



Capacity building for the control of small arms and light weapons (SALW) held by security and defense forces (SDFs) of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger

Background

The consequences of small arms and light weapons trafficking in the Sahel region are of particular concern. Armed groups (extremists, terrorists, and criminals) benefit from the wide availability of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, which contributes to the exacerbation of the ongoing crises in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger.

According to various studies, the detour of national stockpiles through bribery, theft, or battlefield capture have provided illicit arms markets and trafficking networks in the region with significant quantities of equipment. Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) measures are in place to secure, mark, and register weapons stockpiled by national security forces to prevent their detour. However, poor stockpile management, inadequate and poorly enforced regulations, and cross-border trafficking remain major drivers of trafficking. Weapons tracing, which aims to identify the illicit origin or point of detour of trafficked weapons, is essential. Improving the efficiency of procedures, promoting international cooperation, and information exchange is also crucial.

West Africa is unique in having a coherent and binding legal instrument: the *"ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials"*, adopted on June 14, 2006 and coordinated by ECOWAS.

The originality of the program proposed by DCAF lies in the fact that it is linked to programmes already being implemented and that it aims to bring the legal framework and practices of each of the states in question into line with the commitments made at the ECOWAS level. In this respect, this project to control small arms and light weapons will be carried out in coordination with the general inspectorates of the armies and parliamentarians specialized in defense and security issues in each of the three countries.

Project objectives

Building on existing instruments, on established relationships with parliamentarians in charge of defense and security issues, and internal control services of SDFs in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, **DCAF wish to contribute strengthen national capacities for the control and management of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and ammunitions held by the Security and Defense Forces (SDFs).**

Approach and sequencing

This initiative is integrated into the framework of DCAF's existing projects in the three national contexts in order to benefit from already established networks, to capitalize on acquired knowledge and skills, and to ensure the overall cohesiveness of its involvement in the Sahel.

To ensure that effective legal and operational frameworks are established and/or strengthened over the long term, DCAF is planning a three-phase intervention in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.

- **Phase 1:** Analyze national legal instruments for SALW and ammunition management and their adequacy with regional and international conventions, in coordination with national legislators. ***DCAF is currently implementing this first phase for a period of 18 months with the support of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.***
- **Phase 2:** Ensure that SDF practices comply with national protocols for acquisition, storage, marking, tracking, removal and destruction.
- **Phase 3:** Produce risk analyses of loss or detour of SALW seized, held, acquired, or stored by the SDFs and issue recommendations for modification of technical and security protocols and national legal frameworks (without compromising the operational capacities of the forces).

1. Full name: "Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA)". <https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/salw/programme-of-action/>

Expected results

Phase I :

- An inventory of the national legal and operational frameworks for SALW management and their adequacy with regional and international standards.

Phase II:

- Parliamentarians and internal inspection control practices for the acquisition, storage, marking, tracing, collection, transfer and destruction of weapons are strengthened in accordance with national, regional and international legal standards.

Phase III:

- Long-term support in the three countries for reform and strengthening of security and proper management of stockpiles of arms, ammunition and related materials.

Operational framework

The implementation of the project activities will be carried out in close collaboration with the National Focal Points of the UN *Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons*¹ as well as with international actors and programmes (NGOs, UN, EUCAP, UNODC, UNREC, AU, G5 Sahel, GICHD, ATT-OP programme, Small Arms Survey and others) working on these issues in the three countries.

Contacts:

Benoit CUSIN, Consultant, SALW Expert: b.cusin@dcaf.ch
Solène BERTHELIER, Project Officer: s.berthelie@dcaf.ch
Apolline GAGLIARDI, Programme Manager: a.gagliardi@dcaf.ch
africa.programme@dcaf.ch

✉ info@dcaf.ch

🐦 [@DCAF_Geneva](https://twitter.com/DCAF_Geneva)

www.dcaf.ch