



Council of the  
European Union

Brussels, 12 May 2022  
(OR. en)

8651/22  
ADD 1

LIMITE

CORLX 407  
CFSP/PESC 571  
COLAC 20  
CODUN 13  
COARM 80

**NOTE**

---

Subject: COUNCIL DECISION in support of efforts to prevent and combat illicit proliferation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and ammunition and their impact in the Americas - Annex

---

**ANNEX**

**PROJECT DOCUMENT**

**COUNTERING ILLICIT PROLIFERATION AND TRAFFICKING OF SMALL ARMS,  
LIGHT WEAPONS, AND AMMUNITION AND THEIR IMPACT IN THE AMERICAS**

## 1. Background

The Americas is one of the regions in the world most severely impacted by armed violence: in 2017, it registered the highest regional rate of homicides with 17,2 homicides per 100 000 inhabitants, compared to the global average of 6,1 per 100 000 inhabitants<sup>1</sup>. Easy access to and the availability of firearms in many of the countries are key factors to explain those rates. Almost 75 % of the homicides in the region are committed with the use of a firearm<sup>2</sup>. The region is also one of the main destinations of firearms for illicit trafficking<sup>3</sup>.

In large measure due to those negative trends, the proliferation of firearms and illicit trafficking has become a priority in the citizen security agenda of the region. Countries in the Americas have emphasised the importance of coordination and cross-border strategies considering the increasing complexity and internationalisation of criminal organisations. That commitment was translated into the signing of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (CIFTA) in 1997, the first regional binding agreement of its kind. Ratified by 31 of the 34 Organization of American States (OAS) Member States, CIFTA is a fundamental tool to address the illicit small arms trade in the region.

---

<sup>1</sup> UNODC, Global Study on Homicide. 2019. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/global-study-on-homicide.html>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> According to the Global Study of Firearms Trafficking, Central America and South America, together with Western Asia, respond by 80 % of the destinations of firearms trafficking (UNODC, 2020).

However, despite the valuable efforts of national authorities, the countries still cannot fully implement CIFTA. The complexity of the organised crime that controls arms trafficking in the region, including specialisation of work, coordination structures, and internationalization of operations, poses serious challenges to countries' ability to investigate and prosecute these crimes. They also struggle to comply with other protocols and to implement strategies that could reduce the proliferation and availability of firearms. Military and security forces do not systematically implement stockpile management protocols, increasing the likelihood of diversion of firearms and ammunition to the illicit market, as well as the risk of unplanned explosions in storage facilities. Marking, recordkeeping, and tracing of firearms are inconsistent in the region, halting criminal investigations that could trace the origin of firearms, connect them to multiple crime scenes, and uncover networks of illicit trafficking. The absence of domestic legislation reflecting CIFTA obligations and mandating these activities compromises the continuation and sustainability of these practices.

On another level, most of the region still faces challenges to promote the wellbeing of its communities, affected by high levels of poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to public services, among other conditions that put them in a situation of vulnerability. Members of these communities are more likely to be victims or perpetrators of armed violence. Hence, to avoid the perpetuation of cycles of violence, it is not sufficient to solely focus on gun-control policies. It is necessary to address these risk factors and strengthen the resilience of community members. The combination of repressive and preventive policies is fundamental to reducing armed violence levels in the region. To answer these challenges, in 2019, OAS Member States have approved the first Hemispheric Plan of Action to Guide the Design of Public Policies to Prevent and Reduce Intentional Homicide, considering the framework of the Inter-American Program to Prevent Violence and Crime. The Plan of Action sets forth a series of 28 recommendations on (1) the production, dissemination, and use of information and scientific evidence; (2) the design and implementation of prevention policies, and (3) criminal justice.

