

Implementation in Practice

National Points of Contact in the RECSA Region

Introduction

International and regional instruments to control the illicit trade of small arms specifically call for states to designate individuals and administrative processes to help them attain established objectives. For example, both the 2001 Programme of Action on Small Arms¹ (PoA) and the 2005 International Tracing Instrument² (ITI) include provisions for each UN member state to establish or designate a national point of contact (NPC) to act as a liaison with other states concerning their implementation (UNGA, 2001, art. II.5; 2005, art. VI.25).³

The PoA also calls for states to ‘establish, or designate as appropriate, national coordination agencies or bodies and institutional infrastructure responsible for policy guidance, research and monitoring’ of their efforts to counter the illicit trade in small arms (UNGA, 2001, art. II.4). Numerous regional arms control measures require states to undertake similar commitments in this regard.

This Issue Brief focuses on the activities of the 15 signatories of one particular regional initiative: the 2004 Nairobi Protocol.⁴ These states of the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA), hereafter referred to as ‘RECSA members’⁵ (see Map 1), have bolstered their PoA commitments with a legally binding commitment to ‘establish National Focal Points to, inter alia, facilitate the rapid information exchange to combat cross-border small arms and light weapons trafficking’ (Nairobi Protocol, 2004, art. 16(a)). Other regional initiatives include similar measures.⁶

The Issue Brief explores the roles that NPCs fulfil and the numerous challenges they face. It examines efforts that are in place to facilitate their work, paying special attention to the initiatives of states and national coordination agencies (NCAs) to address complementary—and sometimes competing—commitments of regional organizations. The study draws on field research conducted by the Small Arms Survey

in eight countries that are signatories of the Nairobi Protocol, interviews and correspondence with government officials, and a review of national reports submitted under the PoA.

The origins of RECSA

RECSA was founded in 2005, but its origins lie in the Nairobi Declaration of March 2000. The ten original signa-



tories were Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. Five additional states subsequently became members: the Central African Republic (CAR) in 2011, the Republic of the Congo (RoC) in 2009, the Seychelles in 2004, Somalia in 2005, and South Sudan in 2011 (Berman and Maze, 2012, pp. 50–51).

Establishing an NPC: an end in itself?

As mentioned, the PoA and the ITI call on UN member states to designate an NPC to ‘act as liaison’ on matters relating to the implementation of the instruments (UNGA, 2001, art. II.5; 2005, art. VI.25); in the case of the ITI, the purpose is to ‘exchange information’ (UNGA, 2005, art. VI.25). Accordingly, the designation or establishment of an NPC in itself fulfils a specific commitment. The matter of how well the NPC functions is a separate issue that is often overlooked.

Indeed, much of the focus at the global level has been on establishing NPCs, but the effectiveness of these efforts has varied in practice. At this writing, the Holy See and 170 of the UN’s 193 member states—nearly 90 per cent—had communicated their NPC contact details to the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA, n.d.). Yet the accuracy and functionality of these contacts were difficult to evaluate. When the Small Arms Survey attempted to contact listed NPCs in 2010, only 39 per cent of emails generated a response and just 29 per cent of phone calls were answered, not always by an NPC (Parker, 2011, pp. 24–25). The Survey was able to confirm the existence and identity of just over one-third of the NPCs listed, thereby exposing a major weakness of the PoA reporting system: the absence of a monitoring and verification system (p. 27).

That certain NPCs could not be contacted does not necessarily mean they are inactive or ineffective, as evidenced by RECSA members’ NPCs. By 2010, ten of the then 13 RECSA members—more than 75 per cent—had

provided contact information,⁷ yet only two of them responded to the Survey’s efforts to contact them.⁸ The poor rate of response may be partly attributed to the fact that RECSA members belong to numerous regional organizations, such that their NPCs are expected to follow several portfolios and pursue numerous commitments (see Table 1).

As this Issue Brief shows, all 15 RECSA members have NPCs and, although their staff and resources vary, they are all engaged in addressing the threat of small arms proliferation. This full compliance may be a reflection of the legally binding nature of the Nairobi Protocol (in contrast to the PoA and ITI, which are politically binding). Moreover, the RECSA Secretariat provides resources and expertise to the NPCs of RECSA members, as indicated below.

