

Meeting of the Environmental Issues in Mine Action Working Group (EIMA)

26 January 2022

Hosted on Zoom

Participants in attendance:

Linsey Cottrell (CEOBS) (Co-chair)

Lucy Pinches (Mine Action Review) (Co-chair)

Souksaveuy Keotiamchanh (Zero Waste Laos) – Presenter

Christelle Mestre (GICHD)

Kiona Bolt (ICRC)

Roxana Bobolicu (MAG)

Hilde Jørgensen (NPA)

Bach Bui (NPA)

Chakreya Bout (NPA)

Katie Harrison (NPA)

Kim McCosker (NPA)

Carlie Stowe (PeaceTrees)

Steinar Essén (UNDP)

MINUTES

Admin

Comments on the [Terms of Reference](#) for the working group were requested. No comments were received but minor edits will be made to update the Facilitator role (co-chair and rotating after 6 months) and frequency of meetings (every 2 months), as agreed at the 16-Dec meeting.

Updates on environmental activities within organisations from attendees

Brief updates were given by:

GICHD – Christelle works on the Strategic Planning Programme and is also secretary for GICHD’s internal Environmental Working Group (EWG), created in 2020. Planned updates for the Strategic Planning Programme will look into how environmental considerations can be promoted in national mine action strategies, with country-specific focus (e.g. provisionally Sri Lanka, Kosovo as part of the mid-term strategy review, Azerbaijan and Armenia). Drafting of GICHD’s new strategy for 2023-2025, will also include an external focus and how environmental issues can be embedded in GICHD’s wider work, including in advising National Authorities. Previously the EWG covered GICHD office activities only.

UNDP - UNDP will be working with Fenix Insight Ltd on addressing environment and mine action in Azerbaijan. Funding for the pilot project through UK FCDO. Includes the development of environmental NMAS and procedures. The work is scheduled for completion by end of March 2022.

MAR – In follow-up to the [Environmental Policy Paper](#) published in October 2021, MAR will be asking some preliminary environmental questions for the first time as part of the 2022 Mine Action Review reports. Questions will cover the basics - e.g. is there an environmental NMAS and/or a policy on environmental management, how is the environment considered in planning and tasks, do operators have an EMS? Questions are designed to be a start and to trigger thoughts across operators and

authorities about the environment. The environment will not be included under MAR's 7 criteria assessing national programme performance, but MAR will include a brief separate section on the environment in its country reports.

Presentation - Zero Waste Laos (ZWL)

Copy of the presentation by Souksaveuy Keotiamchanh at ZWL is [here](#)

Key points raised:

1. Initial ZWL and NPA Laos meeting in Dec 2019, with surveys and staff training (400 NPA staff) in 2020. Range of topics covered aimed at reducing mine action environmental and carbon footprint.
2. NPA have also supported ZWL with other initiatives such as Youth for SDGs Laos Conference and Youth for SDGs Southern Laos.
3. Vision to achieve more beyond training and awareness and serve as an **Environmental Champion** in Laos – focus to be on reducing carbon footprint, reducing single use plastic, green office and field operations, support the community and youth to protect the environment.
4. Key achievements in 2021 include environmental training, green office/operations tool, input into national mine action strategy, update of NMAS.
5. Green office training – 8 components – policy, energy, waste, water, air quality, green activities, commuting & travel, communication & engagement.
6. Green operation training – covered soil erosion and degradation, pollution reduction measures, camp location selection, wildlife and habitat protection.
7. Importance of data collection and metrics used.
8. Data for office solid waste showed big reduction due to recycling and composting initiative– from max of around 32 bags/month (Nov-19) to <5 bags/month (Aug-21).
9. Survey also conducted on staff behaviour pre and post training. In 2020, 42% of staff never or only sometimes separated waste for recycling. In 2021 post training, this fell to 6% of staff.
10. Updated of NMAS to closely align with IMAS 07.13 and national environmental regulations.
11. Support with youth and climate programmes – importance of environmental awareness raising.
12. SDG importance - reminder that Laos has 18 SDGs (not 17). 18th relates to mine action.
13. Actions for 2022 include: establishing baseline, developing action plans, monitoring and audits, consultation meetings on strategy/standards, continue with youth outreach and green activity.
14. NPA & ZWL partnership has worked extremely well - ZWL's knowledge and understanding of the environmental issues in Laos has been very beneficial to NPA.
15. Very rewarding for NPA Laos to have supported a national and youth lead organisation such as ZWL.
16. Already evidence of behavioural change and increased environmental awareness in staff.
17. There may be concerns that environmental considerations will create too much of an added financial burden and take focus away from main objectives. These concerns are not proven from NPA Laos experience and more about adjusting attitudes - e.g. costs of partnership with ZWL <0.4% of total budget. A lot can be done with little funding, the right enthusiasm and motivation.
18. A **meaningful partnership with a local organisation** has been key – they are able to amplify efforts and the results which can be achieved.
19. NPA Laos aim to work with local organisations rather than external consultants. Also working with other civil society groups, such as Proud to be Us Laos (gender and sexual identify).

