



An Integrated Approach to Small Arms Management

The EU-ASAC Programme on Curbing Small
Arms and Light Weapons in Cambodia

Division 4214
Decosac – Development Cooperation and Small Arms Control

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Paper presented by David de Beer, Programme Manager of EU Assistance on curbing Small Arms and Light Weapons in Cambodia (EU-ASAC)

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Internet: <http://www.gtz.de>

Author:
David de Beer
Photos: David de Beer

Layout:
Sabine Eddigehausen, OE 6002

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1. Introduction¹

In 1998, after thirty years of war, genocide and civil strife, the Royal Government of Cambodia made its first serious attempt to tackle the problems caused by the hundreds of thousands of small arms in the country. At this time, a fragile peace had returned to the country: the last remnants of the Khmer Rouge army had given up their armed struggle and had been mostly absorbed into the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces. However, hundreds of thousands of weapons were still in the possession of Cambodian citizens in towns and villages throughout the country. These weapons and violence they caused in society, posed a threat to the newfound stability of the country.

the problem of small arms in Cambodia

In 1999 the Royal Government issued Sub-decree No. 38 that declared private ownership of weapons to be illegal. In the ensuing months, the Cambodian police and military called upon the people to hand in their weapons and conducted searches in Phnom Penh and other major towns throughout the country. These, sometimes hard-handed, tactics produced good results in the major towns, significantly reducing the number of weapons in circulation. Success in the outlying villages and in the rural areas was less apparent, with villagers fearing for their own safety if they had no weapons to protect themselves. At the same time, the villagers were able to hide their weapons in the fields or forests out of reach of the ill-equipped police force. In this way 1998 and 1999 the government collected over 100,000 weapons.

government initiatives

Notwithstanding all the problems, this was a laudable initiative by the Cambodian government to limit the possession and use of small arms by the civilian population. On 5 May 1999 the Cambodian government took their small arms campaign a step further by beginning to destroy the collected weapons in a series of large public ceremonies in various provincial capitals. Using a bulldozer to crush the weapons, the government destroyed 36,505 in seven such ceremonies. The last crushing ceremony was held in March 2000. In June 2000 the government also formalised the National Commission for Weapons Management and Reform in Cambodia to oversee the

¹ This paper was presented by David de Beer, Programme Manager of EU-ASAC (EU Assistance on curbing Small Arms and Light Weapons in Cambodia), to GTZ and the Hessische Stiftung für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (HSFK), Frankfurt, Germany on 19 December 2002.

process of weapons management in the country. The Deputy-Prime Minister and Co-Minister of the Interior, Sar Kheng, was appointed Chairman of the National Commission.

EU support Meanwhile in Europe the European Union had created an Action Plan on Small Arms and Light Weapons ² and the Cambodian government appealed to the European Union for assistance with its activities in this field. After sending a fact-finding mission to Cambodia in August 1999, the Council of Ministers of the European Commission decided on 15 November 1999³ to support the Royal Government of Cambodia in its effort to combat the potentially destabilising accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons throughout the country and to contribute to promoting the control, collection and destruction of weapons in the country. The Council of Ministers further stated that the excessive and uncontrolled accumulation of small arms and light weapons posed a threat to peace and security and reduced the prospects for sustainable development. In April 2000 EU ASAC (European Union Assistance on Curbing Small Arms and light weapons in Cambodia) opened its office in Phnom Penh under the leadership of Brigadier-General (ret.) Henny van der Graaf, a leading expert in the field of small arms control.

² Joint Action 1999/34/CFSP of 17 December 1998

³ Council Decision 1999/730/CFSP of 15 November 1999

2. EU ASAC's Relationship with the Government

The EU ASAC programme started at request of Cambodian Government and can be said to have the support of the government. The National Commission for Weapons Management and Reform is the government institution that is the natural "partner" of EU ASAC.

This means that, in principle, in case of problems an appeal can be made to the National Commission for assistance in solving these problems.

There is, however, a negative side in being too closely linked to the government. The government is suspicious of a strong civil society and wants to exercise its "control" over its development. It has in this case tried to put pressure on EU ASAC to limit its work with NGO's etc.

For a good relationship with the government, it is essential that the responsible ministers, generals and other officials understand that EU ASAC also has to fulfil its mandate from the Council of Ministers of the European Union and is not merely in Cambodia to do what the Cambodian Government requests. This sometimes requires a fine balancing act.

