

# SALW



## SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS CONTROL IN THE WESTERN BALKANS: LESSONS FROM THE HALO TRUST'S PROJECT IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

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# THE PURPOSE: LESSONS LEARNED

In the Western Balkans, the diversion of state-owned Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and the deficient control over privately held small arms constitutes a source of illicit trafficking of arms into Europe and around the world. The HALO Trust (HALO) has been enhancing the control of SALW in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) since 2017. HALO's marking and registration project has implemented a significant segment of the European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR) co-ordinated "Ammunition, Weapons, and Explosives (AWE) MasterPlan" and the BiH Government's 2016 – 2020 SALW Control Strategy (Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2016).

This assessment of HALO's marking and registration project with the Armed Forces of BiH (AFBiH) will provide useful lessons learned which HALO and prospective donors and stakeholders can use to expand the success of the BiH project across the entire Western Balkans. Other actors working on SALW marking and registration projects in the region and further afield will also find this document useful in providing key insights on the planning and implementation of a successful SALW marking and registration project.

This assessment can also be used to provide lessons learned for the *"Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and their ammunition in Western Balkans by 2024"*, which is coordinated and funded by the European Union and implemented by a Regional Cooperation Council and the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC).<sup>1</sup> The "Roadmap" is the first cross-regional effort of its kind, intended to overcome the segmented, fragmented, bilateral, and protracted approaches to SALW control of the past.

Any transfer of HALO's experiences has to take the substantial preparatory legal and political input as well as the logistical and training requirements into account. As this report builds upon a first assessment of HALO's project (Heinemann-Grüder, 2020), it does not cover the political and legal prerequisites included in the earlier report. Both assessments should, therefore, be read in conjunction.

HALO's marking and registration project in BiH has been a success with valid lessons for the marking and registration of police-held SALW in BiH and government-held SALW in the Western Balkans as a whole. Keeping these lessons in mind will help to avoid sub-optimal outcomes. Based on the joint record of the armed forces, the Ministry of Defense and HALO as well as EUFOR, lessons learned could be transferred—through briefings, demonstration, workshops and training sessions—to future marking and registration efforts in the police and other government agencies in BiH and the Western Balkans.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.seesac.org/ff/docs/SALW-Resources/Roadmap\\_brosura\\_20x20\\_ENG\\_web.pdf](https://www.seesac.org/ff/docs/SALW-Resources/Roadmap_brosura_20x20_ENG_web.pdf).

# THE PROBLEM

The proliferation and illicit trafficking of SALW and ammunition is both a persistent threat to national and international security and a particularly serious problem in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe. As a result of the decentralised territorial defence system in former Yugoslavia, the lasting distrust among ethnic groups who fought over its break-up, the lost control over the military legacy of socialist countries and the lucrative arms industry, the Western Balkans is beset by problems associated with illicitly held weapons. Much of the illegally held or sold weapons come from a black market stockpile of arms left over from the wars in the former Yugoslavia while others find their way out of the inventories of the armed forces through corruption. Due to insufficient end-user control, arms exported from the Western Balkans could be diverted to terrorist groups or armed militias in countries like Syria, Libya, or Iraq. According to the Ministry of Security, some 20,000 weapons confiscated by the police forces and the border guard in BiH were destroyed between 2016 and 2020 alone.<sup>2</sup>

A thriving arms industry and considerable surpluses of weapons make arms transfers an important component of Western Balkan state economies. BiH is the second-largest Western Balkan arms exporter after Serbia. Exports of arms from the Balkans is increasingly difficult to manage and monitor according to a 2020 report by the London-based Tactics Institute for Security and Counter Terrorism. The institute's director, Thomas Charles stated that 'weapons produced in the Balkans are often found in the hands of various non-state actors, including Salafist militias and terrorist groups. Their sale brings profit—and possible political favour—to impoverished states in the region, but also to their corrupt officials and various organised crime groups' (Rosenbaum, 2020).

Western Balkan countries exported weapons and military equipment worth around 1.6 billion US dollars between 2007 and 2013 (Jovanovic, 2015). In 2016 alone, they exported over €500 million of weapons, ammunition and equipment. Regional weapons producers and governments, particularly in Serbia, BiH, Croatia, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Albania, are boosting arms production and exports of surplus stocks. A 2018 report by SEESAC said the region's annual revenues from arms sales rose by 12 per cent to €514.6 million in 2016.

