INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE
CONTROL COMMISSION

C I C A D

Secretariat for Multidimensional Security

SEVENTIETH REGULAR CICAD SESSION
November 16th-19th, 2021
Virtual Session

OEA/Ser.L/XIV.2.70
CICAD/doc.2603/21
November 9, 2021
Original: Textual

MULTILATERAL EVALUATION MECHANISM

REPORT OF THE INTER-GOVERNMENTAL WORKING GROUP

ANNEX IV

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING; RESEARCH, INFORMATION, MONITORING, AND EVALUATION; AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
2023

EVALUATOR'S MANUAL

MULTILATERAL EVALUATION MECHANISM (MEM)

EVALUATOR'S MANUAL

Institutional Strengthening; Research, Information, Monitoring, and Evaluation; and International Cooperation
2023

EIGHTH EVALUATION ROUND

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INTRODUCTION

This manual, approved by the Inter-American Drug Control Commission of the Organization of American States (OAS/CICAD) during its sixty-eighth Regular Session, is a guide to support the work of the Governmental Expert Group (GEG) that carries out the eighth round of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM).

This group's task is to assess the progress made by countries in the implementation of the guidelines issued in the *Hemispheric Plan of Action on Drugs* (POA) 2021-2025, benchmarking the principles of the *OAS Hemispheric Drug Strategy* (HDS) 2020, identifying the objectives to meet and priority actions to achieve them.

Purpose and characteristics

Accordingly, the purpose of this manual is to assist experts in assessing the fulfillment level of each member state in implementing the objectives of the POA of the HDS.

This Manual is a component of the evaluation process in addition to the Evaluation Questionnaire. The Questionnaire is the key instrument of the process, serving as the means to collect information and data that enable the experts in assessing the situation in each country. While taking into account their national reality, domestic legislation, and the stage of development of the public policies.

The eighth round will evaluate the thematic areas over a three-year period, and a comprehensive evaluation in the fourth year. For 2023, the Manual includes the objectives for the areas of Institutional Strengthening; Research, Information, Monitoring, and Evaluation; and International Cooperation; and their corresponding priority actions. There are interpretative notes for each priority action to assist experts in the assessment of each objective.

2023 Evaluation process documents

In this stage of the eighth evaluation round, along with the Evaluator's Manual, the following components are part of the process:

a) Evaluation Questionnaire: This component is the key instrument of the evaluation process. It contains the questions that the countries must respond to, providing the necessary information allowing the GEG to analyze the reality of the country in each of the areas that make up the HDS and its POA. The evaluation period for this thematic area will cover the years 2019 to 2023.
b) Procedural Manual: This Manual contains a description on the operational process of the MEM, the actors involved in the evaluation process and their respective roles, as well as the general aspects for the GEG's preparation of the reports.
c) Calendar of Activities: This component outlines the activities for the evaluation process for the MEM eighth round, including deadlines, such as information submitted by member states,

activities of the MEM independent technical consultants, GEG meetings, training activities, and official publications.

The evaluation process

The assessment of the drug problem in each country is mainly based on analyzing the responses to the Evaluation Questionnaire by each country. Thus, the first stage of the process is drafting the narrative documents, prepared by the MEM Unit, seeking to organize and systematize the information sent by each country. Based on these narrative documents, the MEM independent technical consultants conduct an initial review of the responses to the questionnaire and draft a base document with recommendations for the GEG to use in their analysis.

The GEG analyzes and assesses the situation in each country for the thematic areas evaluated in 2023, while considering the interpretative notes of each priority action in this Manual, the information included in the national reports from previous rounds of this Mechanism, as well as other relevant information sources.

The thematic national reports seek to outline marked progress, setbacks, and shortcomings, taking into account their material, financial, and human capabilities, to provide an objective panorama of the current situation in addressing the drug problem in each country for the corresponding thematic area.

CICAD Commissioners consider and approve the draft thematic national reports at their regular sessions.

Thematic national reports

The main characteristics of these reports aim to be:

- Evaluative and objective.
- Relevant to the country and, specifically, to the drug problem in each country.
- Concise and include the information necessary to fulfill the two previous characteristics.
- Readable and understandable without consulting other reference documents.
- Specific and technical, using clear language, and accurately reflecting information and data.

It is highly important that these thematic national reports include assessments, highlighting the necessary reinforcements and strengthening needed to address the drug problem in each country.

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

OBJECTIVE 1

OBJECTIVE 1	ESTABLISH AND/OR STRENGTHEN NATIONAL DRUG AUTHORITIES, PLACING THEM AT A HIGH POLITICAL LEVEL AND PROVIDING THEM WITH THE NECESSARY CAPABILITIES, RESOURCES, AND COMPETENCIES TO COORDINATE FORMULATION, IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, AND EVALUATION OF NATIONAL DRUG POLICIES.

Priority Action 1.1: Place national drug authorities at a high political level. (Question 1)

Interpretive Note:
The country has national drug authority(ies)[1] placed at a high political level, with the necessary legal/political authority to coordinate drug policies[2] among relevant agencies.

