EUROPEAN UNION

EU-Assistance on curbing Small Arms and light weapons in Cambodia

EU-ASAC

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Lessons Learned from the EU ASAC project
for
Guidelines for setting up a SALW Security and Management Project

I.   PRELIMINARY ACTIVITIES AND PROJECT DESIGN:

1. A SALW Security Project will have political and social implications for the country or region where it is implemented, therefore the support of Government(s)/Regional Authority is essential and they should then preferably claim ownership of the project with the implementing agency "in support of" what is then in essence a government programme.

2. An integrated multi-facetted programme is likely to have the most impact. Separate, but simultaneously implemented programmes can be set up covering elements such as:
   - strengthening legal framework for weapons management and possession
   - weapons collection
   - weapons registration and safe storage for security forces
   - other security sector reform activities
   - public awareness programmes on SALW security
   - weapons destruction.

3. The aims of the Project should be clearly laid out in order of priority, for example:
   - weapons collection from general public
   - weapons collection from demobilised soldiers
   - strengthening legal framework for weapons management and possession
   - secure storage and registration of SALW belonging to security forces
   - weapons destruction
   - other security sector reform activities, i.e. training to improve police/community relations
   - public awareness.

   As many Performance Indicators should be built into the project design by which the progress and success of the project can be measured, both at key stages during its implementation and also at its conclusion.

4. From the beginning there should be contact to the National (and Regional) SALW Focal Points in Government and the appointment of specific Liaison Officers for the Project. These Liaison Officers should have easy access to senior levels of their Ministry (e.g. Defence, Interior, Justice). It is important not only to keep the Liaison

Officers well informed on developments in the project and of on-going achievements, but it must be ensured that regular progress reports reach the National Focal Points and the Ministers.

5. It may not be possible to set up a nationwide/region wide programme for important project components such as weapons collection from the public and weapons registration and safe storage for the military and police. In this case pilot projects tackling specific areas with specific strategies should be chosen in co-operation with the national/regional authorities. In a limited pilot project care must be taken to ensure that the "security problem" does not merely move to a neighbouring area.

6. The organisation and administration of the Project must be clear: Is there a specific time frame for the entire project? Is funding secured for the entire project (or at least a three-year period) or must funding be found on an annual basis? For planning and management purposes it is highly desirable – and almost essential – that a multi-year programme be approved. Climatic seasons may not fit properly into an administrative calendar-year and project cycle; it may not be possible to collect weapons or build development incentives during the rainy season.

7. The initial Project design should be made by a (team of) experienced SALW expert(s) in conjunction with government/regional representatives following general guidelines from donors/interested agencies. However, once the initial broad design has been produced, producing the next stage of detailed planning for each project component can be delegated to the Project Manager who is appointed to implement the project. The Project Manager must not only consult the government/regional officials, but should as far as possible design the activities (particularly of weapons collection) after consultations with all level of society, i.e. national, provincial and local authorities as well as people who are holding weapons.

II. DESIGN OF PROJECT COMPONENTS:

8. Strengthening the legal framework:

8.1 An Arms Law: In the longer term, it is important that, in a country where a small arms and light weapons programme is being implemented, there is a legal framework in place in the country that clearly regulates the management and possession of SALW in society. This enables both the implementing agency and the government to have clear legal indicators within which they can work.

8.2 The status of weapons: The government must decide whether private possession of SALW is to be banned entirely (the so-called "weapons-free society") or whether certain members of the public can be licensed to carry certain categories of weapons. In the latter case the categories of weapons and the conditions under which they must be stored and can be carried and used must be fully laid out in the law.

8.3 Amnesty: It is also important to discuss whether a period of amnesty be built into the law to allow citizens the chance to hand in illegal weapons before the law takes effect.

8.4 Technical legal expert: While drawing up a draft law is the joint responsibility of several involved ministries (Interior, Defence, Justice), they may need technical assistance from an outside expert. This can be provided by the Project. In the initial stages of implementing the Project, this legal expert can also act as general legal adviser to the Project Manager on a wide range of subjects relating to the Project. In practice this has been found to be very useful.

