanh. The main focus was on conducting low order demolitions. The technical assistance project to UXO Lao in Houaphanh was completed at the end of July.

## Female EOD Clearance Team Xieng Khouang



The All-female team has continued support of WFP activities in Pek and Nong Het districts. They have cleared more than 151,2493m<sup>2</sup> of land and destroyed 190 items of UXO over the last quarter, this included one 500lb bomb that had been found during road clearance for in Nasala Village. Clearance from the All-Female Team continues to enable community members in the Province to farm and carry out daily activities in safety.

## Mainstreaming UXO Clearance into Rural Development Initiatives Khammouane



This new project began in May 2009. The clearance team has been equipped with 4 new detectors, allowing each of the 12 technicians to carry out single person drills. During the last quarter over 184,483m<sup>2</sup> of land has been cleared for farm lands and a tourist site. There were 183 direct beneficiaries of clearance and 412 people have received Mine Risk Education. We have added one Roving Team that will respond to emergency requests for UXO removal from targeted communities.

## UXO action for sustainable community development (programme-wide funding)



The MAG 5 year strategy, 2009 - 2014 has been completed. The strategy builds on MAGs strengths of delivering integrated UXO clearance and development partnerships to the most vulnerable communities in the Lao PDR. MAG continues to increase programme clearance outputs with clearance for the April - June quarter, 1,722,785m<sup>2</sup>, more than doubling from the same time in 2008, 834,730m<sup>2</sup>.

## Support to UXO Lao Operations Champassak and Savannakhet



(Funded by the Department of State through Armor Group)

Over the last quarter MAG Technical Advisor Yvon Marie Le Chevanton has been conducting field assessments with the UXO Lao Programme. This included an assessment for explosive storage and support to the Quality Management unit to update Standard Operating Procedures. He has also assisted in Delivering Senior Explosive Ordnance Disposal Training on aircraft bomb fuses.

## Reducing the burden of UXO in vulnerable communities Khammouane



The 2 EC funded clearance teams completed work on 40 sites. A total of 272,7310m<sup>2</sup> of land was cleared and 158 items of UXO were destroyed. Pre-planning for capacity building of local authorities has started with the recruitment of a project coordinator to liaise with the local authorities.

## The partnership for Safe Education Opportunities Khammouane



During the quarter 606,308m<sup>2</sup> of land was cleared and 401 items of UXO destroyed, with 1,736 beneficiaries. 10 MRE trainings were also conducted benefiting 1,340 people. During the next quarter the three teams under the HDI project will split into 1 clearance and 2 roving teams. This will enable quicker response to emergency requests of UXO throughout the target districts.

# EU-funded MAG project to clear UXO, support authorities

MAG and the EU are continuing their history of successful partnership in Khammouane province with a new project that started on April 1st.

The project will clear unexploded ordnance (UXO) from 20 villages in Boulapha, Gnommalat and Mahaxay districts, to increase food security and enable development.

Simultaneously, the project will also build the capacity of the local authorities to undertake management of UXO clearance.

One of the findings of a study conducted by MAG during 2007-8 was that more could be done to support local authorities.

Four DoLSW personnel – three of them from district level - will be involved in the capacity building programme, with the intention that their training is then passed onto other staff.

'MAG's experience is that involving the community in decisions about UXO clearance is the best way to ensure that people benefit from it,' said Boualaphan Inthaxay, MAG's Community Liaison Coordinator. 'This project will give local authorities the support they need to be able to do this, and to match clearance with development priorities.'

The EU has provided 500,000 Euros for this project, which will last for two years.

Photo: Seasutton/ MAG



Photo: Bart Verweij/ MAG



## Facts and figures

programme Statistics,  
April - June 2009

Square metres cleared	1,722,795m <sup>2</sup>
Villages where clearance took place	48
Community members hired to cut vegetation (Village Assisted Clearance)	1,407
Land cleared for food security (% of total)	77%
UXO destroyed	10,474
Number of direct beneficiaries	10,625

## Ending the 'hungry season'

Photo: MAG Laos



Until recently, many households in Thapha village (Gnommalat District, Khammouane Province) were without rice for three to four months of the year. With no irrigation system in the fields, only one rice harvest was possible every year, during the monsoon.

MAG cleared 263 items of UXO from the village. MAG's development partner Triangle then constructed an irrigation system that allows two rice harvests a year instead of one.

"This provides enough rice for the whole year and people's lives have improved a lot," says Mr. Kan, deputy village chief.