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MULTILATERAL EVALUATION MECHANISM (MEM)

*Evaluation Report on Drug Policies:
Institutional Strengthening; Research,
Information, Monitoring, and Evaluation;
and International Cooperation*

El Salvador

Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD)
Secretariat for Multidimensional Security (SMS)

2023



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EL SALVADOR

Evaluation Report on Drug Policies:

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EIGHTH EVALUATION ROUND

2023

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PREFACE

The Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), established by a mandate from the Second Summit of the Americas (Santiago, Chile - 1998), is a unique multilateral evaluation tool designed to measure the progress made and challenges faced by the member states of the Organization of American States (OAS) in implementing the Hemispheric Plan of Action on Drugs of the OAS Hemispheric Drug Strategy, currently in force.

The Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security (SMS) is the OAS specialized agency in charge of implementing this Mechanism.

The current MEM round is based on the objectives of the Hemispheric Plan of Action on Drugs 2021-2025 of the Hemispheric Drug Strategy 2020 and their respective priority actions. These documents take into account the recommendations of the outcome document of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS 2016) and the United Nations 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, as well as cross-cutting issues, such as the gender perspective and human rights, cultural context, and social inclusion approaches, among others.

Seven evaluation rounds have been completed from 1998 to 2019 and, during 2020, the MEM Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG), composed of member state delegates, agreed on a new methodology for the eighth round, consisting of annual thematic evaluations with the support of independent technical consultants, as follows: 2021 – Measures for Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Support; 2022 – Measures to Control and Counter the Illicit Cultivation, Production, Trafficking, and Distribution of Drugs, and to Address their Causes and Consequences; 2023 – Institutional Strengthening; Research, Information, Monitoring, and Evaluation; International Cooperation; and 2024 – Comprehensive Evaluation based on updated information from all thematic areas.

MEM evaluations are carried out based on information provided by the member states' National Coordinating Entities (NCEs), which is analyzed by the MEM Governmental Expert Group (GEG), composed of experts designated by the countries, who do not participate in their own country's evaluation, thus ensuring the transparency and impartiality of the process. The GEG is always supported by the group of independent technical consultants and the MEM Unit. The eighth round represents a more rigorous evaluation process, in which countries are requested to provide valid means of verification to support the information submitted and ensure compliance of each priority action.

Specifically, the GEG's work for the thematic assessment for the areas of "Institutional Strengthening; Research, Information, Monitoring, and Evaluation; and International Cooperation" was conducted during 2023, and covers the 2019 to 2023 period (unless otherwise specified). This work was adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic with the use of technology and virtual tools, as well as taking it into consideration in the evaluation assessments.

Finally, it should be noted that one of the main purposes of MEM evaluation reports is to serve as a useful diagnostic tool to identify opportunities for improvement in drug policies and strategies, both at the national and regional levels.

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

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.

El Salvador’s national drug authority is the National Anti-Drug Commission (CNA). It was established in 2003 and is part of the administrative structure of the State under the direction of the President of the Republic, who appoints its Executive Director, in accordance with the provisions of the Law Regulating Drug-Related Activities (Article 5). The Office of the Executive Director of the CNA is attached administratively and in budget terms to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security.

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.

The legal basis of El Salvador’s CNA is established in Legislative Decree 153 (Law Regulating Drug-Related Activities).

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

El Salvador has an annual budget for its national drug authority, which is included in the budget of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security

The following is the annual budget amount allocated to the national drug authority for the years 2019 –2023.

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Annual budget amount (US dollars)	\$312,259.48	\$320,975.40	\$320,975.40	\$524,490.45	\$629,650.00

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.

El Salvador has an ongoing coordination and collaboration mechanism among agencies and other levels of government (national and subnational) to formulate, implement, monitor, evaluate, and

update evidence-based national drug policies and/or strategies. In this regard, a coordination mechanism has been established through an Interagency Technical Group comprising technical liaisons appointed by the heads of the public and private institutions involved in the implementation of the National Anti-Drug Strategy. These liaisons are appointed taking into account each of the strategic areas coordinated and implemented within the framework of the strategy.

The country's national drug authority coordinates the areas of demand reduction, supply reduction, control measures, drug observatory, and international cooperation. However, the national drug authority does not coordinate the area of program evaluation.

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, 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.

In El Salvador, the National Anti-Drug Commission (CNA), through the Salvadoran Observatory on Drugs (OSD), which is an integral part of the organizational structure of the Office of the Executive Director, collects and uses evidence as a basis for the formulation and updating of national drug policies and strategies. In this regard, updated information is compiled annually through the National Information Network overseen by the OSD, which coordinates and obtains information, statistics, and research on the national drug situation in the country. The annual reports published by the CNA through the OSD were taken into account in updating and finalizing the country strategy for institutional strengthening in drug and chemical precursor interdiction in El Salvador.

Partnerships have also been established with public institutions to promote and conduct national research on the prevalence of psychoactive substance use in different target populations. In the 2018–2019 period, the Fourth National Survey on Psychoactive Substance Use in the school population of El Salvador was carried out. The results of the survey were taken into account in the design of prevention programs being implemented in schools.

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, to contribute to the evidence-based development, implementation, evaluation, and updating of national drug policies.

In El Salvador, the following relevant actors from priority areas are involved in the development, implementation, evaluation, and updating of national drug policies and/or strategies:

Relevant actors	Development	Implementation	Evaluation	Update
Health Ministry	X	X	X	X
Interior Ministry	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Education Ministry	X	X	X	X
Regional and/or local governments				
Scientific community/academia		X	X	X

Civil society		X		
Private sector		X		
Others:				
- Ministry of Justice and Public Security				
- National Directorate of Medicines				
- Ministry of National Defense				
- Office of the Attorney General				
- Supreme Court of Justice				
- National Council for Asset Management	X	X	X	X
- Autonomous Executive Ports Commission				
- Ministry of Finance				
- Superintendency of the Financial System				
- Maritime Port Authority				
- Civil Aviation Authority				

The country's regional and/or local governments are not involved in the development, implementation, evaluation or updating of national 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 sociocultural, demographic and other differences of each region.

El Salvador has not delegated partial or full responsibilities for drugs issues to local or subnational governments, in order to implement concrete actions related to drug policies and/or strategies.

The country's national drug authority does not have, in its central structure, an office or operational unit to promote, coordinate, train, or provide technical support on drug-related issues to sub-national/local governments or agencies.

El Salvador's national drug authority does not have coordinators, offices, or representatives within its country's subnational or local territories, as part of a decentralized operational and coordination structure at the local level, to respond to the drug problem.

The country does not have a specific and ongoing mechanism or program to transfer funds or finance drug initiatives or projects implemented by local municipalities or governments.

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.

El Salvador engages private sector entities to develop innovative approaches in the implementation of drug policies and exchange information and best practices. The National Directorate of Medicines, as the competent authority, develops guidelines, codes of conduct and instruments to inform the industry and users in general about controlled chemical substances, for which it uses the following mechanisms to inform the industry and users about applicable controls and cooperation methods to prevent the diversion of controlled chemical substances: (1) Annual publication of the List of Controlled Substances; (2) On-site and virtual training; (3) Publication of regulations on the web page.

