

# OG 4.11: SALW Control, Security and Development

## Objectives

This module will:

- ✓ provide an overview of small arms and light weapons (SALW) control;
- ✓ explain differences and highlight links between SALW control and DDR;
- ✓ provide guidance on key aspects of SALW control programmes; and
- ✓ explain the advantages and disadvantages of incentives to weapons collection.

## 1. Introduction

SALW control initiatives are often very complex long-term interventions that require a holistic approach dealing with both the supply of and demand for weapons by governments, groups and individuals, as well as the relationships among armed conflict, armed violence, SALW availability and development.

SALW control has important links with both security and development. Although the immediate post-conflict environment opens a window of opportunity to control the supply of and demand for SALW, efforts towards SALW control are related to development, and should therefore be reflected in national development planning frameworks and mechanisms.

### Box 4.11.1: What are SALW?

In brief, *small arms* are those weapons designed for personal use and *light weapons* are those designed for use by several persons serving as a crew, i.e. they are the weapons that are most used in armed conflicts and violence.

**Small arms:** Revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine-guns, assault rifles, light machine-guns.


**Light weapons:** Heavy machine-guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-tank guns and missiles, recoilless rifles, portable anti-aircraft missile systems, mortars of a calibre of less than 100 mm.

**Ammunition and explosives:** Cartridges (rounds) for small arms, shells and missiles for light weapons, anti-personnel and anti-tank hand grenades, landmines, explosives, munitions for single-action anti-aircraft and anti-tank systems.

**Source:** *UN Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms*, 27 August 1997, A/42/299, para. 25

SALW control requires action at global, regional, national and local levels, and involves international and regional organizations, national governments, commercial companies and military stakeholders, non-governmental organizations and non-state actors operating under a variety of conditions.

The growing international consensus regarding the need to deal with SALW is reflected in the *UN Programme of Action* and the *UN Firearms Protocol*, both adopted in 2001, and a number of regional instruments adopted in Africa, Europe and the Americas.

 **Do you want to become familiar with international and regional agreements on SALW? What about normative references, including South Eastern Europe Regional Micro-Disarmament Standards and Guidelines (SEE RMDS/G)? Section 5 and Annex B of IDDRS 4.11 list them. For the texts of agreements and SEE RMDS/G, see <http://www.seesac.org>.**

## 2. Overview of SALW control

SALW control aims to help prevent armed conflict and violence, and to support countries to reduce the social, economic and environmental impacts of uncontrolled SALW spread and possession by reducing the number of SALW in circulation and by strengthening SALW control mechanisms. The objectives of SALW control interventions include:

- reducing the availability and use of illicit SALW in societies;
- reducing the number of SALW- and ammunition-related accidents;
- increasing public awareness of the connection between the availability of weapons and the level of violence in any given society;
- reducing and disrupting the illicit transfers of SALW at the national and regional levels;
- regulating the possession and use of SALW through national legislation and registration;
- recovering illicit SALW from the community;
- reducing the visibility of weapons in the community, and counteracting the culture of weapons, especially among the youth; and
- reducing gender-based violence related to holding and carrying of weapons legally or illegally.

## 3. DDR and SALW control

While DDR and SALW control contribute to the same objective – namely the creation of a secure environment for sustainable development – some significant differences exist between the two processes, as described in Table 4.11.1:

**Table 4.11.1: Comparing DDR and SALW control**

	DDR	SALW control
Target groups	Individual members of armed forces and groups, their dependants, women and children associated with armed forces and groups	Individual civilians, including women and children, organized criminal groups, communities, national authorities and others
Types of weapons	All types of weapons and ammunition	All weapons and ammunition less than 100 mm in calibre
Timing	Post-conflict	Any time
Mandate	A specific mandate in support of the peace process	Supports DDR, security sector reform (SSR), and social and economic development

Although DDR and SALW control interventions are linked, and should therefore be closely coordinated, it is preferable that they remain separate, and that they are not carried out simultaneously in order to avoid possible confusion that may lead to the following scenarios:

- Civilians may attempt to surrender weapons at DDR programme pick-up points (PUPs) or weapons collection point (WCPs) designed to deal with combatants. This could result in increased tension and local outbreaks of violence;
- The sensitization and core messages of the disarmament and SALW control components will necessarily be very different. The risk of mixed messages should be avoided;
- Disputes may arise over entitlements to ‘reintegration’ by ex-combatants or ‘incentives’ by the civilian population.

