

DANGER MINES



REGIONAL VICTIM ASSISTANCE NETWORK (VAN) Terms of Reference (TOR)

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This Terms of Reference (TOR) outlines the establishment, objectives, structure, and operational framework of the ASEAN Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN), developed under the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund-supported project 'Enhance Victim Assistance Programme in ASEAN Member States'. It is the result of extensive regional consultations and aims to strengthen coordinated, inclusive, and sustainable victim assistance mechanisms across ASEAN.

I. BACKGROUND

1. The ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC) was established by the ten ASEAN Member States (AMS) as an intergovernmental entity to serve as a regional center of excellence on explosive ordnance (EO)-related issues. ARMAC is mandated to facilitate cooperation, coordination, and knowledge-sharing among interested AMS and partners, in alignment with the ASEAN Charter and the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025.
2. Victim Assistance (VA) is a fundamental pillar of humanitarian mine action, as recognized under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), and International Mine Action Standards (IMAS 13.10). VA is a national responsibility, but it requires coordinated support from mine action actors including National Mine Action Authorities (NMAAs), National Mine Action Centres (NMACs), operators, healthcare providers, civil society, survivor organizations, and the United Nations system.
3. Despite progress, ASEAN's EO-affected Member States continue to face systemic gaps in delivering timely, equitable, and sustainable assistance to survivors, their families, and affected communities. These include limited access to rehabilitation, psychosocial support, economic inclusion, and data management. Technical and financial constraints, institutional fragmentation, and uneven progress across countries call for a strengthened, regionally coordinated approach.
4. The ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities emphasizes the importance of inclusive services and social protection for persons with disabilities—including EO survivors. As such, the integration of victim assistance within national and regional frameworks directly supports ASEAN's goal of a people-oriented, people-centered community and contributes to multiple Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).

5. The Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) was developed in close consultation with EO-affected AMS, ARMAC, and regional stakeholders under the “Enhance Victim Assistance Programme in ASEAN Member States,” supported by the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF). It builds on a clear consensus: that the needs of victims cannot be fully addressed in isolation. A regional platform can amplify impact by strengthening cross-border coordination, promoting standards, sharing knowledge, mobilizing resources, and enabling collective advocacy.
6. Victim assistance comprises six interconnected pillars: emergency and continuing medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support, socio-economic inclusion, information management, and policy/legal frameworks. The VAN is designed to support ASEAN Member States in strengthening each of these areas through coordinated technical assistance, joint planning, regional trainings, and evidence-based programming.
7. ARMAC, through the VAN, will serve as a regional hub to support Member States and partners in aligning national efforts with international obligations and ASEAN priorities. The VAN will facilitate a shared vision for victim assistance in ASEAN, foster South-South cooperation, and ensure that EO survivors and persons with disabilities are not only beneficiaries but active contributors to inclusive development and resilience in the region.

II. OBJECTIVES

8. The overarching purpose of the ASEAN Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) is to strengthen regional cooperation and support ASEAN Member States in enhancing inclusive, rights-based, and sustainable victim assistance. Specifically, the VAN seeks to:

Facilitate multisectoral coordination among national authorities, service providers, and development partners to strengthen the delivery of comprehensive assistance to EO victims, survivors, and persons with disabilities.

Promote the exchange of knowledge, good practices, and innovations in victim assistance across ASEAN, including data sharing, information management, and evidence-based programming.

Support the development and strengthening of national victim assistance systems, including policy, legal frameworks, institutional mechanisms, and service delivery models in line with international standards and ASEAN commitments

Enhance the technical capacity of ASEAN Member States and stakeholders, including through training, peer learning, and access to regionally harmonized tools and methodologies.

Foster regional partnerships and South-South cooperation to advance victim assistance as a shared regional responsibility, encouraging engagement by both EO-affected and non-affected AMS.