Innovative approaches have been implemented in the country to address drug demand reduction. For example, a memorandum of understanding was signed with Universidad Salvadoreña Alberto Masferrer to carry out training and capacity-building activities on evidence-based practices in drug demand reduction. In addition, funding is provided to the non-governmental organization (NGO) Casa de Recuperación La Esperanza to improve its facilities and provide technical support for specialized residential care for people with substance-use disorders. This approach incorporates evidence-based practices and a rights-based approach to users. Finally, under the Seal of Good Practice Program (*Programa de Sello de Buenas Prácticas*) support is being provided to civil society facilities that care for people with substance-use disorders. The objective of this program is to help such facilities achieve minimum standards in terms of infrastructure and quality of care based on international standards.

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.

El Salvador takes into account the Organization of American States (OAS) 2020 Hemispheric Strategy on Drugs and its corresponding Plan of Action to formulate or update national drug policies and strategies.

The national drug policies and strategies of El Salvador take into account the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that connection, the country has implemented actions related to objective 3.5: Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol, which is implemented through competent entities such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health, which, in turn, have developed actions for the promotion of healthy lifestyles in schools and the community.

The Ministry of Health delivered to the Ministry of Education methodological guides on health

promotion and addressing risk factors in relation to non-communicable diseases, as well as a teacher-training module to foster in children, adolescents, and young people attitudes for dialogue, reflection, and decision making in their individual, family, and community life projects, to ensure a healthy body, free of tobacco, alcohol and drug use. These guides include a gender and rights-based approach and are aimed at students from kindergarten to high school.

It also takes into account objective 3.6 for 2020 of “halving the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents,” and objective 3.a “Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate.” The Ministry of Health and the Solidarity Fund for Health (FOSALUD) offer nationwide treatment and rehabilitation services in different modalities: outpatient, residential, and inpatient at all stage of the life cycle, and have 12 mental health hospital units (UHSM) that provide outpatient and inpatient care to treat patients for psychoactive substance use. In total, there are treatment services at 30 hospitals, including specialized care services at seven addiction prevention and treatment centers (CPTA) that provide detoxification care services and specialized medical assistance in addictions focused on rehabilitation for tobacco, alcohol, and other psychoactive substance users, which is provided to addicts and their families, which are incorporated into a support process. Patients receive medical consultation, psychiatric care, specialized psychological care, and social work, as well as individual, group, family, couples, and psychoeducational therapy, among other addiction prevention and awareness activities. CPTA are open to the entire population. There are also private facilities and NGOs that offer non-specialized care services provided by drug addiction socio-therapeutic operators. It is worth mentioning that nine NGOs have been awarded the Seal of Good Practice in residential and outpatient care for adults and minors. The Seal of Good Practice was awarded by the Office of the Executive Director of the CNA.

Priority Action 2.6: Integrate a human rights, gender, 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.

El Salvador's national drug policies and strategies take into account the human rights approach. In this regard, the country has in place mechanisms to protect the human rights of older persons in treatment programs and services as provided for in the following:

- Mental Health Law
- Implementing Regulations of the Mental Health Law
- National Policy on Mental Health
- Law on Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents
- “Growing Together” Law

The national drug policies and strategies of El Salvador take into account the gender approach. In that regard, the country has in place drug demand reduction policies that include programs in the areas of health promotion, prevention, early intervention, treatment, care, rehabilitation,

and recovery, which include the approaches that take account of age, gender, community, and cultural contexts. El Salvador's national drug authority needs technical support to develop and implement programs with a gender approach, specifically for the development and implementation of gender-aware treatment programs for people with substance use disorders, since there are currently no guidelines for the differentiated treatment of men and women in public and private treatment centers.

The national drug policies and strategies of El Salvador do not take into account the social inclusion approach.

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

El Salvador does not have the necessary resources to implement drug policies and programs. The country needs resources for universal, selective, and indicated prevention programs in order to expand the coverage of treatment mechanisms and continuing training for primary care personnel (in detection, counseling, and referral) and specialized facilities.

The country also lacks the necessary resources to implement all the actions within the framework of the National Anti-Drug Strategy, since, although in some areas it has been possible to manage resources to implement certain, new actions always arise or other actions remain that could not be funded due to resource constraints, since the national economic environment, the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters, and other circumstances force governments to reallocate resources to address situations that cannot be controlled.

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 multidisciplinary approach to the drug problem, including its causes and consequences.

El Salvador has interagency and multisectoral policy and technical coordination mechanisms to address the drug problem through a comprehensive, balanced, and multidisciplinary approach, including its causes and consequences. In this regard, the National Anti-Drug Commission (CNA), in accordance with the provisions of the Law Regulating Activities Related to Drugs, coordinates actions within the framework of the National Anti-Drug Strategy 2016-2021, through inter-institutional technical tables for the implementation of plans, programs, and strategies of government policies related to drugs with: Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of National Defense, National Directorate of Medicines and Superior Council of Public Health, as well as with other government entities and civil society.

Moreover, for the preparation of the "Country Strategy for Institutional Strengthening in the Interdiction of Drugs and Chemical Precursors: El Salvador", which includes five lines of intervention: 1. Maritime Interdiction, 2. Land Interdiction, 3. Air Interdiction, 4. Criminal Investigation, 5. Illicit Economies, the Executive Directorate of the National Anti-Drug Commission established the coordination and management mechanism through a Technical Interinstitutional Coordination Board made up of the institutions directly and indirectly involved in the execution of the actions defined in said strategy. among which are: Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Ministry of National Defense, National Directorate of Medicines, General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic, General Directorate of Immigration, General Directorate of Customs, National Property Administration Commission, Civil National Police, Superintendence of the Financial System, Maritime Port Authority, Civil Aviation Authority and Autonomous Port Executive Commission.

Another mechanism is the coordination of the Plan Cuscatlán, a new government for El Salvador, in which eight government teams were defined, among which are established: Social welfare; Security; Migrations and work; International; Industry, production and technology; Economy, Social Benefits and Finance; Development and public works; and Territorial Development. In the Cuscatlán Plan, the primary axis of the model of care is the person, in their family and community environment, giving priority to health promotion and prevention of damage, without neglecting the healing and rehabilitation aspect.

As part of the Social Welfare axis, the Health Plan defines the necessary actions to consolidate basic social advances that guarantee Human Rights in order to advance the integration of the

National Health System; strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Health as a governing body, establishing strategic alliances, increasing the amount and efficient use of health resources; improving the structure, organization and operation of the Comprehensive and Integrated Health Networks, and other actions to update the strategic lines of the National Health Policy through a consultative process.

The Plan Cuscatlán assumes that another important aspect in the development of the new national health system is the development of permanent health education programs for the population, which promote the practice of healthy lifestyles; that is, the adoption of positive health behaviors by individuals, groups and communities; as well as the good use of health services and compliance with treatments, among others. As part of the strategic guidelines, 13 strategies are included, including specific strategies for environmental health, mental health and comprehensive health care throughout the life cycle.