8.5   Involvement of civil society: It is desirable that civil society, including if possible women's groups, be given a chance to discuss the law at an early draft stage, comment upon it and propose possible alterations. A joint working committee of government and civil society representatives to prepare a final version of the law would ensure its acceptability by a broad spectrum of society.

8.6   Public awareness and police training: It is important for the public to be made aware of the present laws surrounding ownership and use of small arms and light weapons. Once the new Arms Law is in place, it is important that steps are taken to train the police in understanding and applying the law, as well as informing the public of the implications of the law.

9.   Weapons collection:

9.1   Weapons collection:

9.1.1   Before designing any weapons collection campaign it is important to know which weapons are targeted for collection. Mostly the target will be left-over weapons of war, which, if freely available, may give the impression of being the only weapons in circulation. However, sometimes there are also weapons used by criminals which have another origin and other circulation patterns. Collection of these "criminal" weapons can greatly complicate any weapons collection campaign as it then also becomes an "anti-crime" campaign. It is recommended that criminal weapons be the responsibility of the Security authorities and not part of programme.

9.1.2   It is important to know why the people are holding the weapons and what incentive would interest them to give them up? Do men, women and youth view the possession and surrender of weapons differently etc. and must the project design include separate activities based on gender differences?

9.1.3   If possible a baseline survey should be done in an attempt to establish approximately the number and types of weapons in the communities which are the target areas. While this is desirable, it is very often not feasible, given the political pressure to start immediately with the actual collection of weapons and not spend months doing a survey before actual collection starts. However survey statistics do provide useful Performance Indicators.

9.1.4   There are several different types of weapons collection techniques: forced searches, incentives to individuals or communities to handover weapons and weapons buy-backs. Incentives can takes the form of Weapons for Development, but also Weapons in Competition for Development where communities try to collect more weapons than others with a development object as a prize and even a lottery where each person handing in a weapons receives a ticket for a lottery with a prize such as a motor car. Weapons buy-backs are not advised as this very often stimulates arms trade with new weapons being bought with the money received for handing in old ones and attracting arms traders to the area.

9.1.4   In designing any weapons collection programme attention must be paid to making plans for the secure storage of the collected weapons and their transport to central police or military depots.

9.2   Weapons for Development (WfD):

9.2.1   It must be clear in the minds of all stakeholders that Weapons for Development (WfD) is not essentially a development project, but is one way of collecting weapons from the community. The development incentives are the "rewards" for people to give up their weapons.

9.2.2   Implementing development incentives demands much time and effort of programme staff. By integrating the development incentives into existing programmes (see para. 9.5), this non-SALW-related work can be significantly reduced.

9.2.3   In underdeveloped areas, however, WfD can be a means of jump-starting development as institutional development agencies can see that it is now possible to work in previously unsafe areas. A greater incentive to the community holding weapons to hand them in is then not only a short-term development rewards in terms of the WfD programme, but

also that institutional development agencies will begin working in their community if illegal weapons are handed in.

9.3   WfD with large-scale development:
Large-scale development rewards can be described as schools, clinics or hospitals, roads, bridges etc. While these may be essential to the development of the area and high on the list of priorities of what the local community wants as a reward for handing in weapons, there is one major drawback. For a large development project to be given as a reward for handing in weapons, a large number of weapons must be handed in. To achieve this number, weapons handed in by outlying communities are usually counted. The problem is that these outlying communities are too distant for the residents to enjoy the benefits of the development. The school may just be too far from their village to send their children there. This can undermine the trust of the local population in the WfD project. There can also be a large time gap between the handing in of the weapons and the completion of the large development project. The relationship between handing in weapons and the development reward is then lost. Notwithstanding these drawbacks large-scale development projects can be an effective way of the SALW programme showing that it is serious about assisting the authorities in collecting weapons and that it wishes to ensure a better future for the country.

9.4   WfD small-scale development:
Small-scale development rewards are often water wells of fishponds of duck ponds. The advantage of these development incentives is that they are community-based. Villagers who hand in weapons can usually all benefit from a water well built in the immediate vicinity. It also takes less time to plan and build a water well than a large-scale development incentive, so the time gap between handing in weapons and receiving the development reward is considerably shorter.