However, the success of such a programme depends on working in co-operation with the government and being able to rely on the government's expressed intention to severely limit the ownership and use of small arms and light weapons in society.

3. An Integrated, Multi-faceted Programme

A major strength of the EU ASAC programme is that it quickly developed an integrated, multi-faceted approach in its attempts to assist the Government in curbing the possession and use of small arms and light weapons.

five basic elements

The five basic elements of this programme are:

- (1) Assisting the government to draft a new Arms Law;
- (2) Assisting the Ministry of National Defence to develop a comprehensive weapons registration and safe storage system;
- (3) Implementing “Weapons for Development” projects whereby the local population were encourage to hand in illegal weapons to the police in exchange for community development projects such as water wells, schools etc.;
- (4) Assisting the government in a programme of destroying illegally-held weapons that had been handed in as well as military and police surplus weapons; and
- (5) Financing public awareness campaigns on the danger of small arms being illegally held by the local population.

The impact of each of these five elements has been strengthened by the implementation of the other four elements, thereby combining to form a powerful integrated package.

3.1 The Legal Framework

create support of the law

EU ASAC has invested much time in assisting the government draw up a new draft Arms Law. In the longer term, it is important that, in a country where a small arms and light weapons programme is being implemented, there is a legal framework in place that clearly reflects a consensus on regulating the possession and use of small arms and light weapons in society. Frequently, countries have arms laws which are not being observed or are unenforceable, or both. This often reflects local insecurity, but also a basic absence of public understanding and support. In Cambodia, there was a recent regulation in place, which had initial success in publicly collecting arms. Momentum then largely ceased. It was evident that further substantial arms collection would require increasingly intrusive police measures, which would only have aggravated tensions. The regulation had been issued without consultation and therefore was without a real constituency. The EU ASAC initiative, therefore, tried to create a consensus in support of the law, not only among the population but also on the part of the Ministries of Defence and Inte-

rior. Greater arms use accountability on the part of the police and military being the other side of the equation.

As from May 2000, EU ASAC employed a part-time expatriate legal advisor to work with officials from the two most involved ministries, those of the Interior and National Defence, in formulating the goals for the new Arms Law and in producing basic texts. This draft was then circulated among NGO's involved in weapons reduction issues and human rights. It was important that the draft law was not seen as "EU ASAC's" draft, but that there was clear Cambodian ownership of the process. Once comments from involved partners had been received, the draft text was re-worked and a final Round Table discussion was held on 27 March 2001. This brought together representatives of the involved ministries, including Justice, Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, in addition to National Defence and Interior, as well as NGO's and the legal advisor from the Deputy Prime Minister's office and EU ASAC. From February to April 2002 the EU ASAC legal advisor assisted the Ministries of the Interior and National Defence in framing drafts for a sub-decree and inter-ministerial regulation required to implement the law once it has been passed by the National Assembly and the Senate and has been signed by the King. On 16 May 2002 the draft law was approved by the Council of Ministers and on 10 October 2002, the Prime Minister sent the draft law to the National Assembly to be debated on. It is hoped that the law will be in place in time to be applied during the campaigning period for the parliamentary elections, scheduled to be held in Cambodia on 27 July 2003.

create ownership

However, once the Arms Law is in place it is important that steps are taken to train the police in understanding and applying the law, as well as informing the public of the implications of the law. To accomplish this aim, EU ASAC is working with the government and major NGO's preparing the public for the new Arms Law.

information and training

Results so far, after two and a half years, have seen a relative but significant change in perception by government and among the population regarding the issue of arms. There is increased awareness of the need to limit arms presence as a measure for reducing violence, a greater appreciation by the police and military of their security or protective roles, as well as responsibilities for control of their own arms. At the same time, there is an attendant, but slow and still tentative, improvement in confidence among the population toward both police and military.

