Linking Security Sector Governance and Reform to the Sustainable Development Goals: An analysis of Voluntary National Reviews in the period 2020-2023

Concept note and Terms of Reference

1.   Background

DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance is dedicated to improving the security of states and their people within a framework of democratic governance, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. DCAF contributes to making peace and development more sustainable by assisting partner states and international actors supporting these states, to improve the governance of their security sector through inclusive and participatory reforms. It creates innovative knowledge products, promotes norms and good practices, provides legal and policy advice and supports capacity-building of both state and non-state security sector stakeholders.

The UN's 2030 Agenda is a global action plan for sustainable development and a key priority for the UN and its member states. Currently, little work has been done to link Security Sector Governance/Reform (SSG/R) with the 2030 Agenda despite there being considerable overlap between the two realms. In this context, DCAF's Policy and Research Division is conducting a multiyear [project](#) which focuses on linking SSG/R with the 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in particular SDG16 on peace, justice and strong institutions. SDG16 is made up of 12 sub-components. These sub-components, or "targets", clarify how one can achieve SDG16, which includes objectives to reduce violence (target 16.1), promote rule of law (target 16.3), reduce illicit arms flows and combat organized crime (target 16.4), reduce corruption (16.5), develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions (16.6), ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making (16.7), ensure access to information and protect fundamental freedoms (16.10), strengthen institutions to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime (16.A). Many of these targets closely align with the objectives of SSG/R.

Against this background, this project examines how security sector oversight actors contribute to achieving SDG 16 and its targets. It focuses on oversight actors of the security sector and covers the role of parliaments, civil society and independent oversight institutions in promoting SSG/R and SDG16. Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) provide a snapshot of experiences and progress made towards implementation of the SDGs, and thus constitute a valuable record of actionable policies and measures.[1] VNRs are presented by member states each year at the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development. It is for these reasons that the project also includes a research workstream which examines the inclusion of SSG/R considerations in VNRs, as well as a separate workstream under which DCAF co-hosts annual side events at the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development to raise awareness on the role of SSG/R in implementing SDG 16 and the broader 2030 Agenda.

2. Objectives

The main objective of this study will be to provide a **systematic content analysis of VNRs submitted in the period 2020-2023** in order to capture the frequency and means through which 'sector security actors', 'SSG/R considerations' and 'parliaments' are (or are not) referenced in these reviews. The study will be an update to the [first](#) which, published in 2021, identified empirical examples of security sector actors and SSG/R considerations in 152 VNRs submitted during the period 2016-2019 and also assessed whether these reviews referenced the role of parliaments vis-à-vis the security sector.

It is expected that the lessons drawn from second VNR Analysis will be used by parliaments working on SSG/R and sustainable development and will also inform future DCAF support to parliaments under its SDG 16 project.

3. Deliverables

The second VNR analysis will consist of approximately 12,000 words, divided as follows:

1. <u>Introduction (2,000 words):</u> Introduction, relevance and methodology;
2. <u>Contextual analysis (2,000 words):</u> Analysis of the VNRs 'landscape' in the period 2020-2023, including notable changes and/or trends in reporting guidelines and submissions, and the prevalence of SDG 16 targets in VNRs in the same period;

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[1] VNRs are presented by member states each year at the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development. For more information, see: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/

3. <u>Content analysis (6,000 words, or 2,000 words per sub-chapter):</u> Analysis of VNRs, grouped according to the following headings: 1) security actors and the SDGs; 2) SSG/R and the SDGs; and 3) Parliaments, SSG/R and the SDGs;
4. <u>Comparative analysis (1000 words):</u> Summary of key changes/trends as compared to the findings of the first VNR analysis;
5. <u>Conclusion (1000 words):</u> Summary of key findings of each chapter/sub-chapter and potential utility of findings for future work on VNRs, SSG/R and the SDGs.

