National Civil Society Alliances
for UNTOC Implementation (NACSA4U)
Concept Note

Background:
As part of the work of the UNODC Civil Society Unit (CSU), the project “Stakeholder Engagement for the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), its Review Mechanism and Related Activities”, or SE4U in short, was initiated in 2019. The main objective of the SE4U Project is to facilitate the engagement of non-governmental stakeholders in the UNTOC processes.

One of the key outcomes of the SE4U project is to support voluntary country-specific “Pilot initiatives” (VPI) by interested Member States, aimed at strengthening cooperation at the national level between the government review team and civil society organizations, academia, and the private sector on country-specific transnational organized crime priorities to ensure an effective UNTOC review process.

To facilitate the operationalization of the VPIs and to coordinate national civil society engagement in the implementation of UNTOC, the CSU encourages and supports the establishment of National Civil Society Alliances. The National Civil Society Alliances are opportunities for non-governmental stakeholders’ engagement around organized crime issues, that allow to coordinate their efforts and initiatives in support of the UNTOC or other national responses to organized crime. With the support of the CSU, these Alliances facilitate the engagement with governments and the presentation of centralised contributions that follow the strategies or policies in place at state level.

Objective:
Given the variety of non-governmental stakeholders working at country level around issues of transnational organized crime, it is essential to coordinate the voices and expertise of such actors, to facilitate their engagement with government and streamline communication. The objective of the National Civil Society Alliances is two-fold:

1. To serve as a central unified point for coordination, contributions, and actions of national stakeholders in the fight against transnational organized in the context of the UNTOC review.
2. To allow national governments to have a coordinated mechanism through which to engage non-governmental stakeholders in the review process and help civil society to speak and contribute with a unified voice.

Thematic areas:
The National Civil Society Alliances are wide networks of non-governmental stakeholders working in fighting transnational organized crime in the context of UNTOC. Broad thematic areas include but are not limited to:

- The UNTOC and its implementation.
- Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.
- Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air.
• Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms.
• Drug trafficking, corruption, and related crimes in the context of UNTOC.
• Emerging crimes such as cybercrime and crimes that affect the environment as they related to UNTOC.

Besides thematic areas, members of the Alliances provide a range of services as part of their work and in response to the impact of organized crime in their communities, including:

• Crime prevention.
• At-risk youth support.
• Victim’s assistance.
• Human rights protection.
• Advocacy and awareness raising campaigns.

Structure and activities:

Each National Civil Society Alliances propose their own structure and organize member’s contributions depending on their country’s context and advancement of the UNTOC review. They are established as a result of the VPI conducted at national level, or as proactive initiatives by country-based civil society actors that are involved in various SE4U activities such as capacity building and Constructive Dialogues.

Each National Civil Society Alliance is coordinated by a Steering Committee led by a National Coordinator chosen by its members. The National Coordinator represents an organization which has expressed interest to serve as the Secretariat for the Alliance. As the Secretariat for the Alliance, the organization provides admin services for a period of one renewable year. The Steering Committee is formed based on expression of interest of members. It represents the broadest possible membership of the Alliance and ensures gender balance and thematic focus. Working Groups are also established to coordinate technical expertise, strategic communication, engagement, and action.

Based on their interest and areas of expertise, members may choose between being part of the Steering Committee, the Working Groups, or act as Ordinary Members. Ordinary Members have no specifically assigned roles in the Alliance. They support the Alliance as much as possible and as needed. Each Alliance decides the responsibilities and tasks of the Steering Committee and the topics covered by Working Groups. Additional governance structures such as a Co-Cordinator and an Administrative Focal Point may be agreed by each Alliance.

The Alliances convene regular meetings on a quarterly basis facilitated by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is encouraged to meet on a more regular basis. Each National Coordinator, together with the Steering Committee coordinates the drafting of the Alliance’s annual activity plan, including ordinary meetings, a calendar for the Steering Committee meetings, the tasks of the Working Groups, capacity building sessions, engagement activities with other stakeholders, and preparations of policy briefs or publications, among others.

Some of their main activities aim at creating best practices knowledge, contribute to governments’ responses to the UNTOC review self-assessment questionnaire, contributions to the development and
implementation of organized crime strategies by UNODC, and proposing improvements of governments’ policies or actions to fight organized crime.

**Connection between National Civil Society Alliances and Civil Society Regional Networks:**

National Civil Society Alliances and Civil Society Regional Networks are complimentary coordination and engagement mechanisms. While the activities and actions of the National Civil Society Alliances are focused on a specific country, Civil Society Regional Networks operate at regional level, serving as an engagement bridge between issues at national and regional levels. Members of Civil Society Regional Networks can help initiate the establishment of National Civil Society Alliances in their respective countries, while members of the National Civil Society Alliances help to bring national issues and actions to the regional level, ensuring that transnational organized crime is addressed effectively.