Priority Action 1.2: Grant national drug policy entities the authority to guide and coordinate the formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of national drug policies. (Question 2)

Interpretive Note:
The legal basis that grants the authority for the country's national drug entity(ies) to formulate, implement, monitor, and evaluate national drug policies and to coordinate the various agencies responsible for carrying out these activities.

Priority Action 1.3: Allocate the necessary resources (material, financial, and human) for the effective functioning of the national drug authorities. (Question 3)

Interpretive Note:
The national drug authority(ies) of your country has a budget[3] allowing it to finance the necessary resources (material, financial, and human) for effective function.

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[1] The national drug authority(ies) is(are) the central or national governmental body(ies) responsible for the design, coordination, and follow-up of the implementation or execution of the national anti-drug plan/strategy.

[2] Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) guidelines for developing drug policies, notes that national drug bodies be firmly placed, therefore should be, "strong bodies with a legal basis, political will and have decision-making authority. Likewise, they should have the necessary budget to sufficiently operate, staff the necessary personnel and implement policy. These national bodies should be the governing body on drugs, drafting drug policy, coordinating work among the various drug-related offices, outlining guidelines, guidance and advising governmental and non-governmental entities on the drug problem and the corresponding drug law enforcement, implementing programs and projects at the national, state, municipal, and local levels, while monitoring/following-up on the processes and evaluating results and the impact of programs, projects, and initiatives." *How to Develop a National Drug Policy: A Guide for Policymakers, Practitioners and Stakeholders,* (CICAD, 2012).

[3] An annual budget for the national drug authority(ies) is one that facilitates the administration of its structure, functions, and obligations, as well as any operational activities that might be included in its mandate.

Priority Action 1.4: Design or optimize mechanisms to facilitate effective coordination and collaboration among government institutions for the formulation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and updating of evidence-based national drug policies and/or strategies. (Questions 4, 5)

Interpretive Note:
The country has established coordination and collaboration mechanisms among government institutions, headed by the national drug authority(ies), to formulate, implement, monitor, evaluate, and update evidence-based national drug policies and/or strategies.

OBJECTIVE 2

OBJECTIVE 2	FORMULATE, IMPLEMENT, EVALUATE, AND UPDATE COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL DRUG POLICIES AND/OR STRATEGIES THAT PROMOTE BALANCED, MULTIDISCIPLINARY, AND EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACHES, WHILE FULLY RESPECTING HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, UNDER THE PRINCIPLE OF COMMON AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY, CONSISTENT WITH OBLIGATIONS OF PARTIES UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW, AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT GENDER, AGE, COMMUNITY[4], CULTURAL CONTEXT, AND SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT.

Priority Action 2.1: Collect and use evidence as a basis for the formulation and updating of national drug policies and/or strategies. (Question 6)

Interpretive Note:
The country has mechanisms to compile and use evidence as the basis for developing and updating national drug policies and/or strategies.

Priority Action 2.2: Promote and establish collaborative relationships with the scientific community, public policy experts, community and/or civil society actors, and other relevant stakeholders[5], to contribute to the evidence-based development, implementation, evaluation, and updating of national drug policies. (Question 7)

Interpretive Note:
The country promotes and establishes collaborative relationships among public institutions and non-governmental actors. Through this coordination, the academia, the scientific community, civil society, the private sector, international organizations, and other pertinent actors have an active role in the process of developing, implementing, evaluating, and updating the drug policies and/or strategies.

Priority Action 2.3: Promote sub-national/local management of drug policies and/or strategies through greater coordination and/or delegation of responsibilities, as appropriate, between sub-national/local and national agencies, taking into account the socio-cultural, demographic and other differences of each region. (Questions 8, 9, 10, 11)

Interpretive Note:
The country develops actions geared to local strengthening and training in management of drug policies and/or strategies, delegating responsibilities, allowing for coordination and/or decentralization of actions between sub-national/local and national agencies.

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[4] Community includes ethnicity.
[5] **Relevant actors:** Includes civil society, scientific community, academia, and government at the national, regional, and local levels, women's rights organizations, LGBTIQ+ groups, among others.

Priority Action 2.4: Engage private sector entities to develop innovative approaches to implementation of drug policy, including the exchange of information on emerging substances and new drug trafficking modalities that may affect the private sector, and best practices for denying criminals access to the private sector platforms and technologies that facilitate international trade. (Question 12)

Interpretive Note:
The country engages with private sector entities to develop innovative approaches to implementing drug policies, including new policies, interventions, and programs on drugs.

Priority Action 2.5: Formulate or update national drug policies and/or strategies in line with the 2020 OAS Hemispheric Strategy on Drugs and this accompanying Plan of Action, taking into account the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. (Questions 13, 14)

Interpretive Note:
The country drafts national drug policies and/or strategies in line with the 2020 OAS Hemispheric Strategy on Drugs and Plan of Action. The country also takes into consideration the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[6]

[6] Available at: http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/

OBJECTIVE 2

Priority Action 2.6: Integrate a human rights[7], gender[8], and social inclusion approach, particularly with respect to at-risk populations, in the process of formulating, implementing, and updating national drug policies and/or strategies. (Questions 15, 16, 17)

Interpretive Note:
The country includes human rights, gender, and social inclusion approaches in the process of formulating, implementing, and updating the national drug policies and/or strategies.

