

Promoting the Establishment of the Regional Victim Assistance Network and Initiation of the Guidelines to Enhance Victim Assistance Programme in the ASEAN Region

under the project Enhance Victim Assistance Programme
in the ASEAN Member States



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Finally, we extend our sincere thanks to the ARMAC Steering Committee for their continuous guidance and support throughout the planning and implementation phases of the workshop.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regional Workshop on Promoting Establishment of the Regional Victim Assistance Network and Initiation of Guidelines to Enhance Victim Assistance Programme in the ASEAN Region was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, from 24 to 26 October 2023. Organized by the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC) in collaboration with the Peace Sharing Association (PSA) and relevant stakeholders, the workshop aimed to finalize the draft Terms of Reference (TOR) and communication mechanism for the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) and to initiate the development of national country profiles and regional guidelines to enhance victim assistance programs in ASEAN Member States (AMS).

The workshop brought together a diverse group of 59 participants representing government ministries and agencies, national mine action authorities and centers, international and national non-governmental organizations, bilateral donors, UN agencies, and research and academic institutes from ASEAN member states (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam), the ASEAN Secretariat, and the Republic of Korea.

Key discussions focused on the content of the VAN TOR, existing support mechanisms, access to services, mitigation plans for barriers, and the integration of support for EO victims into international conventions and national policies. Participants also engaged in group discussions to provide inputs on the draft TOR and the templates for the regional guideline and country profile sheets. Explosive ordnance (EO) victims/survivors shared their personal experiences, highlighting the impact of EO on their lives. A field study provided participants with insights into physical rehabilitation and mental health support services available in the Republic of Korea.

Key Outcomes:

- Finalization of the draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) and its communication mechanisms.
- Agreement on the topics to be captured in the Country Profile Sheet for EO-affected AMS.
- Initial discussions on the development of a Regional Victim Assistance Guideline, with concerns raised about potential duplication with existing standards.
- Increased awareness among participants on the importance of a coordinated regional approach to victim assistance.
- Enhanced networking and collaboration among various stakeholders.

The finalized draft of the VAN TOR will be submitted to the ARMAC Steering Committee and related ASEAN stakeholders for approval. Further discussions will be held regarding the proposed regional guideline, and efforts will be made to complete the country profile sheets.

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1. INTRODUCTION



The ASEAN region continues to face complex humanitarian and development challenges stemming from the legacy of explosive ordnance (EO), including landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW). These hazards not only pose daily threats to safety and livelihoods but also severely impact the rights and well-being of survivors and their families. Strengthening support for EO victims remains a shared priority for ASEAN Member States (AMS), particularly through the enhancement of victim assistance (VA) programs and cross-border cooperation.

In response to these ongoing needs, and recognizing the importance of coordinated regional action, the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC), with support from the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF), launched the “Enhance Victim Assistance Programme in the ASEAN Member States.” The program aims to promote inclusive, effective, and sustainable victim assistance frameworks across the region.

As a key milestone under this initiative, the **Regional Workshop on Promoting the Establishment of the Regional Victim Assistance Network and Initiation of Guidelines to Enhance Victim Assistance Programme in the ASEAN Region** was convened from 24 to 26 October 2023 in Seoul, Republic of Korea. The workshop brought together government representatives, national mine action authorities, international organizations, NGOs, UN agencies, academic institutions, and EO survivors to collectively advance the regional VA agenda.

Building on the outcomes of national and regional consultative meetings held between 2021 and 2023, this workshop served as the final consultative forum toward formalizing the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) and initiating the development of a regional guideline and national country profile sheets. These tools are intended to strengthen victim assistance coordination, promote best practices, and improve service delivery for survivors across ASEAN.

The workshop fostered inclusive, technical dialogue and served as a platform to consolidate key elements of the VAN Terms of Reference (TOR), gather feedback on draft templates for national country profiles, and explore the added value and applicability of a regional VA guideline. It also featured survivor testimonies and a field study visit, offering participants practical insights into physical and psychological rehabilitation services available in the Republic of Korea.

This report presents a comprehensive summary of the workshop proceedings, including the objectives, technical discussions, stakeholder contributions, key outcomes, and proposed next steps. It also highlights emerging good practices and lessons learned, contributing to the ongoing efforts to strengthen regional and national frameworks for supporting EO victims and ensuring no one is left behind.

2. BACKGROUND



The challenges faced by explosive ordnance (EO) victims and survivors across the ASEAN region are multifaceted and demand sustained, coordinated responses. While many effective practices have emerged in supporting EO victims, maintaining the momentum of these efforts has proven difficult—particularly in light of the gradual withdrawal of technical and financial assistance for victim assistance programs in recent years.

This decline in support is often compounded by limited coordination among government and non-government stakeholders, unclear operational roles, and the absence of national strategic plans or policy frameworks dedicated to victim assistance. These systemic gaps continue to hinder the effectiveness and sustainability of services for EO survivors.