results

3. An Integrated, Multi-faceted Programme

3.2 Weapons Registration and Safe Storage for Military and Police

feasibility study

One of the basic principles of a weapons management programme is that the government knows what weapons it possesses, where they are to be found at any one given time and that they are securely stored. This is why EU ASAC is assisting the Ministry of National Defence to develop a comprehensive weapons registration and safe storage system. It took time to win the confidence of the Ministry of National Defence and for them to see the importance of this programme. In 2000 the EU ASAC Weapons Safe Storage Officer undertook a feasibility study for the improvement of the registration and safe storage of weapons held by the Cambodian Army. For military purposes, the country is divided into five military regions with Phnom Penh effectively serving as a sixth region. The feasibility study found that there was no real weapons registration system in use by the Cambodian army and that weapons were stored in bad and often unsafe conditions. It recommended that EU ASAC assist the Cambodian Army to register all its light weapons in the 2nd Military Region of Kampong Cham and build or renovate four buildings to store the weapons that were not required for daily use by the battalions. This programme was included in the EU ASAC budget for 2001 funded by the European Commission. In total approximately 18,000 weapons were registered in the 2nd Military Region and the details entered into a computerised database. Of these weapons, 5,000 were in use by the battalions and 13,000 were stored on custom-built racks in four specially built or renovated warehouses. An additional 5,892 weapons from the 2nd Military Region, which the Ministry of National Defence declared to be no longer required by the Region, were destroyed by EU ASAC in July 2001. There was also an extensive investment in human resources. Extended training courses for the unit commanders, high-ranking officers and logistics staff in computerisation and registration practises were organised in the Military Region and in the Military High Command in Phnom Penh.

centralised and computerised database

The provision of high quality storage facilities and a centralised computerised weapons registration system, together with an investment in human capacity has helped EU ASAC win the confidence of the Ministry of Defence. The Ministry is now keen to have the programme implemented in all six of the military regions thereby providing it with an integrated national registration system. In 2002 a similar programme for the 5th Military Region of Battambang was funded by the European Commission and has just been completed. Two storage warehouses have been built in Battambang and one each in Pailin and Banteay Meanchay and the same set of training programmes in logistics, registration techniques and computerisation

were organised as in 2001. Some 14,000 weapons have been stored and almost 7,000 are on issue to the battalions. 3,500 weapons were freed for destruction and then destroyed at a Flame of Peace Ceremony on 28 October 2002.

It is of great importance that this programme be extended to cover all the Military Regions in the country as well as the reserve storage facilities in and around Phnom Penh. This would give the Ministry of Defence a centralised, computerised record of all the weapons at their disposal. It would be great assistance in assuring that no illegal weapons trafficking takes place by military officers as they would know that each weapon is traceable through the computerised database. This is an essential part of establishing a comprehensive weapons management system in the country. In addition, experience has shown that, once all weapons in a military region have been registered, the military authorities can be convinced that they have more weapons than they need and that the surplus can be destroyed.

Unfortunately, due to a 15% cut in EU ASAC's 2003 funding by the European Commission, funds for a third military weapons registration and safe storage project will have to be found from other sources.

The commitment of the Ministry of National Defence to continuing to develop a responsible Weapons Management system is shown by the refusal of the Minister of Defence to sell 135,000 magazines to a British arms trader in July 2002. By vetoing this deal, the Minister showed that Cambodia did not want to be seen to be part of the international trade in small arms and that it was committed to completing the process of registering and safely storing all military small arms.

Given the success of this project with the Ministry of National Defence, it is logical that it be extended – in an adapted form - to cover the weapons held by the police, who fall under the Ministry of the Interior. From April to June 2002 EU ASAC undertook a feasibility study as to how a weapons registration and safe storage project could be implemented in co-operation with the police. The study recommended implementing the same registration and training procedures that have been used with the military. As most police weapons are, in fact, on issue to policemen, the study recommended that each police post (approximately one hundred per province) be supplied with a small, lockable weapons storage rack with lockable space to store ammunition. This would then allow the policemen to leave their weapons secured at the police post and not take them home in the evenings. (Police weapons are often used in violent incidents at night.) In addition, small storage warehouses will be built in each of the provincial capitals to store the strategic reserve of

Extension of the programme to the police

3. An Integrated, Multi-faceted Programme

police weapons in each province. EU ASAC has secured funding from the European Commission for the implementation of a pilot project in three provinces in 2003 in co-operation with the Ministry of Interior.

3.3 Weapons for Development

community level

3.3.1 Larger Weapons for Development projects

EU ASAC has played a pioneering role in implementing comprehensive "Weapons for Development" projects in co-operation with the provincial authorities. The two projects which have just been completed resulted in nearly 6,000 weapons being handed in to the local authorities.