In 2017 the estimated total number of firearms, both licit and illicit, held by civilians in BiH amounted to 1,185,000 indicating an increase from 1,143,762 firearms in 2011 and 675,000 firearms in 2007 (Karp, 2007; 2018; Hadzovic et al., 2013). In 2010, it was estimated that 34 per cent of all private households in BiH kept one or more guns, which ranked the country 68 of 178 countries for gun ownership.<sup>3</sup> In spite of this the rate of firearm homicides per 100,000 people are relatively low in BiH. This suggests that among the various dimensions of SALW control, the problem of illicit holdings by private households, compared to illicit trafficking and diversion, is not the most pressing issue that must be addressed.

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Ermin Pešto, Ministry of Security of BiH, 2 December 2020.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gunpolicy.org/firearms/region/bosnia-and-herzegovina>.



In 2015, Paris was rocked by the Charlie Hedbo shooting. The attackers used Yugoslav-made Zastava M70 rifles assault rifles. Serbian-made arms, previously sold by the state to a private company, were used in the fighting between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020.<sup>4</sup> Yugoslav-designed anti-tank launchers have been found in the hands of various rebel groups in Syria along with Croatian-made assault rifles VHS-1 and VHS-2. Croatia sold 50,000 VHS-1 and VHS-2 rifles to Iraqi Federal Police as well as Iraqi Ground and Special Forces. Bulgarian weapons exported to Turkey have been found in Libya both in the hands of the UN- and Turkey-backed Government of National Accord. Despite an arms embargo, Serbian weapons are still finding their way to Libya. In June 2020, an improvised bomb strapped to a teddy bear in the Libyan capital featured a mortar shell produced in 2019 in Serbia (Ristic & Angelovski, 2020). Furthermore, from spring 2017 onwards, the Croatian island airport in Rijeka has become an important logistical base for Pentagon shipments to the Middle East, likely including arms for Syrian rebels (Cosic et al., 2017).

The overarching insight from these examples is that the Western Balkan countries should, with the assistance of the European Union through capable implementing partners, ensure the traceability of SALW stocks and newly produced, seized, exported or decommissioned weapons and implement strong end-use controls. Marking and registration of SALW held by the regular security services (armed forces, police, border guards), arms producers, arms exporters and civilians, as well as of confiscated weapons, is the key to any serious attempt to reduce the illicit possession or proliferation of weapons. Only if a marked and registered weapon can be traced back to its source of origin, will the risks of diversion decrease. Only a Life Cycle Management system which takes into account the production, use, sale and eventual decommissioning or destruction of a weapon can bring illicit weapons holdings under control.

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<sup>4</sup> A missile that was reportedly fired by Armenian forces from BM-21 Grad rocket launchers at the Azeri city of Horadiz was produced by the Serbian state-owned arms manufacturer Krusik in the town of Valjevo in 2019. The marking 'EDePro' shows that the rocket motor was made by another Serbian company, Belgrade-based EDePro. In 2018, Krusik signed a contract for the same type of 122-mm calibre G-2000 long-range rockets with Vectura Trans, a private arms company connected to arms merchant Slobodan Tesic. The United States imposed sanctions on Tesic in 2017, accusing him of bribery and violating arms embargos (Dragojlo et al., 2020).



# HALO'S CONTRIBUTION TO MARKING AND REGISTRATION IN BiH

Following an assessment by the Small Arms Survey in 2017 of SALW holdings in the AFBiH, HALO has worked with the AFBiH and EUFOR to mark and register military stockpiles of approximately 60,000 SALW at six marking sites throughout BiH (Newton, 2020)<sup>5</sup>. The preparation for the marking led to a comprehensive SALW inventory in the military garrisons, including an assessment of the weapons' condition. Only through the inventory, marking, and registration did the AFBiH get an overview of the types of weapons held. As a result of the HALO project, the AFBiH now know the condition of their weapons and can categorise them into "prospective" (for their further use) and "non-prospective" weapons (for sale, destruction or donation).

