



Civil Society Regional Networks for UNTOC Implementation (NET4U)

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. As part of this project, the CSU has encouraged and supported the creation of Civil Society Regional Networks for UNTOC Implementation (NET4U) with the main aim to facilitate the coordination and contributions of these stakeholders to the fight against transnational organized crime and the UNTOC processes.

Although the NET4U are initially created in the context of the SE4U Project, they are independent hubs for engagement, exchange, and action. To maintain their identity, the NET4U share the same branding across all regions and generally follow the same approach. They decide their own work plan and roadmap to make the best possible contribution to the fight against transnational organized crime and the UNTOC implementation. The CSU supports the NET4U with their participation in various opportunities, including Constructive Dialogues, the Conference of the Parties to UNTOC (UNTOC COP), Voluntary Pilot Initiatives, access to online and in-person training opportunities, coordination of their contributions to the Review Mechanism, and where possible, facilitation of their communication with government counterparts.

By November 2023, two Regional Networks have been established, one for the Americas and one for Africa. The [NET4U Americas](#) counts with 20 member organizations and was created after the Regional Follow-up Consultation on UNTOC, held in Panama in March 2022. The [NET4U Africa](#) counts with 26 member organizations and was created after the SE4U Regional Training held in Kenya in June 2023.

Objective:

The mission of the Civil Society Regional Networks is to facilitate the coordination and contributions of non-governmental stakeholders to the fight against organized crime and the implementation of the UNTOC and its Review Mechanism, while serving as a hub for information sharing and networking platform. Working in their respective regions, the NET4U allow their members to promote their work, benefiting from collective knowledge sharing and experiences. In doing so, NET4U support the work of governments in fighting transnational organized crime.

The NET4U are initiated and operate in the context of [resolution 9/1](#) which established the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the UNTOC and the Protocols thereto. NET4U operation also reflects the spirit of UNTOC, which recognizes the role of civil society in addressing transnational organized crime.



Thematic areas:

The NET4U operate in thematic areas based on the needs and realities of their regions. Broad topics include but are not limited to the following:

- The UNTOC and its implementation.
- Coordination with governments in the fight against transnational organized crime.
- 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 in the context of UNTOC.

Structure and activities:

Each Regional Network decide their own structure according to the priorities of the region and the expertise of its members, although similar structures across Regional Networks are suggested to maintain easier communication and interaction between them. Based on previous experience, the following structure is proposed:

- A **Steering Committee** led by a Coordinator chosen by its members. The Steering Committee is formed based on expression of interest of members. It represents the broadest possible membership of the NET4U and ensures gender balance and thematic focus.
- The NET4U convene regular meetings on a quarterly basis facilitated by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is encouraged to meet on a more regular basis.
- The **Coordinator** represents an organization which has expressed interest to serve as the Secretariat for the Network. As the Secretariat for the NE4U, the organization provides admin services to the Network for a period of one renewable year.
- Each Coordinator, together with the Steering Committee coordinates the drafting of the Network'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.
- **Working Groups** are also established to coordinate technical expertise, strategic communication, engagement, and action.
- **Ordinary Members** have no specifically assigned roles in the Network. They support the Network as much as possible and as needed. Based on their interest and areas of expertise, members choose between being part of the Steering Committee, the Working Groups, or act as Ordinary Members.
- Each Network decides the responsibilities and tasks of the Steering Committee and the topics covered by Working Groups.
- Additional governance structures such as a Co-Coordinator and an Administrative Focal Point may be agreed by each NET4U.



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

Civil Society Regional Networks (NET4U) and National Civil Society Alliances (NACSA4U) 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.