- (a) Village and commune leaders were trained by local NGO's on the dangers of small arms in the local communities. These trainings were linked to more general public awareness campaigns by the local NGO's on the need to hand in weapons held in the communities.
- (b) In exchange for weapons from their communities, Village Development Councils were promised appropriate development projects, such as water wells and schools. No personal rewards were given to people handing in weapons. The appeal was to a sense of loyalty to the community underlining that a community without weapons is more likely to receive development than a community with weapons.
- (c) An innovative element of the project was working with the local police. Realising that the villagers would hand in weapons if they felt their personal safety was no longer in danger; a project was set up to improve the performance of the police. This included further training of the police in community relations and human rights, as well as providing equipment such as motorcycles, mountain bicycles, two-way radio's and camera's to the local police districts. Police reports indicate that this equipment has improved their performance and the villagers see the police patrolling on their bicycles more frequently than before, increasing their feeling of security. Police salaries are very low (US\$ 20 per month) and this leads to corruption with policemen sometimes asking for money before investigating a cattle theft etc. In an attempt to limit corruption a programme of trying to increase the income of the police families by training the wives of the policeman in income-generating skills was implemented. In several cases oxen, sewing machines etc. were given to the police wives to enable them to have an independent source of income. While the theory behind the

police wives' programme remains valid, the results have not been entirely satisfactory and in 2003 changes will be made. An international NGO will train a local NGO in the techniques of crop diversification: growing vegetables – both for home consumption and the local market - rather than solely depending upon rice. The local NGO will then be in a position to train local communities in these skills and will begin with the police families. In this way, all the police families will receive the same training and the community as a whole will benefit also. Such an approach also significantly reduces the management supervision required by EU ASAC, as this is delegated to the international NGO implementing the project.

- (d) The training, public awareness and weapons collection elements of the “Weapons for Development” programme ran smoothly and quickly. Looking back, however, it is clear that an opportunity was lost by linking the public awareness campaign solely to the handover of weapons. Once the weapons had been handed in the public awareness work stopped. It would have been better to continue with public awareness campaigns in the communities that had handed in their weapons, but with the emphasis now on peace education. In a society that has known war for so long, concepts of peace, human security and conflict prevention – even on a village level – are still largely unknown. It would have been better to continue public awareness campaigns specifically aimed at institutions such as schools during the time that the development projects – the “rewards” for handing in the weapons – were being implemented. Partly due to the onset of the ‘rainy season’, the implementation of the promised development projects was only completed about nine months after the major weapons collection programme. This meant that, from a management perspective, a long period was spent administering and monitoring development projects. This took a lot of time and energy and EU ASAC was then acting as a small development agency while it is really a weapons management and destruction project. In future, EU ASAC plans, wherever possible, cooperate with an institutional development agency operating in the target area and to link its public awareness activities on the hand-in of weapons to the work of the institutional development agency. The first pilot project of this nature has just been started in Kampong Thom province with GTZ. Next year EU ASAC will also begin working with CARE-Australia in Battambang province.

**public awareness
campaigns**

3. An Integrated, Multi-faceted Programme

The major lesson learned from the large “Weapons for Development” projects is that a comprehensive programme that emphasises ‘human security’ and is prepared to work with the local police is likely to be successful in stimulating villagers to hand in their weapons.

training local NGO’s

3.3.2 Small NGO Weapons for Development projects

In addition to the large “Weapons for Development” programmes operated in two provinces, EU ASAC has started seven small projects run by local NGO’s in various provinces with the approval of the provincial governors. In 2001, two pilot projects proved successful in getting villagers hand in weapons in exchange for water wells. Early in 2002 EU ASAC developed standardised training materials and provided each of the seven NGO’s with these to ensure the quality of the training. EU ASAC also trained these NGO’s in project administration and reporting procedures. This investment has proved worthwhile, both in terms of capacity building among the NGO’s and in saving EU ASAC time and frustration in dealing with very sloppy reporting. Every person trained by these small NGO’s has been given a survey form to fill in. The survey is aimed at providing some baseline data on the attitudes of villagers to the possession of illegal weapons, their experience of any possible improvement in the security situation over the past years etc. The first 4,500 survey forms have been entered into a database and the preliminary results are expected shortly. These smaller projects may have the advantage of being more cost-efficient in terms of the number of weapons handed in. From April to November 2002 some 3,500 weapons were collected as a result of the work of the small NGO’s. In 2002 there has been no work with the police as part of these projects. However in 2003 police community relations training will be offered, but no police equipment will be distributed. An additional advantage is that the local NGO is also responsible for the implementation of the development incentive such as wells, even though experience has shown the need for close monitoring by EU ASAC. Management-wise this is less burdensome for EU ASAC, which can then retain its dynamic as a weapons management and destruction project.