The Logistics Department of the Armed Forces organised the schedule of the marking procedure, the preparation of the respective weapons, their security and transport, and provided the staff for the marking. According to Colonel Mensud Hebibovic of the Ministry of Defense of BiH, the marking and registration through the HALO project may function as a template for the overall stock management of the Armed Forces in BiH.<sup>6</sup>

For establishing and maintaining a reliable inventory of weapons, a database is required. This is because a weapon that is marked, registered and recorded will be traceable. A functioning inventory enables the tracing of weapons back to the point at which they were diverted from a stockpile.<sup>7</sup> HALO initially relied on the International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) and then on the more advanced Modular Small Arms Control Implementation Compendium (MOSAIC) as the toolkit for marking and registration.<sup>8</sup>

To meet the BiH stakeholders' requirements, HALO communicated in various preparatory meetings with the BiH Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations (MoFTER), the AFBiH, the Ministry of Security and EUFOR. Together with the British company Pryor Marking Technology (Pryor), HALO built up the database and record-keeping system. The database enables the AFBiH to include qualitative information on SALW characteristics such as the serviceability and condition of items. It also allows for uploading images of weapons, thus enabling the armed forces to develop a comprehensive weapons catalogue. Ensuring system and data integrity was paramount to developing the data management system. This included establishing different authorisation levels for users, both across the armed forces and at the ministerial level, and the need to record individual user actions, allowing for tracking patterns of behaviour by a specific user. Every entry into the system and every edit is recorded and any deleted entries can be recovered.

<sup>5</sup> Out of the six marking sites four will be retained for future marking beyond the duration of the HALO project.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Colonel Mensud Hebibovic, Joint Staff of AFBiH, 4 December 2020

<sup>7</sup> The following paragraph is based on Newton, 2020.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/mosaic/#:~:text=Modular%20Small-arms-control%20Implementation%20Compendium%20%28MOSAIC%29%20MOSAIC%20is%20a,decade%20of%20coordinated%20work%20within%20the%20UN%20system;https://unoda-web.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/MOSAIC-Factsheet.pdf>.



The preparation, especially the structure of the database, and the logistics of selecting, cleaning, transporting, securing and handling weapons proved to be more demanding than the marking procedure itself. Knowledge of the types of weapons before they were marked allowed for a sequencing of the marking according to specific weapons types, which saved time. HALO's project was thus able to increase the rate of daily markings. The lesson is straightforward: Any marking and registration effort needs to categorise the weapons to be marked in advance of the marking itself because the type of weapon informs the appropriate marking method. For example, light weapons that cannot be marked with a Dot Peen marking machine due to weight or size will require a different marking solution such as a PortaDot marking machine which allows more flexibility in the marking process.

Data was entered into the registration database manually during the HALO project, with some remaining 3,000 light weapons to be marked at the end of 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, marking could temporarily not proceed according to schedule and therefore could not be finished by the end of 2020. However, 95 percent of the marking and registration was accomplished by then. Some of the remaining weapons did not fit to the Dot Peen marking machine due to their size—some technical adjustments to the marking machine had to be made.

HALO only used dot peen machines for marking, not the more expensive laser machines, which were discussed as an option in the course of the project, but whose import would have incurred additional custom duties. HALO purchased a laser marking machine for the project however it has faced a long and protracted import process and, at time of writing, has not yet arrived in BiH. Countries that participate in the Western Balkans should decide early on whether they are willing to refrain from customs for imported marking machines. In future, the interface between marking and registration could probably be digitalised, for example with a scanner that reads the marking (instead of typing the marking into a laptop computer). Although HALO never established a mobile marking team, as was originally contemplated, items that do not fit into the existing marking machines or are difficult to move will be marked with mobile machines in the future.



The management of weapons registration data is a key focus of HALO's project in BiH. The fusion of the SALW registration data in one data bank is to be combined and accessible at the Logistics Department of the Armed Forces and other relevant departments. As was confirmed by the Ministry of Defense, the registration data bank should only be accessible to the Armed Forces and a selected number of people from the MoD itself, but no other ministries or governmental agencies. Control over data access is crucial because any outsider knowledge about surplus weapons would be extremely valuable. By December 2020, the IT technicians of the AFBiH were still working on a solution for the inventory software to be included into the internal network of the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces.