9.5   Development rewards integrated into government development programmes:
Where possible development rewards, be they large-scale or small-scale, should be integrated into existing government development programmes. Very often government planning authorities may have plans to provide villages with water wells, bridges, improved roads etc. in the (longer-term) future. Negotiations should take place with government planning authorities to find out what the development plans and priorities are for the WfD target areas and, once a decision has been made where development rewards will be offered, ensure that these development rewards are in line with the government planning. In effect the WfD programme then pays for a development object that the government was planning to implement at a later stage. It should also be agreed with the government authorities that they will take responsibility for maintaining the development object once it has been built. In this way the WfD programme becomes closely imbedded in the government's own programme.

9.6   The role of Local Field Managers:
The appointment of a Local Field Manager can be crucial to the success of any WfD project. The Field Manager must be able to keep in touch with the people possessing illegal weapons as well as the local police and government authorities and must be able to build and maintain the confidence of all parties concerned, while informing the WfD Project Officer of all relevant developments in implementing the project.

9.7   Public awareness/education as part of weapons collection:
9.7.1   Effective public awareness is the key to all weapons collection programmes; those people holding weapons illegally must be persuaded that it is in their best interests to hand in their weapons to the local authorities. While a national programme of public awareness is useful, it is necessary to specifically have public awareness campaigns focussed on the weapons collection target areas. Local NGO's, which have a good understanding of the local situation, should be trained to hold public education meetings with the local communities.

9.7.2   Special public education materials such as posters, booklets (with little text and much visual imagery) and video programmes should be designed and produced for the project. This ensures that the Project Officer knows that a standardised package is being explained to the people and that each NGO's cannot make up and use their own material.

9.7.3   The public education meetings should be held in spaces that are easily accessible for the local population and where they feel comfortable being present. (In Cambodia mostly pagodas were used. This had the additional advantage that the local monks attended the courses, lending their moral authority to the concept of handing in illegal weapons.)

9.7.4   The effect of the public education meetings is strengthened if not only the local population is present but also representatives of the local authorities and the local police. The people attending then get the message that the collection of illegal weapons is an important subject that affects the community as a whole.

9.7.5   The public education meetings form a good venue to take surveys of how the people feel about Human Security in their area.

9.7.6   The people attending the public awareness meetings should leave knowing that handing in any illegal weapon will benefit both the social climate in their community and open up the community to further development.

9.8   *Human security:*
There is one major reason often given by the population for holding weapons illegally and refusing to hand them in to the local authorities. This is that they feel threatened leaving their security in the hands of the police and military as they have little trust in their effectiveness. This perception of the lack of Human Security (whether it is real or not) must be addressed before people can be expected to hand in their weapons and a successful weapons collection campaign can be implemented. Improved perception of Human Security is a key factor to the success of any weapons collection campaign; when the population believe the police can provide security they will be more willing to surrender their weapons. This is the reason why Security Sector Reform (SSR) activities should take place as part of a weapons collection project.

9.9   *Security Sector Reform (SSR) as part of weapons collection*:
9.9.1   One of the reasons the population may feel the police do not provide protection is that the police are too poorly equipped to do their job properly. By providing police in rural areas with extra equipment such as bicycles, motorcycles, two-way radio's the police become more mobile (and therefore they should be more visible in the communities) and their response time when needed should be much faster. Further equipment such as camera's, filing cabinets, whiteboards etc. improves police administrative capacity.

9.9.2   Providing the police in the target areas with extra training to improve the way they relate to the local communities is another way of improving the perception of Human Security. If possible this training should be a joint effort by official police trainers and civil society organisations. This helps reflect the goal of "opening up the police to better communicate with the community". Depending on the previous extent to which the police have been trained, refresher courses in elements of basic police training can be given. It is important that representatives of the community attend these training courses so that they know what training the police have received and what standards they can expect from their local police.