In the Security axis, the following are noted: NCT1- Provision of technological resources to the authorities that combat illicit trafficking and customs control actors at land, sea and air borders, and NTC2- Increase in technical, tactical and operational capabilities of the agencies involved to ensure an efficient fight against criminal groups that use El Salvador as a corridor for illicit drug trafficking. In addition, three lines of action are defined: prevention, combating crime and reintegration into productive life.

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.

El Salvador has concrete multisectoral plans and programs to address the socioeconomic causes and consequences of the drug problem, which are based on the principles of human rights, public health, and development:

- Project based on Economic Reintegration: The different CIC (Integral Coexistence Centers), at which technical and training activities are carried out to promote positive independent employability (entrepreneurship), in coordination with the Salvadoran Institute of Vocational Training (INSAFORP); this training aims to promote positive economic independence, provide tools, and build capacities in young people and adults.
- Youth Building the Future: this project has been implemented by the social fabric reconstruction department with funding from the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID). It is an internship program for young adults aimed at creating job training opportunities that generate income. The project was implemented in all 14 departments with the support of private businesses, non-governmental organizations (NGO), and government institutions.
- “STOP” Program: provides the Occupational Safety and Health Committees with educational tools and scientific knowledge on drugs, prevention and treatment, through virtual sessions, with the purpose of training and instructing them in this matter. This program is an

educational and awareness-raising program on drug use and the workplace, aimed at members of the Occupational Health and Safety Committees of public institutions.

- **Solidarity Fund for Health (FOSALUD):** specialized addiction treatment services are offered through the Addiction Prevention and Treatment Centers (CPTA), through which the patient receives specialized comprehensive care, provided by doctors, psychologists and social workers. The offer of treatment services is focused on achieving abstinence from tobacco, alcohol or other psychoactive substances and supporting family members of psychoactive substance users.

Also, the Ministry of Education in coordination with the National Civil Police implements universal prevention programs: Education and training in gang resistance (GREAT), Sexual crime through technology and communications (TIC), Police athletic league (LAP) and “School Police”, aimed at students from first grade to high school, with the purpose of empowering students and giving them tools to incorporate human and social values, strengthen social skills for decision making, communication, life plan, safe use of the Internet and reinforce relationships of trust between the school community and the police, prevention and attention in cases of rights violation.

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

El Salvador participates in international cooperation programs at the bilateral and multilateral levels to strengthen policies, programs, institutions, and their internal processes. Thus, the country participates in the European Union-financed Cooperation Program between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union on drug policies (COPOLAD) III in the areas of drug observatories, demand reduction, supply reduction, sustainable development, rights and gender, and support for biregional cooperation on drugs.

In addition, the country is a beneficiary of cooperation from the Colombo Plan through the Drug Advisory Programme (DAP), which receives funding from the United States Bureau of International Narcotics Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). In this area, support is provided for prevention and treatment training programs, as well as for training of trainers for those programs.

El Salvador is also part of the Joint Commission for Technical and Scientific, Educational, and Cultural Cooperation with the Republic of Guatemala. The Commission serves as a forum for exchanges of experience in territorial intervention and addressing at-risk populations.

In that regard, since 2017, the country has implemented the Container Control Programme (CCP), under which the Acajutla Container Control Unit (UCC) operates at the Port of Acajutla facilities, an interagency operational group that profiles containers to prevent their use for different types of illicit activities.

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

El Salvador promotes comprehensive and cross-cutting public policies to reduce and prevent crime, violence, social exclusion, and corruption. In this regard, Phase II, "Opportunities," of the Territorial Control Plan considered issues relating to prevention of violence, crime and social exclusion. In addition, Phase V, "IncurSION," of the Territorial Control Plan addressed reduction of crime, violence, and corruption.

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

El Salvador implements measures that promote equal access to justice and due process, taking into account gender, age, community, and cultural context. In this sense, the measures that are implemented are the intervention, assistance, and approach pathways to victims of different forms of violence, with special attention to gender-based violence, in an interagency coordination framework. Regarding the community and cultural context approaches, the country has made limited progress on these issues.

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

El Salvador does not implement measures that foster citizen participation in crime prevention, build community cohesion, increase public safety, and emphasize social inclusion.

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 for minor or non-violent drug-related offenses, where appropriate, while safeguarding the sovereignty of states, and ensuring individual accountability, respecting human rights and the gender perspective.

El Salvador’s law provides for alternative measures to incarceration for minor or non-violent drug-related offenses through the Law Regulating Drug-Related Activities of 2003 (LRARD) and the Code of Criminal Procedure (CPP) by means of conditional suspension of criminal proceedings, and their respective rules of conduct (Articles 24- 22 of the CPP). Likewise, according to the above law, alternative measures to incarceration will not be applied during the criminal proceeding when the crime is punishable by a prison sentence of up to three years and the judge considers that the oath of the defendant to submit to the proceeding is sufficient to ensure their presence (Article 332, final paragraph).

These measures respect human rights and take into account the gender perspective in accordance with the relevant international instruments. In that connection, with regard to observance and respect for human rights, apart from the traditional protection mechanisms contained in the special criminal, criminal procedural, and correctional regulations, in the area of comprehensive early childhood, childhood and adolescent protection, since 2022, the State and its institutions have had an array of regulations body, including the Growing Together Law for the Comprehensive Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescent Protection (LECJPINA) that addresses the fundamental rights of minors recognized in the Salvadoran Constitution and international legal instruments, and covers, among other important aspects, the following:

- Protection against arbitrary or illegal deprivation of liberty, internment, and institutionalization, which establishes as a priority “Any measure of deprivation of liberty, internment, or placement in foster care of children or adolescents by the competent authorities, shall be taken as a last resort, be exceptional and temporary in nature, be properly grounded, therefore, and respect statutory time limits. The internment or remand of adolescents in police or penitentiary detention centers for adults is prohibited” (Article 67 LECJPINA)
- Obligations of the State with regard to situations of vulnerability, which governs “those who are under protection measures, medical internment, or socio-educational measures for criminal responsibility also have the right to have the State adopt measures for their transition to the outside environment, adult life, or family reintegration” (Article 76 LECJPINA)
- Right of access to justice, which provides as follows: “To enforce socio-educational measures for criminal responsibility ordered by juvenile courts in programs that guarantee their rights and the conditions for their reintegration into society and the recovery of their life project. To endeavor, in the application of justice, to apply alternative dispute settlement mechanisms

such as mediation and conciliation, provided that doing so would not undermine the rights recognized in this Law” (Article 81 LECJPINA)