Priority Action 2.7: Provide adequate financial and other necessary resources for the implementation of drug policies and programs. (Question 18)

Interpretive Note:
The country has the necessary resources (financial, human, infrastructure, and other required resources) to implement drug policies and programs.

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[7] Take into account UNGASS operational recommendations 2016 (Resolution A/S-30/L.1). "Operational recommendations on intersectoral matters: drugs and human rights, youth, children and women and communities. The drugs and human rights, youth, women, children, the vulnerable members of communities and society. Proportional policies and responses and efficient, such as legal guarantees and safeguarding that relate to the criminal proceeding and the justice sector." "We reaffirm the need to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other United Nations entities, within their respective mandates, in their efforts to support Member States in the implementation of international drug control treaties in accordance with applicable human rights obligations and to promote protection of and respect for human rights and the dignity of all individuals in the context of drug programmes, strategies and policies;" United Nations, Outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, *Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem* (New York, 2016).
https://www.unodc.org/documents/postungass2016//outcome/V1603301-E.pdf

[8] The gender perspective entails recognizing that drug policies have a differential impact on women and men and if these differences are not specifically addressed they tend to amplify and deepen the existing inequalities in human development, product of an androcentric and patriarchal society. Inclusion of a gender perspective entails the actions undertaken within the drug policies framework contributing to closing the gender gap.
The UNGASS 2016 Resolution notes "Mainstream a gender perspective into and ensure the involvement of women in all stages of the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of drug policies and programs, develop and disseminate gender-sensitive and age-appropriate measures that take into account the specific needs and circumstances faced by women and girls with regard to the world drug problem and, as States parties, implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women."
United Nations, Outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, *Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem* (New York, 2016).

OBJECTIVE 3

OBJECTIVE 3	DESIGN AND COORDINATE NATIONAL DRUG POLICIES, THAT CAN BE HARMONIZED ACROSS RELATED GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND/OR STRATEGIES, THAT ADDRESS THE FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE DRUG PROBLEM.

Priority Action 3.1: Establish and/or strengthen interagency and multisectoral policy and technical coordination mechanisms, to achieve a comprehensive, balanced, and multi-disciplinary approach to the drug problem, including its causes and consequences. (Question 19)

Interpretive Note:
The country has and implements interagency and multisectoral policy coordination mechanisms among entities responsible for the national drug policies/strategies, as well as those in charge of other public policies and/or strategies to promote a comprehensive, balanced, and multi-disciplinary approach to the drug problem.

Priority Action 3.2: Design, implement, and evaluate multisectoral plans and programs based on the principles of human rights, public health, and development, to address and counter the socioeconomic causes and the consequences of the drug problem. (Question 20)

Interpretive Note:
Based on the principles of human rights, public health, and development, the country develops, implements, and evaluates its plans and programs to address the socioeconomic causes and consequences of the drug problem.

Priority Action 3.3: Participate in international cooperation programs at the bilateral and multilateral levels to strengthen policies, programs, institutions, and their internal processes. (Question 21)

Interpretive Note:
The country participates in international cooperation programs (including, but not limited to horizontal cooperation) to strengthen policies, programs, institutions, and their internal processes.

Priority Action 3.4: Promote comprehensive and cross-cutting public policies to reduce and prevent crime, violence, social exclusion, and corruption. (Question 22)

Interpretive Note:
The country promotes comprehensive public policies in cross-cutting areas to reduce and prevent crime, violence, social exclusion, and corruption, through discussion forums among agencies that implement policies.

Priority Action 3.5: Implement measures that promote equal access to justice and due process, taking into account gender, age, community, and cultural context. (Question 23)

Interpretive Note:
The country designs and implements measures that promote equal access to justice and due process, based on the collection and analysis of data on gender, age, community, and cultural context.

Priority Action 3.6: Implement measures that foster citizen participation in crime prevention, build community cohesion, increase public safety, and emphasize social inclusion. (Question 24)

Interpretive Note:
The country implements measures that foster citizen participation in crime prevention, build community cohesion, increase public safety, and emphasize social inclusions, such as prevention activities, community workshops, among others.

OBJECTIVE 4

OBJECTIVE 4	DESIGN, ADOPT, AND IMPLEMENT ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION FOR MINOR OR NON-VIOLENT DRUG OR DRUG-RELATED OFFENSES, WHILE TAKING INTO ACCOUNT NATIONAL, CONSTITUTIONAL, LEGAL, AND ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS, AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS.

Priority Action 4.1: Adopt alternative measures to incarceration[9] for minor or non-violent drug-related offenses[10], where appropriate, while safeguarding the sovereignty of states, and ensuring individual accountability, respecting human rights and the gender perspective. (Questions 25, 25.a, 25.b)

Interpretive Note:
The country has evaluated the feasibility of implementing alternative measures to incarceration for minor or non-violent drug-related offenses, in accordance with the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, as well as the Tokyo and Bangkok Rules.