Mobilize and align resources, including financial, technical, and institutional support from ASEAN Member States, Dialogue Partners, and other stakeholders for the implementation of victim assistance priorities.

Serve as a platform for regional policy dialogue and strategic direction on victim assistance, aligning with ASEAN frameworks, the APMBC, the CRPD, and the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025.

III. STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK

9. Leadership and Coordination

9.1 The ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC) shall serve as the **Lead Coordinator and Regional Secretariat** of the ASEAN Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN), in accordance with its mandate as an ASEAN entity and its role under the ASEAN Political-Security Community framework. To support inclusive and shared responsibility, **Rotating Country Coordinators** shall be nominated from among the ASEAN Member States (AMS), comprising:

- One **EO-affected AMS**, and
- One **non-affected AMS**,

These Country Coordinators shall serve for a period of two years. They will support ARMAC in hosting, convening, and guiding strategic discussions and planning of the VAN. They shall also promote national and regional ownership, and facilitate the engagement of national institutions and stakeholders.

9.2 An **EO Survivor Representative** maybe nominated annually by the national focal point of an EO-affected AMS to serve in an advisory capacity. This individual will represent survivor perspectives and contribute to ensuring that victim assistance remains inclusive and survivor-centered.

9.3 National Focal Points

9.3.1 Each EO-affected AMS shall designate a **National Focal Point Institution**, preferably the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) or National Mine Action Centre (NMAC), to represent its country in the VAN.

9.3.2. These focal points are encouraged to coordinate with key line ministries and institutions, including but not limited to:

- Ministry of Health

- Ministry of Social Welfare
- Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Defense
- National Disability Councils or Commissions
- The national focal point may be any institution formally appointed by the ASEAN Member State, based on its internal arrangements and national context.

10. Membership Composition

10.1. The VAN shall comprise representatives from:

- All ten ASEAN Member States (AMS);
- Relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies and accredited entities;
- United Nations agencies and intergovernmental organizations;
- Regional and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs);
- Survivor-led organizations, Disabled Persons' Organizations (DPOs), and academic institutions;
- ASEAN Dialogue Partners, development partners, and donors;
- Private sector stakeholders contributing to mine action and inclusive services.

10.2. Technical experts, regional institutions, or international observers may be invited to participate in specific activities or consultations, subject to consensus by the Country Coordinators and ARMAC. These actors will serve in a non-decision-making capacity, in support of the Network's objectives.

11. Decision-Making and Meeting Procedures

11.1. The VAN shall operate in accordance with ASEAN principles of consensus, consultation, and mutual respect.

11.2. Meetings shall be convened at least twice per year by ARMAC, in consultation with the Rotating Country Coordinators. Additional technical or ad-hoc sessions may be called as required.

11.3. ARMAC shall serve as the Secretariat for all VAN activities and maintain communication with members, distribute official documents, and ensure proper documentation of proceedings and follow-ups. Digital communication platforms may be used to support transparency, collaboration, and continuity between meetings, particularly in instances where in-person participation is not feasible.

IV. ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE REGIONAL VAN

12. The Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN), coordinated by ARMAC and guided by Member State leadership, serves as a multi-functional platform to enhance coordination, coherence, and impact in the field of victim assistance in ASEAN. The roles and functions of the VAN shall include the following:

12.1. Regional and National Coordination

- Develop and promote a shared regional roadmap for victim assistance aligned with national strategies and ASEAN frameworks.
- Support the establishment and enhancement of national VA working groups.
- Provide technical support to ASEAN Member States in integrating victim assistance into broader development and social protection policies.
- Promote inter-agency collaboration and joint initiatives across ASEAN Member States and relevant stakeholders.
- Coordinate regional data updates for presentation in ASEAN forums, technical working groups, and other regional or global platforms.

