

Community liaison

The Community Liaison (CL) Officers play an integral role in MAG operations; they are the ‘eyes and ears’ on the ground in communities where MAG works and are key in implementing MAG’s community-based approach to UXO clearance.

For MAG a community-based approach does not mean simply a process of involving the community in the clearance process. Rather, it is more of a philosophical approach which aims to ensure that ownership of the process rests with the community, and that we respect the community’s right to exercise control in the outcomes of the clearance process. The CL teams are trained in rural participatory appraisal, and use these techniques to strengthen the ability of communities to facilitate the identification of clearance tasks and develop appropriate UXO risk reduction strategies.

To further facilitate communication, understanding and commitment to the process, MAG recruits its community liaison team members from within the districts where it works (as well as recruiting for the Village Assisted Clearance teams from the specific villages where it is operational).

The CL teams use participatory approaches using individuals, community leaders and NGOs and government agencies at all levels. The process aims to be open, transparent, inclusive, communicative and decentralised, with clearance tasks identified at the village and district level and (where possible) with partners present.

The CL teams are one of MAG’s main mechanisms for developing linkages not only with the communities it serves but also with government

agencies and other international or non-governmental organisations working in same areas. For example, in Lang Khan district in Khammouane province, MAG has a partnership agreement with the World Food Programme (WFP) and our teams work closely with the WFP field officers. In Nong Het district in Xieng Khouang province, MAG’s partners are the Lao Red Cross and Danish Red Cross, and our CL Officers are central in ensuring effective and efficient coordination and prioritisation of resources in support of these organisations.



Teaching communities what the marker signs mean is one of the most important tasks of the CL Officers. Photo: Lisa Ogrjanovic /MAG

MAG Community Liaison Officers also gather data on the impact and contamination of UXO before, after and during the clearance process. This information is vital for MAG’s risk assessment process, and helps to ensure that MAG’s resources are deployed to priority areas. The teams also collect socio-economic data from affected communities, providing a baseline against which both quantitative and qualitative indicators can be developed and progress monitored and measured.