It is in this context that, since 2007, the Department of Public Security of the OAS (DPS/OAS) has provided support to the countries of the Americas to improve their capacity to comply with CIFTA obligations<sup>4</sup> and mandates established to prevent violence and crimes, especially amongst the most vulnerable populations. After a five-year hiatus, the DPS/OAS reactivated its operational programs in 2019, with funding from the European Union. The project “Countering Illicit Proliferation and Trafficking of Small Arms, Light Weapons (SALW) and Ammunition and their Impact in Latin America and the Caribbean”, started in 2019 and ended in 2021. It is a comprehensive arms control initiative implemented in the framework of the Program of Assistance on Arms Control and Ammunition (PACAM) of the DPS; it takes into account the lessons learned from previous activities and builds on those successful results to further advance the implementation of CIFTA and crime prevention regional mandates. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictive measures adopted by countries to address it have directly impacted the implementation of the project, particularly those activities that have to be delivered on-site, with direct training and supervision of officials (such as the destruction and marking of SALW). In addition, government availability to collaborate and participate in project activities was diminished, as efforts were diverted to address the unprecedented sanitary crisis. As a result, the project scope had to be adjusted, with some impact on the expected results.

Considering those challenges, coupled with the growing needs of the countries (which were not expected to be fully addressed in a three-year initiative), Phase II of the project will continue to provide comprehensive support to the countries, aiming at national ownership of these processes. DPS/OAS experience has shown continuous support is necessary to sustain the progress and advancements in terms of firearms control and the prevention of gun violence and crime, and, accordingly, this new phase will take into account the importance of long-term strategies to provide a meaningful and sustainable change in security policies and conditions.

---

<sup>4</sup> From 2007 to 2015, the DPS/OAS has implemented initiatives of the Program of Assistance for Control of Arms and Munitions in the region (PACAM). The 25 OAS Member States were benefited, resulting in the marking of over 290 000 firearms and the destruction of another 60 000 weapons and over 1 700 tons of munitions throughout the region.

## 2. Technical Approach

During Phase II, DPS/OAS will continue to invest in a holistic approach that combines repressive and preventive lenses, with normative and operational activities, to address the complex issue of armed violence and illicit trafficking in the region. As has been demonstrated in other regions, a modern, cohesive, and harmonic legislative framework, in compliance with the international normative framework, is the foundation for effective firearms control policies. Legislative changes must be accompanied by improving countries' capacities to operationalise and implement the law. As such, by working across these two spheres, the project will be able to target simultaneously the needs of the countries and promote long-term and sustainable changes. These activities to strengthen firearms control and to reduce the availability of firearms will be complemented by a preventive approach to reduce demand in communities that are highly impacted by armed violence, with a particular focus on the prevention of gender-based violence related to the misuse of firearms. Actions to promote safe practices among citizens of the communities, as well as conflict resolution, assistance for victims and survivors of violence, and voluntary turn-in of SALW and ammunition seek to improve community resilience to armed violence.

Under the proposed concept for this project, the DPS/OAS, through PACAM, will assume the role of coordinating and implementing agency through a collaborative approach with other agencies in this field and the national authorities. Utilising the political forums and the communication channels of the OAS, DPS/OAS will identify the countries of the region that require support and work with them in the specific agreements necessary to consolidate the assistance. The project will adopt specific and tailored support to each country, considering they might not have the same needs and gaps. Not all of them will be supported in all project components. Rather, DPS/OAS will continue using the previous successful approach of PACAM: mapping and identifying the needs of each country, engaging the authorities and creating a plan of assistance, and deploying the missions. In addition, considering the lessons learned from the adaptation of the project activities during the pandemic, DPS/OAS will seek to optimise resources by using the virtual environment and technological tools, when possible.

Also, considering the different impacts armed violence has on women, men, girls, and boys, as well as in populations in vulnerability, Phase II will continue to have a gender-based and human rights perspective. This includes the incorporation of women at all levels of project implementation, and the encouragement to have a more equal share of participation of women in the project's activities, as beneficiaries of the interventions. In addition to that, violence prevention activities will focus particular attention on the need of women and girls for security and safety within their communities and for their participation in the search for solutions to these challenges, as well as the incorporation of components focusing exclusively on addressing gender-based violence.

### **3. Overall Goal**

To strengthen the capacity of OAS Member States to address armed violence in the region by supporting measures to counter the proliferation and illicit trafficking in firearms and munitions, and preventing engagement with firearms in highly-impacted communities.