International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) 13.10 underscore the importance of coordinated engagement from both EO-affected and non-affected states. EO-affected countries are encouraged to ensure their national policies address six key elements of victim assistance: data collection and management; emergency and ongoing medical care; physical rehabilitation; psychosocial support; socio-economic reintegration and education; and relevant legal and policy frameworks. Meanwhile, EO non-affected states are urged to contribute to victim assistance efforts, including through resource mobilization aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Despite these global standards, as of 2023, only a few ASEAN Member States had developed national strategies or policies specifically addressing victim assistance. This has posed challenges for regional policy integration and collective progress.

To address these critical gaps, the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC) initiated the **“Enhance Victim Assistance Programme in the ASEAN Member States”**, supported by the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF). The project was designed to strengthen national and regional capacities for victim assistance by promoting the establishment of a Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN), facilitating technical collaboration, and developing guiding frameworks and country profiles.

The initiative builds on recommendations from prior workshops—including the 2018 Regional Workshop hosted by ARMAC—and responds to the need for a shared platform for knowledge exchange, policy harmonization, and strategic coordination among ASEAN stakeholders. Through inclusive and consultative processes, the project has sought to ensure that all voices—especially those of survivors—are integrated into the design and implementation of victim assistance frameworks.

The Regional Workshop held in Seoul in October 2023 represents a critical milestone in this process, serving as a convergence point for national consultations and paving the way for more structured, inclusive, and sustainable victim assistance across the region.

3. MEETING OVERVIEW



The Regional Workshop on Promoting Establishment of the Regional Victim Assistance Network and Initiation of Guidelines to Enhance Victim Assistance Programme in the ASEAN Region was a three-day event held in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

3.1. Objectives

The workshop had two primary objectives:

- **To finalize the draft of the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) and its communication mechanisms** that had been developed through a series of consultative meetings since 2021. The VAN is envisioned as a central point for integrating victim assistance at a regional level, facilitating knowledge sharing, best practices, resource mobilization, and discussions to address challenges in victim assistance.
- **To further initiate the development of the country profile of EO-affected AMS and the development of regional guidelines to enhance relevant victim assistance programs.** The country profiles aim to provide an understanding of the national context of victim assistance services in EO-affected countries, while the regional guideline is expected to cover relevant

conventions, legal frameworks, and policies, outlining stakeholder responsibilities and commitments.

3.2. Date, Time, and Venue

The workshop took place from **24 to 26 October 2023**. The venue for the first two days, 24 and 25 October, was the **Yonsei Sangnam Institute of Management**, located at Yonsei University in Seoul. The address is 50 Yonsei-ro, Seodaemun-gu, Seoul 03722, South Korea. The third day, 26 October, involved a **site visit to Yonsei University and Military Rehabilitation Hospitals in Seoul**.

3.3. Format

The workshop was primarily conducted in an **in-person format**, bringing together participants from ASEAN Member States and the Republic of Korea. Some participants also joined online. The format included plenary sessions with presentations on key topics, group discussions to facilitate active engagement and input from participants, and interactive sessions such as survivor testimonies. The third day involved a field study to provide practical insights into victim assistance services in the host country.

3.4. Opening Ceremony Summary



The opening ceremony on 24 October 2023 included welcome remarks and addresses from several distinguished guests and organizers. The ceremony was introduced by **Ms. Chung Mee Hyun** from the Peace Sharing Association (PSA) and Yonsei University. **Mr. Cho Jai Kook**, Executive Director of PSA, delivered welcome remarks, highlighting the challenges related to landmines in Korea and the need for ASEAN countries' assistance, mentioning the Korean government's efforts in enacting the Special Act on Compensation for Mine Victims and the submitted Act on Mine Clearance.



Mr. Prum Suonpraseth, Executive Director of ARMAC, provided remarks, expressing gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Korea for their financial support and outlining the project's objectives, which built upon previous national and regional consultative meetings.



Mr. Choi Kang Shik, Director of the Institute of East and West Studies at Yonsei University, welcomed the participants to the university and expressed his belief in the workshop's potential for significant outcomes.



Ms. Park Hyung Ji, Interim Executive Director of the Korean Committee for UNICEF, spoke about UNICEF's work for children affected by conflict and expressed Korea's commitment to addressing the issue of mine action and victim assistance at various levels.



Mr. Park Yoonjoo, Minister – Deputy Chief of Mission of the Mission of the Republic of Korea to ASEAN, conveyed his government's congratulations and pleasure in supporting the workshop through



the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund, emphasizing the timeliness and pertinence of the focus on helping victims of explosive ordnances.

2025 and the ASEAN-Republic of Korea (ROK) Plan of Action (POA).



