

Arms Trade Treaty
12th Conference of States Parties
Working Paper
**Building synergies and improving transparency and reporting outcomes across
conventional arms control instruments**

Submitted by Australia

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to explore synergies in transparency reporting across conventional arms control instruments and identify possible next steps in improving reporting outcomes. In particular, the paper identifies possible areas of focus for States Parties, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) Secretariat, and ATT office holders, in furthering these objectives.

This paper builds on existing literature on transparency reporting and consultations by Australia with States Parties to conventional arms control instruments, relevant international organisations, treaty ISUs and Secretariats. This includes two working papers on synergies in transparency reporting – submitted to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) 13th Meeting of States Parties,¹ and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) 22nd Meeting of States Parties² – on which the present working paper is based.

Australia encourages States Parties to the ATT and the ATT Secretariat, in particular, to consider the ideas outlined in this paper, share lessons learned and progress practical steps to improve transparency reporting.

The purpose and benefits of transparency reporting

Transparency reporting by States on the implementation of their obligations promotes trust and confidence building between States Parties. It is an important tool to monitor progress in implementing the ATT, and facilitates international cooperation and assistance between States Parties. Reporting can help understand assistance needs and foster a collaborative environment for achieving common goals.

The benefits of transparency reporting further include, but are not limited to:

- ensuring parties have a clear view of developments relating to the ATT and its implementation;
- enabling informed decision-making on the implementation of the ATT;
- demonstrating the impact of the ATT and progress in implementation; and

¹ CCM/MSP/2025/12.

² APLC/MSP.22/2025/WP.29.

- identifying and addressing challenges or obstacles that may hinder implementation.

Transparency reporting under the ATT

Under Article 13(1) of the ATT, States Parties are required to provide an initial report to the Secretariat within the first year after entry into force of this Treaty for that State Party. The initial report must describe the measures the State Party has taken to implement the Treaty, ‘including national laws, national control lists and other regulations and administrative measures’. States Parties are also required to report on new measures undertaken to implement the ATT, updating their initial reports.

Under Article 13(2) of the ATT, States Parties are also encouraged to report on measures taken that have proven effective in addressing the diversion of transferred conventional arms covered under Article 2(1). This is not a mandatory requirement.

Under Article 13(3) of the ATT, States Parties are required to submit an annual report by 31 May each year that includes information ‘concerning authorized or actual exports and imports of conventional arms covered under Article 2(1)’ that were made during the preceding calendar year (1 January to 31 December).

Transparency reporting trends

While 81% of States Parties have submitted initial reports, there remained 22 States Parties with outstanding initial reports as of February 2026. One-quarter (24 of the 94 reports) had restricted access, which means only other States Parties can view them and they are not available to the public. Most of the outstanding initial reports were due more than five years ago, with four of these due more than a decade ago. The initial reports aim to provide important baseline data on State Party national control systems. Without this data, it can be difficult to understand where States Parties are making progress and where challenges and gaps remain.

For the 2025 reporting cycle, the on-time submission rate of annual reports was 41% (47 of 115 States Parties). It should be noted that further annual reports are expected to be submitted in the months following the 31 May deadline ahead of the annual Conference of States Parties.

For the 2024 reporting cycle, the report of the Chair of the ATT [Working Group on Transparency and Reporting](#) (WGTR) found that:³

- 63% of States Parties had submitted all due reports;
- Almost 1 in 3 (31%) reports were not published on the public ATT website and were only available to other States Parties;
- Only 8% of reports used the online reporting tool.
- Approximately 50% of States Parties authorised the Secretariat to transmit their reports to UNODA for use as their UNROCA submissions.

³ ATT/CSP12.WGTR/2026/CHAIR/854/Conf.Rep

In addition to quantitative data, assessing the quality of reporting over time will also be important to providing a comprehensive picture of transparency reporting trends under the ATT.