What’s in a name? Terms used to refer to NPCs

NPCs are expected to act as liaisons on all matters relating to the implementation of small arms instruments, whereas NCAs are designed to guide national policy and action (see Box 1). NPCs are intended to be a single point of contact available for discussion on small arms issues. Yet it is unclear under the PoA and ITI commitments whether an NPC is to be a single contact or a wider coordinating body. Ideally, the NCA should be a broader agency or governing body, within which the NPC would operate. In many instances the head of the NCA acts as the NPC, ensuring close collaboration between the two bodies (UNDP, 2008, p. 2).

Table 1 RECSA members’ memberships in selected other regional organizations*

Member state	AU	CCPAC	CEEAC	CEMAC	CEN-SAD	CEPGL	COMESA	EAC	EAPCCO	ICGLR	IGAD	SADC	SARPCCO	Totals
Burundi	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	7
CAR	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	6
Djibouti	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	5
DRC	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	8
Eritrea	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	5
Ethiopia	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	4
Kenya	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	7
RoC	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	5
Rwanda	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	6
Seychelles	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	5
Somalia	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	4
South Sudan	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	5
Sudan	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	6
Tanzania	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	6
Uganda	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	6

Notes: * In the order of appearance in the table, the regional organizations are: the African Union (AU); the Central African Police Chiefs Committee (CCPAC); the Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC); the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC); the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD); the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL); the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); the East Africa Community (EAC); the Eastern African Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (EAPCCO); the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR); the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); the Southern African Development Community (SADC); and the Southern Africa Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation (SARPCCO).

Rwanda is a former member of CEEAC. South Sudan’s membership in both COMESA and the EAC is pending, as is Somalia’s membership in the EAC. In 2007 Eritrea suspended its membership in IGAD, which has yet to respond to this decision.

Source: Berman and Maze (2012, pp. 23–57)

National coordination agency (NCA) or national commission: Under the PoA, UN member states have undertaken to 'establish, or designate as appropriate, national coordination agencies or bodies and institutional infrastructure responsible for policy guidance, research and monitoring of efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects' (UNGA, 2001, art. II.4). An 'NCA or National Commission is a national inter-agency body that is responsible for policy development, coordination, implementation, and monitoring of efforts to address all small arms-related issues in a country' (UNDP, 2008, p. 2).

National focal point (NFP): States parties to the Nairobi Protocol have undertaken to 'establish National Focal Points to, inter alia, facilitate the rapid information exchange to combat cross-border small arms and light weapons trafficking' (Nairobi Protocol, 2004, art. 16(a)). Furthermore, NFPs were mandated by the Second Ministerial Review Conference of April 2004 to 'be responsible for monitoring the ratification, the implementation, the execution and evaluation of this protocol at the national level, in liaison with law enforcement agencies, and ensuring adherence to the standards set out therein and informing Secretariat on a regular basis of progress thereof' (Ministerial Declaration, 2004, para. 1(d)). The Nairobi Protocol does not specify whether the NFP should be an individual or an agency, but in practice—and certainly in most RECSA countries—the NFP is an inter-agency body responsible for small arms policy and for acting as a 'clearing house' for small arms information (RECSA, 2005, p. 22).

NFP coordinator: If an NFP consists of a group of representatives from several ministries or agencies, its lead or point person is the NFP coordinator. NFPs were mandated by the Second Ministerial Review Conference of April 2004 to appoint the NFP coordinator 'as the liaison between the Nairobi Secretariat and the relevant agencies in each Signatory State on all matters relating to the ratification and implementation of the Protocol' (Ministerial Declaration, 2004, art. 1(e)). In this sense, the coordinator is to an NFP what an NPC is to its country's NCA or national commission.

National point of contact (NPC): Under the PoA, UN member states undertake to 'establish or designate, as appropriate, a national point of contact to act as liaison between States on matters relating to the implementation of [the PoA]' (UNGA, 2001, art. II.5). Under the ITI, states have committed to 'designate one or more national points of contact to exchange information and act as a liaison on all matters relating to the implementation of [the ITI]' (UNGA, 2005, art. VI.25). In practice, an NPC is an individual or an institution (such as a ministerial department or police agency) that acts as a liaison between states on matters relating to the implementation of the PoA and the ITI and that serves as a first point of contact for small arms-related information. In many countries, 'the head of the National Commission acts as the NPC' (UNDP, 2008, p. 2).

The terms 'national point of contact' and 'national focal point' are often used interchangeably to refer to the person or entity responsible for liaising on small arms matters on behalf of a state. Similarly, NCAs or national commissions are often referred to as NFPs.