- Right to due process, on which it provides: “Minors have the right to due process in any administrative and judicial proceedings in accordance with the terms enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic, this law, and the rest of the system of laws. The State recognizes the particular vulnerability of adolescent criminal offenders and shall ensure heightened protection of their rights and guarantees in administrative and judicial proceedings” (Article 83 LECJPINA)
- Guarantee of confidentiality, which states: “All authorities or persons involved in investigations and decisions in judicial or administrative matters involving children and adolescents, as well as in the application of the measures adopted, are required to keep secret the matters known to them, which are considered privileged and may not be disclosed under any circumstances. However, mothers, fathers, legal representatives, and guardians shall have access to the respective proceedings and files” (Article 84 LECJPINA)
- Specific conditions for programs related to adolescent criminal offenders: “The State shall establish programs and mechanisms that guarantee adolescent criminal offenders the exercise of their rights, their comprehensive protection, the construction of a life project, and their social integration. The National Council for Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence shall manage centers and programs for the enforcement of pretrial detention and execution of socio-educational measures for adolescent criminal offenders, for which purpose it will coordinate the management of services with the guarantor institutions for the effective enjoyment of their rights. The socio-educational measures for adolescent criminal offenders may also be implemented through programs run by care entities, which will be accountable to the competent judge for monitoring such measures, as well as under the supervision of the National Council for Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescents ...” (Article 131 LECJPINA)

With respect to adopting a gender perspective in the enforcement of alternative measures to incarceration in minor drug-related offenses, the country has not yet developed regulations; however, there are legal texts dating from 2011 that have developed the international commitments acquired by the State upon its ratification of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, including the Special Comprehensive Law for a Life Free of Violence for Women (LEIV) (adopted by Legislative Decree 520 of November 25, 2010. P.O. 2. T. 390 of January 4, 2011), which provides a regulatory framework for criminal, civil and administrative proceedings to be applied by all State institutions, such protection being required not only when women are victims of violence at the hands of private citizens, but also where they are victims of violence on the part of the State through its institutions. Another text of similar importance in this area is the Law on Equality, Equity and Eradication of Discrimination against Women (LEIV) (adopted by Legislative Decree 645, of March 17, 2011, P.O. 70, T. 391 of April 8, 2011), which has been part of the development of the commitments adopted by the State upon its ratification of international human rights treaties and conventions that enshrine equality of persons as a fundamental right. Therefore, the aim of this body of law is the formulation of public policies for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, involving state institutions, in particular, in ensuring respect for that right, including in all initiatives undertaken by women either in the public or private sphere.

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.

El Salvador develops mechanisms to monitor and evaluate alternative measures to incarceration for minor or non-violent drug-related offenses. The agency responsible for implementing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms is the Supreme Court of Justice.

In cases in which Conditional Suspension of Criminal Proceedings is granted as an alternative to incarceration for less serious drug-related offenses, the judge in the case establishes the rules of conduct that the person must observe as a condition for eligibility for the benefit, which under the applicable regulations falls to the penitentiary surveillance and enforcement judge (Articles 24-22 of the CPP and Article 37 (12) of the Penitentiary Law), who monitors compliance with the aforementioned rules, and in this area relies on the collaboration of the Department of Evidence and Assisted Release (DPLA) of the Supreme Court of Justice, as regulated by Article 121-B of the Organic Law of the Judiciary. These mechanisms do not involve academic and research institutions or civil society.

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

El Salvador does not promote a common understanding of national legal norms, regulations, or internal procedures for the implementation of alternatives to incarceration.

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.

El Salvador has 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. In this regard, the *Juventudes con Éxito* program, which is aimed at adolescents and young people in vulnerable circumstances in communities targeted by the Territorial Control Plan. Also available is the UNICO (Uniting Communities) program, which targets communities stigmatized for reasons of violence and promotes activities around healthy competition and healthy coexistence, enhancing positive aspects of communities through different sports activities. In addition, the country is recovering areas with the aim of restoring and revitalizing public spaces in targeted stigmatized communities.

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

El Salvador disseminates best practices and lessons learned to improve institutional responses to the needs of at-risk populations, such as mechanisms, programs, and interventions, through publications, meetings, workshops, among others. In that regard, the country disseminates best practices and lessons learned through the Community and Community Management diploma course for technical managers in various municipalities, in order to improve interventions and approaches to communities in the country.

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.

El Salvador promotes the 2003 Law Regulating Drug-Related Activities (LRARD), which provides for proportional legal sentencing for minor drug-related offenses in accordance with domestic law. It establishes proportional penalties for a number of minor drug-related offenses, i.e., offenses that are punishable under criminal law with one to three years of imprisonment, which under the Salvadoran law amount to less serious offenses (Articles 32 (1), 46 of the LRARD, in relation to Article 18 of the Criminal Code).

The country does not have special courts or tribunals for minor drug-related offenses.

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

El Salvador does not promote legal reforms regarding proportional sentencing for minor drug-related offenses.

RESEARCH, INFORMATION, MONITORING, AND EVALUATION

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.

El Salvador has the Salvadoran Observatory on Drugs (OSD), which is part of the organizational structure of the Office of the Executive Director of the National Anti-Drug Commission (DE-CNA).

The OSD is allocated financial and human resources to carry out its functions. This is financed with funding provided in the country's General Budget (*Fondo General de la Nación*) to the DE-CNA and includes funds for administrative expenses and the operation of the OSD, which is part of the organizational structure of the DE-CNA. The OSD does not have a specific budget earmarked for it.

Research is conducted by obtaining resources from the budget of the DE-CNA to finance research projects. Another mechanism is to establish strategic partnerships with research entities and universities to conduct specific studies such as, for example, estimating substance-use prevalence in different target populations, among other drug-related topics. The funding includes a budget contribution from each of the participating entities; in some instances, contributions of technical and financial assistance have been obtained from international cooperation agencies.

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.

El Salvador has established and maintained working relationships with academic and research institutions. In this regard, the National Anti-Drug Commission (CNA), in coordination and close collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the Solidarity Fund for Health (FOSALUD), and Universidad Evangélica de El Salvador, promote and carry out drug research. A study on use of heated tobacco products and e-cigarettes in university students is planned for 2023. The aim of the study is to determine the prevalence of heated tobacco products and e-cigarettes in the university population. The research will be conducted in young university students nationwide who are prone to using heated tobacco products and e-cigarettes. The direct beneficiaries of the study will be university students, since identifying the prevalence and dynamics of e-cigarette use will enable decision-makers to develop intervention strategies through FOSALUD and the Ministry of Health, thus reducing the risks from this new means of using tobacco and other substances containing tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

The country has not carried out studies on the drug problem through universities or specialized research centers, non-governmental organizations (NGO), or other academic and research institutions.

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

El Salvador has developed and adopted quantitative and qualitative methodologies and information-gathering mechanisms that allow for the comparison of data among countries. In this regard, the methodology used in the national studies on psychoactive-substance use in the general population, schools, and university students carried out in the country has been that of the Inter-American Uniform Drug Use Data System (SIDUC).

Using this methodology, the country conducted the Fourth National Survey on Psychoactive Substance Use in the School Population of El Salvador in August 2018. The survey was the result of the commitment of different institutions of the Government of El Salvador to which partnered to advance decision-making and strategies based on the generation of updated evidence. The survey is the continuation of a series of periodic studies on the use of psychoactive substances in the country. It was conducted, planned, and executed by the Ministry of Health through the National Health Institute, in coordination with the Primary Health Care Directorate and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, with technical cooperation from the CNA through the OSD, FOSALUD, the Statistics and Census Bureau (DIGESTYC) and the Directorate of Non-communicable Diseases (DENT/MINSAL). Financial support was provided by Medicus Mundi.