The opening ceremony concluded with a group photo.



The opening address was delivered by **Mrs. Zelda Wulan Kartika**, Minister – Deputy Chief of Mission of the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia to the Republic of Korea, on behalf of the Steering Committee of ARMAC. She expressed felicitations to the host country and reiterated support for the workshop’s theme, highlighting the evolution of victim assistance in the ASEAN region and the importance of collaboration. She also noted the alignment of the workshop’s goals with the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Blueprint

4. PARTICIPANTS



The Regional Workshop brought together a diverse group of stakeholders committed to enhancing victim assistance in the ASEAN region.

4.1. Total Number Of Participants

A total of **59 participants** attended the workshop, with **20 females** among them, both in person and online. This number included representatives from various sectors and countries.

4.2. Stakeholder Groups

The participants represented a wide range of stakeholder groups, including:

- **Government Ministries and Agencies** from ASEAN Member States and the Republic of Korea.
- **National Mine Action Authorities and Centers** from EO-affected countries in ASEAN.
- **International and National Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)** working in mine action and victim assistance. Examples include Humanity and Inclusion (HI).

- **Bilateral Donors**, including the Korean Development Partner (AKCF and AKPMT).
- **UN Agencies**, such as UNDP and UNICEF.
- **Research and Academic Institutes**, including Yonsei University and Jangan University.
- **The ASEAN Secretariat.**
- **Representatives from the Mission of the Republic of Korea to ASEAN and the Royal Embassy of Cambodia to the Republic of Korea**
- **Explosive Ordnance (EO) victims and survivors.**





4.3. Geographic Representation

The Regional Workshop was characterized by robust participation from a diverse range of ASEAN Member States, including Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam. These countries were actively represented by government officials, national mine action authorities, and key stakeholders engaged in victim assistance efforts. Additionally, the Republic of Korea was well represented, contributing valuable insights and support, underscoring its pivotal role as a partner in advancing victim assistance initiatives across the ASEAN region. This wide geographical representation ensured a comprehensive exchange of perspectives, fostering a collaborative approach to addressing the challenges faced by explosive ordnance (EO) victims.

4.4. Attendance Mode

The workshop was attended primarily in person by delegates and representatives in Seoul, fostering direct interaction and engagement among participants. To ensure broader inclusivity and facilitate participation from those unable to travel, some stakeholders also joined the sessions virtually. This hybrid format allowed for comprehensive engagement and enabled contributions from a wider range of experts and stakeholders, ensuring that key perspectives were represented in the discussions.





The technical sessions of the workshop focused on a wide array of crucial topics surrounding victim assistance. These included in-depth overviews of national victim assistance programs, addressing existing challenges and identifying gaps in service delivery. Survivor testimonies provided personal and powerful insights into the lived experiences of explosive ordnance (EO) victims, while regional and global technical guidance was shared to inform the development of best practices and standards in victim assistance. Participants engaged actively in discussions to refine strategies and mechanisms to improve victim support systems both at the national and regional levels.

5.1. Overview of National VA Programmes and Services

A central component of the workshop was gaining a comprehensive understanding of the existing victim assistance (VA) programs and services across the EO-affected ASEAN Member States (AMS). Although country profiles were under development, the workshop provided a valuable platform for representatives from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam, and the Republic of Korea to share key insights into the mechanisms currently in place to support victims, access to services, and the barriers impeding effective victim assistance. For instance, Mr. Nguyen Dong

Hung from Viet Nam's Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs (MOLISA) presented the national legal framework governing victim assistance in Viet Nam. Similarly, Mr. Swan Yi Ya, Director from Myanmar's Department of Rehabilitation, shared an overview of Myanmar's legal framework on victim assistance, illustrating the country's efforts to integrate support for victims into its broader socio-economic structures.

5.2. Challenges and Gaps

The discussions highlighted several persistent challenges and gaps in the victim assistance programs across the ASEAN region. One of the most pressing concerns was the slow withdrawal of technical and financial support from international partners, which often stems from a lack of coordination, unclear operational roles, and the absence of strategic planning among stakeholders. The absence of cohesive policies and clear operational frameworks has hindered the development of sustainable victim assistance initiatives. Only a few EO-affected AMS have initiated comprehensive national strategic plans to enhance victim assistance, making the integration of these policies into regional frameworks particularly challenging. A consensus emerged that more urgent and collaborative efforts are needed to equip all AMS with the tools and resources to

mobilize support for victims and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

5.3. Survivor Testimonies

The workshop became a powerful platform for sharing the voices of those whose lives have been most profoundly affected by explosive ordnance. Sessions 1 and 2 featured deeply moving testimonies from EO survivors, offering a raw and heartfelt glimpse into the enduring struggles faced by victims.



