

DRAFT INTERNATIONAL **ISACS** SMALL ARMS CONTROL **05.31** STANDARD

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Tracing illicit small arms and light weapons

Request for feedback

The United Nations invites feedback on this draft ISACS module from qualified practitioners and policymakers from all sectors of the small arms and light weapons community of practice – e.g. governments (including police and military); international, regional and sub-regional organizations; civil society and industry – and from all regions of the world.

Feedback on this and all other draft ISACS modules may be provided on an online workspace. For details, please visit www.un-casa-isacs.org

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This document is in draft form. As such, it is not complete, has not been adopted by the United Nations and may not be referred to as an international standard.

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Contents	Page
Foreword	iv
Introduction	vi
1 Scope	1
2 Normative references	1
3 Terms and definitions	1
4 General provisions	2
5 National point(s) of contact on tracing	2
5.1 Single or multiple points of contact	2
5.2 Responsibilities	2
5.3 Resource requirements	3
5.4 Standard operating procedures	3
6 Identification of small arms and light weapons	3
6.1 Essential information	3
6.2 Additional information	3
7 National tracing system	4
7.1 Weapons subject to domestic tracing	4
7.2 Extent of domestic tracing	4
7.3 Previously exported small arms and light weapons	4
7.4 Domestic information exchange	5
7.5 Databases	5
8 Domestic tracing operations	5
8.1 General procedure	5
8.2 Specific procedures	6
8.3 Domestic tracing operations in response to international tracing requests	6
9 International tracing operations	6
9.1 Routing international tracing requests	6
9.2 Content of international tracing requests	7
10 Responding to international tracing requests	7
10.1 Acknowledgement of receipt	7
10.2 Verification of completeness	7
10.3 Restrictions on the use of information	7
10.4 Information to be provided	8
10.5 Timeframes	9
11 International cooperation and assistance	9
11.1 General	9
11.2 INTERPOL	10
11.3 Regional organizations	10
11.4 Investigations of violations of UN arms embargoes	10
11.5 Nongovernmental actors	10
11.6 Information exchange	10
12 Reporting on implementation of tracing measures	11
12.1 Frequency of reporting	11
12.2 Content of reports	11
13 Tracing illicit parts, components and ammunition	11
Annex A (informative) The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)	13
Bibliography	15

Foreword

The United Nations (UN) Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) mechanism strives to improve the UN's ability to work as one in delivering effective policy, programming and advice to Member States on curbing the uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. Established by the Secretary-General in 1998 with the task of coordinating the small arms work of the United Nations, CASA today unites more than 20 UN bodies active in policy development and/or programming related to small arms and light weapons.¹

Building on previous UN initiatives to develop international standards in the areas of mine action (International Mine Action Standards) and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants (Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards), the United Nations is developing a series of International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) with the aim of providing clear and comprehensive guidance to practitioners and policymakers on fundamental aspects of small arms and light weapons control. This document forms part of the ISACS series, as outlined in the table opposite.

ISACS are framed by existing global agreements related to small arms and light weapons control, in particular

- the *UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons In All Its Aspects* (UN PoA);
- 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) and;
- the *UN 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).

ISACS build upon standards, best practice guidelines, model regulations, etc. that have been elaborated at the regional and sub-regional levels and they seek to cover the fundamental areas of small arms and light weapons control on which the United Nations may be called upon to provide advice and guidance.

This ISACS module is being drafted in accordance with the rules given in ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2, *Rules for the structure and drafting of International Standards*, under the oversight of the CASA Working Group on ISACS, co-chaired by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

¹ Current members of the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) mechanism are: Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA); Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO); Department of Political Affairs (DPA); Department of Public Information (DPI); Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA); International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO); Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA); Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide (OSAPG); Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG/CAAC); Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT); United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR); United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS); United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) acts as the focal point of CASA.

