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National coordinating mechanisms on small arms and light weapons control

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MOSAIC
Good practices for safer societies.

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Foreword

What is MOSAIC?

MOSAIC translates into practice the objectives of key global agreements aiming to prevent the illicit trade, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, including:

- the Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons
- the International Tracing Instrument
- the Firearms Protocol supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime
- the Arms Trade Treaty.

MOSAIC modules are based on good practices, codes of conduct and standard operating procedures that have been developed at (sub-)regional levels. They were developed by the UN, benefitting from the very best technical advice from experts around the world.

MOSAIC is a completely voluntary toolkit.

MOSAIC supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 16 to promote peaceful, just and inclusive societies and its target 16.4 that includes a significant reduction in illicit arms flows.

Who developed MOSAIC?

Governments often call upon the UN system to provide advice and support on issues related to small arms and light weapons control — including on legislative, programmatic and operational matters.

UN agencies decided that the best way to ensure that the United Nations as a whole could consistently deliver high-quality advice and support in response to such requests, was to develop international guidance on small arms and light weapons control, similar to the standards the UN developed in the areas of mine action (International Mine Action Standards – IMAS); disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (Integrated DDR Standards – IDDRS); and ammunition (International Ammunition Technical Guidelines – IATG).

The compendium is the result of a decade of coordinated work within the UN system, involving 24 partner entities with expertise ranging from development and weapons management to gender and public health. An external expert reference group of over 300 specialists, from NGOs to industry, completed the sturdy process of establishing each module.

Who can use MOSAIC?

MOSAIC can be used by any government or organization. Properly basing small-arms control endeavours on MOSAIC modules, reduces the risk of weapons falling into the hands of criminals, armed groups, terrorists and others who would misuse them.

MOSAIC. Good practices for safer societies.

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Introduction

Creating, implementing and enforcing effective national controls over the full life-cycle of small arms and light weapons requires cooperation and coordination among a wide range of actors, including government agencies, civil society, the private sector and intergovernmental organizations. A national coordinating mechanism on small arms and light weapons control can help to ensure that all relevant parts of government work together with national and international partners to conceive, direct, monitor and evaluate safe, relevant, efficient and effective small arms and light weapons control measures.

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National coordinating mechanisms on small arms and light weapons control

1 Scope

This document provides guidance on the creation and functioning of multi-disciplinary national coordinating mechanisms on small arms and light weapons control.

It is applicable to governments who wish to establish such a mechanism, as well as to governments who wish to assess the composition and functioning of an existing coordinating mechanism in relation to international standards.

This document should also be of use to UN entities and other international partners in advising and assisting governments to establish national coordinating mechanisms on small arms and light weapons control.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

MOSAIC 04.10, *Designing and implementing National Action Plans*

MOSAIC 04.20, *Designing and implementing community safety programming*

MOSAIC 04.30, *Raising awareness of the need for small arms and light weapons control*

MOSAIC 04.40, *Monitoring, evaluation and reporting*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in MOSAIC 01.20, *Glossary of terms and definitions*, and the following apply.

In all MOSAIC modules, the words 'shall', 'should', 'may' and 'can' are used to express provisions in accordance with their usage in International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards.

a) **“shall” indicates a requirement:** It is used to indicate requirements strictly to be followed in order to conform to the document and from which no deviation is permitted.

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b) **“should” indicates a recommendation:** It is used to indicate that among several possibilities one is recommended as particularly suitable, without mentioning or excluding others, or that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required, or that (in the negative form, 'should not') a certain possibility or course of action is deprecated but nor prohibited.

c) **“may” indicates permission:** It is used to indicate a course of action permissible within the limits of the document.

d) **“can” indicates possibility and capability:** It is used for statements of possibility and capability, whether material, physical or casual.

4 United Nations framework

4.1 General

This document provides practical guidance on the implementation of commitments related to national coordinating mechanisms that are contained in United Nations multilateral instruments related to small arms and light weapons control.