#### **4. Description of Projects' Intervention Strategies**

##### **Objective 1: To Strengthen National Firearms Regulatory Framework, considering international normative and good practices**

##### **Activities**

- Identification of countries to be assisted as a matter of priority with legislative review, on the basis of a needs assessment and taking into account countries targeted by operational components of the project;
- Technical assistance to countries to review legislation and normative framework considering international standards, and internal harmonisation of mandates, as well as the integration of a gender-based perspective;
- Development of regional standards on Physical Security and Stockpile Management, and on Destruction of SALW and Ammunition;
- Development of regional recommendations to prevent gender-based violence related to the misuse of firearms;
- Development of an electronic database to facilitate access to firearms standards and other relevant guidelines (e.g. CIFTA, model legislation, MOSAIC, and IATG) to facilitate access to and use of the standards for the different areas regarding firearms control by having a search engine and by categorising the standards with tags that would allow the users to quickly find all related rules for an area of interest.

##### **Outputs**

- Legislative assistance provided to improve national firearms normative framework, considering international standards and gender-based perspective, to at least six countries of the region;
- Regional Standards for Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) developed and disseminated to all OAS Member States;

- Regional Standards for Destruction of SALW and Ammunition developed and disseminated to all OAS Member States;
- Regional recommendations to prevent gender-based violence related to the misuse of firearms developed and disseminated to all OAS Member States;
- Electronic database of SALW standards and guidelines created and made available for countries to use.

**Objective 2: To improve the operational capacity of national authorities to mark, trace, store, and destroy firearms**

**Activities**

- Development and provision of specialised training for national personnel in PSSM, marking and recordkeeping, and destruction of SALW and ammunition. There will be regional training workshops, where personnel will be able to also share good practices and improve collaboration, and national courses targeting the specific needs of each country;
- Advanced explosive ordnance disposal training for technicians from countries in partnership with the Ministry of Defense of Spain;
- Technical assistance and resources to implement national plans to destroy weapons, and obsolete, seized, or excess munitions;
- Technical assistance and support to mark firearms, and maintain records, including the provision of necessary equipment;
- Drawing-up of sustainability plans with countries that receive support through the project.

**Outputs**

- Destruction processes of firearms and ammunition carried out in at least 10 countries, with the destruction of at least 150 tons of ammunition, and 35 000 SALW seized, obsolete, unsafe, and/or in excess;

- At least 200 national personnel trained in SALW and ammunition destruction;
- Technical assistance on marking and recordkeeping of firearms provided to at least 12 countries;
- At least 150 national personnel trained on marking, and recordkeeping;
- National Firearms Registration Systems of at least three countries upgraded;
- Security of institutional stockpiles improved in at least 10 countries;
- Two Regional Seminar on Good Practices of Physical Security and Stockpile Management implemented, with the certification of at least 80 officials from at least 15 countries;
- At least 45 personnel from 10 countries certified as explosive ordnance disposal technicians to EOD level 3;
- Tools and guidelines for the elaboration of National Actions Plans created and available for the countries assisted by the project;
- National Action Plans drafted and validated by national authorities for at least 20 % of the countries that receive assistance.

**Objective 3: To optimise small arms control through the use of Information Technology tools**

**Activities**

- Programming of the Electronic System for the Regional Communication Mechanism on Licit Transfers of Firearms and Ammunition (MCTA), a regional mechanism for the notification and exchange of information on the licit transfer of firearms, whose framework and technical requirements were developed during Phase I. It mirrors the positive experience of the European Union and will allow countries to quickly identify and communicate about vulnerabilities and diversion risks on the international legal commerce of firearms. Considering almost 50 % of the countries in the region do not have an electronic national licensing system, the possibility of programming the system in a way that allows countries to use it as their domestic systems will be explored;

- Deployment of the Electronic System of the MCTA as a pilot phase, with the training of national authorities, and the incorporation of corrections necessary;
- Upgrade of the virtual community for information exchange, developed during Phase I, to become a Hemispheric Firearms Knowledge Platform, with functionalities such as (i) automatic submission and tracking of data about firearms control system and the status of CIFTA implementation; (ii) repository of national authorities; (iii) dashboard to visualise the status and the comprehensiveness of the firearms control system;
- Update and expansion of the SALW and Ammunition Inventory Control Software to countries in the region that may benefit from this IT solution developed during Phase I.

