National authorities are increasingly aware of the benefit of the United Nations’ practical, authoritative modules with advice on small arms control measures. Over 110 countries have reported applying these modules when they work to improve their small-arms control measures. All modules are available on www.un.org/disarmament/convars/mosaic/.

Beginning in 2009, the United Nations developed this set of modules under the name “International Small Arms Control Standards”, or ISACS. Then, in 2018, they were relaunched under an immediately recognizable name: MOSAIC – the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium.

What is MOSAIC?

MOSAIC translates into practice the objectives of key global agreements aiming to prevent the illicit trade, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, including:

- the Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons;
- the International Tracing Instrument;
- the Firearms Protocol supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime;
- the Arms Trade Treaty.

MOSAIC modules provide voluntary, practical guidance derived from good practices, codes of conduct and standard operating procedures that have been developed at (sub-) regional levels. They are based on the very best technical advice from experts around the world. Modules are becoming available in a growing number of languages, including Arabic, French and Spanish.

The compendium includes modules ranging from how to establish a national small-arms commission or set up a national SALW action plan, to modules on stockpile management, gender, or weapons marking. Modules are continually being developed, including on security sector reform; on small arms and light weapons control in the context of preventing armed violence; and on monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

MOSAIC also supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 16 to promote peaceful, just and inclusive societies and its indicator 16.4 that includes a significant reduction in illicit arms flows.
Who developed MOSAIC?

Governments often call upon the UN system to provide advice and support on issues related to small arms and light weapons control — including on legislative, programmatic and operational matters.

UN agencies decided that the best way to ensure that the United Nations as a whole could consistently deliver high-quality advice and support in response to such requests, was to develop international guidance on small arms and light weapons control, similar to the standards the UN developed in the areas of mine action (International Mine Action Standards – IMAS); disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (Integrated DDR Standards – IDDRS); and ammunition (International Ammunition Technical Guidelines – IATG).

The compendium is the result of a decade of coordinated work within the UN system, involving 24 partner entities with expertise ranging from development and weapons management to gender and public health.

An external expert reference group of over 300 specialists, from NGOs to industry, completed the methodical process of establishing each module.

Who can use MOSAIC?

MOSAIC can be used by any government or organization. Properly basing small-arms control endeavours on MOSAIC modules reduces the risk of access to weapons by criminals, armed groups, terrorists and others who would misuse them.

MOSAIC. Good practices for safer societies.

MOSAIC “… contributes directly to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.”

António Guterres
United Nations Secretary-General