Working Outline of ISACS

SERIES	MODULE
01 Introduction to ISACS	01.10 Guide to the application of ISACS
	01.20 Glossary of terms, definitions and abbreviated terms
02 Small arms and light weapons control in context	02.10 Small arms and light weapons control in the context of preventing armed violence
	02.20 Small arms and light weapons control in the context of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
	02.30 Small arms and light weapons control in the context of Security Sector Reform
03 Legislative and Regulatory	03.10 National controls over the manufacture of small arms and light weapons
	03.20 National controls over the international transfer of small arms and light weapons
	03.21 National controls over the end-user and end-use of internationally transferred small arms and light weapons
	03.30 National controls over the access of civilians to small arms and light weapons
	03.40 National coordinating mechanisms on small arms and light weapons control
	03.50 International legal cooperation, criminal offenses and investigations
04 Design and Management	04.10 Designing and implementing National Action Plans
	04.20 Designing and implementing community safety programming
	04.30 Raising awareness of the need for small arms and light weapons control
	04.40 Monitoring, evaluation and reporting
05 Operational Support	05.10 Conducting small arms and light weapons surveys
	05.20 Stockpile management: Weapons
	05.21 Stockpile management: Ammunition
	05.30 Marking and recordkeeping
	05.31 Tracing illicit small arms and light weapons
	05.40 Collection
	05.50 Destruction: Weapons
	05.51 Destruction: Ammunition
	05.60 Border controls and law enforcement cooperation
06 Crosscutting Issues	06.10 Gender and small arms and light weapons
	06.20 Children, Youth and small arms and light weapons

Introduction

Most illicit small arms and light weapons begin as legally manufactured or imported weapons that are subsequently diverted to the illicit realm.

Tracing is the systematic tracking of illicit small arms or light weapons from their point of manufacture or import, through their lines of supply, to their last legal title-holder, in order to determine the point, in space and time, at which they were diverted.

Reliably identifying the point of diversion is crucial to preventing future diversions. Tracing the origin of small arms and light weapons that are recovered in crime, for example, enables law enforcement officials to develop investigative leads that may link a suspect to a weapon in a criminal investigation, identify suspected arms traffickers, and detect patterns of intra-state, interstate and international arms trafficking.

Similar benefits accrue from tracing illicit small arms or light weapons recovered in the context of armed conflict. The challenges are often greater in such cases, however, since circuitous arms trafficking routes are often involved, not to mention falsified documents, second-hand weapons that may have been produced decades before, etc.

For these reasons, the tracing of small arms and light weapons recovered in the context of armed conflict is rarely carried out. This leaves under-used an important means to identify the actors responsible for small arms and light weapons diversions, to hold them to account, and thereby to contribute to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Small arms and light weapons may be recovered from the illicit sphere during law enforcement or military operations, as well as in the context of weapons collection programs (see ISACS 05.40, *Collection*).

Tracing illicit small arms and light weapons involves the following steps:

- the correct identification of the weapon based on its physical characteristics and markings;
- a determination of whether the weapon was diverted while under national jurisdiction (i.e. following its legal manufacture in, or legal import into, the State where it was recovered);
 - a weapon determined to have been diverted while under national jurisdiction becomes the subject of a national tracing operation;
 - a weapon determined to have been illicitly trafficked into the country becomes the subject of an international tracing operation;
- the tracing operation (national or international) identifies the point (in time and space) at which the weapon became illicit;
- Following a successful tracing operation, action is taken to prevent similar diversions from happening again.

Tracing illicit small arms and light weapons

1 Scope

This International Small Arms Control Standard establishes the guiding principles and operational methodology for the tracing, in a timely and reliable manner, of illicit small arms and light weapons. It covers the establishment of an effective national infrastructure for tracing illicit small arms and light weapons in domestic records and for initiating and responding to international tracing requests.

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.

International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (International Tracing Instrument);

Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UN Firearms Protocol);

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).

3 Terms and definitions

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

In all ISACS 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.
- 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 not 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 General provisions

Small arms or light weapons recovered in contexts that breach national and/or international law shall be the subject of tracing operations. This includes small arms or light weapons that are

- a) manufactured, assembled, held, stockpiled, or transferred without a valid license from or authorization by the relevant authority of the State that recovered the weapons;
- b) not individually marked with a unique marking; or
- c) transferred internationally in violation of arms embargoes decided by the United Nations Security Council.

All recovered illicit small arms and light weapons shall be the subject of a domestic tracing operation with the aim of determining whether the weapons were diverted to the illicit realm while under the jurisdiction of the State that recovered them.