During the marking and registration process and the movement of weapons to marking sites and their return, no theft or disappearance of SALW was reported, although the physical security of storage sites leaves room for improvement. From the perspective of the AFBiH, the maintenance management is a key priority in the framework of the AWE Masterplan and will be addressed.

As a summary of the review of HALO's marking and registration efforts, it is worth mentioning that marking, registration, record keeping and physical security of SALW are interdependent. The application of marking techniques, either with Dot Peen or laser machines, makes sense only in connection with the respective registration software and measures ensuring physical security. Therefore, any marking and registration project only makes sense as a "package deal" and only organisations such as HALO, capable of designing and implementing the whole "package", should be considered as serious implementing partners. A marking machine is useless, and efforts wasted, if not interconnected with integrated registration software. Training, updates and follow-up must be part of any marking effort. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations (MOFTER) has developed a database independent of the AFBiH and MoD to deal with exports of arms and ammunition. There is no interface with the MoD data collection on "prospective" and "non-prospective" weapons. The Presidency of BiH decides whether weapons and ammunition are sold or not. However, the MOFTER assesses whether potential buyers meet export criteria. The interface for the AFBiH weapons registration and storage management and the MOFTER management, which will pertain to arms manufacturers too, is not yet resolved but should be discussed before projects in other Western Balkans countries are implemented.

In principle, the need for efficient stockpile management also applies to weapons that do not belong to the current SALW definition in BiH, i.e. weapons beyond 100mm calibre, which are still portable by one person, for example anti-tank weapons or MANPADs. The AFBiH will discuss the future marking and registrations of weapons beyond the 100mm calibre, but currently do not consider this a priority. However, the labelling of weapons storage boxes with HALO's assistance has been agreed upon and should start in 2021. HALO will contribute to establishing a warehousing system for weapons boxes, which will also pertain to ammunition boxes and other items stored by the AFBiH.



# SCOPE OF SALW MARKING AND REGISTRATION AND STORAGE MANAGEMENT

HALO's marking and registration project does not apply to weapons held by the police, which are under the authority of the entities of BiH and its cantons even though HALO's marking technology was jointly designed with the Logistics Department of the AFBiH to build up a storage system that could go beyond the AFBiH. While HALO's terms of reference did not include the development and implementation of stock management software, future SALW projects should address record-keeping and data management for the life cycle management of SALW.

The BiH Marking Law does not require weapons to be marked at the time of their seizure or confiscation, nor does it state that weapons under police control must be marked—the national law does not extend to the state or cantonal level.<sup>9</sup> Effective record-keeping and tracking of seized or confiscated weapons is difficult, because it falls into the sphere of competencies of the cantons. The Ministry of Security of BiH has collected evidence on the number of weapons holdings by the police. However, the figures are not disclosed and cannot be confirmed. What is known is that the weapons holdings of the police in BiH's entities include military-grade weapons.

In 2018 and 2019, HALO, together with the national BiH Ministry of Security, conducted three information events to demonstrate the benefits of marking and registration to the police forces of the entities (state and cantonal level) of the Federation. In 2020 under the guidance of the "Coordination Board for SALW Control of BiH," a new comprehensive "strategic document" on SALW, which would correspond to the "Roadmap" goals and include the weapons and ammunition holdings of the entities and cantons, was under discussion between the different national ministries and the entities of BiH. Any implementation of SALW control projects would thus require legislation at the state level on both police weapons and civilian weapons holdings.

Although HALO's marking and registration project was confined to the AFBiH, it would be advisable for the "Roadmap" to extend a unified marking and registration protocol, including software, to all stakeholders, i.e., arms producers, the Ministry of Foreign Trade, the police and illicit weapons seized. A unified marking and registration protocol would allow for improved partnerships and an exchange of data, keeping track of shifts of weapons holdings from one agency to another and addressing potential loopholes of illicit trafficking outside the confines of the Armed Forces. In BiH, several meetings took place between the MoD, MOFTER, the Ministry of Security and EUFOR—with HALO's representative in attendance—about a joint data management approach. No solution has been found yet, but the "Roadmap" would be well advised to take this issue into account.