4.2 UN Programme of Action

In the United Nations *Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects* (UN Programme of Action), all UN Member States commit themselves

a) to “Strengthening or developing agreed norms and measures at […] national levels that would reinforce and further coordinate efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects” (Part I, paragraph 22.a);

b) “To establish, or designate as appropriate, national coordination agencies or bodies and institutional infrastructure responsible for policy guidance, research and monitoring of efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.” (Part II, paragraph 4);

c) “To establish or designate, as appropriate, a national point of contact to act as liaison between States on matters relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action” (Part II, paragraph 5); and

d) “to […] ensure coordination, complementarity and synergy in efforts to deal with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects at […] national levels and to encourage the establishment and strengthening of cooperation and partnerships at all levels among international and intergovernmental organizations and civil society, including non-governmental organizations and international financial institutions” (Part III, paragraph 2).

4.3 International Tracing Instrument

In the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (International Tracing Instrument), all UN Member States commit themselves to

a) “designate one or more national points of contact to exchange information and act as a liaison on all matters relating to the implementation of this instrument.” (paragraph 25); and

b) “provide the Secretary-General, through the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat, with the following information, updating it when necessary: (a) Name and contact information for the national point(s) of contact” (paragraph 31).

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4.4 Firearms Protocol

The *Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition*, supplementing the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* (UN Firearms Protocol), stipulates that each State Party

a) "shall identify a national body or a single point of contact to act as liaison between it and other States Parties on matters relating to this Protocol" (Article 13.2).

4.5 Arms Trade Treaty

The Arms Trade Treaty stipulates that each State Party

a) "shall designate one or more national points of contact to exchange information on matters related to the implementation of this Treaty. Each State Party shall notify the Secretariat […] of its national point(s) of contact and keep the information updated" (Article 5.6).

5 National Authority

5.1 General

States shall designate or establish a government entity (e.g. ministry, agency, etc.) to take the lead in providing overall political coordination and policy direction for national small arms and light weapons control efforts. Such an agency may be know as the National Authority on small arms and light weapons.

5.2 Role

The National Authority should

a) coordinate all government institutions and international agencies involved in small arms and light weapons control;

b) ensure programme coordination, e.g. programme coverage, integrated and common approaches, application of agreed standards, etc);

c) encourage and support accountability and transparency in order to help build confidence among all stakeholders in the national coordination mechanism (see Clause 7);

d) ensure continuing financial and technical support from national, regional and international sources; and

e) be supported by a national technical planning and coordination body.

The role and mandate of the national authority should be outlined in relevant legislation and/or official policies.

Since the objective of the National Authority is to coordinate and drive forward small arms and light weapons control efforts at the national level, the National Authority should be, or should be located within, a government agency that has responsibility for the interior, internal affairs or internal peace and security.

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6 National Point of Contact

6.1 General

One or more National Points of Contact shall be designated to exchange information and act as liaison on all matters relating to the implementation of the international instruments set out in Clause 4.

In order to minimize coordination challenges, one National Point of Contact may be responsible for exchanging information and acting as liaison for more than one of the international instruments listed in Clause 4.

Where more than one National Point of Contact are designated, they shall regularly share information and coordinate activities, under the oversight of the National Authority.

6.2 Role

A National Point of Contact is an officially designated individual or office within the national government with responsibility for liaising and sharing information with relevant national stakeholders, as well as with other States, international, regional- and sub-regional bodies and the United Nations, on matters relating to the implementation of one or more of the international instruments listed in Clause 4.

A National Point of Contact should be the first point of contact for all entities (national, regional and international) seeking or providing information, cooperation or assistance related to the implementation of the instruments under its mandate.

A National Point of Contact should fulfil the following requirements on training, skills and professional experience:

a) It should have extensive knowledge of political, legal and technical requirements related to the implementation of the instruments under its mandate;

b) have extensive experience in the design and implementation of small arms and light weapons control programmes;

c) have an informed understanding of the role, responsibilities and capacities of all relevant stakeholders within the jurisdiction of the State;

d) have the necessary communication and diplomatic skills to consult, interact and share information with all relevant stakeholders; and

e) have the necessary writing, communication and presentation skills to be able to prepare and present information and reports at the national, regional and international levels.

6.3 Contact details

For each National Point of Contact, its name and contact details shall be provided to the secretariat(s) of the instrument(s) under its mandate and shall be kept up to date.