The decision on when to initiate a SALW collection programme for the civilian population should therefore be made on a country-by-country basis following careful conflict analysis and detailed assessments.

## 4. SALW control programmes

SALW control programmes follow the same basic procedures as those for the DDR programme cycle – assessment, design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The following paragraphs will highlight only specific SALW control aspects of assessment and design of the programme cycle.

### 4.1. Assessment

Detailed assessments of SALW-related issues at the national and subregional levels are a prerequisite for the development of an SALW control programme.

These assessments, often referred to as small arms surveys or small arms baseline assessments, should ideally contain the following components:

- *A small arms distribution assessment (SADA):* This collects data on the type, quantity, ownership, distribution and movement of SALW within the country and region, together with an analysis of local resources available to respond to the problem;
- *A small arms impact survey (SAIS):* This collects data on the impact of SALW on the community (types of violence), and social and economic development;
- *A small arms perception survey (SAPS):* This collects qualitative information on the attitudes of the local community to SALW ownership and possible interventions;
- *A small arms capacity survey (SACS):* This collects information on the national and local capacity to carry out an appropriate, safe, efficient and effective SALW intervention.



**Do you know how to carry out SALW surveys? For more information on how to do this, see SALW survey protocols (<http://www.seesac.org>).**

## 4.2. Design

There should be a single and coherent national SALW control programme designed with the participation of all key national stakeholders and the financial and technical support of international actors, where necessary. Such programmes are often referred to as national strategies or national plans of action.

Components of SALW control programmes largely consist of, but are not limited to, establishing or strengthening:

- national mechanisms that bring key stakeholders together to devise SALW control programmes and reduce armed violence (see Box 4.11.2, below);
- national legislation related to SALW production, export, import, surplus and possession (see Box 4.11.3, below);
- cross-border control mechanisms;
- SALW awareness and communication strategies;
- voluntary SALW collection initiatives;
- stockpile management and security; and
- the destruction of surplus SALW and ammunition.



**Do you need to prepare a SALW awareness and communication strategy? See the SALW Awareness and Support Pack 2005 (SASP 2) (<http://www.seesac.org>).**

**Box 4.11.2: National SALW commissions**

The primary responsibility for SALW control lies with the government of the affected state. This responsibility should normally be vested in a national SALW authority or commission, which acts as a national focal point on SALW issues, and is expected to perform the following key functions:

- the development and implementation of national strategies or action plans;
- the facilitation of cooperation and coordination;
- awareness-raising and risk education; and
- the monitoring and evaluation of and formal reporting on SALW control activities.

The membership should be broader than security and law enforcement organs, and include a number of ministerial departments (justice, youth, foreign affairs, etc.), as well as civil society organizations.

**Box 4.11.3: National SALW legislation**

SALW control is unlikely to be successful without the establishment and enforcement of an adequate national legal framework. However, revising and updating national SALW legislation is a time- and resource-intensive process, which may be speeded up where members of parliament are associated with national SALW commissions. This process requires ensuring that national SALW legislation conforms with – or exceeds – international and regional standards, and that relevant international SALW control instruments are ratified.

For SALW collection programmes, a related amnesty law (which can apply for a specific period) may be required in order to permit the public transportation of weapons to the collection points.

## 5. SALW collection incentives

SALW control usually includes initiatives aimed at collecting illicit and surplus SALW from individuals and communities. These initiatives often rely on individual and collective incentives schemes or a combination of the two, which need to be carefully designed, taking into account the specificities of each country; hence, the need for a SALW survey before a collection programme starts. Such specificities include:

- the situation of the country in terms of security, stability and public confidence;
- society's perception of SALW ownership;
- the regional and subregional contexts;
- the real and relative price of weapons; and
- the financial and material resources available.