12.2. Fostering Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement

- Strengthen cooperation between governments, civil society, survivors, and development partners to promote inclusive and survivor-centered victim assistance.
- Document and disseminate best practices, lessons learned, and models for policy and service improvement.
- Support joint advocacy and stakeholder engagement to promote the inclusion of victim assistance in ASEAN strategies and national development planning.
- Facilitate regional efforts to mobilize and align resources and funding in support of victim assistance.
- Promote the integration of victim assistance within national development plans and ASEAN integration efforts.

12.3 Information Management and Data Sharing

- Design and operationalize a centralized, secure regional VA information management (IM) system.
- Develop harmonized data collection tools and protocols, ensuring alignment with national regulations and informed consent protocols.
- Enable regional-level analysis while ensuring ownership and confidentiality of national data.

12.4. Knowledge Generation and Information Sharing

- Facilitate knowledge transfer and peer learning among AMS and partners.
- Promote the documentation and dissemination of good practices and innovation.
- Support regional research initiatives, studies, and technical missions on victim assistance.
- Develop and maintain regional repositories on VA practices, information systems, and tools for use by Member States and partners.
- Support evidence-based programming through joint research, evaluations, and impact assessments.
- Promote innovation, including through new technologies for rehabilitation, psychosocial support, and data systems.
- Convene technical exchanges and working groups to share knowledge and support harmonization of standards and approaches.

12.4. Capacity Building and Technical Support

- Develop training materials and facilitate regional training and knowledge-sharing events on victim assistance themes.
- Provide technical support and peer-learning opportunities to build institutional and human resource capacity at national and regional levels.
- Strengthen communication, awareness, and outreach strategies across the region through collaborative knowledge products.
- Facilitate the rollout of the Regional VA Dialogue Platform and participation in relevant global and ASEAN forums.
- Promote inclusive participation in trainings, including gender and diversity considerations.

12.5. Resource Mobilization and Advocacy

- Coordinate joint fundraising efforts to support national and regional VA priorities.
- Advocate the integration of VA within ASEAN's broader human rights and development agenda.
- Align resource mobilization efforts with ASEAN cooperation mechanisms and donor frameworks.

12.6. Monitoring and Evaluation

- An ASEAN-consistent M&E framework will be adopted to guide VAN implementation.
- Annual performance reviews will be conducted by ARMAC with reporting to Steering Committee representatives.
- Biennial external evaluations will be undertaken with engagement of independent technical reviewers.

V. PARTICIPATION AND MEMBERSHIP

- 13.** The Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) includes partners with technical experience in leading victim assistance (VA) programmes within the ASEAN region. Membership is open to ASEAN Member States (AMS), regional intergovernmental bodies, development partners, UN agencies, civil society organizations, academic and research institutions, and private sector entities with relevant expertise. Key technical research institutes on health, rehabilitation, disability inclusion, and risk analysis may also be invited to contribute.
- 14.** The VAN convenes biannually and, on an ad-hoc basis, through web-based platforms and, when feasible, face-to-face meetings. Meetings are coordinated by ARMAC in collaboration with designated Country Coordinators, and all members are encouraged to participate actively in discussions and activities.
- 15.** The VAN shall consist of a permanent regional coordinator, rotating country coordinators, and a broad base of contributing members:
- **Permanent Regional Coordinator:** ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC), serving as the institutional lead and Secretariat of the VAN.
 - **Rotating Country Coordinators** (biennially rotated): ASEAN Member States, nominated by consensus, including one EO-affected AMS and one non-affected AMS. These countries support the facilitation of VAN activities during their term. At the end of each rotation, the Terms of Reference (TOR) may be reviewed and adjusted as needed.
 - **Government Focal Points from EO-affected AMS:**
 - a) **Cambodia** – Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA)
 - b) **Lao PDR** – National Regulatory Authority for UXO/Mine Action (NRA), Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
 - c) **Thailand** – Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEP), Ministry of Social Development and Human Security; and Thailand Mine Action Center (TMAC)
 - d) **Myanmar** – Department of Rehabilitation, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief & Resettlement
 - e) **Viet Nam** – Viet Nam Mine Action Centre (VNMAC) and Vietnam National Mine Action Secretariat and Management Agency (VNASMA)
 - **Other relevant ministries and national institutions may include:**
 - Ministry of Health
 - Ministry of Education
 - Ministry of Defense