3.4 Weapons Destruction

‘flames of peace’

For a government that is trying to limit the number of weapons in circulation or create a weapons-free society it is important that the population can feel that progress has been made and that they can see that the collected or surplus weapons are destroyed. For this reason EU ASAC has been assisting the government in a pro-

gramme of destroying illegally-held weapons that had been handed in as well as military and police surplus weapons. Before the arrival of EU ASAC, the government was destroying weapons by crushing them with a bulldozer, but EU ASAC chose to work with “Flames of Peace” ceremonies. Based on its experience, EU ASAC has now developed a handbook on how to organise a Flame of Peace ceremony. The symbolism of burning the weapons on a pyre fits in well with the Buddhist culture in Cambodia. Ideally between 4,000 and 8,000 weapons should be publicly burned during each ceremony. These colourful ceremonies are organised by the Provincial authorities and usually a senior member of the Council of Ministers officiates. Thousands of people attend and there is always widespread coverage in the national press and on television. The weapons burn for up to 48 hours and what remains is only fit to be used as scrap metal.

Organising a Flame of Peace only takes a few days. It is much more difficult to get permission from the National Commission for Weapons Management and Reform to have the weapons destroyed. No weapon is allowed to be destroyed without permission from the National Commission. For surplus military weapons the Head of the Military Region and the Military High Command must first give their approval before permission is requested from the National Commission. In the case of weapons held by the Police, the Provincial Governor must request permission to destroy from the National Commission. In the past year, there have been several unexplained delays in getting permission from the National Commission to hold Flames of Peace. These may well have been the result of internal political tensions within the Government. When, in September 2002, a representative of the Presidency of the European Commission raised this issue with the Secretary of State for the Interior, he was assured there was no problem... However, only five Flames of Peace ceremonies were able to be held in 2002. On 28 October 2002, in the Flame of Peace ceremony in Battambang, the 100,000th weapon was destroyed since the first crushing ceremony in May 1999. This is an achievement the Cambodian government can be proud of.

Despite the impressiveness of the large Flames of Peace ceremonies, there is also much to be said for organising small “on-the-spot” destruction ceremonies in some outlying rural areas where villagers have handed in illegal weapons. They can then see that “their” weapons are immediately destroyed. Otherwise, the weapons are slowly passed on to the headquarters of the provincial police and have to wait many months before a large provincial ceremony is organised. These smaller ceremonies are particularly appropriate in areas where “Weapons for Development” projects are being implemented or where weapons have been removed from secret weap-

3. An Integrated, Multi-faceted Programme

ons caches previously hidden in remote forest areas. However, the cost of destroying each weapon in a “smaller” Flame of Peace ceremony (less than 5,000) rises relative to the smaller number destroyed.

3.5 Public Awareness Campaigns

useful cooperation with NGO'S

The larger Cambodian human rights NGO's have proved effective at running public awareness campaigns, financed by EU ASAC, on the danger of small arms being held illegally by the local population. However, this has evoked some tensions with the government who are generally suspicious of NGO activities. An attempt was made to find a solution to this by organising public awareness campaigns at a time and around a theme specifically approved by the government. From September to December 2002 a new public awareness campaign on the implications of the new Arms Law is being implemented by three large NGO's. This may ease the uncertainties of the government, as the theme is of great concern to the government at this time. In organising the campaign, EU ASAC brought together three NGO's (which, like many NGO's around the world, are suspicious of co-operating with each other) to discuss the common theme and to co-ordinate the provinces in which each NGO would work to prevent any overlap. Each NGO was allowed to develop its own way of working with the common theme and could thereby maintain its own independence.

4. Other issues

There are a few other issues covered by EU ASAC which do not allow themselves to be categorised easily into the five major project components.