[9] The 2015 *CICAD Technical Report on Alternatives to Incarceration for Drug-related Offenses* defines alternatives to incarceration as:
"Any measure (whether legal reforms, strategies, programs or policies) intended to: i) reduce criminal prosecution, ii) limit the use of incarceration as a punishment, or iii) decrease the time of actual deprivation of liberty in the event of incarceration, for individuals who have committed drug-related offenses."
In this regard, the Report notes:
"Alternatives to incarceration can be grouped into three broad categories according to the stage in judicial proceedings at which they occur. Accordingly, this report refers to: a) Measures taken prior to the opening of a criminal proceeding, and aimed at limiting entry into the criminal justice system; b) Measures applied during criminal proceedings, and aimed at either preventing the criminal case from resulting in incarceration, or making the incarceration proportional to the offense; and c) Measures for prison populations, aimed at providing for early release of convicted and imprisoned individuals along with social integration strategies."
In order to recognize, review and foster alternatives to incarceration the States can assess suitability of implementation, foster and/or amend legislation, changes to drug polies or implement specific programs.
Tokyo Rules: United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures. General Assembly Resolution 45/110. 14 December 1990. Available at:
https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/UN_Standard_Minimum_Rules_for_Non-custodial_Measures_Tokyo_Rules.pdf
Bangkok Rules: United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders. General Assembly Resolution 65/229. 21 December 2010. Available at:
https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Bangkok_Rules_ENG_22032015.pdf

[10] Low-level offenses are referred to crimes punishable with a maximum sentencing up to a year of incarceration/imprisonment, or crimes punishable with a minimum sentencing of less than six months of incarceration/imprisonment. Notwithstanding those established by the respective legal systems of member states.

Priority Action 4.2: Develop mechanisms to monitor and evaluate alternative measures to incarceration for minor or non-violent drug-related offenses, in collaboration with academic and research institutions, as well as civil society. (Questions 25.c, 25.d)

Interpretive Note:
The country develops mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the impact of implementation of alternative measures to incarceration for minor or non-violent drug-related offenses in collaboration with academic and research institutions, as well as civil society.

Priority Action 4.3: Promote common understanding of national legal norms, regulations, and internal procedures for the implementation of alternatives to incarceration. (Question 26)

Interpretive Note:
The country increases the common understanding of national legal norms, regulations, and internal procedures to develop alternatives to incarceration.

OBJECTIVE 5

OBJECTIVE 5	PROMOTE AND IMPLEMENT, AS APPROPRIATE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLICIES, LAWS AND NEEDS OF EACH COUNTRY, COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS THAT PROMOTE SOCIAL INCLUSION, ESPECIALLY TO THOSE AT-RISK POPULATIONS.

Priority Action 5.1: Design and implement, in accordance with the characteristics, interests, and needs of each country, inter-agency and multisectoral programs that promote the social inclusion of individuals, families, and communities affected by the drug problem, taking into account the specific needs of at-risk populations. (Question 28)

Interpretive Note:
The country develops and implements inter-agency and multisectoral programs that promote social inclusion[11] of individuals, families, communities affected by the drug problem, taking into account the specific needs of at-risk populations.[12]

Priority Action 5.2: Disseminate best practices and lessons learned to improve institutional responses to the needs of at-risk populations. (Question 29)

Interpretive Note:
The country shares best practices and lessons learned to improve the institutional responses to

[11] Social inclusion is the process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities – that everyone, regardless of their background, can achieve their full potential in life. Such efforts include policies and actions that promote equal access to (public) services as well as enable citizen's participation in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

[12] The member states of the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted the *2010 Hemispheric Drug Strategy and its Plan of Action 2016-2020*, agreeing upon the fundamental principles that: "In addressing the world drug problem, its impact on poverty and exclusion must be given special emphasis while encouraging the implementation of policies and actions that foster social inclusion and a reduction in those vulnerabilities."

Given that CICAD adopted the international definition of t the world drug problem as a complex, dynamic and multi-causal issue, it requires policies that foster inclusive social development. The social inclusion programs seek to strengthen social assets and resources of individuals and communities (access to material resources, employment, education, participation, social recognition, among others) to reduce vulnerability and/or vulnerability of rights. The concept of vulnerability refers to an impending, temporary and/or evolving condition that can stem from economic recessions, natural disasters, armed conflict and weakening democratic institutions and government, among others.

The Resolution approved on April 19, 2016 by the United Nations General Assembly approves the following measures, among others, aimed at improving the situation of affected and vulnerable populations:

"Continue to identify and address protective and risk factors, as well as the conditions that continue to make women and girls vulnerable to exploitation and participation in drug trafficking, including as couriers, with a view to preventing their involvement in drug-related crime." (UNGASS, 2016)

"Encourage the promotion of inclusive economic growth and support initiatives that contribute to poverty eradication and the sustainability of social and economic development, develop measures for rural development, improving infrastructure and social inclusion and protection, addressing the consequences of illicit crop cultivation and the manufacture and production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances on the environment, with the incorporation and participation of local communities, and consider taking voluntary measures to promote products stemming from alternative development, including preventive alternative development, as appropriate, to gain access to markets, consistent with applicable 24 multilateral trade rules and with national and international law, within the framework of comprehensive and balanced drug control strategies." (UNGASS, 2016).

the needs of at-risk populations, such as mechanisms, programs, and interventions through publications, meetings, workshops, among others.