Support for ATT transparency reporting

Support available for States Parties to understand and fulfil their transparency reporting obligations includes:

- Reporting templates for both initial and annual reports, including detailed guidance on the type of information that should be reported, available on the ATT website: <https://www.thearmstradetreaty.org/how-to-submit-a-report>. These were initially endorsed by States Parties in 2016 ⁴and updated in 2021.⁵
- A 'FAQ'-document on annual reporting (*Reporting Authorized or Actual Exports and Imports of Conventional Arms under the ATT: Questions & Answers*), initially endorsed by States Parties in 2017 and updated in 2019 and 2022.
- The Working Group on Transparency and Reporting (WGTR), established in 2016 by the Second Conference of States Parties. Its mandate for 2025-26 included reviewing the status and implementation of transparency reporting, inviting States Parties to exchange transparency reporting practices and initiatives, and monitoring initiatives to support States Parties in fulfilling reporting obligations.⁶
- The ATT Needs and Resources Matching Database and ATT Voluntary Trust Fund, which both enable States Parties to request assistance with ATT implementation, including support with transparency reporting.
- Support provided by the Secretariat, including:
 - An ongoing project of voluntary peer-to-peer bilateral and regional assistance with reporting.
 - Optimisation of the format and provision of reporting guidance tools.
 - The ATT Secretariat's Voluntary Guidance on The Practice of Annual Reporting.
 - A secure online reporting tool on the ATT website.
 - Regional champions initiative.
 - Other activities under the Secretariat's Implementation Support Project, including refining training materials (including e-learning modules and interactive resources); enhancing the format of the reporting templates to improve clarity, usability, and accessibility; and enhancing the ATT IT infrastructure to support meaningful exchange of information.
 - Briefings and Q&A sessions on practical tips for transparency reporting.

⁴ ATT/CSP2/2016/5

⁵ ATT/CSP7/2021/SEC/681/Conf.FinRep.Rev1

⁶ ATT/CSP11.WGTR/2025/CHAIR/827/Conf.Rep.

- Support provided by civil society organisations, including the Institute for Disarmament Research, the Stimson Center, the ATT Monitor, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, and the Small Arms Survey.

Further details can be found in the endnotes of the WGTR's meeting materials.⁷

Challenges in transparency reporting

Common challenges in transparency reporting across the ATT and other conventional arms control instruments can be broadly grouped as follows:

- lack of awareness of reporting obligations and processes;
- lack of capacity and resources, including materials in local languages;
- lack of interagency cooperation and coordination;
- national security considerations; and
- lack of political support.

Some States Parties will face some challenges more than others. Some challenges are context-specific, and differ from region to region. Just as there is no one challenge faced by States in fulfilling their reporting obligations, there is likewise no one-size-fits-all solution to the challenges faced by States Parties in their reporting. That said, where States in a particular region share common challenges, there may be opportunities to explore regional responses to address them.

Practical measures to improve transparency reporting identified in consultations

Based on Australia's consultations, stakeholders identified the following practical measures that could be adopted by States Parties, treaty officeholders and ISUs or Secretariats, where appropriate and applicable, to improve reporting outcomes across conventional arms control instruments:

- looking for opportunities for synergies to make it simpler to report across multiple areas within a Convention, or across Conventions;
- considering the relative benefits of aligning or staggering reporting deadlines across conventional arms control instruments – where possible within existing Convention rules;
- ensure that States Parties with 'nothing to report' in their annual reports can find and use the simplified 'nil reporting' template';
- providing further training on how to complete, submit and update reports;
- holding meetings on transparency reporting (including joint meetings with other treaty ISUs and Secretariats) prior to reporting deadlines to assist States Parties with preparations;
- updating reporting resources regularly and making them available to States Parties, including in local languages where feasible and appropriate;

⁷ For example, ATT/CSP12CSP12.WGTR/20262026/CHAIR/836/DrAnnAgenda.

- undertaking initiatives to help States better understand the benefits of transparency reporting, such as the infographic prepared by the 2024-2025 UNROCA Group of Governmental Experts;⁸
- where possible and appropriate, preparing guidance documents and reporting tools in national languages to make them accessible to States Parties;
- using capacity building workshops to highlight how one process for collecting information and compiling a report can help with another;
- encouraging States Parties to make their transparency reports public, noting a significant proportion of reports submitted under the ATT are not publicly available. Publishing reports can contribute to greater transparency on how States Parties are implementing the ATT, enhance confidence among States Parties, and support broader understanding of global arms transfer trends.