9.9.3   Low police wages may almost force the police to be corrupt and demand payment for their "services" or for "protection". While no SALW project can pay supplements to police wages, projects to improve police family income are a viable alternative. In this case projects involving the wives of policemen are set up aimed at increasing their income in a sustainable way. Care must be taken not to implement projects that will make other women in the community jealous of the police wives because they are receiving support. Good results were achieved in a project training police wives to grow vegetables and raise poultry (and therefore diversify from only growing rice). In this way the police families had more nutritious food and surplus vegetables etc. could be sold on the local market. But a major part of the success

of the project was that the police wives subsequently trained other women in the villages to grow vegetables and raise poultry. By sharing their new skill with others in the community they improved their own status and in their own way helped improve police-community relations and therefore also improve the perception of Human Security.

9.10   Mainstreaming:
If there are institutional development agencies working in or nearby the target areas of a weapons collection programme they should be approached with a view to them "mainstreaming" public education on weapons security into their regular activities. For them it is attractive if they know that people in their own target area have been encouraged to hand in weapons, because the area in then likely to be more stable and conducive to gain full benefits from any development that they may bring. If development agencies take responsibility for public awareness on weapons security and peace education as part of their normal "educational package" this is likely to ensure a longer-term effect than single campaigns through special weapons collection projects.

9.11   Sustainability and exit strategies:
9.11.1   No weapons collection project will continue forever and no weapons collection campaign will ever succeed in collecting 100% of the illegal weapons in the target areas. Therefore in the early stages thought should be given as to what will happen when the project closes (even if this is several years away). Will the government be in a position to continue after a donor-supported project closes? Given the costs involved this is unlikely. The "mainstreaming" of public education into the activities of institutional development agencies with a longer-term commitment to the country can be of some use.
9.11.2   One option is to ensure that, before the end of the weapons collection project, the local authorities on the lowest level receive training in how to improve and be responsible for Weapons Security in their community. In Cambodia this resulted in the Commune Council Capacity Building project (CCCB). With the full knowledge and involvement of provincial government authorities, the official government trainers were themselves trained in how to include Weapons Security training as part of their normal packet of trainings. One of the objectives of the training is to open up lines of communication between the Commune Councils and the Commune police, as it had been noticed that these have separate reporting systems on events relating to local security incidents.
9.11.3   It is certainly recommended that an exit-strategy, such as CCCB, be considered in an early stage of implementing a weapons collection project.

9.12   Weapons collection as part of Disarmament, Demobilisation & Reintegration (DDR):
Weapons collection as part of DDR falls into a different category than the collection of weapons from the local population (unless the DDR failed and former soldiers took their weapons with them back into civilian life). A DDR programme should ensure that any weapons in possession of soldiers marked for demobilisation are handed in to the relevant authorities before the soldier returns to civilian life. Development incentives of "reintegration packages" are also subject to different condition than in a WfD project.

10. Weapons Registration and Safe Storage of the security forces:
10.1   Weapons management:
Improving weapons management within the military and police structures is a key part of Security Sector Reform. A basic principle of a weapons management programme is that the government knows what weapons it possesses, where they are to be found at any one given time and that they are securely stored. One of the major sources of illegal weapons in a community can be "leakages" from military and police supplies into the civilian community. Improving weapons management limits the possibility of these "leakages" as after a weapons registration and safe storage project all weapons should be securely stored and traceable through a computer database.

10.2   Secure storage facilities:

In each administrative Military Region consultations must take place with the Military Commander to determine how many weapons are required in the Military Region both for short-term storage (regular or daily use) and in medium-term storage (reserve weapons which will only be used in an emergency). Once agreement has been reached on these figures, the Project Officer can calculate the number of weapons racks in barracks and offices that are required for short-term storage, and the number and size of buildings required for the medium-term secure storage facilities. The Project Officer is then responsible for arranging for the fabrication and delivery of the short-terms storage racks and the construction of the medium-term storage depots.

Similarly, the Project Officer must negotiate with the relevant authorities of the Ministry of Defence to provide secure safe storage facilities for all weapons in long-term storage, that is the national weapons reserve.

10.3   Weapons registration:

10.3.1 Once all the storage facilities (short-term racks and medium-term depots) have been completed, the agreed number of weapons are then stored in the new facilities and the relevant details of each weapon (make and type of weapon, date of manufacture, condition of weapon and serial number) are noted during a manual registration procedure together with the exact location (building, row, rack and place number) of where each weapon is stored. These details are then later entered into the computer database.