Those illicit small arms and light weapons that are determined, as a result of a domestic tracing operation, to have been illicitly trafficked into the jurisdiction of the State that recovered them, shall be the subject of an international tracing operation.

Where tracing operations (domestic or international) identify the point at which a small arm or light weapon became illicit, action shall be taken at the national level and, where appropriate, at the international level, to prevent similar diversions re-occurring.

5 National point(s) of contact on tracing

5.1 Single or multiple points of contact

States shall designate one or more national points of contact as the competent national authority (or authorities) on all matters relating to tracing illicit small arms and light weapons. Given the nature of tracing operations, the point(s) of contact should be established within the police force and/or the military.

Where a single national point of contact is designated, it shall have the authority to trace illicit small arms and light weapons in all relevant domestic records.

Where two or more national points of contact are designated, it shall be specified which domestic records each is authorized to use in conducting tracing operations, e.g. those pertaining to law enforcement agencies, manufacturers, dealers, civilians and the military.

5.2 Responsibilities

The national point(s) of contact should be mandated and capacitated to, in a timely and reliable manner,

- a) trace, using domestic records, illicit small arms or light weapons recovered domestically in order to determine whether (and, if so, when, where and by whom) they were diverted from the State's jurisdiction;
- b) initiate and follow through on international tracing requests in relation to illicit small arms or light weapons recovered domestically that were illicitly trafficked into the State's jurisdiction;

- c) respond to incoming international tracing requests in relation to illicit small arms or light weapons recovered abroad; and
- d) report on national implementation of international commitments on tracing illicit small arms and light weapons (see Clause 12).

5.3 Resource requirements

The national point(s) of contact should have available adequate resources to enable it to carry out its functions in a timely and reliable manner. In particular, the point(s) of contact should have

- a) a clear mandate from the appropriate National Authority;
- b) a sufficient number of staff
 - 1) trained to retrieve information from national records of small arms and light weapons and
 - 2) with access to the equipment required to do so; and
- c) adequate financial resources to cover staff, equipment and operational costs.

5.4 Standard operating procedures

Standard operating procedures should be established to provide detailed instructions and comprehensive guidance to the national point(s) of contact on tracing.

Such standard operating procedures should define the roles of the point(s) of contact as well as the methodologies and procedures to be followed in tracing operations and in handling information exchanges as part of such operations.

The national point(s) of contact on tracing should be trained in the application of the standard operating procedures.

6 Identification of small arms and light weapons

6.1 Essential information

The correct initial identification of an illicit small arm or light weapon is vital to maximizing the chances that a tracing operation will be successful. The identification of a weapon for the purpose of a tracing operation shall include its

- a) make,
- b) model,
- c) caliber,
- d) serial number, and
- e) country of manufacture or most recent import.

6.2 Additional information

6.2.1 Physical characteristics

Additional relevant information that may be available should also be provided when identifying a weapon, e.g.

ISACS 05.31:2010(E) – draft 3.0

- a) the location, on the weapon, of the serial number;
- b) the type of action;
- c) the length of the barrel; and
- d) the capacity of the magazine.

6.2.2 Multiple serial numbers and other markings

Where a weapon is assembled from mixed parts bearing different serial numbers and/or bears other marks or numbers – such as proof marks, assembly numbers, military or police identification numbers, patent numbers and/or patent use numbers – all such marks and numbers, along with their location on the weapon, should be provided when identifying a weapon.

The manufacturer (if different from the make) should also be provided.

6.2.3 Photographs

Where possible, photographs should be used to illustrate the essential and additional information required to identify a weapon.

7 National tracing system

7.1 Weapons subject to domestic tracing

A national tracing system shall make possible the timely and reliable domestic tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons that

- a) were legally manufactured and/or assembled under national jurisdiction;
- b) were legally imported into national jurisdiction;
- c) otherwise entered national jurisdiction (e.g. through recovery from the illicit sphere);
- d) left national jurisdiction (e.g. through export or alleged destruction); and
- e) were identified as domestically diverted (e.g. through theft or loss).