OBJECTIVE 6

OBJECTIVE 6	PROMOTE PROPORTIONATE SENTENCING FOR DRUG-RELATED CRIMES THAT PROVIDES FOR PENALTIES COMMENSURATE WITH THE RELATIVE SERIOUSNESS OF OFFENSES, IN LINE WITH THE INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONVENTIONS AND RESPECTING THE PRINCIPLES OF DUE PROCESS, WITH GENDER PERSPECTIVE, AGE, COMMUNITY, AND A HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACH.

Priority Action 6.1: Promote proportional legal sentencing for minor drug-related offenses in accordance with domestic law. (Questions 30, 31)

Interpretive Note:
The country adopts initiatives to foster, in the context of national drug policies, the implementation of a legal framework that includes proportional sentencing for minor drug-related offenses.[13]

Priority Action 6.2: Promote legal reforms as needed, to promote proportional sentencing for minor drug-related offenses. (Question 32)

Interpretive Note:
The country promotes legal reforms, as needed, to promote proportional sentencing for minor drug-related offenses.

[13] Low-level offenses are referred to as crimes punishable with a maximum sentence up to a year of incarceration/imprisonment, or crimes punishable with a minimum sentence of less than six months of incarceration/imprisonment. Notwithstanding those established by the respective legal systems of member states.

RESEARCH, INFORMATION, MONITORING, AND EVALUATION

OBJECTIVE 1

OBJECTIVE 1	ESTABLISH OR STRENGTHEN NATIONAL OBSERVATORIES ON DRUGS, OR SIMILAR TECHNICAL OFFICES, STRENGTHENING NATIONAL DRUG INFORMATION SYSTEMS, AND FOSTER SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH TO GENERATE, COLLECT, ORGANIZE, ANALYZE, AND DISSEMINATE INFORMATION TO INFORM THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EVIDENCE-BASED DRUG POLICIES AND STRATEGIES.

Priority Action 1.1: Develop and strengthen national drug observatories (NDO) or similar technical offices ensuring they have adequate human and financial resources. (Questions 1, 2)

Interpretive Note:
The country has developed or strengthened a National Drug Observatory (NDO),[14] or similar technical office, which has adequate human and financial resources. The main purpose of the NDO is to monitor the drug problem by collecting information that is reliable, timely, and comparable between countries to generate scientific evidence that allows for the development of drug policies.

Priority Action 1.2: Strengthen ties to academic and research institutions, as well as specialized non-governmental organizations, to foster scientific research and studies on the various aspects of the drug phenomenon. (Questions 3, 4)

Interpretive Note:
NDOs or similar technical office establishes and maintains working relationships with academic and research institutions, including universities or specialized research centers, to foster scientific research and studies on the various aspects of the drug phenomenon. In this case, the NDO will be responsible for monitoring the activities for each phase of the study.

Priority Action 1.3: Develop and adopt quantitative and qualitative methodologies and information-gathering mechanisms that allow for the comparison of data among countries. (Questions 5, 6)

Interpretive Note:
The country has adopted and applies standardized instruments, such as Inter-American Uniform Drug Use Data System (by its Spanish language acronym SIDUC), the CICAD standard indicators for national drug information networks,[15] and other standardized or harmonized methodologies agreed upon by member states. This allows for comparable data and information across member states.

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[14] The NDO is in charge of conducting periodic studies and research on the drug problem and collecting data on both drug demand and drug supply. It provides factual, objective, and comparable information on drugs, drug use, and its consequences.

[15] OAS/CICAD, 'Standardized Indicators for National Drug Information Networks in the Caribbean,' 2017. http://www.cicad.oas.org/oid/pubs/StandarizedDINIndicatorsCaribbeanENG.pdf.pdf

Priority Action 1.4: Establish and strengthen national drug information networks (DINs) to carry out long-term monitoring and early warning systems (EWS), including the use of a broad range of research methods and information sources, to develop rapid responses to emerging threats. (Questions 7, 8, 9, 10)

Interpretive Note:
The country's NDO or similar technical office has a functioning drug information network (DINs)[16] and/or early warning system (EWS)[17], including various national level institutions for the purpose of accessing, collecting, and disseminating relevant information, to obtain a comprehensive overview of the drug situation in general as well as emerging drugs.

Priority Action 1.5: Contribute to the Early Warning System of the Americas (Spanish acronym SATA) to gather the available national alerts and disseminate them to member states, so that member states can respond in the shortest possible time to new threats. (Questions 8.b)

Interpretive Note:
The country's NDO or similar technical office will coordinate with the Inter-American Observatory on Drugs (by its Spanish language acronym, OID) and will periodically send alerts as appropriate from its national EWS to the SATA.

Note: In the questionnaire, the necessary information to determine the status of this Priority Action can be found under question 8.b.

Priority Action 1.6: Publish updates annually, when possible, on drug supply and drug demand utilizing the information provided on the national drug situation by using information from the national DINs. (Questions 28.b)

Interpretive Note:
The country publishes a report on the drug situation annually, using the information collected from the different DIN stakeholders along with the data generated by the NDO (or similar technical office). Ideally, such reports should contain data on both drug demand, as well as drug supply at a national level.