Interpreting the role of NPCs

Interpretations of how NPCs should operate vary widely. Researchers have observed that officials in the RECSA region rarely distinguish between NPCs and NCAs. Conversations with government officials reveal that 'NFP' and 'NCA' are frequently used interchangeably, suggesting that the two operational structures are often perceived to be one and the same. Many interviewed focal points described their individual roles as head or coordinator of the NFP, which is made up of representatives of multiple governments and, often, non-governmental bodies. It seems that NFPs are also referred to as 'NatComs' or 'national commissions'. Among RECSA members, few examples exist of NCAs and NPCs working independently of one another.

Burundi is unique among RECSA countries in that its small arms initiatives are split between its NPC and a dedicated government agency, the National Commission to Combat the Proliferation of Small Arms (Commission nationale permanente de lutte contre la prolifération des armes légères, or CNAP). Distinct from the NPC, the CNAP is the primary implementing agency for areas such as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), civilian stockpile management, and civilian firearms registration. Consequently, its autonomy is greater than that of traditional NPCs (King, 2012, p. 2).

For different reasons, Tanzania also has two separate small arms bodies. As a semi-autonomous region of Tanzania, Zanzibar established the Arms Management and Disarmament Committee, which works in parallel with Tanzania's National Committee on Arms Management, Disarmament and Funding (King, 2012, p. 43). The committee comprises 15 members from various government ministries and civil society groups; its membership is formalized and meets four times per year.⁹

The remaining NPCs in the RECSA region are more standard in structure. The Kenya National Focal Point (KNFP), Kenya's main coordinating body, is responsible for policy formulation,

In 2008, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) published *How to Guide: The Establishment and Functioning of National Small Arms and Light Weapons Commissions*. The publication contains a section on establishing NPCs and on the role they play in ensuring the success of national small arms commitments. It provides a list of criteria that NPC representatives should fulfil (UNDP, 2008, p. 25). These criteria include:

- possessing extensive knowledge of the small arms situation within the country;
- fully understanding the role, responsibilities, and operational workings of all stakeholders—meaning the government, international organizations, and civil society—within the country;

- having sufficient seniority in the administration to take part in (and preferably lead) decision-making processes and to communicate effectively regarding relevant policy issues;
- being able to gain the confidence of all stakeholders and to maintain it accordingly;
- having the ability to communicate with all relevant national and international stakeholders; and
- being able to represent the state at international small arms-related meetings.

The UNDP publication also identifies the responsibility of the NPC, often in close partnership with the chair of the NCA, to prepare national reports on PoA and ITI implementation, as well as other relevant reports.

Table 2 Overview of RECSA members' small arms NPCs, NCAs, and selected activities, December 2013

Member state	NPC/NFP					
	Year established	Number of NFPs	Full-time position?	No. of support staff	NPC/NFP name	Coordinating body's link to government
Burundi	2003	4	n/a	>40	Permanent National Commission against Small Arms Proliferation	Ministry of Public Security
CAR	2005	1	n/a	0	National Commission against Small Arms Proliferation and for Disarmament and Reinsertion	Ministry of National Defence, Ex-Combatants, War Victims, Disarmament, and Restructuring of the Army
Djibouti	2004	n/a	No	n/a	National Commission for the Coordination of the Fight against Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
DRC	2008	4	Yes	69 (19 in Kinshasa)	National Commission for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons and Armed Violence Reduction	Ministers of Interior and Security, of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and Defence and Veterans Affairs
Eritrea	2005	1	No	0	(No standing body)	Police
Ethiopia	2004	3	No	n/a	National Focal Point, Interpol National Central Bureau for Ethiopia, Interpol Addis Ababa standalone contact (located in the Federal Police Commission, which is listed as the NCA)	Federal police headquarters
Kenya	2002	4	Yes	n/a	Kenya National Focal Point on Small Arms and Light Weapons	Office of the President in the Ministry of State for Provincial Administration and Internal Security
RoC	2009	1	n/a	n/a	(Pending cabinet approval)	Ministry of Internal Security
Rwanda	2003	4	Yes	2	Rwandan National Focal Point on Small Arms	Ministry of Internal Security
Seychelles	2006	2	No	1	(No standing body)	Police in Ministry of Home Affairs
Somalia	2005	3	No	n/a	Somalia National Focal Point	Advisor to the President on Security
South Sudan	2008	3	Yes	52	Bureau for Community Security and Small Arms Control	Ministry of the Interior
Sudan	2004	2	No	8	National Office for Small Arms and Light Weapons	Criminal Investigation Department, Ministry of Interior, Police Force Headquarters
Tanzania	2001	3	Yes	26	National Committee on Arms Management, Disarmament and Funding	Ministry of Home Affairs
Uganda	2001	4	Yes	10	Uganda National Focal Point on Small Arms and Light Weapons	Ministry of Internal Affairs

Notes:

n/a indicates that data is not available; - indicates 'not applicable'.