## **Outputs**

- Electronic System for the Regional Communication Mechanism on Licit Transfers of Firearms and Ammunition (MCTA) programmed, and implemented, as a pilot, in 5 countries;
- SALW and Ammunition Inventory Control Software improved, based on users' feedback, and implemented in at least four other countries;
- Hemispheric Firearms Knowledge Platform developed, with the registration of points of contact of at least for at least 15 countries;
- Meetings of the national points of contact held biannually to encourage dialogue and cooperation.

## **Objective 4: To strengthen community resilience to gun violence and reduce access to illicit/and or unwanted firearms**

### **Activities**

- Expansion of the OASIS program's methodology to at least another community highly affected by gun violence. OASIS seeks to promote socially responsible behaviors in communities severely affected by gun violence; it includes an initial assessment of the community, and the available mechanisms to prevent violence and assist victims. The program offers daily extracurricular activities to at-risk youth, and training for local multi-stakeholders in the communities on prevention of violence and assistance to victims;

- Creation of a community-based center of reference for the assistance of victims, families, and witnesses of violence and crime committed using firearms to interrupt violence cycles;
- Development of a regional educational training program to prevent and address gender-based violence;
- Development and implementation of at least two community weapons collection campaigns, including education strategies to sensitise the population and encourage voluntary weapons turn-in. The campaigns will highlight the connection between gender-based violence and the misuse of firearms, as most GBV victims have been intimidated or killed with them<sup>5</sup>;
- Support for national and local authorities in the collection, storage, transportation, and destruction of SALW and ammunition collected. This will be done in coordination with activities conducted under Objective 2 of the project to optimise resources.

## Outputs

- Capacities of at least two hotspot communities' to support at-risk youth, assist victims and survivors, and prevent gun violence improved;
- Life-skills of at least 160 students from two hotspot communities improved through training and daily after-school performing activities;
- At least 150 policymakers, government officials, services providers, community leaders, teachers, parents, and civil society trained on prevention and interruption of gender-based violence, and assistance to victims;
- One center of reference for violence survivors, families, and witnesses created and operational;
- At least two community weapons collection campaigns developed and implemented.

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://unoda-web.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/MOSAIC-06.10-2017EV1.0.pdf>

**Objective 5: To develop a Central American Firearms Roadmap to equip the countries with a practical and management tool through a regional, coordinated, and evidence-based approach**

### **Activities**

- Elaboration of a methodology to develop the Central American Roadmap, in consultation with experts in the field and with the validation of the countries;
- Development of a needs assessment, in consultation with Central American governments;
- Development of a draft Central American Firearms Roadmap, taking into account the needs assessment, international legal frameworks, and good practices;
- Validation of the draft Roadmap through a round of consultations with countries and stakeholders; and
- External communication and outreach to mobilise partners to support the implementation of the Central American Firearms Roadmap.

### **Outputs**

- Methodology to develop roadmap elaborated and validated with stakeholders;
- Needs assessment developed to determine the principal threats, gaps, vulnerabilities, and priorities of the Central American countries;
- Two workshops implemented to collect inputs and feedback to the draft of the Central American Firearms Roadmap, with the participation of national authorities and organisations working in the field;
- Central American Roadmap developed and presented to countries of the region;
- Communication campaign developed to disseminate the Central American Firearms Roadmap, obtain its political approval, and gather partners' support for its implementation.

## **5. Duration**

The total estimated duration of the comprehensive regional Phase II will be 36 months.

## 6. Technical implementing entity

The technical implementation of this program is entrusted to the Department of Public Security of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (DPS/OAS). The DPS/OAS has an advantageous position to support the countries of the Americas considering its double role as a Technical co-Secretariat of CIFTA, and as the technical and operational body of the OAS in this matter. In this role, the OAS-DPS has implemented projects and programs to support OAS Member States in fulfilling their obligations to ensure the security of national firearms stockpiles, to implement legislative measures to establish the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms as criminal offenses under domestic law, to require firearms marking, and to exchange information with other CIFTA signatories concerning tracing information and patterns of illicit trafficking. No other regional or sub-regional organisation covering all of the Americas has the political influence, technical expertise, or geographical reach to be able to support and assist all American states.