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[16] The DIN should include organizations that generate information on drugs at the national or international level, such as the ministry of health, ministry of education, ministry of justice, prosecutors, national police, forensic departments, national customs, national institute of statistics, universities, private research consultants, non-governmental organizations, and other civil society organizations. Participants of the network should have periodic meetings to coordinate and exchange information.

[17] The SAT is a multidisciplinary system comprised of professionals, agencies, and procedures that provide diverse sources of information to quickly identify and respond to new threats, such as new psychoactive substances (NPS), synthetic opioids, among other emerging drugs.

OBJECTIVE 1

Note: In the questionnaire, the necessary information to determine the status of this Priority Action can be found under question 28.b.

Priority Action 1.7: Build capacity among relevant stakeholders to enhance the collection, management, and dissemination of drug related information. (Questions 11, 12)

Interpretive Note:
The country's NDO or similar technical office builds its own capacity and the capacity of relevant stakeholders through, for example, participation in trainings and meetings convened by both national and international organizations. Likewise, it facilitates training and awareness sessions on the collection, management, and dissemination of drug related information for their stakeholders at a national level.

Priority Action 1.8: Establish or strengthen forums at which drug researchers can present their findings to policymakers, and encourage their participation in CICAD experts groups. (Question 13)

Interpretive Note:
The country's NDO or similar technical office establishes or strengthens forums at which drug researchers can present their findings to policymakers and encourage their participation in CICAD experts groups.

Priority Action 1.9: Foster and disseminate best practices and the exchange of successful experiences in research among member states. (Question 14)

Interpretive Note:
The country's NDO or similar technical office shares the available information with its national and international counterparts, supporting the promotion and dissemination of best practices and the exchange of successful experiences in research among member states. The national observatory may, for example, support the national observatory of another member state by sharing its experience in carrying out a specific study, or in the establishment of an early warning system on emerging drug threats.

OBJECTIVE 2

OBJECTIVE 2	EXPAND ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON DRUG USE AND RELATED ISSUES THROUGH THE USE OF SOUND, SYSTEMATIC DATA COLLECTION PRACTICES, SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, AND STANDARDIZED METHODOLOGIES, ENSURING THAT COUNTRIES HAVE THE INFORMATION NECESSARY TO DEVELOP SOUND DEMAND REDUCTION PROGRAMS AND POLICIES.

Priority Action 2.1: Generate information on the incidence, prevalence, and modes of drug use and health impacts of drug use (e.g. non-fatal overdose, fatal overdose, infectious disease transmission), as well as drug use and health impact trends over time using sound, systematic data collection practices, scientific research, and standardized methodologies to monitor use across the general public and in key populations, whenever possible utilizing the Inter-American Drug Use Data System (SIDUC) as the standard methodology for epidemiological surveillance. (Question 15)

Interpretive Note:
The country's National Drug Observatory (NDO) or similar technical office carries out its studies on drug use and health impacts of drug use using the survey protocols of the SIDUC program or other harmonized methods. This will ensure that a standardized methodology is being used at the hemispheric level and the results are comparable between the member states.

Priority Action 2.2: Develop drug treatment information systems that record the number of patients treated, diagnoses, clinical history, and available information on treatment outcomes. (Question 16)

Interpretive Note:
In coordination with relevant stakeholders, the country's NDO or similar technical office creates a drug treatment information system. This drug treatment information system includes the number of patients who access treatment, drugs for which they seek treatment, type of treatment they receive, number of patients who complete treatment, duration of treatment, among other relevant data.

Priority Action 2.3: Evaluate and monitor the impact and the results of treatment and prevention programs using scientific methodologies and make recommendations to update programs based on findings. (Questions 17, 18, 19, 20)

Interpretive Note:
The country's NDO or similar technical office, as appropriate, engages persons and/or organizations with the technical capacity to evaluate[18] and monitor the impact and results of treatment and prevention programs.

[18] Evaluations include an assessment of the process, results, and impacts of such programs. This information will help to generate the evidence needed to determine the efficacy of intervention programs and support the identification of best practices.

Process evaluation: includes documenting each step of the design of a specific intervention, to determine its efficacy, efficiency, and effectiveness. It seeks to determine whether the intervention efficiently meets its short-term goals, has successfully reached the target population, and the materials used are appropriate.

Intermediate outcome evaluation: assesses the effectiveness of the program; that is, what the project is expected to change. The outcome may include changes in behavior, status, attitude, or certification of the beneficiaries after receiving the program's goods or services. The importance of the intermediate outcome evaluation lies in the expectation that the results will drive the final outcome (impact) of the program or project.

Impact evaluation: This is an assessment of the final outcomes of key actions or inputs relative to what would have occurred in the absence of an intervention. These results indicate a change in the conditions of the target population directly attributable to these actions. In some instances, it is difficult to carry out these measurements, due to the difficulty in isolating the effects of other external variables and/or because many of these effects are long term.

OBJECTIVE 3

OBJECTIVE 3	EXPAND AND ENHANCE THE COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON ILLICIT DRUG PRODUCTION, TRAFFICKING, AND RELATED ISSUES, THROUGH THE USE OF SOUND, SYSTEMATIC DATA COLLECTION PRACTICES, SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, AND STANDARDIZED METHODOLOGIES.