20. ZWL look forward to engagement from other HMAOs and wider adoption.

Any further questions, please do contact souksaveuy@zerowastelaos.org

Outreach plans for EIMA WG

There is a list of previous attendees [here](#) and these have been mainly from INGOs. Wish to extend the group and get others involved, including NMAAs, donors etc... May be easier to encourage those who already have an interest in environmental issues.

In terms of networks for partnerships on climate adaptation initiatives relating to post clearance land use, UNEP have directed us towards the [Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction](#). Will be approaching them on possibly contributing to the next meeting.

Kiona also able to reach out to the ICRC Climate Initiatives bilaterally.

Many will be unaware that the EIMA WG exists so useful **for all to highlight the existence** of the group to any partners, donors or authorities which we work with.

Also important to have a central repository and 'go-to' for the Environment, with links to resources. NPA are investigating setting up a webpage for the EIMA WG and will report back. A dedicated website for the EIMA WG should also hopefully help raise awareness of the group's existence and encourage others to join. The shared [Google Drive](#) and [Linkedin group](#) page are useful stop gaps for now.

Side event for the next NDM proposed - will be added to the next EIMA meeting agenda

Other information

List of key dates is [here](#), including dates for the next NDM planned for end of June. Plan would be to have an in-person annual meeting at the NDM, if possible.

A serving UK Army Officer is carrying out an MSc project on sea-dumped munitions. He has access to a detonation test site and would be interested in hearing from anyone who may wish to trail or review environmental mitigation measures for underwater munitions. Study would be ending this summer. Contact linsey@ceobs.org if you know someone who may be interested in exploring.

Tentative offer for some pro bono work from RPS. The scope of what they could or may be willing to offer if not yet known. They do have an Explosives Engineering Services division and explosive/environmental testing capacity. If you have ideas of an area or specific project for which they could potentially provide support or consultancy services, please email linsey@ceobs.org.

Reminder to check the [Linkedin group](#), where other updates posted.

Key ones to mention for now:

- Free course on natural-based solutions. 7 hours only and a useful introduction to learn more about how NbS could be applied to post-clearance land
https://pedrr.org/mooc?utm_source=MOOC+2+Outreach&utm_medium=Podcast&utm_campaign=Podcast+Campaign
- Environmental Peacebuilding Conference 1-4 February 2022 – some sessions of relevance for mine action

<https://www.environmentalpeacebuilding.org/conferences/2nd-international-conference-on-environmental-peacebuilding/agenda/>

Date of next meeting

Next meeting **Wed 23th March 2022, 12pm CET**. A link to register link is to follow.

[A draft agenda is [here](#)].

Please add any further suggestions/comments or send them to linsey@ceobs.org