* The list of government bodies is indicative rather than comprehensive.

** As of 31 December 2013.

Source: Berman and Dönges (2014)

NCA		Examples of official PoA-related activities			
Government bodies represented*	Civil society represented? (no. of organizations)	PoA reports submitted**	Most recent year	National Action Plan	Marking begun on state firearms
Ministries: Communication; Defence; Education; Good Governance; Finance; Foreign Affairs; Human Rights; Justice; Public Safety; Social Welfare. Other bodies: National Assembly; President's Office; Transitional Senate; Vice-president's Office	Yes (n/a)	7	2012	Yes	Yes
Ministries: Defence; DDR; Internal Security. Other bodies: Customs	Yes (n/a)	1	2003	Yes	No
n/a	Yes (3)	3	2011	Yes	No
Ministries: Budget; Defence; Environment; Family, Gender, and Children; Finance; Foreign Trade; Home Affairs; Human Rights; Justice; Nature, Conservation, and Tourism; Social Affairs; Transport and Communication Channels	Yes (3)	3	2012	Yes	No
Ministries: Defence; Education; Finance; Foreign Affairs; Information; Justice. Other bodies: Attorney General; Customs; Demining Agency; Immigration; National Security Agency; Police; Regional Administrations	Yes (n/a)	2	2010	Yes	No
Ministries: Customs; Defence; Education; Federal Affairs; Foreign Affairs; Immigration; Justice; Mine Action; Sports and Youth	n/a	2	2008	Yes	Yes
Ministries: Defence; Education; Environment and Natural Resources-Department of Mines and Geology; Foreign Affairs; Home Affairs; Immigration and Registration of Persons; Information and Communications; Prisons Service; Trade and Industry. Other bodies: Attorney General's Chambers; National Security Intelligence Service; Police Department (including Administration Police, Central Firearms Bureau, Criminal Investigations Department, General Service Unit, and Police Headquarters); State Law Office; Wildlife Service	Yes (6)	6	2012	Yes	Yes
Ministries: Defence; Finance (Customs); Foreign Affairs and Francophonie; Gender; Internal Affairs; Water and Forestry	Yes (n/a)	3	2010	n/a	No
Ministries: Defence; Finance and Economic Planning; Foreign Affairs and Cooperation; Gender; Immigration; Internal Security (Police); Justice; Trade and Industry; Youth and Information and Communication Technologies. Other bodies: Revenue Authority	Yes (1)	3	2010	Yes	Yes
Ministries: National Police; Seychelles People's Defence Force	Yes (1)	0	-	No	Yes
n/a	n/a	0	-	No	No
Ministries: Finance and Economic Planning; Foreign Affairs; Gender, Social Welfare, and Religious Affairs; Interior; Justice; Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development; Peace and CPA Implementation; Presidential Affairs; Regional Cooperation; SPLA Affairs. Other bodies: DDR Commission; Human Rights Commission; Rehabilitation Commission	n/a	1	2012	No	Yes
Ministries: DDR Commission; Defence; Foreign Affairs; Humanitarian Affairs; Interior; Justice; National Intelligence; Police Administration	Yes (3)	4	2012	Yes	Yes
Ministries: Defence and National Services; Energy and Minerals; Foreign Affairs; Home Affairs; Natural Resources and Tourism (Wildlife Division). Other bodies: Office of the President	Yes (n/a)	4	2012	Yes	Yes
Ministries: Defence; East African Cooperation Affairs; Education and Sports; Finance and Economic Planning; Foreign Affairs; Gender and Social Development; Health; Internal Affairs (Police, Immigration); Justice and Constitutional Affairs; Karamoja Affairs; Trade, Industry and Tourism. Other bodies: President's Office; Prime Minister's Office (Pacification and Development; Disaster Management and Refugees); Prison Service; Revenue Authority (Customs)	Yes (4)	5	2010	Yes	Yes

research, and the monitoring of small arms activities. In 2006 and 2009, the KNFP published two national action plans, the most recent of which is valid through 2015 (King, 2012, p. 20). Its efforts to implement the PoA have been enhanced by the establishment of several sub-committees—such as on technology, policy, training, and capacity building—as well as Provincial Task Forces (PTFs) and District Task Forces (DTFs) to encourage harmonized approaches to arms control and management (Kenya, 2010, p. 6). Rwanda employs a similar system in which its PTFs oversee the implementation of decisions made at the national level. In the past, the PTFs have trained provincial representatives (as working groups) on new small arms legislation, national action plans, record-keeping related to firearms, and the exchange of information.¹⁰