7.2 Extent of domestic tracing

A national tracing system shall make possible the timely and reliable domestic tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons from their manufacture, import or other point of entry into national jurisdiction up to

- a) the last legal possessor of the weapon; or
- b) the point at which the weapon left national jurisdiction (e.g. through destruction or export).

7.3 Previously exported small arms and light weapons

In cases where a recovered illicit small arm or light weapon is determined to have previously left the national jurisdiction through export, the national tracing system should make it possible to identify

- a) the recipient of the weapons,

- b) the actor(s) involved in the transfer (e.g. transport agents and brokers), and,
- c) the associated financial transactions, if applicable.

7.4 Domestic information exchange

Separate systems may be used, at the national level, for tracing small arms and light weapons that are held and/or controlled by different agencies of the State (e.g. law enforcement, armed forces, etc.). In such cases, it should be possible to exchange information quickly between the different tracing systems in use. To achieve this, it may be necessary to have in place a legislative or regulatory framework to enable efficient exchange of information, at the national level, regarding domestic tracing operations.

7.5 Databases

The centralized collection and analysis of data on recovered illicit small arms and light weapons and on their tracing can assist in the identification and design of counter-measures to prevent future diversions of small arms and light weapons.

One or more national electronic databases containing the details of all illicit small arms and light weapons recovered within the jurisdiction of the State, should be created. These databases should also record the progress and outcomes of domestic and international tracing operations.

Where more than one database exists, they may be networked so as to allow for the efficient searching of all databases from a single location.

8 Domestic tracing operations

8.1 General procedure

On the recovery of an illicit small arm or light weapon, the following general procedure should be followed:

- a) The national point(s) of contact on tracing of the State in whose jurisdiction the weapon was recovered should be informed and provided with details of the weapon's identification, in accordance with **Clause 6**.
- b) The point(s) of contact, using relevant domestic records, should determine whether the weapon in question was
 - 1) diverted while under national jurisdiction (e.g. after having been legally held by the State or by a private individual within the jurisdiction of the State); or
 - 2) diverted after having left national jurisdiction (e.g. following export or alleged destruction);
- c) Where a determination of diversion, as outlined in (b) above, cannot be established using domestic records, the point(s) of contact should investigate the likelihood of the weapon in question having been
 - 1) illicitly trafficked into the State, or
 - 2) illicitly manufactured in the State.
- d) Where it is determined that the weapon in question was
 - 1) diverted while under national jurisdiction or

- 2) illicitly manufactured within national jurisdiction,
investigations shall be carried out with the goal of
 - 3) determining the point, in space and time, of the diversion or illicit manufacture,
 - 4) identifying the individuals responsible for the diversion or illicit manufacture,
 - 5) taking effective action (e.g. prosecuting those involved, strengthening national legislative and regulatory frameworks, etc.) to ensure that similar diversions or illicit manufacture do not re-occur.
- e) Where, on the other hand, it is determined that the weapon in question was
- 1) diverted after having left national jurisdiction and/or
 - 2) illicitly trafficked into the State,
the national point(s) of contact shall direct an international tracing request to
 - 3) the State to which the weapon was exported, or
 - 4) the State of manufacture or last legal import of the weapon (derived from markings on the weapon).

8.2 Specific procedures

The specific procedures for tracing illicit small arms and light weapons in domestic records will depend on the nature of the national tracing infrastructure. A point of contact in a State that maintains a centralized record-keeping system will usually need only to consult that system.

A point of contact in a State that maintains a non-centralized record-keeping should first determine which records need to be consulted (e.g. those held by official State agencies or by private manufacturers and dealers) and then request the tracing-related information from the relevant State or non-state body.

8.3 Domestic tracing operations in response to international tracing requests

The procedures outlined in this Clause should also be applied when conducting domestic tracing operations in response to international tracing requests.

9 International tracing operations

9.1 Routing international tracing requests

International tracing requests shall be addressed, in writing, by the national point of contact making the request to the national point(s) of contact on tracing in the State that, according to the result of the domestic tracing operation, most recently exercised jurisdiction over the weapon in question. Moving from most- to least-recent, these may be

- a) the State to which the weapon was exported (derived from domestic records),
- b) the State that most recently imported the weapon (derived from markings on the weapon), or
- c) the State in which the weapon was manufactured (derived from marking on the weapon)

Assistance with international tracing operations may also be requested of partners other than States (see Clause 11).