The survey's methodology, based on SIDUC, ensures comparability with previous surveys and reporting in other countries.

The results show updated information on the extent and distribution of the use of different legal and illegal psychoactive substances by 7th and 9th grade students and second-year high school students in 93 public and private schools. They amount to 109,862 students nationwide. The risk factors for the use of these substances are also described, as are the risk behaviors of students.

El Salvador has utilized the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) standard indicators for drug information networks for the collection, analysis, and reporting of national drug related data and information.

The country has not carried out studies using methods non-representative of the population and/or qualitative methodologies to obtain information on drugs that can be shared with other countries that have carried out studies with similar methodologies.

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.

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.

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.

The OSD has a national drug information network (DIN), which interacts by the following means:

Means	Yes	No	Frequency
Meetings	X		Monthly
Document exchange	X		Daily, monthly

The following stakeholders are involved in the DIN:

Stakeholders	Yes	No
Universities/Academia	X	
Health institutions	X	
Drug treatment facilities	X	
Law enforcement	X	
Forensic laboratories	X	
Statistical and census institutions		X
Private consultants	X	
Civil society and other social stakeholders	X	
International cooperation organizations	X	

The DIN publishes a periodic report.

El Salvador has an early warning system (EWS) to identify new psychoactive substances (NPS) and other emerging drug threats, which is led by the OSD. The EWS shares information, alerts, and reports with the Early Warning System of the Americas (SATA).

The EWS has a mechanism to share information in real-time.

The following stakeholders are involved in the EWS:

Stakeholders	Yes	No
Universities/Academia		X
Health institutions	X	

Drug treatment facilities	X	
Law enforcement	X	
Forensic laboratories	X	
Statistical and census institutions		X
Private consultants		X
Civil society and other social stakeholders	X	
International cooperation organizations	X	

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

The OSD organizes trainings with local stakeholders to enhance data collection and management.

The OSD convenes meetings or other workshops where the results of studies and other data collection activities are shared with local stakeholders.

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.

El Salvador has not established forums that allow drug researchers to present their findings to policymakers.

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

The OSD promotes and disseminates best practices and the exchange of successful experiences in research among member states:

- The OSD was invited by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Global SMART (Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends) Programme to participate in the Guatemala EWS (SIALERT) Workshop held on February 20 and 21, to present El Salvador's experience with the implementation of its EWS as part of the collaboration and exchange of experience and good practice in bilateral cooperation with the Executive Secretariat of the Commission against Addictions and Illicit Drug Trafficking (SECCATID) of Guatemala
- The CNA's OSD was invited by the Inter-American Observatory on Drugs (OID) to provide a virtual presentation of the experience of El Salvador in implementing its EWS at the Subregional Seminar on Early Warning Systems held in Trinidad and Tobago on December 7 and 8, 2022. It highlighted the identification and detection of new psychoactive substances and synthetic drugs in the country
- With support from the UNODC Global SMART Programme, the Regional Forensic Laboratories Training Workshop was held on November 8 and 9, 2022, at the Forensic Investigation Center

in Nuevo Cuscatlán, El Salvador, at which the Controlled Substances Laboratory of the Forensic Analysis Division of the National Civil Police presented its experience and highlighted the importance of laboratories in providing scientific evidence on NPS and synthetic drugs for the EWS. Delegations from Guatemala, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, and El Salvador took part in the workshop

- On November 9, 2022, in response to an invitation from the OID-CICAD/OAS to provide a virtual presentation of the experience of the El Salvador's EWS, the Executive Director of the CNA presented the experience and best practices of the EWS of El Salvador to the member states that participated in the virtual panel at the seventy-second regular session of CICAD
- On October 7, 2022, at the invitation of the Regional Technical Mechanism for Demand Reduction, in which Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Panama participate, the OSD presented El Salvador's experience with the implementation of the EWS
- On October 5 and 6, 2022, at the request of the OID-CICAD/OAS, the OSD participated in the Seminar on Early Warning Systems in Response to Opioids and New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) in Latin America in which El Salvador's experience was presented in the panel discussion: The importance of forensic laboratories in drug testing and EWS reporting
- On January 19, 2022, at the request of the OID-CICAD/OAS, the OSD presented El Salvador's experience with national information networks for drug monitoring at the virtual meeting, Project for Strengthening the Mexican Observatory on Drugs of the National Commission against Addictions (CONADIC), Online Training Seminar on Drug Information Networks (DIN)

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.

El Salvador has carried out and published the following demand reduction studies:

Demand reduction			
Studies	Studies carried out and published		Year of most recent study
	Yes	No	
Survey of secondary school students	X		2018–2019
National household surveys (12–64 years)		X	
Cross-section survey of patients in treatment centers		X	
Survey of patients in emergency rooms		X	
Survey of university students		X	
Survey of incarcerated individuals		X	
Studies on drug-related mortality	X		2020–2021
Studies on drug-related morbidity		X	
Survey of other target populations		X	

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.

El Salvador has a national system for the collection of data on the number of patients treated, diagnoses, clinical history, and available information on treatment outcomes.

The national system on treatment data includes the following modalities and interventions:

Modalities and interventions	Yes	No
Community-based service	X	
Screening, Brief Interventions, and Referral to Treatment	X	
Medication-Assisted Treatment	X	

Short-Term In-Patient or Residential Treatment	X	
Outpatient Treatment	X	
Long-term Residential Treatment	X	
Recovery Management		X

Information on patients treated is collected from the following institutions:

Institution	Yes	No
Public health system	X	
Private institutions	X	
Non-governmental organizations	X	
Religious institutions	X	

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.

El Salvador has not carried out studies to evaluate treatment and prevention programs and/or interventions.

The country has not carried out any process or intermediate outcome evaluations of prevention or treatment programs.

El Salvador has not conducted any evaluations of prevention or treatment programs.

The country has the following mechanisms to continually monitor and evaluate the results of programs and services in the public health care and/or social protection network:

Programs/ Services	Mechanisms to continually monitor and evaluate the results		Name of the mechanisms
	Yes	No	
Care	X		An annual program of visits to health units and hospitals is carried out in which a general mental health instrument is applied to evaluate the care program provided
Treatment	X		
Rehabilitation		X	
Recovery and social integration		X	

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.