6.3.1 UN Programme of Action and International Tracing Instrument

The name and contact details of the National Point (or Points) of Contact in relation to

a) the UN Programme of Action (see Clause 4.2); and

b) the International Tracing Instrument (see Clause 4.3);

shall be provided to the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and shall be kept up-to-date.

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NOTE Information may be sent to: United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Conventional Arms Branch, UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA; or emailed to conventionalarms@un.org.

6.3.2 UN Firearms Protocol

The name and contact details of the National Point of Contact in relation to the UN Firearms Protocol (see Clause 4.4) shall be provided to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and shall be kept up-to-date.

NOTE Information may be sent to: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Firearms Team, Vienna International Centre, PO Box 500, A 1400 Vienna, Austria or emailed to unodc@un.org.

6.3.3 Arms Trade Treaty

The name and contact details of the National Point of Contact in relation to the Arms Trade Treaty (see Clause 4.5) shall be provided to the Secretariat of the Arms Trade Treaty and shall be kept up-to-date.

7 National coordinating mechanism

7.1 General

A national coordinating mechanism — encompassing the National Authority, the National Point of Contact and other relevant stakeholders — shall be established.

7.2 Role

The national coordinating mechanism on small arms and light weapons should ensure that

a) all relevant parts of government, as well as all relevant national and international partners, are involved in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national small arms and light weapons control programmes; and

b) all commitments made by the State in the UN Programme of Action (see Clause 4.2), the International Tracing Instrument (see Clause 4.3) and other international and regional instruments to which the State is party (see Clauses 4.4 and 4.5) are fully implemented.

The role and mandate of the national coordinating mechanisms should be outlined in relevant legislation and/or official policies.

NOTE 1 States in certain regions – e.g. the Economic Community of West African States, the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa, and the Southern African Development Community – are required by legally binding international agreements to establish national coordination mechanisms on small arms and light weapons control.

NOTE 2 Although the guidance set out in this document is focused on small arms and light weapons, this should not prevent a national coordination mechanism from expanding its role to cover other small lethal weapons, if this is deemed necessary to prevent or reduce armed violence (e.g. bladed weapons, hand grenades, improvised explosive devices, etc.). It may also be tasked to coordinate government actions in relation to other types of armaments and arms control commitments.

7.3 Infrastructure and administrative requirements

In order to function effectively and efficiently, the national coordinating mechanism should have access to the following resources:

a) support staff with the requisite knowledge and competencies to carry out their functions;

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b) appropriate space and facilities for meetings;

c) appropriate office space and office equipment to enable the support staff to function effectively (e.g. desks, chairs, computers, telecommunication equipment, internet access, etc.); and

d) sufficient financial resources to cover the salaries of support staff, support staff travel (if required), meetings of the national coordinating mechanism and office running costs.

These resources may be provided by the National Authority (see Clause 5).

7.4 Functions

7.4.1 General

The following outlines the key functions of a national coordinating mechanism.

7.4.2 High priority

The national coordinating mechanism shall monitor, on an ongoing basis, the impact of small arms and light weapons on State and human security, as well as on economic and social wellbeing within the jurisdiction of the State.

The national coordinating mechanism should conduct the following assessments:

a) Assessments of State holdings, including

    a. management and security of stockpiles, and

    b. extent of thefts and losses of small arms and light weapons from State stockpiles,

b) Assessments of Civilian holdings, including

    a. number of licensed small arms held (disaggregated by sex), and

    b. estimate of illegal small arms and light weapons held (disaggregated by sex),

c) Assessments of criminal and violent misuse of small arms and light weapons, including in

    a. homicide (gender disaggregated data on perpetrators and victims),

    b. suicide (disaggregated by sex), and

    c. sexual, gender-based, and intimate partner / family-related violence (gender disaggregated data on perpetrators and victims);

d) Assessments of gender and age dynamics of small arms misuse;

e) Assessments of the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons, including

    a. drivers of illicit demand,

    b. supply mechanisms and

    c. trafficking routes,

f) Assessments of small arms and light weapons manufacturing (including craft manufacturing) and trading within the jurisdiction of the State, in a cultural and regional context,

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g) Assessments of the dynamics, role and broader (including economic) implications of small arms use within the hunting and sport shooting sectors, including as they relate to wildlife and ecosystem management;

h) Assessments of the strengths, weaknesses, gaps and inefficiencies of existing national small arms and light weapons control policy, legislation and programmes.