9.2 Content of international tracing requests

9.2.1 Essential information

An international tracing request should contain

- a) contextual information regarding the illicit nature of the weapon, including the legal justification for the tracing request and, to the extent possible, the circumstances under which the illicit weapon was recovered;
- b) the grounds for believing that the State in receipt of the international tracing request held the most recent legal authority over the weapon;
- c) a correct identification of the weapon in accordance with Clause 6;
- d) a request for information regarding the history of the weapon while under the legal jurisdiction of the State in receipt of the international tracing request; and
- e) the purpose and intended use of the information sought.

9.2.2 Additional information

An international tracing request should also contain any additional information that might assist in tracing the weapon in question, e.g. the quantity, date, and place of recovery of the weapon(s), the individuals who were detained with the recovered weapon(s), etc.

10 Responding to international tracing requests

10.1 Acknowledgement of receipt

An acknowledgement of receipt of an international tracing request should be issued within seven days of receipt of the request.

10.2 Verification of completeness

An incoming international tracing request should first be checked for completeness in accordance with Clause 9.2.

A request that does not contain the information required by Clause 9.2 should be returned with a request to re-submit it with all of the necessary information.

Where the requesting point of contact indicates that it is not possible to provide all of the information required by Clause 9.2, but where the information provided is sufficient for a tracing operation to have a reasonable chance of success, the request should be processed in accordance with the remainder of this clause.

10.3 Restrictions on the use of information

The recipient of an international tracing request may impose restrictions on the use of all or part of the information provided in response to the request (e.g. proprietary information relating to commercial transactions). Such restrictions should, however, be kept to the minimum required by law.

The initiator of the request shall comply with any such restrictions, subject to national and/or international legal obligations.

Where it is not possible, for legal reasons, for such restrictions to be complied with, the initiator of the tracing request shall inform the recipient of the tracing request of this in advance.

10.4 Information to be provided

All available information sought by the requesting Point of Contact that is relevant to tracing the weapon should be provided.

Such information should provide a full history of the weapon for as long as it was under the legal control of the State and shall, at a minimum, provide information on the last legal possessor of the weapon before it left the jurisdiction of the State or was internally diverted.

10.4.1 In case of legal manufacture or import

If the weapon concerned was legally manufactured in or imported into the jurisdiction of the requested State, information in response to a tracing request may include

- a) confirmation of the manufacture or import;
- b) relevant information on the manufacturer or importer;
- c) date of manufacture or import; and
- d) any additional information that could assist in tracing the weapon.

EXAMPLE Examples of such additional information include hidden or other identification markings, special characteristics, the date of technical testing, identification of the testing body, etc.

10.4.2 In case of internal transfer

If the weapon concerned was transferred legally within the jurisdiction of the requested state, information in response to a tracing request may include

- a) the date of transfer(s);
- b) information on the final consignee(s);
- c) details of the transfer license(s), if applicable; and
- d) any additional information that could assist in tracing the weapon.

10.4.3 In case of export

If the weapon concerned was exported from the requested state, information in response to a tracing request may include information on

- a) the date of export;
- b) the importing state;
- c) transit states where relevant;
- d) the final consignee;
- e) details of the import, export and in-transit licenses; and
- f) any additional information that could assist in tracing the weapon.

10.4.4 In case of internal diversion

If the weapon concerned was diverted while under the jurisdiction of the requested state, information in response to a tracing request may include

- a) confirmation and details of the diversion;
- b) information on the last legal possessor of the weapon; and
- c) any additional information that could assist in tracing the weapon.

The requested point of contact should also specify whether an investigation into the circumstances of the diversion has been launched or is envisaged.

10.5 Timeframes

10.5.1 General

Responses to international tracing requests shall be timely. As a general guide, responses should be provided within **three** weeks of receipt of the request.

10.5.2 Delays and restrictions

The requested Point of Contact may delay, or restrict the content of, the response to a tracing request, or may refuse to provide the information sought

- a) if releasing the information would compromise ongoing criminal investigations or violate legislation providing for the protection of confidential information;
- b) if the requesting Point of Contact cannot guarantee the confidentiality of the information; or
- c) for reasons of national security consistent with the Charter of the United Nations.