El Salvador has mechanisms to collect and analyze information related to the illicit supply of drugs. The following institutions participate in these mechanisms:

- Ministry of Justice and Public Security, through the National Civil Police and its Antinarcotics Division and Forensic Analysis Division
- Office of the Attorney General of the Republic, through the National Directorate of Medicines’ Narcotics Unit
- Ministry of Defense, through the Directorate of Defense Policy
- Supreme Court of Justice, through its Criminal Division
- Office of the Attorney General of the Republic, through its Department of Statistics (DATI)

The country has the following information related to supply reduction, trafficking, and related crimes:

Supply reduction, trafficking, and related crimes			
Information	Available information		Year of most recent information
	Yes	No	
Quantification of illicit crop cultivation including crops grown indoors		X	
Number of seizures of illicit drugs and raw materials for their production	X		2022
Quantities of illicit drugs and raw materials for their production seized	X		2022
Number of seizures of controlled chemical substances (precursors)	X		2022
Quantities of seized controlled chemical substances (precursors)	X		2022
Number of seizures of pharmaceutical products	X		2022
Quantities of seized pharmaceutical products	X		2022
Number of persons formally charged with drug use, possession, and trafficking	X		2022
Number of persons convicted of drug use, possession, and trafficking	X		2022
Number of laboratories producing illicit plant-based		X	

Supply reduction, trafficking, and related crimes			
Information	Available information		Year of most recent information
	Yes	No	
drugs detected and dismantled			
Number of laboratories producing illicit drugs of synthetic origin detected and dismantled		X	
Chemical composition of seized drugs	X		2022
Sale price of drugs (for consumers)	X		2022
Number of persons formally charged with money laundering	X		2022
Number of persons convicted of money laundering	X		2022
Number of persons formally charged with trafficking in firearms, explosives, ammunition, and related materials	X		2022
Number of persons convicted of trafficking in firearms, explosives, ammunition, and related materials	X		2022
Number of persons formally charged with diversion of chemical substances	X		2022
Number of persons convicted of diversion of chemical substances	X		2022

El Salvador carries out the following periodic studies and research on the drug market for illicit drugs:

Type of Study	Title of report	Year of publication of research findings
Drugs and organized crime	<i>Impacto de la COVID19 en el Crimen Organizado</i> (Impact of COVID-19 on Organized Crime)	2020
Drugs and organized crime	<i>Desempleo economía informal y crimen organizado una aproximación desde el análisis sistémico El Salvador</i> (Unemployment, the informal economy and organized crime: A systemic analysis approach El Salvador)	2020
Drugs	<i>Informe nacional sobre la situación de las drogas en El Salvador</i> (National report on the drug situation in El Salvador)	2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022

The country does not carry out studies on medical, scientific, and other legal uses of narcotics or psychotropic substances subject to the international control system.

Priority Action 3.2: Conduct studies on the price, purity or concentration, and chemical profile of drugs.

El Salvador collects information on drug prices, purity or concentration, and chemical profile of drugs, through the following publication:

Type of Study	Title of report/publication	Year of report/ publication
Annual report	<i>El Salvador informe nacional 2022 sobre la situación de las drogas</i> (El Salvador 2022 national report on the drug situation)	2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022

The country conducts chemical characterization and tests of purity for substances that may or may not be subject to international control. The country also has mechanisms through which substances that have been identified as not subject to international control can be placed under control. In this regard, the National Directorate of Medicines (DNM) is the entity responsible for controlling and monitoring all controlled substances and those that are not subject to international control when it is decided on the basis of an evaluation to include them in the lists of medicines and controlled substances issued annually and published by this entity on the website of the DNM.

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.

In El Salvador, the Forensic Subdirectorate of the National Civil Police, specifically the Forensic Analysis Division through the Controlled Substances Laboratory, is responsible for the chemical analysis of substances, precursors, and pharmaceutical products, including NPSs, as well as being part of the early warning system (EWS) and the national drug information network (DIN).

The country implements and participates in the following periodic training programs for personnel involved in the analysis of chemical substances, precursors, and pharmaceutical products, including new psychoactive substances:

Implements or participates in the program	Type of Training	Targeted institutions	Year when training was last done
Implements and participates	Personal Protection for Synthetic Opioids	Controlled Substances Laboratory of the Forensic Analysis Division of the Forensic Subdirectorate of the National Civil Police	2022
Implements and participates	Use of portable RAMAN equipment and colorimetric tests for substances and chemical	Controlled Substances Laboratory of the Forensic Analysis Division of the Forensic Subdirectorate of the	2022

	precursors	National Civil Police	
Implements and participates	Legislation and regulation of chemical substances	Controlled Substances Laboratory of the Forensic Analysis Division of the Forensic Subdirectorate of the National Civil Police	2022
Participates	Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)- International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) safety training for Latin American and Caribbean member countries	Controlled Substances Laboratory of the Forensic Analysis Division of the Forensic Subdirectorate of the National Civil Police	2022

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.

El Salvador’s DIN relies on standardized indicators for the collection of data on drug supply.

The country implements and participates in training activities for DIN stakeholders to improve and strengthen the mechanisms that are needed for the collection and exchange of information on drug supply.

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.

For the eighth round of evaluation of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), El Salvador compiled information on the implementation of the Hemispheric Plan of Action on Drugs 2021-2025 and submitted it in a timely manner for evaluation by the Governmental Expert Group (GEG) in the following thematic areas:

- Measures of Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Support (2021)
- Measures to Control and Counter the Illicit Cultivation, Production, Trafficking, and Distribution of Drugs, and to Address their Causes and Consequences (2022)
- Institutional Strengthening; Research, Information, Monitoring and Evaluation; and International Cooperation (2023)

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

For the eighth MEM evaluation round, El Salvador designated delegates for the following MEM groups and actively participated in and contributed to the evaluation process:

Thematic Evaluation	National Coordinating Entities (NCEs)	Governmental Expert Group (GEG)
Measures of Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Support (2021)	Yes	Yes
Measures to Control and Counter the Illicit Cultivation, Production, Trafficking, and Distribution of Drugs, and to Address their Causes and Consequences (2022)	Yes	Yes
Institutional Strengthening; Research, Information, Monitoring and Evaluation; and International Cooperation (2023)	Yes	Yes

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

El Salvador did not carry out periodic activities to promote and/or raise awareness of the MEM Evaluation Reports on Drug Policies aimed at national institutions.

Priority Action 4.4: Promote use of the MEM’s findings to identify technical assistance needs.

El Salvador has promoted the analysis of the findings of MEM Evaluation Reports on Drug Policies for national institutions to identify areas where technical assistance is needed to improve national drug-related policies and programs. In that regard, the MEM report "Evaluation Report on Drug Policies: Measures of Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Support, 2021" was used as a bibliographic reference source in meetings with the Ministry of Health and other institutions.

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

El Salvador has not reviewed MEM Evaluation Reports on Drug Policies, nor identified opportunities to increase cooperation and partnerships with other member states or share best practices and lessons learned (horizontal cooperation).

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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.