Further, the ongoing development of a five-year strategy for the ATT presents an opportunity to explore how to support and encourage transparency reporting, as set out in the WGTR Chair's report to the 12th Conference of States Parties.⁹

Synergies in transparency reporting across conventional arms control

Strengthening synergies between conventional arms control instruments – such as the ATT, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA), the Programme of Action on Small Arms (PoA) and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) – could further enhance efforts to quantitatively and qualitatively improve transparency reporting.

There are particular complementarities between the ATT and UNROCA. Both have the same reporting deadline of 31 May. Both involve States submitting annual reports detailing imports and exports of conventional weapons. Article 13(3) of the ATT expressly permits States Parties to include 'the same information submitted by the State Party to relevant United Nations frameworks, including the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms [UNROCA]'. The ATT reporting template allows a State Party to simply tick a box to authorise the transmission of annual reports to UNODA for use as that State Party's UNROCA submission. Of the 118 States Parties to the ATT, 116 have voluntarily participated in UNROCA reporting.

There are also complementarities between the ATT and regional instruments, such as the Organization of American States' Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions (CITTAC) and the Wassenaar Arrangement export control regime. The Secretariat's [Voluntary Guidance on The Practice of Annual Reporting](#) includes further examples.¹⁰

It is important to acknowledge that fully harmonising reporting obligations across conventional arms control instruments is unlikely to be feasible. There are major differences between the ATT and the APMBC, BWC, CCM and CCW in terms of the nature of the information reported and the objectives of reporting. That said, possible synergies across similar conventional arms control

⁸ <https://docs.un.org/A/80/121>

⁹ ATT/CSP12.WGTR/2026/CHAIR/854/Conf.Rep

¹⁰ Section 110, page 55.

instruments that could be further explored by States Parties, ISUs and Secretariats, and civil society organisations include:

- synergies in data collection;
- synergies in awareness-raising activities on transparency reporting;
- promoting common approaches to reporting under conventional arms control instruments at the national level;
- providing international cooperation and assistance to States to assist reporting under multiple instruments; and
- encouraging dialogue between relevant treaty ISUs and Secretariats.

Possible areas of action

Based on the review of existing literature, consultations and our work in this field, Australia has identified the following possible areas of focus to improve transparency reporting and build synergies across conventional arms control instruments. These could be taken up by the Secretariat, future Chairs of the Working Group of Transparency and Reporting, and States Parties:

1. **Advance recommendations on practical measures for treaty ISUs and Secretariats on strengthening transparency reporting and building synergies:** Australia has identified in this working paper a number of practical measures that could be progressed to improve transparency reporting outcomes and build synergies across particular conventional arms control instruments, where appropriate. In addition, the WGTR Chair's report to CSP12¹¹ identifies several recommendations for future action.
2. **Convene regular informal meetings to explore synergies in transparency reporting across conventional arms control instruments, and share good practices adopted in the ATT context:** Australia held informal meetings on transparency reporting in March 2025 and February 2026. These included participation by the treaty ISUs and Secretariats of the ATT, CCM, APMBC, CCW and UNROCA, together with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC) and States Parties interested in transparency reporting. These meeting were a valuable opportunity to share ideas and experiences on reporting challenges and good practices, and helped identify synergies in reporting. The continuation of such meetings could pave the way for further improvements in reporting processes and collaboration between treaty ISUs and Secretariats.

Conclusion

Australia supports transparent and timely reporting under the ATT. We strongly encourage States Parties to submit their annual and initial transparency reports. These reports serve as a vital

¹¹ ATT/CSP12.WGTR/2026/CHAIR/854/Conf.Rep

indicator of the ATT's overall health and provide a benchmark for measuring the collective and individual progress of States Parties in achieving their goals.

Australia has sought in this paper to bring together information, ideas and experience from across conventional arms control frameworks to identify ways to improve reporting outcomes. Australia sees value in continuing work to identify and build synergies in transparency reporting across conventional arms control instruments.

Australia would like to thank, in particular, the treaty ISUs and Secretariats of the ATT, CCM, APMBC, CCW and UNROCA, together with UNIDIR, UNODA, ICRC, ICBL-CMC and relevant States Parties to the ATT, for their valuable insights in preparing this working paper.