10.3.2 Details of all weapons – in short-term, medium-term and long-term storage facilities – must be registered in a centralised computer database held by the Military High Command and the Ministry of Defence. In practice each administrative Military Region maintains a computer database of the serial numbers and storage locations of each weapon under its control. A copy of the database of each Military Region is sent to the Military High Command and Ministry of Defence so that they have the complete national database at their disposal.

10.3.3 If technically possible, each weapon – apart from the serial number inscribed by the manufacturer – should be marked in such a way as to show the country of ownership, the date of purchase by the military authorities and the country or organisation from which it was purchased. If these details are also entered into the computer database, it facilitates tracing any possible later illegal trading transactions involving these weapons.

10.4   Training:

Extensive training, that is investment in developing human resources, is the key to the success of the registration of weapons. Separate training courses should be organised for:

- High-ranking officers, so that they understand the concepts behind and benefits of a Registration & Safe Storage project;
- Unit commanders in the Military Region, so that they understand the concepts behind and benefits of a Registration & Safe Storage project and will co-operate with the programme to register all the weapons in their units;
- Logistical officers, who must both understand the concepts behind and benefits of a Registration & Safe Storage project and are able to carry out the manual registration of all details required to be entered into the computer database and know how to keep the system up-to-date when weapons are moved, added or removed from the storage facilities; and
- Computer operators, who must be able to enter all registration data into the database, send the details to the Military High Command and Ministry of Defence and keep the database up-to-date when weapons are moved, added or removed from the storage facilities.

The importance of thorough training at all levels to ensure understanding, co-operation and efficient implementation cannot be emphasised enough and this must be planned for in the project budget.

10.5   Destruction of surplus weapons:
At the beginning of the Registration & Safe Storage project negotiations take place with the Military Commander to determine the number of weapons required by the Military Region in short-term and medium term storage. It is highly desirable that there is an agreement with the Ministry of Defence that all weapons above this agreed number will be destroyed at the end of the project. This helps remove surplus weapons from the country, and prevents any chance that the surplus weapons will be "leaked" for illegal purposes to civilians. It is however, possible that the Ministry of Defence may wish to re-allocate these weapons to another Military Region or long-term storage (in which case they must be registered and entered into the computerised database) or that the Ministry of Defence may wish to sell the weapons on the international market. It is, however, highly desirable that the Project Manager tries to negotiate for the destruction of surplus weapons to prevent the further spread of SALW. In addition the destruction of surplus military weapons sends a strong signal to both the local population and the international community that the country is serious about curbing small arms.

11. Weapons destruction:
11.1   Importance of weapons destruction:
11.1.1   Weapons destruction is important to remove surplus weapons from circulation and to ensure that collected or surplus weapons do not re-enter the illegal circuit. In addition, public weapons destruction ceremonies can in certain circumstances play an important part in getting the civilian population to see that the authorities are serious in their efforts to remove SALW from circulation and are making progress. This importance is underlined when it is realised that for the local population a destruction ceremony means the destruction of weapons that have caused them much suffering during periods of conflict. Public ceremonies therefore play a psychological role in putting conflict in the past and preparing for a more secure future.
11.1.2   Despite the impressiveness of the large destruction ceremonies such as a "Flame of Peace", there is much to be said for also organising small "on-the-spot" destruction ceremonies in outlying rural areas where villagers have handed in illegal weapons. They can then see that "their" weapons are immediately destroyed. Otherwise, the weapons are slowly passed on to the headquarters of the provincial police and have to wait many months before a large ceremony is organised. These smaller ceremonies are particularly appropriate in areas where "Weapons for Development" projects are being implemented.

11.2   Types of weapons destruction:
There are many ways in which weapons can be destroyed and studies are available detailing the methodology and advantages and disadvantages of each method. The chosen method (or combination of methods) will often be determined by factors such as available technology, number of weapons to be destroyed, cost per weapon destroyed etc. Some types of weapons destruction are:
- incineration in steel smelters
- cutting
- crushing
- dumping in sea
- burning (as in a "Flame of Peace" ceremony).

