

Memorandum of Understanding between The National Mine Action Centre and The Northern Provincial Council

to support the transitioning process of Deminers in Sri Lanka

This Memorandum of Understanding (“MoU”) entered into as of this day 02 of November 2023 by and between the National Mine Action Centre (hereinafter referred to as NMAC), under the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing with its principal office located at “Sethsiripaya”, Battaramulla, and the Northern Provincial Council (hereinafter referred to as NPC) with its principal office located at Kaithadi, Jaffna. They are collectively referred to as the “Parties” or individually as “Party”. The Parties recognize the value of establishing a collaborative framework to guide their cooperation and interaction in supporting the transitioning process of deminers, as Sri Lanka enters the final phase of demining activities.

1. Background

The mine action sector in Sri Lanka currently employs more than 3,000 deminers, including the largest proportion of female deminers in the world (39%), most of whom are female heads of households. As Sri Lanka enters the final phase of demining activities, a significant challenge arises in providing alternative formal employment for this large workforce, primarily concentrated in the Northern Province. Presently the demining operations in Sri Lanka are being carried out by two international NGOs (MAG and HALO), two national NGOs (DASH and SHARP) and the Humanitarian Demining Unit of the Sri Lankan Army (SLA).

The Government of Sri Lanka has made commitments in the National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023-2027 to facilitate deminers' smooth transition to alternative and sustainable economic activities, as elaborated under the Strategic Objective 4 "Staff Transition".

Within this context, the Northern Provincial Council (NPC) plays a pivotal role in addressing the distinctive needs and challenges faced by the population in the province, including the deminers. It encompasses crucial aspects such as education, economic growth, and social welfare, all of which are integral to fostering sustainable development.

Given the shared goals and mutual interests, the relationship between NMAC and NPC holds significant potential, and by formalizing and strengthening this collaboration, its efficacy can be significantly enhanced. This effort will also extend its benefits to the four humanitarian demining operators, namely MAG, HALO, DASH, and SHARP, ensuring a comprehensive and unified approach to supporting the transitioning process for deminers.

As a result, the demining workforce will experience an improved access to relevant socio-economic services delivered by government departments operating under NPC's supervision.

2. Definitions

For the purpose of this MoU, the following terms and acronyms shall have the meanings ascribed to them unless otherwise specified:

- **Deminers:** The term "deminers" in the context of this Agreement refers to individuals engaged in the clearance of landmines, explosive remnants of war (ERW), and other hazardous explosive devices in Sri Lanka. It is a generic term that encompasses employees working for demining operators, including operators, team leaders, supervisors, and other personnel involved in mine clearance activities.
- **Demining operators:** Refers to the 4 in-country humanitarian organizations involved in mine clearance activities, namely Mines Advisory Group (MAG), the HALO Trust, Delvon Assistance for Social Harmony (DASH) and SKAVITA Humanitarian Assistance to Relief Project (SHARP). These not-for-profit organisations play a crucial role in conducting mine clearance operations and related activities to ensure the safety and well-being of communities affected by landmines and explosive remnants of war in Sri Lanka.
- **NMAC:** Refers to the National Mine Action Centre, the government body responsible for coordinating and overseeing mine clearance activities in Sri Lanka. NMAC plays a key role in strategic planning, policy development, resource coordination, and overall management of mine action efforts to create a safer environment for communities affected by landmines and explosive remnants of war. In addition, NMAC is committed to working on the staff transitioning process, supporting the successful integration of deminers into alternative employment opportunities beyond the demining phase.

3. Scope of Collaboration

A. Responsibility of NPC:

- To appoint a focal person to contact and facilitate communication and coordination between both parties.
- To develop an annual work plan for orientation sessions and activities targeting deminers.
- To familiarize deminers with the services offered by the government department.
- To facilitate exposure visits for deminers, granting them hands-on experience and practical insights.

B. Responsibility of NMAC and the Demining Operators:

- To coordinate with the relevant government departments to share relevant information pertaining to deminers and jointly develops the annual work-plan for orientation sessions and activities targeting deminers across all five districts of the Northern Province.
- To identify and select staff members interested in participating in the orientations sessions and exposure visits organized by the designated government department during the stand down period.

- To take necessary measures to ensure the participation of the selected staff during the agreed-upon activities. This will include arranging transportation for the deminers to attend the sessions and visits as scheduled.
- Subject to availability of donor funding to allocate financial resources to facilitate the rollout of tailored activities for deminers, as outlined in the approved annual work plan. This includes providing necessary support and assistance to the resource persons appointed by the concerned government department who will facilitate the orientation sessions and exposure visits. The demining operators will ensure that the resource persons receive appropriate training to enhance their capacity to effectively deliver the orientation sessions and ensure that the deminers receive valuable and engaging information.

C. It is acknowledged that the most relevant government departments to collaborate with the following: Department of Agriculture, Department of Animal Production and Health, Department of Industries, Fisheries Unit, Department of Social Services, Department of Cooperative Development and Department of Motor Traffic.

A phased approach will be adopted, with the initial focus on collaborating with the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Animal Production and Health.

4. Duration and Termination

This MoU shall come into effect on the date of its signing by both Parties and shall remain valid for a period of two (2) years.

Either Party may terminate this MoU by providing a written notice of termination to the other Party thirty (30) days in advance. Termination shall be effective upon the expiration of the notice period.

The Parties may also mutually agree to extend the duration of this MoU through written consent.

5. Resource Commitments

Each Party commits to providing resources in accordance with their capacities and in line with their respective mandates.

The specific details and modalities of resource sharing and contributions will be further defined in separate bilateral sub-agreements between the relevant government departments under NPC's supervision and the respective demining operators. These sub-agreements will facilitate the implementation of tailored interventions designed for their demining staff.

Both Parties consent to conducting periodic reviews to ensure effective and efficient execution of the activities outlined in this MoU.

6. Amendments

No amendment or other variation of this MoU is effective unless it is written, dated, expressly refers to this MoU and duly signed by authorized representatives of party hereto.

Signature and Date:

This MoU is hereby executed and agreed upon by the authorized representatives of the Parties as follows:

For the National Mine Action Centre (NMAC):

For the Northern Provincial Council (NPC):



Mr. W. S. Sathyananda

Secretary / Director

National Mine Action Centre

Ministry of Urban Development and Housing

Date: 02/11/2023



Mr. S.M. Saman Bandulasena

Chief Secretary

Northern Provincial Council

Date: 02.11.2023

S.M. Saman Bandulasena
Chief Secretary
Northern Province