During Phase II, the DPS/OAS will also continue coordinating and collaborating with other institutions and organisations during the execution of the project. The DPS/OAS engaged a number of them in Phase I and expects to continue collaborating on specific issues to promote the initiative in the region, including the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC), the Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (CARICOM IMPACS), Inter-American Defence Board, The Ammunition Management Advisory Team of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (AMAT- GICHD), Golden West Humanitarian Foundation, INTERPOL, the US Department of State, and the Humanitarian Demining Training Center of the US Department of Defense. The DPS focuses on establishing a close relationship with all these other entities also working in the field to maximise the benefits of the action by using the complementing expertise of the organisations. Particularly, during Phase II, DPS/OAS will aim to strengthen the collaboration with the sub-regional organisations, such as CARICOM-IMPACS and SICA (Central America Integration System) to support the implementation of the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap, and coordinate the development of the Central-American Firearms Roadmap.

## 7. Relevance

### A. “Securing Arms, Protecting Citizens”: EU Strategy against Illicit Firearms, Small Arms and Light Weapons, and their Ammunition, adopted by the Council on 19 November 2018

The objectives, activities, and expected outcomes of this project are aligned to the goals and the approach of the European Union Strategy “Securing Arms, Protecting Citizens”. In that regard, the Council of the European Union decided to fund Phase I of this initiative in order to foster multilateralism and synergies between the European Union and the OAS to reduce armed violence and criminal activity, and it contemplated the priorities established in the strategy. Phase II, as a continuation of those efforts, maintains this paradigm and approach, and it complements the global work of the European Union in this area by targeting a region seriously affected by the proliferation, excessive accumulation, and trafficking of SALW.

Specifically, Phase II reflects the following priorities of the Strategy:

2.1. Strengthening the Normative Framework: The activities of Objective 1 of the Action seek to ensure countries harmonise their legislation to the international standards, and have tools available to better the implementation of the conventions;

2.2.2 Controls on the export of firearms and their ammunition: The development of the electronic tool of the MCTA, on Objective 3, addresses the importance of controlling the legal trade to avoid diversions to the illicit market;

2.2.3 Secure SALW and ammunition stockpile management: Objective 2 has a series of activities focusing on PSSM, including training of officials, and technical and material assistance for improvement of practices and facilities, following the international standards of MOSAICS and IATGs;

2.2.4 Responsible disposal of SALW and their ammunition: Objective 2 includes training, material assistance, supervision, and certification of the destruction processes of firearms and ammunition to countries that so require;

2.2.5 Cross-cutting issues: Objective 3 includes a series of IT solutions and tools to foster cooperation and information sharing across the countries of the region.

To maximise the impact of those activities, DPS/OAS will support complementary activities including the reduction of the demand for firearms by implementing preventing actions, and collection programs, and the development of a Central American Roadmap, as a concrete tool to coordinate and improve efforts in this region.

**B. EU Council Decision 2011/428/CFSP of 18 July 2011 in support of United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs activities to implement the United Nations Programme of Actions to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects<sup>6</sup>**

The Council Decision promotes three principal objectives: (1) the implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects at both the global and regional levels, (2) support for the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), and (3) support for the development and implementation of UN technical guidelines for ammunition stockpile management.

Each of these objectives is consistent with the overall aims of specific provisions of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (CIFTA) and its Courses of Action. CIFTA establishes several mandatory recommendations to State Parties, including the establishment of jurisdiction over criminal offenses; mandatory marking of firearms; maintenance of records for tracing; improvement of transfer controls; and cross-national cooperation. The CIFTA Course of Action 2018-2022 reinforces the aims of the CIFTA States Parties in these areas in consonance with the UN Program of Action and 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.

---

<sup>6</sup> OJ L 188, 19.7.2011, p. 37.

The DPS/OAS continues to implement operational programs to support countries in building their capacities to comply with their obligations under CIFTA. Phase II was designed to continue this assistance considering the priorities established by CIFTA State Parties in the Course of Action 2018-2022, particularly the following: 1. Firearms Marking and Tracing; 2. Import and Export; 3. Legislative Measures; and 4. Stockpile Management and Destruction.

## **8. Reporting**

The DPS/OAS will prepare regular reports, in line with the negotiated Delegation Agreement.

## **9. Total cost**

The total estimated funding sought from the EU for the implementation of Phase II is EUR – **around EUR 4,2 million**. The General Secretariat of the OAS will provide in-kind contributions for the execution of the program and will seek other in-kind support (such as the one provided by the Spanish Government in Phase I).

---