Mr. Tit Hay from Cambodia and Mr. Thanouxai Douangphachanh from Lao PDR courageously shared their personal journeys, revealing not only the physical scars of their accidents but also the lasting psychological and emotional toll they endure. Their stories of resilience serve as a stark reminder of the ongoing impact that landmines and unexploded ordnance have on the lives of survivors and their families. Their voices are not just a testament to their suffering but to their strength and determination to move forward despite the challenges.



In an equally emotional moment, Mr. Kim Soo Duck, a UXO victim from South Korea, recounted his journey of living with a disability caused by an explosive remnant of war. He poignantly shared the pain of not receiving adequate support from his own government, underscoring the critical gap in assistance that many survivors still face, even in well-developed nations.

These brave individuals gave a face to the statistics, turning numbers into human experiences that tugged at the heartstrings of all present. Their testimony was not just a plea for more support but a call to action for all of us – to ensure that no one, no matter where they live, is left behind in the fight for justice, healing, and a better life. Their courage in sharing their stories reminded us all of the urgent need for victim assistance programs that are comprehensive, compassionate, and driven by the lived realities of those most affected.

5.4. Regional/Global Technical Guidance

The workshop acknowledged the importance of adhering to international standards and guidelines in victim assistance. International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) 13.10, which provide clear recommendations on the roles of government and non-government sectors in EO-affected and non-affected countries, were referenced as a key guiding document. The 'Guidance on an Integrated Approach to Victim Assistance' presented by Humanity and Inclusion (HI) during national consultative meetings was also highlighted as a relevant framework. These documents emphasize a multi-sectoral and integrated approach to ensure comprehensive care for EO victims. Concerns were raised by some participants about the potential for a regional guideline to duplicate existing legal documents such as IMAS 13.10 and the Guidance on an Integrated Approach to Victim Assistance, especially considering that some AMS, like Cambodia and Viet Nam, have recently developed national Mine Action Standards (MAS) on victim assistance. These concerns are important to consider to ensure that regional guidelines complement, rather than duplicate, existing efforts and frameworks.

6. REGIONAL VAN DISCUSSION



A significant focus of the workshop was on the establishment and operationalization of the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN), which is designed to strengthen and coordinate efforts in victim assistance across the ASEAN region.

6.1. Rationale and Proposed Functions

The concept of the Regional VAN emerged in response to the identified gaps in victim assistance in EO-affected ASEAN Member States. This network acknowledges the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration to provide comprehensive and effective support to explosive ordnance (EO) victims. The Regional VAN aims to serve as a platform for diverse stakeholders to collaborate, share knowledge, and coordinate their efforts at both national and regional levels. Its proposed functions include:

- **Regional and National Coordination:** Facilitating communication and collaboration among stakeholders at both regional and national levels.
- **Fostering Partnership:** Strengthening partnerships between members, stakeholders, and victims to enhance support and address victim assistance policy inclusions.

- **Knowledge Gathering and Sharing:** Serving as a central point to share knowledge, best practices, relevant information, and lessons learned in victim assistance, bridging the gap between regional and country levels.
- **Capacity Building:** Organizing trainings and events to enhance the skills and knowledge of stakeholders involved in victim assistance.
- **Resource Mobilization:** Engaging in resource mobilization efforts to support victim assistance programs.
- **Developing Common Frameworks:** Enhancing existing frameworks to further the intellectual underpinning of victim assistance action, including definitions and standards, and supporting governments in developing collaborative and sustainable victim assistance action systems and plans.

6.2. Group Discussions Summary

Participants were divided into smaller groups to discuss and refine the draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Regional VAN and its communication mechanisms. These group discussions generated several valuable inputs and feedback on the draft TOR.



Key areas of focus included:

- **The Regional VAN's Functions:** Defining the primary roles and operational scope of the VAN.
- **Roles of Co-leaders:** The co-leaders of the network will be ARMAC and relevant stakeholders in each EO-affected country on a rotational basis.
- **Focal Point:** The network will be open to both EO-affected and non-affected countries, as well as relevant stakeholders from various sectors, including government and non-government organizations.
- **Communication Mechanisms:** The discussions explored several communication strategies, including the use of online platforms, email communication, and hybrid meetings to ensure ongoing dialogue among VAN members.

The outcome of these discussions was a finalized draft of the VAN TOR, which was presented at the end of the workshop. The TOR establishes clear objectives such as integrating victim assistance into both national and regional policy and legal frameworks, promoting a holistic approach to victim assistance, and fostering stronger collaboration among all stakeholders involved.

6.3. Stakeholder Roles

The discussions on the VAN TOR also addressed the roles of different stakeholders within the network. ARMAC is expected to play a central role in overseeing the operation of the VAN, facilitating communication, and collaborating closely with national authorities. In each EO-affected country, relevant stakeholders will serve as co-leaders on a rotational basis, ensuring broad participation and shared leadership.