4.1 Links with CMAC (Cambodian Mine Action Centre)

EU ASAC appeals to the Cambodian public to hand in their illegally-held weapons to the authorities. In practice not only small arms are handed in, but also extensive quantities of ammunition, grenades and even unexploded ordinance (UXO's), that is bombs or rockets that have been fired but did not explode on impact with the ground. While the public awareness campaigns try to underline the danger of touching hand grenades and UXO's, some are still handed in. EU ASAC has an agreement with CMAC that they will destroy the ammunition that has been handed in and will respond to requests for assistance in dealing with dangerous live explosives and UXO's.

synergies

CMAC has an extensive public education unit that informs people on the dangers of landmines, ammunition and UXO's. EU ASAC is now investigating the possibility of co-ordinating some of its public awareness activities on the dangers of illegally-held small arms to the CMAC's public education campaigning. CMAC has also declared a readiness to send a CMAC educator to give a short course on the dangers of mines and UXO's at training sessions organised by the small NGO's as part of their Weapons for Development activities. Co-operation on this level between EU ASAC and CMAC should benefit the Cambodians living in the target areas by strengthening the public awareness message to the villagers.

EU ASAC and CMAC have also agreed to co-operate in searching for weapons caches hidden in remote forest areas (see paragraph 4.b below).

4.2 Weapons Caches

Towards the middle of 2002 several small NGO's involved with the Weapons for Development project reported to EU ASAC that former (Khmer Rouge) soldiers whom they came across in implementing their programmes told them they knew where weapons caches had been hidden during the years of war. Sometimes the ex-soldiers themselves claimed to have hidden the weapons, mostly in remote forest areas and often protected by landmines. In July 2002 the Deputy Prime Minister, in an interview with the EU ASAC Project Manager, expressed his concern that weapons caches could be looted during the run-up to the 2003 parliamentary election, leading to increased weapons circulation in the country.

4. Other Issues

find and destroy hidden weapons

Since then EU ASAC has been negotiating an agreement with the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of National Defence and CMAC to formulate joint action in approaching this problem. A special unit with representatives of the two ministries will be formed to verify information on the caches. After this EU ASAC will fund a joint search party (representatives of the two ministries, EU ASAC and CMAC) to look for and dig out the weapons caches. CMAC will be responsible for de-mining the area where the weapons caches are expected to be found. EU ASAC's assistance is conditional on the weapons that are found in the weapons caches being destroyed. It is not the intention that they be taken over by the police or military authorities. EU ASAC will also provide a small development project, e.g. a water well, to the community of the person who provided the information leading to the weapons cache. No personal rewards will be given. This draft agreement is now awaiting finalisation by the National Commission for Weapons Management & Reform. At this stage knowledge of the prospective agreement is widespread and already many local NGO's and individuals have approached EU ASAC saying they have information on weapons caches. In the coming months this could develop into an integrated part of EU ASAC's activities as it fits into the general concept of improving security in society by reducing the (potential) number of weapons in circulation.

4.3 Co-operation with Japan

increased involvement of Japan

Since 2001 Japan has been one of the major bi-lateral donors to the EU ASAC programme, having taken on responsibility for funding the development component in one of the large Weapons for Development projects. Since then there has been a Japanese liaison officer sharing office facilities with EU ASAC. One drawback of Japan's involvement up till now is that it does not allow its funding to be used to cover any work with the police; neither the police community relations training nor the upgrading of the equipment of the police to allow them to function more efficiently, thereby winning the confidence of the villagers. The initial involvement of GTZ in EU ASAC's programme was, in fact, to fill this gap left by the Japanese grant.

Encouraged by the success of the Weapons for Development project in which it participated, Japan has now decided to radically increase its level of involvement in the campaign against small arms in Cambodia. As from March 2003 a new organisation, JSAC (Japanese Small Arms Assistance in Cambodia) will begin operating with a budget of over US\$ 3 million. Their programme will be based on EU ASAC's multi-faceted approach. Part of their budget will be spent on projects in co-operation with EU ASAC, but most will be spent separately. It is not expected that all activities covered by this

budget (including three new large-scale Weapons for Development projects which will be carried out separately from EU ASAC's activities) will be able to be implemented in twelve months, so this money may well be spread out over a period of more than a year. While looking forward to close co-operation with JSAC and welcoming this increased Japanese involvement. (JSAC's budget will be considerably larger than that provided by the European Commission to EU ASAC) there has been one worrying point. As mentioned earlier, EU ASAC is paying more and more attention to the concept of "human security" in the Weapons for Development projects; encouraging the improvement of the relationship between police and community so that villagers will feel safe if they hand in their illegally-held weapons. The hesitancy of the Japanese to integrate a full police component into their project and their use of large-scale infrastructural development "rewards" such as schools rather than small-scale water wells means they will be using a different Weapon for Development philosophy from that of EU ASAC. However, initial discussions in December 2002 with the Japanese researcher who designed the project could lead to a more common approach by JSAC and EU ASAC.