Assessments carried out as part of the monitoring process shall rely upon evidence-based research that uses sound investigative and social science research methods.

The national coordinating mechanism should design and disseminate a realistic, implementable National Action Plan on small arms and light weapons control and/or a national small arms and light weapons control strategy in accordance with MOSAIC 04.10 — *Designing and implementing National Action Plans*. For this purpose, the national coordination mechanisms should:

a) Determine the aim of a National Action Plan and/or small arms and light weapons control strategy (which may include amendments to policy, legislation and activities) within the jurisdiction of the State in consultation with relevant stakeholders (see Clause 7.5);
b) Derive from this aim the strategic and operational objectives of a National Action Plan and/or small arms and light weapons control strategy, taking into account cultural, gender and age considerations, in consultation with relevant stakeholders.
c) Consult with all relevant stakeholders, including at the sub-national and district levels, in support of the implementation of the National Action Plan and coordinate activities in this regard.

The national coordinating mechanism should identify and designate the government entities (and, where relevant, the UN and other international and regional organizations) that will have responsibility for each aspect of small arms and light weapons control in order to ensure a comprehensive approach and to prevent the duplication of roles;.

7.4.3 Medium priority

As a medium priority, the national coordination mechanisms should:

a) Provide strategic oversight of and direction to small arms and light weapons control efforts in order to promote the implementation process and overcome barriers to good performance;

b) Consult with and provide information to the National Legislature about the implementation of small arms and light weapons control and their impacts relative to Clause 7.4.2;

c) Ensure that relevant government entities and other stakeholders share a common understanding of their mandates, roles and responsibilities with respect to small arms and light weapons control at the national level;

d) Establish clear, two-way lines of communication between government entities and other relevant stakeholders;

e) Disseminate appropriate and timely information to all relevant stakeholders and the media in support of the implementation of the National Action Plan on small arms and light weapons control, including research findings on the impact of small arms and light weapons on State and human security and on economic and social wellbeing;

f) Monitor, or ensure the monitoring of, the implementation of all aspects of the small arms and light weapons control strategy in support of the National Action Plan, in order to ensure that implementation is proceeding according to plan;

g) Evaluate all aspects of the small arms and light weapons control strategy in support of the National Action Plan, in order to ascertain the actual impacts of implementation, including any changes in gender and age dynamics as they relate to small arms and light weapons possession, use, misuse and victimization;

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h) Amend or update the National Action Plan or strategy, when and where appropriate, in order to respond to changing operational conditions, as well as to the findings of research and evaluations;

7.4.4 Lower Priority

As a lower priority, the national coordination mechanisms should:

a) Establish, where appropriate, effective communication and technical small arms and light weapons support arrangements with neighboring states;

b) Oversee national reporting on small arms and light weapons control measures to the United Nations and relevant regional and sub-regional organizations (see MOSAIC 04.40, *Monitoring, evaluation and reporting,* for further guidance;)

c) Verify that effective national controls are in place on the import, export, transit, transshipment and brokering of small arms and light weapons, in accordance with MOSAIC 03.20, *National controls over the international transfer of small arms and light weapons*;

d) Provide information (including reports), when required, to relevant regional and global institutions regarding the small arms and light weapons control activities overseen by the national coordinating mechanism.

7.5 Composition

7.5.1 General

Government and non-governmental entities with responsibility for issue-areas that are directly or indirectly related to small arms and light weapons control should be included in the national coordinating mechanism.

The national coordinating mechanism should strive to achieve gender balance.

7.5.2 Government entities

Where they exist, government ministries dealing with the following issues should be included in the national coordinating mechanism:

NOTE This is not an exhaustive list. Government ministries with responsibility for other issue-areas with direct or indirect relevant for small arms and light weapons control may also be included.

a) children;

b) defence;

c) education;

d) finance / economic affairs / customs;

e) foreign affairs;

f) health;

g) intelligence;

h) interior / internal affairs / police;

i) justice / state law;

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j) local government;

k) social welfare;

l) transport (including aviation, rail, road and ports authorities)

m) women's affairs and gender equality;

n) youth;

o) trade and industry;

p) sport (if encompassing sport shooting);

q) agriculture / wildlife / environment; and

r) culture / heritage.