The network will include representatives from both EO-affected and non-affected states, as well as key government and non-government organizations. This inclusive approach will involve National Mine Action Authorities (NMAAs), Ministries of Health (MOH), Ministries of Education (MOE), Ministries of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW), and other relevant entities, all working together to strengthen victim assistance efforts across the region.



6.4. Coordination and Communication Mechanisms

The finalized draft of the VAN TOR includes provisions for coordination and communication among its members. Proposed mechanisms include:

- A regional online platform or website to serve as a central repository for information, best practices, research studies, guidelines, and other relevant materials.
- Other social media platforms such as Telegram, Email, Meta, and LinkedIn for ongoing communication among network members.
- Working group/task force meetings in a hybrid format based on specific topics and as requested by VAN members.
- Coordination of activities to avoid duplication in areas such as data collection and information sharing.

7. MEETING OUTCOMES



The Regional Workshop achieved several significant outcomes, advancing the goals of establishing a regional framework for enhanced victim assistance.

7.1. Finalization of the Regional VAN TOR

The primary outcome of the workshop was the **finalization of the draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) and its communication mechanism**. Through active participation and group discussions, participants provided valuable inputs that were incorporated into the TOR. The VAN TOR now outlines the network's objectives, functions, membership, structure, and communication strategies. The finalized draft will be submitted to the ARMAC Steering Committee and related ASEAN stakeholders for approval and subsequent execution.

7.2. Agreement on Country Profile Sheet Template

The workshop also made progress in **initiating the development of a Country Profile Sheet for each Explosive Ordnance (EO) affected country**. Participants engaged in discussions

on the objective and template for the country profile, reaching an **agreement on the topics to be captured** in this document. The country profile is expected to provide an understanding of the national context of victim assistance services in EO-affected countries, covering aspects such as introduction, country context (history of war, causes and effects, EO victims/survivors and their needs), victim assistance in the country (national and international stakeholders, legal framework, commitment and responsibilities, implementation of services), and next steps. Following the workshop, ARMAC will consolidate information for each country based on the agreed template and share it with the respective countries for review and further input before finalization and publication.





7.3. Initial Discussion on Regional Victim Assistance Guideline

The workshop included an **initiation of the development of a Regional Victim Assistance Guideline to enhance victim assistance in ASEAN Member States (AMS)**. ARMAC presented the objective and an initial draft template for the guideline. However, during group discussions, concerns were raised by participants regarding the potential for duplication with existing international and national standards and guidelines, such as IMAS 13.10 and national MAS on victim assistance developed by countries like Cambodia and Viet Nam. The enforceability and relevance of a regional guideline for countries with existing national frameworks were also questioned. While there was a consensus to continue discussing the idea of a regional guideline at the next regional workshop, it was acknowledged that efforts might be better focused on assisting AMS still developing their national VA guidelines. The template for the regional guideline initially covered topics such as key definitions, introduction, purpose, values and ethics, laws and policies, and the implementation of victim assistance services.



7.4. Site Visit Insights

On the third day of the workshop, participants had the opportunity to visit Yonsei University and Military Rehabilitation Hospitals in Seoul, where they gained valuable insights into the comprehensive services provided for landmine/unexploded ordnance victims and persons with disabilities. Due to visitor restrictions, participants were split into two groups, each visiting either the Veterans Health Service (VHS) Medical Center or the Severance Rehabilitation Hospital (SRH).



These site visits offered firsthand exposure to Korea's advanced approaches in physical rehabilitation and mental health support, highlighting innovative practices and the integration of rehabilitation services within the broader healthcare system. The visits not only expanded participants' understanding of the practical challenges and solutions in victim assistance but also showcased potential models that could be adapted and implemented in other ASEAN Member States. This experience reinforced the importance of a multi-disciplinary and coordinated approach to victim rehabilitation and recovery, serving as a valuable learning opportunity for all involved.



8. GOOD PRACTICES AND SUCCESSES



The Regional Workshop provided an opportunity to highlight several good practices and successes in the ongoing efforts to enhance victim assistance across the ASEAN region.

8.1. Field Visit Demonstrations

The field visit to rehabilitation facilities in Seoul was a key moment in the workshop, offering participants an invaluable opportunity to witness firsthand the integrated approaches to physical rehabilitation and mental health support for Explosive Ordnance (EO) victims and persons with disabilities (PWD). The visit included demonstrations at two leading institutions: the Veterans Health Service (VHS) Medical Center and the Severance Rehabilitation Hospital (SRH), which provide comprehensive services to individuals affected by landmines, unexploded ordnance (UXO), and other disabilities.

The participants observed a range of rehabilitation services, including prosthetic fitting, physical therapy, and psychological support. These services are essential in enabling EO victims to regain mobility and reintegrate into society. Furthermore, mental health support programs, such as counseling and trauma care, play a vital role in the long-term healing process for survivors.