El Salvador develops and implements a plan for the promotion and strengthening of 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. In that regard, the country carried out the following activities:

- Participation in the European Union-financed Cooperation Program between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union on drug policies (COPOLAD) III in the areas of drug observatories, demand reduction, supply reduction, sustainable development, rights and gender, and support for biregional cooperation on drugs
- The country is a beneficiary of cooperation from the Colombo Plan through the Drug Advisory Programme (DAP), which receives funding from the United States Bureau of International Narcotics Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). In this area, support is provided for prevention and treatment training programs, as well as for training of trainers for those programs
- The Financial Investigation Unit (FIU) is part of the network of cooperation entities, where intelligence information is shared among the FIUs of the different states
- In October 2022, at the request of the Inter-American Observatory on Drugs (OID), the Salvadoran Observatory on Drugs (OSD) of the National Anti-Drug Commission (CNA) participated in the Seminar on Early Warning Systems in Response to Opioids and New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) in Latin America in which El Salvador's experience was presented in the panel discussion: The importance of forensic laboratories in drug testing and EWS reporting

The country has established secure communication channels for the exchange of intelligence information on drug interdiction and control by means of:

- Airport Communication Programme (AIRCOP) operates through operational units at airports located in countries of origin, transit or destination. The units are connected to each other via a secure communication network (CENComm) provided and managed by the World Customs Organization (WCO), allowing them to share sensitive information with their international counterparts in real time. They also have direct access to the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) tools and databases through the I-24/7 system.
- Container Control Programme (CCP): the exchange of secure information between Container Control Units (UCC) and other authorized teams profiling high-risk containers is facilitated

through the "ContainerComm" application. This communication tool, which is a user-friendly, multifunctional web-based software, facilitates the encrypted exchange of confidential information between authorized users in participating countries, including alerts of possible high-risk container shipments. The tool also enables container numbers to be verified. This web-based system undergoes continual enhancements to meet the changing needs of users. Development of links to commercial databases and other relevant applications. Practical training exercises in online container tracking and search tools are organized by the WCO for personnel selected by the CCP. Newsletters containing useful information about seized containers and trends from both official and open sources are now included in the database.

- To profile high-risk containers the interagency units also have access to a container search and trace system. That system enables users to search and track containers with specific destinations, in addition to providing detailed information on cargo type, routing, payment methods, and other information needed to elaborate and identify high-risk containers.
- As regards exchanging information, the FIU has a number of information exchange channels, including the Consultation and Registration System Tool (SICORE Network) and the Asset Recovery Network (RRAG) of the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America (GAFILAT). In addition, since 2003, El Salvador's FIU has been a member of the EGMONT Group of Financial Intelligence Units, an intelligence exchange network with more than 160 member countries. All have mechanisms guaranteeing the security and confidentiality of information.

El Salvador promotes the exchange, with member states and with states outside of the Western Hemisphere, and with relevant international and regional organizations, of best practices on training, specialization, and professional development of the staff responsible for implementing the national drug policies and strategies. In this regard, the country carries out the following activities:

- Active participation in COPOLAD III together with the European Union and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). The country participates in working groups in components 1, 2 and 3 (Strengthening national drug observatories; Enhancing policies on drug use; Drug supply control policies based on human rights, gender equity, social inclusion, sustainable development, and human safety)
- Participation in the DAP promoted by the Colombo Plan. A group of professionals was trained as trainers in the application of the Universal Treatment Curriculum (UTC) in 2021. This is being replicated in the period October 2022–June 2023, with technical support from the Colombo Plan. The Colombo Plan is currently offering a virtual course for coordinators in the Universal Prevention Curriculum
- The OSD was invited by the UNODC Global SMART (Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends) Programme to participate in the Guatemala EWS (SIALERT) Workshop held on February 20 and 21, 2023, to present El Salvador's experience with the implementation of its EWS as part of the collaboration and exchange of experience and good practice in bilateral cooperation with the Executive Secretariat of the Commission against Addictions and Illicit Drug Trafficking (SECCATID) of Guatemala
- The CNA's OSD was invited by the OID to provide a virtual presentation of the experience of

El Salvador in implementing its EWS at the Subregional Seminar on Early Warning Systems held in Trinidad and Tobago on December 7 and 8, 2022. It highlighted the identification and detection of new psychoactive substances and synthetic drugs in the country

- With support from the UNODC Global SMART Programme, the Training Workshop on the Role of Forensic Laboratories in Early Warning Systems in the Region: Guatemala, Honduras, Dominican Republic and El Salvador, was held on November 8 and 9, 2022, at the Forensic Investigation Center in Nuevo Cuscatlán, El Salvador, at which the Controlled Substances Laboratory of the Forensic Analysis Division of the National Civil Police presented its experience and highlighted the importance of laboratories in providing scientific evidence on NPSs and synthetic drugs for the EWS
- On November 9, 2022, in response to an invitation from the OID, the Executive Director of the CNA presented the experience and best practices of the EWS of El Salvador to the member states that participated in the virtual panel at the seventy-second regular session of CICAD
- On October 7, 2022, at the invitation of the Regional Technical Mechanism for Demand Reduction, in which Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Panama participate, the OSD presented El Salvador's experience with the implementation of the EWS
- On October 5 and 6, 2022, at the request of the OID, the CAN's OSD participated in the Seminar on Early Warning Systems in Response to Opioids and New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) in Latin America in which the experience of El Salvador was presented in the Panel Discussion: The importance of forensic laboratories in drug testing and EWS reporting
- On January 19, 2022, at the request of the OID, the OSD presented El Salvador's experience with information networks for drug monitoring at the virtual meeting "Project for Strengthening the Mexican Observatory on Drugs of the National Commission against Addictions (CONADIC) – Online Training Seminar on Drug Information Networks (DIN)
- On November 10, 2021, the OSD participated in the virtual roundtable "The latest information on the opioid crisis and new responses," which was convened by the OID. The meeting enabled the presentation of a series of data on opioid use, seizures, trafficking in precursor chemicals, the UNODC toolkit, EWS, and other developments in the countries of the Americas. The meeting was attended by representatives of the National Civil Police, the National Directorate of Medicines, the Ministry of Health, and the Solidarity Fund for Health (FOSALUD) who are involved in the implementation of the EWS
- Participation of all members of the Acajutla Container Control Unit (UCC) in a virtual training on intellectual property and counterfeit recognition techniques organized by the firm MORAN IP of Panama and held on September 17, 21 and 22, 2021
- Participation of members of the Acajutla UCC in the webinar on the use of the new publicly accessible mobile application "ID-Art" (which helps to identify stolen cultural property to reduce illicit trafficking and increase the chances of recovering such objects), held on October 21, 2021
- Participation of a nine-person Salvadoran delegation representing the National Directorate of Medicines, National Civil Police, Ministry of Defense, Office of the Attorney General, UNODC, and Office of the Executive Director of the CNA in the Third Socialization Meeting of the Subregional Strategy Document and the Mechanism to Follow-up on the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) Project to improve the interdiction of

drug trafficking and chemical precursors, held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, in October 2021

- Participation by a five-person delegation representing the National Directorate of Medicines and the Office of the Executive Director of the CNA in a virtual meeting of the CICAD Group of Experts on Chemical Substances and Pharmaceutical Products held on October 14 and 15, 2021. During that meeting, El Salvador moderated the Panel "Increased yield of precursor chemicals and the use of new essential substances in the illicit manufacture of drugs of natural and synthetic origin"
- In April 2021, El Salvador participated in the virtual meeting convened by the OID as part of the program of training events on emerging drugs and EWS to train teams of professionals from national drug observatories in the methodologies needed to detect emerging drugs, as well as to provide tools to support the creation of EWS in the countries of the region
- From February 14 to 17, 2023, in line with the initiative to assist Central American countries with capacity building and awareness raising, with a view to ensuring adequate availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) Learning, in collaboration with the Government of El Salvador and CICAD, held a technical seminar in San Salvador for the competent national authorities of Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama. The regional technical training seminar was designed for officials at competent national authorities with direct responsibility for control of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, and precursor chemicals, as well as for the preparation and submission of estimates and statistical reports to the INCB
- Trainings have been held with other FIUs and the Department of Justice of the United States, in which the experiences of El Salvador's FIU in different areas were presented to international organizations such as GAFILAT and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- Also, as part of the collaboration and exchange of experiences and best practices, within the bilateral cooperation with SECCATID of Guatemala, the OSD presented the experience of El Salvador in the process, as well as the instruments used and mechanisms established for the implementation of the EWS. El Salvador has also shared its experience with other countries in the region such as Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama and the Dominican Republic

El Salvador participates in regional coordination activities to prevent crimes related to drug trafficking, such as firearms trafficking, extortion, kidnapping, money laundering, and corruption, among others. Lastly, since 2017, El Salvador has implemented the CCP, under which the Acajutla UCC operates at the Port of Acajutla facilities, an interagency operational group that profiles containers to prevent their use for different types of illicit activities, including drugs, chemical precursors, weapons, money, counterfeit brands, endangered species, organized crime, and other black-market activities.