4. Methodology

4.1. VNR analysis – overview of methodology

The second VNR analysis should analyse all VNRs submitted during the period 2020-2023 (excluding those not available in English, French or Spanish so as to ensure comparability with the first VNR analysis).

As with the first VNR analysis, it will rely on both **quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques**, in particular through the use of the coding software **MaxQDA**.

Following the approach of the first VNR analysis, quantitative content analysis shall be used by the chosen researcher to examine the frequency of codes pertaining to **a) "security actors and related terms", b) "security sector governance/reform" and c) "parliaments"**, and qualitative content analysis for assessing whether these codes constitute references to SSG/R.

Notes:
- A codebook will be shared by DCAF with the chosen researcher, but may require adaptation.

4.2. Step 1 – quantitative analysis

Once all VNRs submitted in the period 2020-2023 have been identified, downloaded and imported into MaxODA, a keyword search based on the aforementioned codebook will be made. Manual coding may be needed, for example, whenever the national or local name of a country's specific institution is identified. Manual coding will also be needed for keywords where multiple meanings could significantly bias the results.

Once the quantitative analysis is completed, the codes will be exported into an excel spreadsheet and disaggregated by VNR.

4.3. Step 2 – qualitative analysis

The below criteria shall be used to qualitatively assess whether the collected samples constitute references to SSG/R: **(a) Timeframe; (b) Good Governance, (c) Listing of actors, (d) Law enforcement, (e) Financial intelligence, (f) Mentions of security actors, (g) Trust in security actors (h) Substantive references to SSG/R, (i) Examples of peacekeeping or regional, international involvement**.

Notes:

- The analysis is based on a binary assessment: either a sample is considered as an example of SSG/R or not.
- In the case of samples that were particularly ambiguous, a **negative bias** shall be adopted, and the sample under review will not be considered a reference to SSG/R.

Assessment Criteria	1. Timeframe	The SSG/R example should take place within the SDG timeframe (i.e. 2015 onwards) to be considered for inclusion.
	2. Good governance	The samples should speak to DCAF's good governance principles (implicitly or explicitly), which include transparency, accountability, rule of law, participation, responsiveness, effectiveness, and efficiency. However, only referring to effectiveness and efficiency is not enough. Other good governance principles should also be present (again, this might be implicit or explicit).
	3. Listing of actors	When security actors are mentioned alongside other actors, but it is unclear what their role is, the sample shall be coded as 'no'. This is because no firm conclusion can be made as regard attribution or contribution – it is impossible to know who participated and what were the implications for the institution.
	4. Law enforcement	When 'law enforcement' is mentioned only to refer to the enforcement of the law, it should not be considered as SSG/R.
	5. Financial Intelligence	Samples referring to financial intelligence may only be considered as examples of SSG/R when they directly relate to preventing terrorism financing.
	6. Mentions of Security Actors as data sources	These types of statements are generally not considered as examples of SSG/R as they focus on the function of security actors only as data sources. E.g. "905 violent crimes were reported to the Swiss police in 2016." (Switzerland's VNR).
	7. Trust in security actors	While dependent on the context, samples referencing trust in security actors may be considered as instances of SSG/R.
	8. Are references to SSG/R substantive enough?	These highly depend on context. If the mention of SSG/R is contained in only one sentence, the reference must be clear and unambiguous. If it is spread across multiple sentences/a paragraph, more discretion may be taken. However, wherever there is a doubt, the sample should not be considered as referencing SSG/R.
	9. Examples of peacekeeping or regional/international involvement	Statements stating that a country contributes to peacekeeping missions are not enough to be considered as SSG/R.

The above criteria are indicative and will entail some level of subjectivity. Key is to ensure **consistency** in the assessment throughout the analysis.

To further mitigate bias/subjectivity, and to ensure quality control, a second researcher will be involved. The second researcher will validate the samples considered as examples of SSG/R, and co-examine samples deemed as ambiguous.