The demonstration of such services illustrated the profound impact that well-coordinated and multidisciplinary rehabilitation efforts can have on survivors' lives. Seeing these best practices in action provided participants with tangible examples of how rehabilitation services could be integrated and scaled in their own countries. It offered valuable lessons in terms of resource mobilization, partnership-building between governments and healthcare providers, and the importance of providing comprehensive care that addresses both physical and psychological needs.

This exposure has inspired many participants to consider adapting and implementing similar models in their own regions. It reinforced the critical importance of investing in healthcare infrastructure that combines physical rehabilitation with psychosocial support, ensuring that victim assistance programs are both holistic and sustainable. The visit not only provided practical examples of what is achievable but also sparked further discussions on the need for greater regional collaboration in establishing similar programs across ASEAN Member States.

8.2. Survivor Participation

A standout success of the Regional Workshop was the active and meaningful participation of Explosive Ordnance (EO) victims and survivors. Their involvement in the discussions and willingness to share their deeply personal experiences brought a level of authenticity and urgency to the workshop that was invaluable. The survivors' testimonies not only highlighted the severe, life-altering impacts of explosive ordnance on individuals and their families but also underscored the importance of a victim-centered approach in the development and implementation of victim assistance programs.



The survivors provided critical insights into the challenges they face, ranging from physical injuries to psychological trauma and socio-economic hardships. Their stories painted a vivid picture of the harsh realities of living with the consequences of landmines and unexploded ordnance. This firsthand information was essential in shaping the discussions, allowing stakeholders to better understand the gaps in existing services and the urgent need for comprehensive, long-term support for victims.



The survivor testimonies also reinforced the importance of ensuring that assistance programs are not only reactive but proactive in addressing the diverse and evolving needs of victims. Their participation empowered other stakeholders to consider more inclusive and tailored approaches to victim assistance—one that places the voices of those most affected at the heart of the decision-making process.



By having victims at the forefront of the discussions, the workshop reinforced the need to build programs that are not just technically sound but also empathetic and responsive to the real-life experiences of survivors. This direct engagement helped to create a more profound sense of accountability among participants, making the victim assistance efforts more aligned with the actual needs of those affected. The active role of survivors in the workshop ultimately contributed to a more holistic and human-centered approach to victim assistance, ensuring that future initiatives will be more impactful and truly reflective of the people they are designed to help.



8.3. Development of Centralized Country Data Profiles

A key outcome of the workshop was the agreement on the topics to be included in the Country Profile Sheet for Explosive Ordnance (EO)-affected ASEAN Member States (AMS). This initiative is critical as it marks a significant step towards creating a centralized resource that will provide a comprehensive understanding of the national contexts of victim assistance across the region. By compiling detailed country profiles, the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) will be able to gather essential information on the current state of victim assistance, existing gaps, and the specific needs of survivors in each affected country.



The development of these Country Profile Sheets will serve as a vital tool for ensuring that victim assistance programs are tailored to the unique challenges and circumstances of each country. By systematically mapping out the status of victim assistance services, the profiles will facilitate the

identification of common needs and obstacles, such as gaps in rehabilitation services, legal frameworks, and the provision of psychosocial support. This, in turn, will enable more targeted interventions and strategic resource allocation at both the national and regional levels.

Moreover, the centralized data will allow for better knowledge-sharing and collaboration across ASEAN. With a clearer understanding of each country's situation, regional stakeholders, including governments, NGOs, and donors, will be able to coordinate their efforts more effectively, avoiding duplication of services while optimizing the use of resources. The profiles will also serve as a baseline for monitoring progress in victim assistance and ensuring that future policies and programs remain responsive to the evolving needs of EO victims.



In the long term, the development of these Country Profile Sheets is essential for building a robust and effective Regional VAN. It will ensure that victim assistance in ASEAN is not only comprehensive and coordinated but also adaptable to the specific needs and challenges of each Member State, ultimately improving the quality of life for victims and survivors across the region.



9. LESSONS LEARNED



The Regional Workshop provided valuable insights and practical lessons that will inform future initiatives, as well as the continued development of the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN). These lessons will guide the next steps and ensure that the process remains inclusive and effective. The following key aspects were identified during the workshop:

- The **structured engagement of a diverse range of stakeholders** from ASEAN Member States, the Republic of Korea, international organizations, and civil society proved to be an effective approach for fostering dialogue and generating comprehensive inputs.
- The **inclusion of survivor testimonies** added a critical human dimension to the discussions, reinforcing the importance and urgency of victim assistance efforts.
- The **field visit** provided practical insights and exposure to established rehabilitation and support systems, offering valuable learning opportunities for participants.