Table 4.11.2 outlines the advantages and disadvantages of the incentives schemes that have been most commonly used during weapons collection:

**Table 4.11.2: Types of incentives in weapons collection: Advantages and disadvantages**

Type of incentive	Objective	Advantages	Disadvantages
Buy-back (not supported by the UN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To exchange weapons for cash</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immediate individual gratification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can increase the value of arms after it has dropped if price is not carefully defined</li> <li>Cash can be used to buy newer weapons</li> <li>Can have damaging economic effects if large amounts of cash are injected into fragile economies</li> </ul>
Weapons in exchange for food or goods or services, i.e. weapons in exchange for incentives (WEI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To deal with short-term basic needs or wants, such as food, water, shelter, medication, seeds and agricultural tools, recreational equipment and lottery tickets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has a moral and symbolic dimension</li> <li>Can help secure short-term survival</li> <li>Can reduce resources required by humanitarian agencies</li> </ul>	
Weapons in exchange for development (WED; WfD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide training and other support that can be linked to community development needs such as roads and bridges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports social cohesion</li> <li>Contributes to economic development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only works if there is a perception of joint weapons ownership and if donor assistance available from other sources is limited</li> <li>Expensive if a community project (e.g. road repair) is not tied to a minimum number of weapons handed in</li> </ul>
Weapons in competition for development (WCD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To challenge two communities of similar size and divide the funds available for development between them,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributes to economic development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can spur new conflicts between participating communities</li> </ul>


	according to the proportion of weapons handed in by each community		
Weapons linked to development (WLD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To allocate benefits to communities that declare themselves 'weapons free' in such a way that it results in multiplier effects among other communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Involves less overheads than other interventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Needs to be tied to other donor priorities</li> <li>■ Demands significant negotiation before launch</li> <li>■ Requires the adoption of shared guidelines</li> </ul>

**Source:** Adapted from Douglas, Ian, *et al.*, *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: A Practical Field and Classroom Guide*, GTZ, NODEFIC, PPC, SNDC, 2004, p. 41 and *Compendium of Good Practices on Security Sector Reform*, 'Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)', <http://www.gfn-ssr.org>

SALW collection programmes should last a relatively short time to avoid the creation of a weapons market (which can attract many more weapons to the country) and be carefully timed in relation to any DDR programme under way. Furthermore, it is important to note that the success of SALW collection initiatives in post-conflict environments depends not only on the ability to prepare holistic interventions, but also upon:

- *the level of confidence in the peace process:* If civilians perceive the peace and reconciliation process as too fragile and believe that hostilities might resume, they will be unwilling to surrender their weapons;
- *the security situation in the country:* If civilians feel they have to remain armed for personal security because local police or security forces are unable to protect them, weapons collection programmes are likely to fail;
- *the existence of a culture of weapons:* If the possession of weapons is of cultural significance to the populations and has been considered a habit that existed before violent conflict broke out, weapons collection programmes are likely to fail; and
- *the level of commitment of the government and of cooperation among all interested national parties.*

In brief, people will only surrender their weapons if they feel they no longer need them. This shows the importance of creating an enabling environment through the various components of SALW control, as well as DDR and justice and security sector reform, for weapons collection initiatives to succeed.

 **IDDRS 4.11 on SALW Control, Security and Development, section 10 provides more information about the links between DDR and justice and security sector reform.**

## 6. Summary of key guidance on SALW control, security and development

- ✓ The planning of SALW control programmes should deal with both the supply and demand aspects of weapons possession.
- ✓ Disarming combatants when civilian and community ownership of weapons is high does not solve the problem. Indeed, failing to provide ex-combatants with the security they need to return to civilian life might actually create new security concerns.
- ✓ SALW control and its activities cannot be dealt with in isolation, as there is a great deal of overlap with complementary security and development programmes.
- ✓ In all SALW control activities, safety and security need to be primary guiding principles in the phases of collection, temporary storage and destruction.