- National Disability Councils or related stakeholders
- **Members:**
Government and non-government stakeholders from both EO-affected and non-affected AMS, including:
 - UN agencies
 - ASEAN Dialogue Partners and donor institutions
 - International and local NGOs, including Disabled Persons' Organizations (DPOs)
 - Academic and research institutions
 - Foundations and technical centers of excellence
 - Private sector actors
 - Community representatives, including EO survivors, persons with disabilities, and indirect victims

16. Network Coordination Structure

16.1 Regional Level

- ARMAC, in its regional coordination role, shall liaise with national focal points and development partners to ensure aligned action and effective communication.
- ARMAC and development partners shall coordinate regional-level support and collaboration mechanisms, including proposals, technical assistance, and shared resources.

16.2 National Level

- National Authorities shall coordinate with relevant sub-national authorities and ministries to implement VAN-related activities.
- Focal points may facilitate cross-sector collaboration across health, education, social protection, and other sectors.

16.3 Sub-National Level

- Sub-national authorities, including provincial and district officials, shall coordinate with EO-affected communities, including both direct and indirect victims, to support inclusive implementation.

All members are encouraged to participate actively in the VAN. Members are expected to contribute to regional collaboration by proposing and leading initiatives, sharing good practices, and engaging in joint planning.

Non-active stakeholders, including potential development partners or observers, may be invited to participate in a consultative or supporting role.

VI. COORDINATION MECHANISM

17. Communication Channels

- ARMAC will serve as the official communication channel for VAN under ASEAN mechanisms.
- Regular updates will be published via ARMAC's online platforms and distributed through ASEAN communication channels.
- Success stories and impactful results will be featured in relevant ASEAN and partner publications.
- The primary mode of official communication among VAN members shall be through formal email correspondence coordinated by ARMAC, which serves as the VAN Secretariat.
- VAN members are encouraged to regularly share updates, documents, and relevant materials (e.g., national policies, action plans, studies, and tools) with ARMAC's designated focal point.
- ARMAC will compile and publish relevant updates on its official website and other communication platforms to ensure transparency, accessibility, and knowledge sharing.

18. Informal and Real-Time Communication

- To complement formal coordination, the VAN may utilize secure social media or messaging platforms, such as Telegram or WhatsApp, for rapid information exchange among designated representatives.
- These platforms shall be used for coordination on events, joint activities, and day-to-day updates, and shall be managed in a manner that ensures professionalism and respect for confidentiality where needed.

19. Technical and Thematic Coordination

- The VAN may establish working groups or task forces to address specific topics or challenges, as proposed by members and endorsed by ARMAC and the Country Coordinators.
- These task forces shall operate in hybrid formats (virtual/in-person) depending on needs and availability, and shall provide technical recommendations for regional action.

20. Coordination Principles and Avoidance of Duplication

To ensure efficient coordination and complementarity, the VAN shall adhere to the following principles:

- Alignment with national strategies and existing frameworks;
- Minimization of duplication in data collection, tools, and activities;
- Consolidation and interoperability of information management systems and platforms;
- Promotion of harmonized approaches in program design and reporting.

ARMAC shall support the mapping of ongoing activities and maintain a coordination matrix to inform member initiatives and planning.

ANNEXES

Annex I: Summary of Functions and Activities (Operational Guide)

Annex II: List of National Focal Points

Annex III: Template for VA IM Data Sharing and Consent Protocol

Annex IV: Criteria for EO Survivor Representative Nomination

This initiative is implemented by the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC), under the Enhance Victim Assistance Programme in ASEAN Member States, with the generous support of the ASEAN–Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF).

ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC)



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