4.4. Researcher selection

The researcher should be familiar with coding and in particular the use of MaxODA. They should have excellent research and writing skills, and previous experience working on or for organizations specialising in SSG/R, DDR, rule of law, justice or related thematics. They should also be familiar with the 2030 Agenda; in particular SDG 16, and ideally, Voluntary National Reviews.

5. Remuneration

Description	Total
VNR Analysis fee	10'000 CHF

6. Timeline (TBC)[2]

Time interval	Description of activities
Month 1	- Researcher drafts outline/DCAF provides feedback. - Consultation between DCAF and the researcher on content-related and methodological aspects. - Relevant literature on VNRs identified, and bibliography developed. - VNRs identified, downloaded and imported into Max QDA.
Month 2	- Quantitative analysis (1): keyword search based on the codebook. - Where necessary, manual coding completed, and codebook updated (in consultation with DCAF)
Month 3	- Quantitative analysis (2): codes exported into an excel spreadsheet and disaggregated by VNR. - Drafting (1): literature review drafted/shared with DCAF. - Quantitative analysis (3): analysis of results of security "security actors and related terms" codes - Drafting (2): chapter on "security actors and related terms" drafted/shared with DCAF for comments. - Qualitative analysis (1): assessment of whether the samples constitute references to SSG/R (using criteria outlined in section 4.2 of this document)
Month 4	(continued) Qualitative analysis (1: assessment of whether the samples constitute references to SSG/R - Qualitative analysis (2) – identification of any interesting trends/patterns in SSG/R samples (disaggregated by year to ensure comparability with the first VNR analysis)

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[2] The timeline may be adjusted within reason.

	• Drafting (3): chapter on "security sector governance/reform" drafted/shared with DCAF for comments.
Month 5	• Drafting (4): researcher incorporates DCAF comments and provides updated chapters. • Drafting (5): researcher drafts introduction and conclusion/shares with DCAF for comments.
Month 6	• Drafting (5): external reviewer and DCAF provide final comments on updated chapters + introduction/conclusion. • Drafting (6): researcher incorporates comments into final draft, and submits final manuscript to DCAF.
Month 7	• Publication production process (1): Manuscript sent for copy-editing and lay-outing. • Publication production process (2): Review of final publication
Month 8	• Publication launch

7. Terms of Reference

7.1. Structure:

The study should comply with the following structure (the word count per section is indicative and signifies the relative importance of each of the sections), although some variation with sections may be possible:

1. **Introduction** (2000 words)
   1.1. General introduction
   1.2. Outline of the structure of the VNR Analysis
   1.3. Methodology
      a. Question, relevance; methodologies techniques used and limitations.
      b. Introduction of key concepts, ideas and challenges addressed in subsequent sections.
      c. Outline of the structure of the VNR Analysis.

2. **Contextual analysis** (2000 words)
   2.1 Voluntary National Reviews
      a. What are the VNRs?
      b. VNR landscape in the second four-year cycle of the HLPF.
   2.2 Reporting on SDG16 targets in VNRs

3. **Content analysis** (6000 words i.e. 2000 words per sub-section)
   3.1 Security actors and the SDGs
      a. References to security actors in VNRs
      b. Examples of the contributions of security actors to the SDGs
   3.2 SSG/R and the SDGs
      a. VNR reports featuring SSG/R terminology
      b. Further references to SSG/R in VNR reports
   3.3 Parliaments, SSG/R and the SDGs

4. **Comparative analysis** (1000 words)

    4.1 Summary of key changes/trends as compared to the findings of the first VNR analysis.

5. **Conclusions and end notes** (1000 words)

6. **Annexes** (not included in word count)

    6.1 List of countries

    6.2 Codebook

    6.3 VNRs featuring some reference to SSG/R

7.2. Notes on referencing and style:

We ask the researcher to ensure that their papers are fully referenced. Please refrain from lengthy quotes (e.g. from laws, policy documents, or other academic works); keep them concise and to the point. We ask you to use endnotes to cite your references. Endnotes and Annexes do not count towards the final word count.