'human security'

4.4 Administrative issues

While EU ASAC is a small arms programme with the specific goal of assisting the Royal Cambodian Government to develop and implement a responsible integrated weapons management policy, there are some administrative issues that limit the efficiency or effectiveness of the project.

4.4.1 Limits of planning on a year-by-year basis

The project-life of EU ASAC is not fixed. EU ASAC is given an annual budget recommended by the Working Group on Small Arms of the European Commission (CODUN) and formally approved by the Council of Ministers of the European Union. The formal decision to extend EU ASAC for another year and the confirmation of its budget is generally only taken in November of each year. This means that fixed long-term planning with the Cambodian government on a three or five-year basis is not possible. While activities are implemented each year as if they were part of a longer-term plan, there is no guarantee that this is the case and each year the arguments for extending the project for another twelve months must be made.

**Short term budgets –
long term tasks**

4.4.2 Bi-lateral donors

The Terms of Reference of the Project Manager specifically encourage him to find funding part relevant programme activities that are not covered by the European Commission's core funding. Up till now these have been the development and police components of the large WfD projects. As mentioned earlier in 2003 this will also have to include a third Weapons Registration and Safe Storage project for the Ministry of National Defence. Given the nature of the budget planning of potential donors, negotiations with them must be opened long before there is final confirmation from the Council of Ministers that EU ASAC will be continued for one more year. This is an uneasy negotiating position.

Each bi-lateral donor requires its own set of reports. Therefore the more EU ASAC is forced to rely on bi-lateral donors, the more time must be spent on "servicing" the reporting needs of these donors. Given the dynamics and inter-relatedness of EU ASAC's project components, the ideal donor is a flexible one (such as GTZ has proved to be); but there are donors who allow no flexibility at all.

5. Conclusion

One of the strengths of the EU ASAC programme is that it is constantly refining its approach in reaction to the challenges and opportunities that present themselves. There is a constant process of trying to learn from the complicated political and social environment in which it operates; as well as learning from its mistakes. It is certainly a dynamic that inspires the entire staff.

flexibility and complexity

While there are lessons to be learned from each of the five elements of EU ASAC's work, the major lessons remain that close co-operation with a willing government is essential and that a weapons management programme must be comprehensive in tackling the various problems small arms and light weapons cause in society.

The integrated, multi-faceted approach to weapons management that has been used by EU ASAC in Cambodia can certainly be used as a model in other countries or by other agencies. The Japanese programme, which is to start in Cambodia in 2003, is certainly directly based on EU ASAC's way of working and, as mentioned before, the two programmes will co-operate closely. On 9 December 2002 UNIDIR, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, held a conference on Weapons for Development programmes in Geneva and there it was decided to use the Cambodia programme as an entry point for testing the new Participatory Evaluation Method for Weapons for Development projects. The United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs is considering holding a sub-regional conference so that the Cambodian experience can get further international exposure. These are all gratifying developments, but the real test of EU ASAC's programme to support the efforts of the Cambodian Government is the longer term improvement in security in Cambodia and the benefits that this will bring to the ordinary man and woman in both the streets and the rice paddies of Cambodia.

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Contact:

Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH
DECOSAC – Development Cooperation and Small Arms Control, Division 4214
Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 3
Postfach 5180
65726 Eschborn
Phone: 06196-79-3131
Fax: 06196-79- 6310
E-mail: smallarms.control@gtz.de

EU-ASAC
Golden Gate Hotel: Rooms 001-006
#9 Street 278, Sangkat B.K.K 1,
Khan Chamkarmon, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Phone/Fax: +855 (23) 214 805
Mobile Project Manager: +855 12 921 425
E-mail: eu.smallarms@online.com.kh