9.1. Effective Aspects

Several aspects of the workshop were deemed particularly effective in advancing the discussion on victim assistance and supporting the development of the Regional VAN. These included diverse stakeholder engagement, survivor testimonies, and the field visits, each of which contributed significantly to the workshop's success.

• Diverse Stakeholder Engagement:

The active involvement of a wide range of stakeholders from ASEAN Member States, the Republic of Korea, international organizations, and civil society created a dynamic and inclusive atmosphere for dialogue. This diversity ensured that the discussions were comprehensive and reflective of regional and national experiences.

• Survivor Testimonies:

The personal stories shared by survivors brought a human element to the discussions, making the importance of victim assistance more tangible. These accounts highlighted the deep and lasting impacts of explosive ordnance and the necessity for comprehensive, victim-centered programs.

- **Field Visit Insights:**

The field visits provided participants with firsthand exposure to successful rehabilitation and mental health support models. These visits not only demonstrated best practices but also offered a practical blueprint for how these models can be adapted and scaled in other ASEAN countries to improve victim assistance.



9.2. Areas for Improvement

Despite the progress made, there were several areas identified for improvement to strengthen victim assistance efforts and enhance the Regional VAN. These areas highlight the need for further refinement in certain aspects of coordination, communication, and the development of regional guidelines.

- **National Coordination and Policy Integration:**

One of the key challenges remains the lack of strong national coordination mechanisms for victim assistance. Many countries face difficulties aligning national programs with regional and international standards. Strengthening these coordination mechanisms will be critical for ensuring the effective implementation of victim assistance strategies.

- **Clarification on Regional Guidelines:**

Discussions on the development of a Regional Victim Assistance Guideline revealed a need for greater clarity on its role and how it complements existing frameworks. Some participants expressed concerns about duplication, especially given the existing IMAS 13.10 standards and national approaches already in place. Future efforts should focus on ensuring that the regional guidelines bring added value and fill gaps without overlapping with existing frameworks.

- **Language Barriers and Inclusion:**

Language differences, particularly the limited English proficiency of some Republic of Korea partners, posed a challenge to full participation. Ensuring that future workshops provide adequate translation and interpretation support will enhance inclusivity and facilitate more meaningful engagement from all stakeholders.

- **Group Discussion Format:**

The format of the group discussions, which separated participants into two groups, was noted as potentially limiting. Some felt that splitting the participants hindered collaborative input. For future workshops, it may be beneficial to consider alternative formats that allow for more interactive and collaborative discussions.



9.3. Contextual Considerations

The workshop highlighted the critical need to understand and address the diverse national contexts within ASEAN, as well as the varying stages of development in victim assistance programs. To ensure the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) is both effective and relevant, it is imperative that the network remains adaptable to the unique needs of each ASEAN Member State.

Alignment with National and Regional Needs: For the Regional VAN to be truly impactful, it must be aligned with the national victim assistance efforts of each ASEAN Member State. Considering the different levels of explosive ordnance (EO) contamination and the varying stages of mine action development across ASEAN countries, it is essential that the network can accommodate these diverse needs. By doing so, the network will be better equipped to deliver meaningful assistance to victims, ensuring the success of the initiative across all affected countries.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS



The following recommendations are made based on the discussions, outcomes, and lessons learned during the Regional Workshop. These recommendations aim to guide future actions and enhance the effectiveness of victim assistance efforts across the ASEAN region:

10.1. For National Stakeholders

To effectively support the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) and enhance victim assistance efforts, it is essential that national stakeholders take proactive steps to integrate victim assistance into national frameworks and ensure strong coordination among all relevant entities. The following actions are recommended:

- **Integration of Victim Assistance in National Policies:**

Ensure that victim assistance is fully integrated into national mine action strategies, policies, and legal frameworks. This should cover all six essential elements of victim assistance as outlined in IMAS 13.10, ensuring that no aspect of victim support is overlooked.

- **Strengthen Coordination Mechanisms:**

National stakeholders, including government ministries, national mine action authorities, NGOs, and other relevant bodies, must strengthen coordination to ensure a unified, efficient, and comprehensive approach to victim assistance. Effective collaboration among these parties will ensure that services reach all those in need.

- **Active Engagement with the Regional VAN:**

Once the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) is established, it is critical for ASEAN Member States to engage actively by contributing to country profiles, sharing best practices, and participating in network activities. This will enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the network.

- **Explore Funding Opportunities for Victim Assistance:**

For non-affected countries, consider earmarking funding specifically for victim assistance, aligning with global sustainable development goals (SDGs) and recommendations set forth in IMAS 13.10.

10.2. For ARMAC and Regional Actors

ARMAC and other regional actors play a central role in ensuring the success and operationalization of the Regional VAN. By taking leadership in coordination and facilitating the development of key mechanisms, they will ensure that the regional network is effective and meets the needs of all ASEAN Member States.