If a requested Point of Contact delays or provides a restricted response to a tracing request, or refuses to provide the information sought, it will inform the requesting Point of Contact of the reasons for this. The requesting Point of Contact may subsequently seek clarification of this explanation.

11 International cooperation and assistance

11.1 General

Co-operation with other States in tracing illicit small arms and light weapons shall be provided, including by responding in a timely and reliable manner to international tracing requests.

Where required, cooperation and assistance to build capacity to trace illicit small arms and light weapons should be sought. Such cooperation and assistance can be sought from other States, as well as from relevant regional and international organizations, or from other relevant actors.

To request cooperation and assistance, use may be made of the “matching needs with resources” tool on the UN PoA-ISS website [\[insert link\]](#).

Where possible, cooperation and assistance that is requested should be provided. Such cooperation or assistance can be technical or financial in nature and can be provided bilaterally or multilaterally.

Technical assistance may include

- a) training (e.g. in the correct identification of small arms and light weapons, as well as in conducting tracing operations and investigations); and
- b) transfer of technology that facilitates the tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons.

11.2 INTERPOL

The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) provides valuable assistance to its Member States in tracing small arms recovered in crime, including through its Firearms Reference Table, Firearms Trace Request, and Ballistics Information Network.

In order to take full advantage of this assistance in tracing, a State that is a member of INTERPOL should ensure that its INTERPOL National Central Bureau, which links domestic law enforcement to INTERPOL, is fully operational.

NOTE Further information on INTERPOL's role in tracing small arms recovered in crime is contained in **Annex A** of this module).

11.3 Regional organizations

A State that is not a member of INTERPOL but that is a member of a regional organization that facilitates the tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons should make use of the assistance provided by the regional organization, for example:

11.3.1 Economic Community of West African States

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is mandated to assist member States in tracing illicit small arms and light weapons. An ECOWAS member State may request the ECOWAS Commission to initiate and conduct an international tracing operation on its behalf.

11.4 Investigations of violations of UN arms embargoes

In the context of tracing illicit small arms and light weapons, all possible cooperation shall be provided to UN panels investigating possible violations of arms embargos mandated by the UN Security Council.

11.5 Nongovernmental actors

Nongovernmental actors can also provide valuable cooperation and assistance in building national tracing capacities, for example by providing training in the correct identification of recovered small arms and light weapons.

Research by nongovernmental actors may also uncover previously unknown cases of diversion that can be followed up on and investigated.

11.6 Information exchange

International information exchanges in the context of tracing operations can be complemented with broader information exchanges that facilitate the identification of points of diversion and overall trafficking patterns. The following types of information can be useful in this regard:

- a) nationally authorized manufacturers, brokers and dealers;
- b) marking systems and techniques in use for marking at the time of manufacture and at import;
- c) the means of concealment and routes used by criminals in trafficking illicit small arms and light weapons as well as the ways of detecting such means and routes

- d) transfers of small arms and light weapons (information concerning national legislation, existing practices and controls, etc.); and
- e) practices in relation to existing government stockpiles (management, security, surplus, losses, theft and destruction).

12 Reporting on implementation of tracing measures

12.1 Frequency of reporting

National reports detailing efforts to implement the International Tracing Instrument should be submitted every two years to the UN Secretary-General, via the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs.

NOTE Such reports may form part of national reports on the implementation of the UN Programme of Action.

The “Guidelines for reporting on the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument,” available on the UN PoA-ISS website [\[insert link\]](#), may be used for this purpose.

12.2 Content of reports

National reports on tracing illicit small arms and light weapons should include

- a) contact details of the National Point(s) of Contact on tracing;
- b) details of national efforts to implement the International Tracing Instrument;
- c) national experiences in tracing illicit small arms and light weapons, including main challenges and opportunities;
- d) measures taken to ensure that the national tracing system is capable of undertaking timely and reliable domestic traces and of initiating and responding to international tracing requests;
- e) measures taken in the field of international cooperation and assistance on tracing including, as relevant,
 - 1) international cooperation and/or assistance rendered and/or received;
 - 2) priority assistance needs; and
 - 3) types of assistance and cooperation that can be offered to build national tracing capacities.