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<sup>9</sup> [http://mvteo.gov.ba/attachments/en\\_zakon-o-obiljezavanju-malog-oruzja--lakog-naoruzanja-i-pripadajuće-municije-\(sluzbeni-glasnik-bih--broj-83-16\)--.pdf](http://mvteo.gov.ba/attachments/en_zakon-o-obiljezavanju-malog-oruzja--lakog-naoruzanja-i-pripadajuće-municije-(sluzbeni-glasnik-bih--broj-83-16)--.pdf).



In partnership with EUFOR, HALO conducted complementary training on weapons serviceability and storage management, which enhances the physical security of the AFBiH stockpile.

In addition to marking the weapons themselves and their corresponding registration, the system allows for greater ease of stockpile management through the use of data matrices. The chore of stock-taking can be relatively painless when marked and registered weapons are stored in sealed containers labelled with a complex mark that can be quickly and easily scanned, providing an operator with information instantaneously (Newton, 2020).

Based on the categorisation of weapons as “prospective” or “non-prospective,” the AFBiH can make plans and projections on future arms sales and respond to requests by arms purchasers from abroad. To generate additional income, the AFBiH prefer the sale of non-prospective weapons instead of “donations” or scrapping. However until the end of 2020, the AFBiH allegedly had not sold but only “donated” weapons.<sup>10</sup> To where or whom the proceeds from these sales would go, the national armed forces or the entities of the BiH-Federation, is a contentious issue. In December 2020, the Ministry of Defense of BiH was not able to specify its sales plans for “non-prospective” weapons.

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<sup>10</sup> In 2012, 122mm howitzers were donated to Iraq through the US Embassy.



# HALO'S FUTURE ENGAGEMENT WITH BIH STAKEHOLDERS

HALO most closely interacted with the Logistics Department of the Armed Forces, with the Ministry of Defense and with EUFOR. HALO also interacted with the Ministry of Security on the potential expansion of the project to the police, however, since the police are devolved to the sphere of competencies of the entities of the BiH, the willingness of expanding marking and registration is beyond the purview of the national government.

The police are decentralised in BiH, and the two jurisdictions, that is the Federation and the Republika Srpska, do not necessarily coordinate activities or plans. The implementation was complicated and beyond HALO's powers because of the overall political stalemate between the entities of BiH. The sheer number of security services under arms, seven alone under the national Ministry of Security, requires more complex coordination than in the case of the armed forces. Assistant Minister of Security of BiH, Ermin Pesto, had prepared a report on the weapons holdings of the police forces of BiH in spring 2019, but the findings were not made publicly available due in part to the fact that the entities of BiH have built-up paramilitary capabilities far beyond those of the armed forces.

Based on the experience of the HALO project with the armed forces, a marking and registration project with the police would need less preparation and could start more readily. HALO suggested to train and equip two marking teams for the police, however, at the time of writing (January 2021), the entities of BiH had not yet agreed on the extension of HALO's marking and registration project to the police.





HALO TRUST

PC Interface

# PROSPECTS OF SURRENDER OR LEGALISATION OF ILLICIT CIVILIAN WEAPONS

HALO's project has dealt with state-held weapons rather than privately owned ones. Civilian disarmament is a function of state control over its weapons holdings. Only a state that controls its weapons can instill a sense of confidence among its people. Only people who trust state-controlled security services will give up weapons as their personal "last resort" for security provision. Any civilian disarmament strategy, either on the Western Balkans, in the conflict zones of the former Soviet Union or in Sub-Sahara Africa only makes sense if it addresses the core of the SALW problem namely the deficient or absent control of state-owned weapons or ammunition.

The Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Republika Srpska have relatively strict weapon laws compared to the rest of Europe. Weapons are regulated by the Weapons and Ammunition Law.<sup>11</sup> People over 21 may apply for a permit. Those with a history of criminal activity, mental disorders, alcohol or drug abuse will be denied a permit. There is also a thorough background check, interviewing neighbours and family, and the applicant must complete a course and pass a multiple-choice exam. Firearms must be kept in a safe place within a residence and may be confiscated by police if the owner is found to be irresponsible. Concealed carry is allowed with a permit.