South Sudan's NFP, the Bureau for Community Security and Small Arms Control (BCSSAC), is headquartered in the capital, Juba, but has staff members posted in each of the country's ten states. The Bureau focuses on disarming civilians, raising awareness, and facilitating the national marking initiative (King, 2012, p. 31).

Table 2 provides information relating to the NPCs of RECSA members, including details on their structure and position within the wider governmental framework.

Strategies towards implementation

NPCs and NCAs in RECSA countries are responsible for the development and oversight of a range of projects designed to facilitate the implementa-

tion of the PoA, the ITI, and the Nairobi Protocol. Most projects address commitments specific to regional and international mechanisms and include relevant activities. These activities pertain to weapons collection and destruction; stockpile security and weapons management; marking, record-keeping, and tracing; public awareness; policy development, national action plan (NAP) design, and the drafting of improved legislation; cooperation over issues including border control; and the reporting of information on such activities to governments and the UN.

Examples of the nature and types of activities undertaken by RECSA member NPCs and NCAs appear below.

Policy and planning

Throughout RECSA countries, an emphasis has been placed on the devel-



A Ugandan firearm-marking team. © Small Arms Survey



Illicit small arms and light weapons burn in the Uhuru Gardens in Nairobi, Kenya, March 2007. © Antony Njuguna/Reuters

opment of legislation and national policy, such as NAPs. In Burundi, for example, the Technical Commission for the Disarmament of the Civilian Population and Fight against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (Commission technique de désarmement de la population civile et de lutte contre la prolifération des armes légères et de petit calibre) adopted its national strategy in 2006 (Burundi, 2010, p. 2). In the RoC, activities addressing small arms issues began after the country acceded to the Nairobi Protocol in 2007; it joined RECSA in 2009. At this writing, the RoC was establishing a national commission on small arms while also drafting a NAP. It will be the commission's responsibility to establish mechanisms that are in line with commitments of the Nairobi Protocol.¹¹

After Rwanda ratified the Nairobi Protocol in December 2004, President Paul Kagame approved a five-year NAP to tackle small arms proliferation, which was adopted by the Cabinet in 2009. Awareness raising became a key component of this strategy (Rwanda, 2010, pp. 6–7). In 2010 Rwanda estab-

lished Regional and District Task Forces to introduce new laws on small arms, the NAP, new record-keeping practices, and other small arms projects to a wider audience. The NAP was updated in 2011 to become the new national strategic plan on small arms and light weapons. The largest of its new projects, in terms of budget, involves upgrading stockpile management systems (Rwanda, 2011, pp. 45–46).

Cooperation

A large part of the assistance component of the international small arms process involves cooperation, technical support, and funding. NPCs also rely on guidance from governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the UN, and partner agencies within their own governments. Table 2 lists the ministries and departments of RECSA members that are engaged in NCAs and small arms coordinating mechanisms. Interdepartmental cooperation occurs in some instances, such as when multiple departments are involved in authorizing project proposals and budgets.

Before a concept note can be sent to donors from Uganda, for example, it must be submitted to a management committee and then to the Ministry of Interior for approval (Small Arms Survey, 2012, p. 4).

External relationships are equally important. Uganda's NPC regularly meets with RECSA officials, but contact with NGOs, government agencies, donors, and implementation partners is less frequent and takes place on a case-by-case basis. The NPC might meet with civil society only once per month (Small Arms Survey, 2012, p. 3). Kenya's NFP works closely with other stakeholders, meeting daily with the Ministry of State for Provincial Administration and Internal Security, NGOs (such as Saferworld), the NCA, RECSA, and UNDP; its meetings with donors and other international organizations are less frequent (Small Arms Survey, 2012, p. 3).