13 Tracing illicit parts, components and ammunition

The standards contained in this module can also be applied to tracing illicit parts, components and ammunition of small arms and light weapons.

NOTE Under certain circumstances, it can be difficult to trace illicit ammunition; e.g. when ammunition lots with identical markings on the ammunition bodies and/or packaging are transferred to multiple actors (e.g. a single lot of sporting ammunition sold to tens of thousands of customers); or when ammunition transfers are recorded without also recording the ammunition markings. Under other circumstances, however, it may be possible to trace illicit ammunition; e.g. when a particular lot is marked with a unique lot number and is transferred to a single recipient with the transfer adequately recorded (e.g. ammunition produced under contract for military forces).

ISACS 05.31:2010(E) – draft 3.0

In order to correctly identify illicit ammunition, information should be provided on as many of the following elements as possible:

- a) manufacturer (or manufacturer's code),
- b) country of manufacture,
- c) lot or batch number,
- d) year of production, and
- e) caliber.

Annex A (informative)

The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)

A.1 General

The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) is represented by a National Central Bureau in each of its 187 member States. Its primary task is the support of law enforcement agencies in member states in crime prevention and the conduct of criminal investigations. It offers member states secure global police communications services, operational data services and databases for police, and operational police support services.

INTERPOL is mandated to assist states in the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument that the UN General Assembly adopted in 2005 (International Tracing Instrument, paragraphs 33-35). INTERPOL's role is specified to facilitate tracing operations and assist in investigations to identify and trace illicit SALW when requested by a member State.

INTERPOL developed the INTERPOL Firearms Trace Request, which complements the existing communication system and provides an easy-to-use tool for law enforcement officers to trace firearms that were recovered during an investigation. INTERPOL also makes available the INTERPOL Firearms Reference Table (IFRT) to assist member States in the correct identification of firearms recovered in crime.

A.2 INTERPOL Firearms Trace Request

INTERPOL's Firearms Programme comprises a three-pronged approach to assist member States with obtaining the most firearms intelligence possible using the information on the outside of the firearm and the data that can be gleaned from the inside of the firearm to prevent and solve crime. The INTERPOL Firearms Trace Request gives the investigator the international communications tool to request, from the country of manufacture or legal import, the firearm's ownership history. It is available on the INTERPOL I-24/7 Network in all four official INTERPOL languages.

Illicit firearms traced through INTERPOL are checked against firearms reported to INTERPOL by member States as lost or stolen. INTERPOL also checks available information in relation to the individual from whom the firearm was recovered, as well as his/her passport and vehicle, against relevant INTERPOL databases. Global participation in firearms tracing through INTERPOL would establish the system as a crucial central point for tracing illicit firearms in the context of law enforcement investigations.

A.3 INTERPOL Firearms Reference Table

INTERPOL assists member States in the identification of illicit firearms by hosting a comprehensive and continually upgraded library of most firearms types and models in existence. The INTERPOL Firearms Reference Table (IFRT) facilitates the correct identification of the recovered firearm prior to submitting a tracing request. It forms part of INTERPOL's aim to provide a web based solution to identifying and tracing illicit firearms.

The IFRT is an easy-to-use system containing over 250,000 firearms references and 57,000 high quality images. The web-based application, currently available in French and English, was developed by INTERPOL using data supplied and annually updated by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

A.4 INTERPOL Ballistic Information Network

The third prong of INTERPOL's Firearms Programme is the INTERPOL Ballistic Information Network (IBIN), currently under development. IBIN will be the first large-scale international platform for the sharing and comparing of ballistics data. IBIN will connect the member Countries/territories that have the IBIS© technology and wish to participate. It will also connect countries or regional alliances who may acquire the system in the future.

It is anticipated that IBIN will link separate crimes across international borders that would otherwise not have been known to law enforcement. Over time, the analysis of the shared ballistic data is expected to reveal illicit firearms trafficking routes and provide police with critical information about firearms traffickers and other violent criminals.

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