Any strategy of civilian disarmament needs to define a clear goal whether it be gun or crime control, reducing homicides with firearms or even 'sensitisation' to firearms. Civilians who illicitly hold arms regularly cite self-protection to justify possession due to the deficient state security or latent distrust. Civilian disarmament mechanisms need to curb the supply of arms, address the reasons that motivate civilians to possess arms, provide incentives for legalising arms or handing them over.

Individuals holding non-registered weapons could be encouraged to "legalise" their weapons holdings or to hand them in in exchange for an "amnesty" for past non-registration. A subsequent reduction in murder cases (which mostly involve unregistered weapons) or a reduction in domestic violence might contribute to building public pressure. It is impossible to assess the impact of HALO's project on the overall security perceptions in BiH or to attribute changes in security perceptions to the project. But given the existing social divisions in BiH, the gap between the rich and the poor as well as persisting ethnic, nationalist and religious divides, reducing the spread of illicit weapons positively contributes to the stability of the country.

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<sup>11</sup> Zakon O Nabavljanju Drzanju I Nosenju Oruzja I Municije, [http://parlamentfbih.gov.ba/dom\\_naroda/bos/parlament/propisi/El\\_materijali/Zakon%20o%20oruzju.pdf](http://parlamentfbih.gov.ba/dom_naroda/bos/parlament/propisi/El_materijali/Zakon%20o%20oruzju.pdf)

## ACHIEVING DONOR OBJECTIVES AND DONOR VISIBILITY

HALO's project has been highly visible to the donors who were regularly informed about project progress including training workshops and updates on operations at marking sites. HALO invited donors to its marking sites and reported back to them how the money was spent. Communication with donor representatives support the view that they felt well informed. The donor's contribution was visible at marking sites, the logos of partners were on display, boards referred to the respective donors.

A successful SALW strategy needs to include a broader information policy, a constant accompaniment by the national parliament, a media strategy and public awareness-raising at the local level, in the educational sector and schools. A regularly updated government SALW-focused website with publicly available information on the progress or bottlenecks in solving the SALW problems might contribute to keeping the political momentum.

## CROSSCUTTING ISSUES

The principle crosscutting issue for this project was and continues to be gender equality. HALO demonstrated its commitment to hiring women and ensuring a safe and inclusive working environment within the marking teams. Due to the impact COVID-19 HALO BiH did not conduct any gender equality, inclusion or safeguarding training besides comprehensive induction training on HALO's policies. It had planned to hold training sessions together with "The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining" (GICHD). A trainer was supposed to deliver training activities at all four HALO BiH marking and registration locations (Tuzla, Banja Luka, Capljina, Visoko), but due to COVID-19 regulations, this training could not take place in 2020. HALO's "Prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment policy" (SEA) of 27 February 2018 lists the values HALO adheres to. Accordingly, "HALO takes a zero-tolerance approach to any forms of SEA and harassment. All reports will be investigated thoroughly and dealt with appropriately. HALO senior management is committed to a workplace free of harassment will treat all reported incidents with utmost confidentiality; the identities of the alleged harasser, affected person(s), as well as the informant will be kept confidential unless the organisation assesses that disclosure is necessary for safety reasons. All reported incidents of SEA and harassment will be handled impartially and independently by neutral parties who are not directly involved and have no conflict of interest in the case. HALO practices a policy of non-retaliation to ensure that the reporting informant is not victimised following any reported incident."



## SUSTAINABILITY

Project sustainability is determined by the build-up of competence and institutional arrangements that outlast donor and implementer input. During project implementation, the sustainability depends on the level and the predictability of funding for the whole project duration. HALO regularly had to lobby for an extension of its project funding and for matching funds— which it did successfully. The marking team coordinators were HALO staff and funded through bilateral grants while members of the AFBiH made up the marking teams, which were financed by the AFBiH themselves.

HALO's supplier and partner, the UK based company Pryor Marking, trained HALO personnel and the team coordinators at the marking sites, the then-trained AFBiH marking teams who had gained experience with marking and registration went on to train newcomers. Depending on whether the AFBiH remains committed to funding the trained personnel, the life-cycle management system for SALW is sustainable. HALO continues to engage with stakeholders to ensure a transition to full-state ownership of the marking and registration system.

