

SDG indicator 16.4.2

This non-paper aims to inform on coordination efforts within the UN Secretariat on reporting, data collection and monitoring for SDG indicator 16.4.2.

It recommends that States may wish to assess the existing mechanisms that can feed data and information into this indicator (or recommend UNODA and UNODC to jointly do so).

As Goal 16 is scheduled to be reviewed in 2019, the second half of 2018 may be a timely opportunity for such an endeavour.

I. Introduction

1. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development revolves around adequate **measurability** through concrete, time-bound *goals* which are unpacked into specific *targets*, for which coherent *indicators* are developed. Data should in principle be collected in coordination with national statistical offices.
2. Under SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), target 16.4 includes the aim to, by 2030, “**significantly reduce**” **illicit arms flows**. Security and arms regulation were not part of the MDGs; these are fields still characterized by a paucity of publicly available year-on-year statistics. A complicating factor is the target’s focus on *illicit* activities: identifying a national baseline of illicit activity against which to measure its desired significant reduction is a challenge to say the least.
3. Global indicators are developed within the Statistical Commission’s **Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs)**, which consists of select Member States, with UN agencies as observers. Draft indicators are vetted for solid measurability. Each indicator is attached to one of three levels of technical strength:
 - *Tier 1* for those that are conceptually clear, have an internationally established methodology and standards, and data regularly produced by countries for at least 50% of countries;
 - *Tier 2* for indicators that are conceptually clear, have an internationally established methodology and standards available, but data are not regularly produced by countries;
 - *Tier 3* for indicators that have no internationally established methodology or standards yet available, but methodology / standards are being developed or tested.
4. **In addition to the global process of developing indicators**, the 2030 Agenda document encourages States to develop **national and regional indicators**.
5. The 2030 Agenda encourages the use of **existing reporting mechanisms**, while also stressing that **national statistical offices** should be the central hub for collecting and transmitting national information.

II. Indicator 16.4.2

6. Indicator 16.4.2 reads: “**Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments**”.
7. The IAEG-SDGs has classified indicator 16.4.2 under tier 3, which implies that its data collection process is in need of further development.
8. The focus of this indicator is on the action taken by national authorities to identify trafficking flows and points of diversion, which are identified as pre-conditions for an effective fight against illicit flows of firearms.
9. Two agencies, the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), are identified as **co-custodians** for indicator 16.4.2.

III. Monitoring and data collection for indicator 16.4.2

10. This indicator focuses on government action only, and is thus dependent on national reporting. Currently, the **responsibility** of collecting data for this indicator at national level can be either with **national agencies / ministries** responsible for firearms regulation or with national **statistical offices**.
11. While SDG-related data flows are still under discussion within the IAEG-SDG, current arrangements provide for custodian agencies to collect and process relevant data before transmittal to the UN Statistics Division. Also, custodian agencies could support States in data collection, analysis and reporting.
12. Target 16.4 is not directly linked to any particular global instrument. But there are several **global reporting mechanisms** to which governments have committed to report – although not through their national statistical offices. These mechanisms can support or complement the monitoring of the SDG 16.4.2 indicator.

a) Programme of Action / International Tracing

Instrument. All 193 UN Member States are committed to this political instrument. Reporting is done once every two years. UNODA collects **national reports** on the implementation of these instruments. The reporting template has already been adapted to include a section related to indicator 16.4.2.

b) **Firearms Protocol** supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. All 193 UN Member States agreed to adopt the Convention and its three Protocols as legally binding instruments, and to consider becoming a party to them. The Firearms Protocol currently has 115 States Parties. Reporting on its implementation is done via **self-assessment questionnaires**, currently under review by the Conference.

c) UNODC was also mandated by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, to conduct a **study on firearms trafficking** (published in 2015). It was subsequently mandated to continue to collect and analyze quantitative information and suitably disaggregated data on trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, taking into account the 2015 study and target 16.4, and to disseminate its findings on a regular basis. For this, UNODC has launched a mechanism to collect annually national data and information from all UN Member States: the **Illicit Arm Flows Questionnaire**. This questionnaire is not linked to any international instrument and builds on the 'annual and significant seizures report questionnaires' used for the 2015 Study.

As no standard methodology was available for indicator 16.4.2, UNODC based its work on developing a methodology on existing recording practices.

An expert group meeting, a pilot exercise among volunteer countries, and a consultation with IAEG-SDGs, have contributed to this standardised approach for producing indicator-16.4.2-relevant data.

It asks for disaggregated data and qualitative information on seized, found and surrendered arms, their parts and components and ammunition, trafficking flows and routes, tracing activities by national authorities, and complementary qualitative information.

IV. Observations and recommendations

13. Within the UN Secretariat, UNODA and UNODC are committed to **streamline the data collection process and avoid overlap**, and ensure consistency of published data.
14. **UNODC**, with its dedicated Global Firearms Programme, its Research and Trend Analysis Branch and its strong field presence, **will continue to lead** in developing annual 16.4.2 data collection, data processing, and submission to the Statistical Commission. **UNODA**, as co-custodian, **will enrich that process with complementary biennial data** collected under the PoA/ITI process. Both entities have ensured that target 16.4 is reflected in their reporting mechanisms.
15. States could invite national statistical systems responsible for SDG monitoring to **holistically assess the existing reporting mechanisms under point 12.a-c)** above, or to recommend UNODA and UNODC to jointly do so, with a view to streamlining national reporting according to standardised methodology while avoiding duplication.
16. As **Goal 16** is scheduled to be **reviewed in 2019**, such an exercise could perhaps best be undertaken in the **second half of 2018**.
17. **A great number of States will likely need assistance with data collection and with establishing procedures for data flows to national statistical offices from national law enforcement agencies / national focal points on small arms.** In-country support / capacity-building on data collection and analysis will rest primarily with UNODC. UNODA can assist, through its regional centres, where resources would be made available from donors.
18. UNODA and UNODC can also work individually, where requested, with national authorities and (sub-)regional organizations on the voluntary development of national and regional indicators, while sharing good practices among themselves and maintaining methodological consistency with global data collection.