Priority Action 3.1: Generate information on illicit drug production, trafficking, drug markets, and related issues, using systematic data collection practices, scientific research, and wherever possible applying comparable methodologies. (Questions 21, 22, 23, 24)

Interpretive Note:
The country generates information in coordination with organizations responsible for generating data on the drug supply and the drug market, using systematic data collection practices, scientific research, and wherever possible applying comparable methodologies.[19]

Priority Action 3.2: Conduct studies on the price, purity or concentration, and chemical profile of drugs. (Questions 25, 26)

Interpretive Note:
The country's NDO or similar technical office, commissions studies and/or compiles information on the price, purity, or concentration of drugs, their availability, main points of sale, and ease of access to drugs. Moreover, it coordinates with forensic laboratories to obtain information on specific analyses and chemical characterization of seized drugs and precursors used for their manufacture and/or adulteration.

Priority Action 3.3: Establish and strengthen the relationship between the NDOs, or similar technical offices, and national, and when applicable, local, or sub-national forensic laboratories to bolster the collection of data on the chemical composition of substances and precursors seized. (Questions 27, 28, 28.a)

Interpretive Note:
The country's NDO or similar technical office and its respective early warning system (EWS) establish close coordination with forensic laboratories[20] to obtain data on new and emergent drugs, as well as precursors used in drug manufacture.

[19] The NDO or similar technical office is responsible for generating a database with official information at the national level, on topics such as drug seizures, drug precursors, and clandestine laboratories; arrests for drug trafficking and related crimes; drug trafficking routes, and information on drug analysis by forensic laboratories. Reports are prepared using standardized forms, so that information is comparable at an international level.
[20] Forensic laboratories are the specialized agencies at the national level that carry out chemical characterization of drugs, purity tests, and determination of the various chemical compounds that are present in them.

Priority Action 3.4: Strengthen drug information networks in member states by improving the mechanisms used to gather and analyze data to inform the development of public policies that control the illicit supply of drugs. (Questions 7, 28.b, 28.c)

Interpretive Note:
The country's NDO or similar technical office includes, in the national drug information network (DIN), all those organizations in charge of collecting data on supply and the drug market.[21]

Note: In the questionnaire, additional information to determine the status of this Priority Action can be found under question 7.

[21] The data is official and approved by all other organizations that provide information on national drug supply. Additionally, the data is recorded in standardized formats so it is comparable at the national level and hemispheric level and can be used to determine trends.

OBJECTIVE 4

OBJECTIVE 4	PARTICIPATE IN AND STRENGTHEN THE MULTILATERAL EVALUATION MECHANISM (MEM) PROCESS, CONSIDERING ITS RECOMMENDATIONS.

Priority Action 4.1: Regularly collect information and data to evaluate implementation of the Hemispheric Plan of Action.

Interpretive Note:
The country collects information on the implementation of the OAS Hemispheric Plan of Action on Drugs through the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) and presents it in a timely manner so it can be evaluated by the Governmental Expert Group (GEG).

Note: The questionnaire does not include questions related to this Priority Action, given that the MEM Unit has kept record of member states submission of evaluation questionnaires.

Priority Action 4.2: Support and facilitate active and timely participation in each of the MEM activities agreed to by member states.

Interpretive Note:
The country designates delegates to all MEM-related activities, who actively participate and contribute to the MEM evaluation process.

Note: The questionnaire does not include questions related to this Priority Action, given that the MEM Unit has kept record of member states' participation in the MEM evaluation process.

Priority Action 4.3: Disseminate MEM evaluation reports by member states among national stakeholders, other pertinent organizations, and the general public. (Question 29)

Interpretive Note:
The country periodically carries out activities to promote and raise awareness of the MEM Evaluation Reports on Drug Policies.

Priority Action 4.4: Promote use of the MEM's findings to identify technical assistance needs. (Question 30)

Interpretive Note:
The country promotes the analysis of the findings of the MEM Evaluation Report on Drug Policies, so that national institutions carry out activities to identify areas where technical assistance is needed to improve national drug-related policies and programs.

Priority Action 4.5: Increase hemispheric cooperation and partnerships among member states and sharing of best practices and lessons learned. (Question 31)

Interpretive Note: Based on the national MEM Evaluation Reports on Drug Policies, the country identifies opportunities to increase cooperation and partnerships with other member states and sharing of best practices and lessons learned (horizontal cooperation).

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

OBJECTIVE 1

OBJECTIVE 1	PROMOTE AND STRENGTHEN COOPERATION AND COORDINATION MECHANISMS TO FOSTER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, IMPROVE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND EXPERIENCES, AND SHARE BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED ON DRUG POLICIES.

Priority Action 1.1: Develop and implement a plan for promoting and strengthening technical assistance and horizontal cooperation among member states and with states outside of the Western Hemisphere, and with relevant international and regional organizations, and related initiatives and programs. (Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Interpretive Note:
The country develops and implements a plan for promoting and strengthening technical assistance and horizontal cooperation among member states and with states outside of the Western Hemisphere, and with relevant international and regional organizations, and related initiatives and programs.