In addition, where they exist, the following government bodies should be included in the national coordinating mechanism:

s) National Point of Contact on small arms and light weapons (see Clause 6);

t) National Legislature;

u) office of the President / Prime Minister; and

v) arms export / import control agency;

7.5.3 Civil society

Representatives of civil society should be included in the national coordinating mechanism.

EXAMPLE Civil society organizations may include relevant nongovernmental organizations, research institutes, women's groups, hunting and sport shooting associations, media organizations, political groups, youth federations/groups, children's federations/groups, community-based protection networks, disabled federations/groups, think tanks and religious organizations.

7.5.4 Industry

Legal small arms and light weapons manufacturers and manufacturing associations, as well as facilitators of the legal trade in small arms and light weapons (brokers, dealers, etc.), should be included in the national coordinating mechanism.

7.5.5 International bodies

United Nations bodies, international organizations and regional- and sub-regional organizations that provide advice and support to the government in the area of small arms and light weapons control should be included in the national coordinating mechanism. They may be included as full members or as observers.

8 Governmental areas of responsibility

The national coordinating mechanism is responsible for coordinating a wide variety of related small arms and light weapons control activities. However, it is individual government ministries, departments, agencies, etc. that are ultimately required to implement such activities.

The functional responsibility for implementing small arms and light weapons control activities can be allocated among government entities as set out in Table 1.

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Table 1 – Functional responsibilities of government entities

Functional area of small arms and light weapons control	Relevant government entities are those responsible for:
Cross-border controls	Interior / Internal Affairs / Police Defense Customs Foreign Affairs
Health and social welfare impact	Health Social Welfare Women's Affairs and Gender Equality Wildlife / Environment
Information management	Interior / Internal Affairs / Police Intelligence
Policy and legislation	National Legislature Interior / Internal Affairs / Police Justice Foreign Affairs Women's Affairs and Gender Equality Child Protection / Rights Customs
Awareness and communication	Interior / Internal Affairs / Police Communication Health Social Welfare Education Women's Affairs and Gender Equality Youth Wildlife / Environment
Imports, exports and brokering	Foreign Affairs Defense Interior / Internal Affairs / Police Customs Import/export licensing
Marking, recordkeeping and tracing	Interior / Internal Affairs / Police Defense
Collection	Interior / Internal Affairs / Police Defense Local Government Women's Affairs and Gender Equality Youth
Destruction	Interior / Internal Affairs / Police Defense
Stockpile management	Defense Interior / Internal Affairs / Police
Investigation of small arms offences	Interior / Internal Affairs / Police Justice Customs
Prosecution and international legal cooperation	Justice Prosecution Interior / Internal Affairs / Police Foreign Affairs

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9 National Action Plans and related processes

The national coordinating mechanism should develop a National Action Plan for the control of small arms and light weapons, in accordance with MOSAIC 04.10, *Designing and implementing National Action Plans*.

The national coordinating mechanism should also contribute to the design and implementation of community safety programming and awareness initiatives, in accordance with MOSAIC 04.20, *Designing and implementing community safety programming*, and MOSAIC 04.30, *Raising awareness of the need for small arms and light weapons control*, respectively.

10 Exceptional role of regional organizations and the United Nations

At certain times and in certain geographical areas (e.g. areas emerging from armed conflict that may have weakened government capacity), States may decide to give a mandate to regional organizations or the United Nations to coordinate and support small arms and light weapons control efforts.

In such circumstances, the regional organization or United Nations body in question should assume some or all of the roles and responsibilities of the National Authority, and may also act as a conduit for donor resources. The roles and responsibilities of regional organizations and the United Nations may vary from State to State and may be subject to specific agreements.

Relevant regional organizations or the United Nations should provide the necessary capacity building and technical support to fragile or vulnerable governments that lack the resources and expertise to exercise effective controls over small arms and light weapons, with the aim of fostering the establishment of an independent and effective national coordinating mechanism.

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