12. Public awareness:
Public awareness forms an essential part of a comprehensive weapons management campaign. It must be aimed at making the public aware of the dangers SALW pose to the community, both directly (killing and wounding of people) and indirectly (a community with many weapons is not likely to attract new development). Public awareness can be done:
- on a national level using the media such as radio and television advertisements or incorporating SALW storylines into television drama series;

- by involving the national government and the relevant ministries on a national level spreading information on the irregular use of small arms by the military and police, particularly on a theme such as the adoption of a new Arms Law;
- on a local level using NGO's to travel through target areas spreading brochures, showing video programmes or organising theatrical production on the dangers of SALW in the local communities.
- by erecting billboards in target areas which serve as a constant reminder of the dangers of SALW in the community.

In practice a combination of national and local strategies serves to strengthen the core message of all public awareness activities: SALW are a danger to the community.

13. Evaluation:

13.1 It is important that any SALW project (or even components of larger programmes) be periodically evaluated by an external evaluator. While a Project Manager will be constantly reviewing progress made and seeks to extract Lessons Learned on an ongoing basis, an external evaluator brings fresh insights to reviewing the programme or programme component.

13.2 Where possible Performance Indicators originally incorporated into the project design should be used in evaluating the project together with any other relevant assessment criteria. As a SALW security and management project also has an impact on the political and social levels of society, the evaluation must check with all levels of society, particularly with people in the target areas, as to their experiences throughout the programme and their assessment of the results. As in the project design phase gender and youth must be taken fully into account. The use of questionnaires (for example on the perceptions of Human Security) during the project can also provide statistics to be used as Performance Indicators.

13.3 Any SALW security and management project will finally be judged on the impact it has had on the problems previously caused by SALW in the country, while the donors must be assured that their funds were well managed during the project implementation.

III.   CONCLUSIONS:

14. It must be realised that this paper has been drawn up mostly using lessons learned from the experience of EU ASAC in Cambodia over the period 2000 to 2004. A SALW problem in another country will have a specific set of parameters, but it is to be hoped that the lessons from EU ASAC can be of general assistance in planning a SALW intervention elsewhere.

    In brief, the conclusions of the lessons learned with regard to setting up and implementing a project can be summarised as follows:

    - SALW security and management programmes cannot be solely designed and implemented following technical guidelines; they are inherently political programmes with a profound effect on society and they need to be designed and managed as such. This means that there must be an open contact with the national government or regional authorities.
    - Reducing the threat SALW pose to the security and stability of a country is most likely to be achieved by implementing a comprehensive project comprising of several separate, but complementary programme components. Each programme component strengthens the overall impact and the final result is generally more than the sum of the individual components.
    - A strong legal framework should be in place that both reflects the government's intention to reduce the problems caused by SALW and also gives guidelines within which weapons collection and Security Sector Reform projects can be implemented.

- A comprehensive Weapons for Development project that seeks to improve 'human security' and includes elements of Social Sector Reform to ensure better police-community relations is likely to be successful in stimulating the local population to hand in their illegal weapons.
- The development incentives of a Weapons for Development programme should, whenever possible, be incorporated into the government's local development plans.
- In an early stage of the project an exit-strategy for the Weapons for Development programme (like the Commune Council Capacity Building programme) should be developed whereby local responsibility for weapons security will be ensured once the WfD project ends.
- The provision of high quality weapons storage facilities and a centralised computerised weapons registration system, together with an investment in human capacity has not only improved security by limiting the "leaking" of weapons from the military to civilians, but it has also helped to win the confidence of the Ministry of Defence in the entire programme.
- Once all weapons in a military region have been registered and securely stored, the military authorities can be convinced that they have more weapons than they need and that the surplus can be destroyed.
- For a government that is trying to limit the number of weapons in circulation or create a weapons-free society it is important that the population can feel that progress has been made and that they can see that the collected or surplus weapons are destroyed.
- A combination of national and local public awareness strategies serves to strengthen the core message of all SALW campaigns: illegal weapons are a danger to the community and a community without weapons is likely to attract more development.
- A SALW Security project needs to be evaluated primarily on the impact that it has had on curbing the problems caused by SALW and whether donor funds have been properly managed in achieving the aims of the project.

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