Priority Action 1.2: Promote technology transfers and information sharing among and between member states and international organizations. (Questions 6, 7)

Interpretive Note:
The country promotes technology transfers and information sharing among and between OAS member states and international (including regional) organizations, including but not limited to, the systematization of regulation, studies, research, and bibliographic material.

Priority Action 1.3: Promote the dissemination of good practices and exchange of successful research experiences among and between member states and international organizations. (Question 8)

Interpretive Note:
The country promotes the dissemination of good practices and exchange of successful research experiences among and between OAS member states and international (including regional) organizations on drug policies.

OBJECTIVE 2	STRENGTHEN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AS DEFINED IN THE INTERNATIONAL LEGAL INSTRUMENTS RELATED TO THE WORLD DRUG PROBLEM, MAINTAINING RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.

Priority Action 2.1: Strengthen regional and international cooperation by competent authorities to investigate and prosecute criminals on drug-related offenses. (Question 9)

Interpretive Note:
The country strengthens regional and international cooperation through investigating and prosecuting criminals for drug-related offenses by competent authorities.

Priority Action 2.2: Strengthen regional and international cooperation to facilitate, where appropriate, mutual legal assistance, extradition, and transfer of proceedings, in accordance with international legal instruments, when investigating and prosecuting criminals on drug-related offenses. (Question 10)

Interpretive Note:
The country strengthens regional and international cooperation to facilitate, where appropriate, mutual legal assistance, extradition, and transfer of proceedings, in accordance with international legal instruments,[22] when investigating and prosecuting criminals on drug-related offenses.

[22] United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961), amended by the 1972 Protocol, the United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971), the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988), the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000) and its three Protocols: against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition; the United Nations Convention against Corruption (2003); the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (1992), the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (1996), and the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and other Related Materials (CIFTA) (1997); UNGASS 2016 Outcome Document: *Our Joint Commitment to Effectively Addressing and Countering the World Drug Problem*, CICAD 2010 Hemispheric Drug Strategy and its Plan of Action, 2016-2020; 2009 United Nations Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation Towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem; United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; Organization of American States (OAS) 2013 Declaration of Antigua, Guatemala: *For a Comprehensive Policy against the World Drug Problem in the Americas*; and 2014 OAS General Assembly Resolution: *Reflections and Guidelines to Formulate and Follow-up on Comprehensive Policies to Address the World Drug Problem in the Americas*.

Priority Action 2.3: Enact national legislation and/or take administrative actions, as appropriate, to more fully implement the obligations set forth within these legal instruments. (Question 11)

Interpretive Note:
The country has enacted national legislation and/or taken administrative actions, as appropriate, to more fully implement the obligations set forth within the international legal instruments[23] related to the world drug problem, while respecting human rights and gender equality.

Priority Action 2.4: Promote the accession, ratification, and implementation of the international legal instruments related to the world drug problem and related crimes. (Question 12)

Interpretive Note:
The country promotes the accession[24], ratification, and implementation, as appropriate, of the international legal instruments[25] related to the world drug problem and related crimes. The

[23] United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961), amended by the 1972 Protocol, the United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971), the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988), the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000) and its three Protocols: against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition; the United Nations Convention against Corruption (2003); the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (1992), the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (1996), and the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and other Related Materials (CIFTA) (1997); UNGASS 2016 Outcome Document, CICAD 2010 Hemispheric Drug Strategy and its Plan of Action, 2016-2020; 2009 United Nations Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation Towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem; United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; Organization of American States (OAS) 2013 Declaration of Antigua, Guatemala, *For a Comprehensive Policy against the World Drug Problem in the Americas*; and 2014 OAS General Assembly Resolution, *Reflections and Guidelines to Formulate and Follow-up on Comprehensive Policies to Address the World Drug Problem in the Americas*.

[24] **Accession:** Act whereby a state accepts the offer or the opportunity to become a party to a treaty already negotiated and signed by other states. It has the same legal effect as ratification. Accession usually occurs after the treaty has entered into force. United Nations Treaty Collection. Web link: https://treaties.un.org/doc/source/publications/THB/English.pdf.

[25] United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961), amended by the 1972 Protocol, the United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971), the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988), the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000) and its three Protocols: against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition; the United Nations Convention against Corruption (2003); the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (1992), the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (1996), and the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and other Related Materials (CIFTA) (1997); UNGASS 2016 Outcome Document, CICAD 2010 Hemispheric Drug Strategy and its Plan of Action, 2016-2020; 2009 United Nations Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation Towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World

United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988) has been ratified by all OAS member states (thus not included on the table in Question 8 but will be noted in the narrative document).

Drug Problem; United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; Organization of American States (OAS) 2013 Declaration of Antigua, Guatemala, *For a Comprehensive Policy against the World Drug Problem in the Americas*; and 2014 OAS General Assembly Resolution, *Reflections and Guidelines to Formulate and Follow-up on Comprehensive Policies to Address the World Drug Problem in the Americas*.

Financed by:
Government of Canada
Government of Mexico
Government of Trinidad and Tobago
Government of the United States of America
Regular Fund of the Organization of American States