The Rwandan NPC meets twice per year with the Technical Advice Committee (of NPCs) and has helped coordinate training for Central African NPCs, which is provided by the Africa Union.¹² Sudan's NPC maintains regular



A Ugandan soldier prepares weapons for a gun-burning ceremony in Jinja, 100 km east of the capital, Kampala, in June 2006. © James Akena/Reuters

rounds of ammunition, and 6,000 pieces of ordnance. Public destruction and disarmament workshops have been elements of the country's public awareness campaigns (Small Arms Survey, 2012, p. 4).

In South Sudan, the NPC has been involved in a community-level project to fund the construction of boreholes (fresh-water wells) close to communities. The project serves to reduce the distance people must travel to fetch water and, consequently, their need for weapons to protect themselves and their cattle from cattle rustlers (Small Arms Survey, 2012, p. 5). This grassroots approach, which seeks to curb local demand for weapons, is a sound example of how thinking creatively can help to tackle the illicit trade in small arms. The project shows that a localized approach to small arms control can address the root causes of armed conflict and the illicit trade. In addition to benefitting the local community, it also adds value to regional small arms control and demonstrates how a grassroots agenda can be as successful as a donor-based one.

Researchers noted that a great deal of activity has revolved around awareness raising. The European Union (EU), for example, provided a large grant to:

raise awareness and knowledge of relevant institutional and civil society actors on the legislative and institutional aspects of the fight against the illicit accumulation and trafficking of firearms with a view to foster the role, or the establishment where they are not in place, of National Focal Points and to develop and/or implement [. . .] National Action Plans (Council of the EU, 2010, p. 12).

Funding Funding NPCs

These projects, as well as the NPCs and NCAs that oversee them, are heavily dependent on funding, be it internal government funding or donor support. Few RECSA members have sufficient funds to support their own points of

contact with RECSA officials (Small Arms Survey, 2012, p. 3). Cooperation with NGOs and civil society varies across the RECSA region. In some cases, NGOs form one of the multiple components of NPCs, but, more commonly, NGOs help raise awareness for small arms-related projects among local communities. In some instances, however, they do not participate at all.¹³

Projects

The nature of the small arms activities overseen by NPCs and NCAs in RECSA

countries and their role in generating small arms activities vary. In Kenya, for instance, the NPC plays a key role in facilitating projects within and in consultation with communities. It explores the key drivers of conflict, encouraging communities to find solutions and make decisions. Kenya's ministers compile and validate relevant data, which is then approved by directors and development partners, after which the NPC forms a steering committee to supervise the approved (and funded) projects. Since 2008, Kenya has destroyed 25,000 illicit arms, 500,000

contact. In 2012, Uganda's NPC received an annual government budget of UGX 130 million (USD 49,000)—an amount that the NPC regarded as meagre and that the government intended to increase in the next financial year. This sum covers ten full-time staff members (mostly seconded from the police or army), the running costs of the office, and transport, fuel, and field operations. EU funds are allocated to the office, a vehicle, and computers (Small Arms Survey, 2012, p. 4).

South Sudan's NFP receives government funds to cover the salaries of 52 full-time staff and fuel. According to the NFP, however, this previously healthy budget was subsequently cut, leaving no extra funds for programmes. In neighbouring Sudan, the NFP receives a small government budget covering operating costs only, such as the office, a vehicle, and furniture. As the Kenyan NPC receives no direct funding from the government, it submits funding proposals for specific projects (Small Arms Survey, 2012, p. 4).

Funding programmes: marking and tracing

The majority of RECSA countries rely heavily on donor resources and support to run effective implementation programmes. Much of the support is financial and is supplied directly from donor states, via RECSA or the East Africa Community (Bevan and King, 2013, p. 17). The EU and UN development funds have also contributed to several marking and tracing programmes. This support includes marking machines, the training of personnel to operate those machines, vehicles to transport the machines, and operational funds to keep the programmes going, such as fuel, travel expenses, and salaries (Bevan and King, 2013, p. 17; King, 2012, p. 2).

Donor support is not always well coordinated, however. Moreover, researchers noted that NPCs do not always fully disclose to RECSA the additional external programme support they receive. With respect to the marking of weapons, for instance, several state-security forces obtained record-keeping software from donors

without RECSA's knowledge.¹⁴ This lack of reporting to the coordinating body may be attributed to the NPCs' fear of losing out on RECSA-promised support.

Challenges faced by NPCs

This section describes some of the challenges inherent in establishing and operating NPCs and implementing small arms programmes.