The following actions are recommended:

- **Finalize the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) TOR** and its communication mechanism and submit it to the ARMAC Steering Committee and ASEAN stakeholders for approval in a timely manner.
- **Develop and provide tools and coordination support** to facilitate the operationalization of the VAN, including the establishment of the regional online platform and other communication channels.
- **Continue to facilitate discussions on the Regional Victim Assistance Guideline**, ensuring a clear understanding of its purpose, target audience, and added value in relation to existing international and national frameworks. Consider focusing on providing support to AMS that are still developing their national guidelines.
- **Develop the Country Profile Sheets** based on the agreed template, working closely with each EO-affected country to gather accurate and comprehensive information, and subsequently publish and distribute these profiles.
- **Plan future regional workshops and activities** that build upon the outcomes of this workshop, focusing on key priorities identified by the VAN members and addressing the ongoing needs of EO victims in the region.
- **Ensure adequate translation and interpretation services** at future regional events to promote inclusive participation.



10.3. For Technical and Funding Partners

Commit long-term technical and financial support to both national and regional victim assistance systems in the ASEAN region, recognizing the sustained nature of the challenges posed by explosive ordnance.

Share expertise and best practices in victim assistance, drawing upon international experience and successful models.

Support capacity-building initiatives for national stakeholders in ASEAN Member States to strengthen their ability to provide comprehensive and sustainable victim assistance services.



11. WAY FORWARD

The Regional Workshop has established a critical foundation for enhanced regional cooperation and collaboration in victim assistance efforts within the ASEAN region. The work completed in this workshop sets the stage for ongoing action and progress, ensuring the continuity of efforts to support explosive ordnance (EO) victims and strengthen victim assistance frameworks across ASEAN Member States (AMS).



11.1. Immediate Next Steps

Following the workshop, the immediate next steps include:

- **Consolidating the inputs** received on the draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) and finalizing the document for submission.
- **Beginning the drafting of the Country Profile Sheets** for each EO-affected ASEAN Member State based on the agreed template, and subsequently sharing these drafts with the respective countries for review and input.
- **Planning for virtual discussion meetings** among delegates to further discuss and work towards finalizing the Regional Victim Assistance Guideline.

11.2. Regional Consultations

Ongoing consultations with ASEAN Member States and relevant stakeholders will be integral to ensuring the continued development of the Regional VAN. These consultations will focus on the final review process for the Regional VAN TOR and provide critical input into the further development of the Regional Victim Assistance Guideline.

The goal is to ensure that the regional framework not only reflects national priorities but is also effective in addressing the unique challenges and needs of EO victims across the region.



11.3. Timeline for Deliverables

The next steps will proceed according to the following expected timeline:

- **Finalization of the Regional VAN ToR:**

The finalized Terms of Reference for the Regional VAN is expected to be submitted to the ARMAC Steering Committee for approval in the near term.

- **Completion of Country Profile Sheets:**

The timeline for completing the Country Profile Sheets depends on the timely provision of data from each EO-affected country. The aim is to publish and distribute these profiles in alignment with regional needs.

- **Development of the Regional Victim Assistance Guideline:**

The finalization of the Regional Victim Assistance Guideline is anticipated to occur by the time of the third regional workshop, following continued virtual discussions and consultations.

These steps will be essential in advancing the Regional Victim Assistance Network and ensuring its successful operationalization to provide sustainable and effective victim assistance across ASEAN.

CONCLUSION



The Regional Workshop on the Promotion of the Establishment of the Regional Victim Assistance Network and the Initiation of Guidelines to Enhance the Victim Assistance Programme in the ASEAN Region has proven to be a pivotal moment in advancing victim assistance efforts across ASEAN. The successful finalization of the draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) sets the stage for a coordinated and strategic approach to victim assistance, fostering increased collaboration, resource mobilization, and knowledge sharing across ASEAN Member States and relevant stakeholders.

The initiation of the Country Profile Sheets marks a significant step towards deepening the understanding of national victim assistance landscapes. These profiles will serve as a crucial tool to tailor regional support efforts, ensuring that assistance is responsive to the unique needs and challenges faced by each ASEAN Member State.

Although discussions surrounding the Regional Victim Assistance Guideline will require additional deliberation, the workshop reaffirmed the strong commitment of all stakeholders to prioritize the needs of explosive ordnance (EO) victims. The valuable input from participants, the openness of dialogue, and the collaborative spirit demonstrated throughout the workshop reflect a collective determination to improve the lives of those affected by explosive hazards.

Moving forward, the success of this workshop will be translated into ongoing collaboration and consultation, ensuring that the next phase of this important initiative results in real, tangible improvements. The combined efforts of all partners will be critical in ensuring that the Regional VAN is effectively implemented, offering lasting support and empowerment to EO victims and their communities throughout the ASEAN region.

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