# LESSONS LEARNED FOR AN EXPANSION OF HALO'S PROJECT TO THE WIDER WESTERN BALKANS

SALW marking and registration projects can only be successful if valid lessons of HALO's project in BiH are taken into account. Any output oriented SALW control project requires a baseline assessment of legal and illicit SALW and target figures for SALW registration and disposal at the end of the project. The weapons catalogue the SALW database in BiH was built on can be used to aid in the establishment of similar HALO projects in other Balkan countries. This would reduce both start-up costs and the time required to establish a workable database in line with stakeholder wishes. External monitoring and evaluation also allows for lessons learned to be implemented for future projects, increasing efficiency and effectiveness. The BiH experience demonstrates the necessity for clear division of labour between political coordination and steering, implementation, oversight and evaluation.

Certain insights can be gained from BiH's experience. The implementation of a result-oriented SALW control project thus necessitates:

- an authoritative and capable co-ordinating body which represents donor countries to whom the national implementing organisations regularly report and which has steering and enforcement capacity;
- a clear assignment of tasks and duties to each implementing organisation which correspond to their profile and proven record (for example, a proven record in marking and registration, in physical security, or destruction)
- a baseline assessment of the weapons and ammunition stockpiles as well as target figures for marking and registration,
- a national coordinating body with authoritative political clout,
- open, transparent, competitive tender procedures for implementing organisations,
- operationalised action plans, including timelines, milestones, human and material resources and contingency measures,
- measurable objectives and concrete indicators,
- progress reporting and review procedures,
- ensuring a sustainable, nationally owned stockpile management system as a result of the project,
- a separation of coordinating functions from the technical assessment of project proposals,
- the application of competition regulations of the European Union to avoid cronyism, favoritism or monopolies.

HALO's project in BiH was successful due to the high levels of coordination between all relevant in-country stakeholders which was largely facilitated by the AWE Masterplan and the national SALW Coordination Board. Future SALW control projects must ensure that there is appropriate coordination between the implementing organisation, the national authorities and any relevant regional or international stakeholders to allow for effective and time sensitive decision making to resolve issues that will likely arise throughout the implementation of the project.



# TOWARDS REALISATION OF THE “ROADMAP”

The “Roadmap” lists seven goals: (1) arms control legislation, (2) evidence-based arms control policies, (3) reducing illicit flows of SALW, (4) awareness, education, outreach and advocacy, (5) decreasing illicitly possessed firearms, (6) destruction of seized SALW, and (7) decreasing risks of proliferation and diversion. The Roadmap’s fourteen “performance indicators” focus on legal frameworks, the establishment of “focal points”, prosecution, weapons seizures, destruction, physical security and citizen’s satisfaction. However, none of the “performance indicators” of the “Roadmap” provides quantifiable measures for a comparison of the status quo (the starting point) with the strived for end-state after project completion. The target metrics are vague or not measurable. The “Roadmap” fails to link goals with the necessary organisational set-up and resources.

The “*Strategic Evaluation of the Roadmap 2024 for the Comprehensive Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Western Balkans*”, conducted by the Global Public Policy Institute in Berlin and submitted to the German Federal Foreign Office in January 2020 concluded that,

*Germany, France and the EU should specifically undertake efforts to close the critical gaps that exist in the baseline data, in particular on weapons stockpiles in the Western Balkans region, on the one hand, and those that result from challenges to the validity and/or operationalization of individual KPIs ..., on the other hand* (Global Public Policy Institute, 2019).

While praising the principal of the regional approach, the assessment of the Roadmap by the Global Public Policy Institute critically highlights that “none of the Roadmap stakeholders have been able to provide a full, detailed estimate of funding needs”, that “the available data on small arms control in the Western Balkans show significant gaps in available information regarding illicit possessions and smuggling” (ibid.).

In view of the potential for an inefficient use of donor funds it is advisable to adjust the Roadmap’s goals and revise the implementation procedures. Only by transforming these insights and critical observations into measurable and testable indicators for the project design and implementation can it be assured that donor funds are appropriately spent, that set goals will be achieved in time, and that project inputs are attributable to outputs and result in tangible outcomes.

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