Losing institutional memory: staff turnover

The day-to-day running of NPCs can affect the fundamental workings of national small arms mechanisms. The NPCs of Ethiopia, Kenya, and the Seychelles are experiencing transitions subsequent to changes in senior management. In each case, NPCs had held their positions for a number of years before moving on to new roles, raising the issue of how institutional memory should be maintained.

If handover periods are inadequate, the risk of institutional brain drain is heightened, especially for NPCs that operate alone. This risk highlights the contribution that an NCA, or a similar coordinating body, can make in facilitating information sharing, knowledge retention, and a smoother transition for new staff. In this context, the UNDP makes the following recommendation:

Ideally, the function [of NPCs] should be attached to an existing government post or department rather than to an individual (who may leave at any point, jeopardizing the continuity and institutional memory of the Commission) (UNDP, 2008, p. 25).

Yet linking the function of the NPC or NFP coordinator to a particular post may not address the issue of employee turnover. Indeed, Kenya's PTFs and DTFs reportedly face this challenge on an ongoing basis. In these task forces, the chairperson is usually a high-ranking government official; when he or she leaves the post, the KNFP is required to train new appointees.¹⁵

Implementing programmes: marking and tracing

Efforts to implement marking commitments provide abundant illustrations of the frustrations and limitations that RECSA states face. For example, despite creating a more complete system that integrates marking and record keeping, Burundi's point of contact, the CNAP, is reliant on project-specific donor funding, which has slowed down progress with respect to marking activities. Several states have provided little to no funding to cover the operational costs associated with marking projects, per diems, fuel, and vehicles (Bevan and King, 2013, p. 33). Some stakeholders have mentioned that the time it takes to receive donor funds delays the implementation of projects, along with their results. Such delays breed frustration, not least because donors often have strict deadlines for results (Small Arms Survey, 2012, p. 4).

The majority of RECSA states face the significant challenge of having no reliable transport for NPCs to implement projects nationwide, a setback that increased funding could alleviate (Bevan and King, 2013, p. 33). The South Sudan Police Service has no vehicles designated to transport marking equipment outside Juba (Small Arms Survey, 2012, pp. 1–2). Similarly, Sudan's NPC, the Criminal Investigation Department, has no means to transport marking equipment beyond Khartoum (King, 2012, p. 40).

Because of the poor road surfaces in Burundi, marking authorities construct large boxes to transport marking equipment. These boxes are robust enough to protect the machinery and components from damage, but are so large that their sole vehicle (supplied by the East Africa Community) could carry only one single marking system at a time. Consequently, the CNAP must resort to renting civilian vehicles to carry out its marking operations (King, 2012, p. 5).

Not all challenges faced by RECSA NPCs and NCAs stem from financial difficulties. These countries are often afflicted by conflict and insecurity, past

or current, which hinder the implementation of projects. Burundian authorities noted that the movement of weapons for marking purposes is limited as a result of relative insecurity in remote areas and the related risk of diversion (King, 2012, p. 4). Similarly, the insecurity along the border between Sudan and South Sudan is one of numerous barriers to PoA implementation activities, including marking and tracing (p. 31).

The lack of technical know-how also hampers projects. One recurring issue concerns the marking machines owned by RECSA members. While the components that tend to wear down during use—such as marking pins—are relatively easy to fix or replace, the more complex parts require special servicing that may not be available in-country. While the manufacturer offers electronic component repair services in Spain, none of the RECSA officials interviewed have taken the initiative to ship any damaged equipment to Europe for repairs. As a consequence, several of the marking machines sit idle (Bevan and King, 2013, p. 26).

Throughout Africa, legislative gaps hamstring attempts to implement modern small arms measures. Officials from the RoC observed that in the absence of a national commission and appropriate legislation, it is difficult to coordinate and implement the measures necessary to address the illicit trade in small arms (RoC, 2010, p. 4).¹⁶ South Sudan also lacks the legislation necessary to ensure the implementation of small arms control measures. If signed into law, the proposed Small Arms Bill 2012 could address much of this gap (King, 2014).¹⁷

On a continent as vast as Africa, with its unforgiving terrain and conditions, geographical challenges reportedly blight many NPCs' implementation efforts. Among other factors, the size and geographic features of Sudan make it unlikely that the NPC will be successful in marking all police and licensed firearms within the projected 2–3-year timeframe (King, 2012, p. 38). The Tanzanian marking team has struggled to deploy marking personnel and equipment across vast distances, difficult terrain, and poor roads. Their

challenges are compounded by the lack of consistent funding, which prevents effective planning (p. 44).

Conclusion

NPCs and NCAs continue to play an important role in effectively implementing commitments made in the PoA, the ITI, and the Nairobi Protocol. This review underscores the importance of political will and sufficient resources in achieving agreed goals. Whether independently or with external support, many governments in the region have made important progress in addressing illicit small arms proliferation.

Evidence shows that limited financial means invested in these efforts can go a long way. Programmes can get moving on the ground with as little as a suitable vehicle, fuel, per diems, and maintenance training. Where political will exists, meaningful progress can therefore be made without an infusion of significant external assistance. Yet even if generous external support is available, efforts cannot produce positive results if domestic political commitments are uneven, half-hearted, or uncoordinated.

Governments play the most important role in improving their own implementation of the PoA, the ITI, and regional agreements using available resources. National initiatives should be supported by a coordinated allocation of means.

An increase in funding for such initiatives would allow for improved facilities, resources, training, knowledge, and awareness. Bolstered by cooperation and assistance on relevant issues, such as border security and policy development, stakeholders could play a more effective role in preventing and combating the illicit trade in small arms.

With respect to their NPCs and NCAs, many of the shortcomings and challenges RECSA members experience are similar to those encountered by other states. RECSA members' achievements could therefore be used to inform best practice for other NPCs and NCAs. ■

List of abbreviations

BCSSAC	Bureau for Community Security and Small Arms Control
CAR	Central African Republic
CNAP	National Commission to Combat the Proliferation of Small Arms
DDR	Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DTF	District Task Force
EU	European Union
ITI	International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons
KNFP	Kenya National Focal Point
NAP	National action plan
NCA	National coordination agency
NFP	National Focal Point
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPC	National point of contact
PoA	United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
PTF	Provincial Task Force
RECSA	Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa, and Bordering States
RoC	Republic of the Congo
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNODA	United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs

Notes

- 1 Full name: Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. See UNGA (2001).
- 2 Full name: International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. See UNGA (2005).
- 3 Incidentally, the 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 (Firearms Protocol) also obliges states parties to 'identify a national body or a single point of contact to act as liaison between it and other States Parties on matters relating to this Protocol' (UNODC, 2004, art. 13(2)).

- 4 Full name: Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa.
- 5 RECSA started in 2000 as the Nairobi Secretariat to support the Nairobi Declaration, a politically binding document that preceded the Nairobi Protocol. RECSA serves as the secretariat for the Nairobi Protocol and fulfils many additional tasks.
- 6 One example is the Southern African Development Community Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials, which is also legally binding and calls for its 15 signatories to establish national focal contact points within their respective law enforcement agencies 'for the rapid information exchange to combat cross-border firearm trafficking' (SADC, 2001, 15(e)).
- 7 The ten member states that provided NPC details were Burundi, Djibouti, the DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, the RoC, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. CAR and South Sudan joined RECSA after the study was undertaken (Berman and Maze, 2012, p. 50).
- 8 The responsive NPCs were in Burundi and the DRC.
- 9 Benjamin King interview with Esaka Mugasa, assistant commissioner of police and Tanzanian NPC official, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 16 November 2011.
- 10 Benjamin King interview with Emmanuel Misingo, Ministry of Internal Security and Rwandan NFP, Kigali, Rwanda, 24 November 2011.
- 11 Jasna Lazarevic interview with François Nde, security advisor, Ministère de l'intérieur et de la décentralisation (Ministry of the Interior and of Decentralization), Brazzaville, RoC, 3 May 2012.
- 12 Benjamin King interview with Emmanuel Misingo, Ministry of Internal Security and Rwandan NFP, Kigali, Rwanda, 24 November 2011.
- 13 Eric G. Berman interview with Richard Mugisha, director, People with Disabilities Uganda, Kampala, Uganda, 24 October 2012.
- 14 Benjamin King interview with a confidential source, location withheld, 17 April 2013.
- 15 Correspondence between Sarah Parker and Joseph Dube, small arms consultant, 2 February 2013.
- 16 Jasna Lazarevic interview with François Nde, security advisor, Ministère de l'intérieur et de la décentralisation, Brazzaville, RoC, 3 May 2012.
- 17 Benjamin King interview with BCSSAC representative, Juba, South Sudan, 22 October 2013.

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