The country also participates in meetings of the Commission of Chiefs of Police of Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean. It also takes part in border control exercises with GAFILAT in conjunction with the Customs Authority, and in regional GAFILAT meetings. It also participates in the Orion Naval Campaign coordinated by the Colombian Navy, and regional meetings of the Chief Prosecutors of the region.

In El Salvador there are bilateral mechanisms for coordination and collaboration with other countries focused on the dismantling of criminal groups linked to drug trafficking and related crimes, including the United States, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Honduras. These mechanisms are used on a daily basis.

Priority Action 1.2: Promote technology transfers and information sharing among and between member states and international organizations.

El Salvador has not promoted technology transfers among and between OAS member states and international (including regional) organizations.

The country has promoted information sharing among and between OAS member states and international (including regional) organizations. In that connection, the FIU exchanges information with the GAFILAT Secretariat in accordance with its obligations as a member of that group.

As part of the Early Warning Advisory on new psychoactive substances and synthetic drugs, regular communication is maintained with the UNODC Global SMART Programme and the Early Warning System of the Americas (SATA) of the OEA, with which information containing scientific evidence on NPS identified in the country is shared. Information has also been exchanged with other countries—including Guatemala, Costa Rica, Honduras and Panama—on NPS and synthetic drugs identified in El Salvador.

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

El Salvador promotes the dissemination of good practices and the exchange of successful research experiences among and between member states and international organizations on drug policies. In that regard, in conjunction with Guatemala it has carried out simultaneous operations against drug trafficking structures operating in Guatemala and El Salvador. There is also coordination with Colombia.

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.**

The competent authorities of El Salvador carry out the following cooperation activities at the regional and international level to investigate and prosecute criminals for drug-related offenses:

- The Supreme Court of Justice as a whole carries out activities both when requesting judicial cooperation from abroad in order to gather documentation for the investigation or prosecution of criminal activities, including drug trafficking, and when receiving requests for judicial assistance from abroad. This also applies to extradition proceedings
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador is involved in processing requests for and providing legal assistance in criminal matters, as both a requesting and requested State. Legal assistance includes activities such as requesting or sending files, support in investigations, collaboration in video conferences, and interviews in relation to crimes under investigation
- El Salvador's Financial Investigation Unit (FIU) actively participates in the Orion naval campaign coordinated by the Colombian Navy; and twice a year in intensified cross-border cash transport monitoring exercises coordinated by the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America (GAFILAT) Secretariat
- The Specialized Unit for Drug Trafficking Crimes of the Office of the Attorney General takes in simultaneous operations, scheduled operations between several countries, and extraditions

The country takes human rights into account when carrying out these activities. In this regard, the Supreme Court of Justice and the judiciary applies all international human rights instruments, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the American Convention on Human Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, when processing of requests for judicial assistance and extradition. It also apply domestic rules guaranteeing due process, with a focus on protection of victims and the rights of those under prosecution or investigation.

Due process, as established in the Anti-Money Laundering Law, is observed, for which existing legal mechanisms are utilized and the due process rights of those under investigation are respected.

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.

El Salvador carries out activities to 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. In this regard, the FIU provides mutual assistance between jurisdictions. The country has also designated a central authority to forward requests for mutual assistance in criminal matters with the authority to communicate directly with other central authorities, reducing the time and resources required for the transfer of documents.

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.

El Salvador has adopted, during the evaluation period (2019-2023), the following legislation and administrative measures and actions to improve implementation of obligations set forth in international legal instruments related to the world drug problem, respecting human rights, and gender equality:

	Enacted	Adopted	Name of the legislation / administrative measures or actions
Legislative Actions/ Measures		X	Amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure
		X	Amendments to the Law Regulating Drug-Related Activities
		X	Amendments to the Law against Organized Crime
		X	Amendments to the Special Law for Intervention in Telecommunications
		X	Amendments to the Telecommunications Law
		X	Amendments to the Criminal Code
		X	Amendments to the Criminal Law on Juveniles
		X	The Growing Together Law for the Comprehensive Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescent Protection
Administrative Actions/ Measures		X	Designation of the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic as the central authority for international legal assistance in criminal matters under the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances

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

El Salvador has ratified or acceded to the following international legal instruments:

Conventions and Protocols		Yes	No
United Nations Conventions	Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children	X	
	Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000		
	Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air	X	
	Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition	X	
	Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961	X	
	Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971	X	
	Convention against Corruption, 2003	X	
Inter-American Conventions	Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and other Related Materials (CIFTA), 1997	X	
	Convention against Corruption, 1996	X	
	Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, 1992	X	

EVALUATIVE SUMMARY

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

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.

CICAD notes that El Salvador has a national drug authority, which has a legal basis. Moreover, CICAD observes that, in the country, there is an annual budget for the national drug authority, which is integrated with the budget of another institution. Moreover, CICAD notes that El Salvador has an ongoing coordination and collaboration mechanism among agencies and other levels of government to formulate, implement, monitor, evaluate, and update national drug policies and/or strategies and that the country's national drug authority coordinates the areas of demand reduction, supply reduction, control measures, drug observatory and international cooperation, but it does not coordinate the area of program evaluation.

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, cultural context, and socially inclusive development.

CICAD notes that El Salvador collects and uses evidence as a basis for formulating and updating national drug policies and/or strategies. Additionally, CICAD observes the involvement of relevant actors from the priority areas in the development, implementation, evaluation and updating of national drug policies and/or strategies, except for the country's regional and/or local governments. CICAD notes that El Salvador has not partially or fully delegated responsibilities on drug issues to subnational/local governments to implement concrete actions related to drug policies and strategies, and the national drug authority does not have in its central structure, an office or operational unit to promote, coordinate, train, and provide technical support on drug-related issues to subnational/local governments or agencies. Moreover, the national drug authority does not have coordinators, offices, or representatives in the sub-national or local territories, as part of a decentralized operational and coordination structure at the local level to respond to the drug problem. Additionally, El Salvador does not have a specific and ongoing mechanism or program to transfer funds or finance drug initiatives or projects implemented by sub-national/local governments. CICAD observes that the country engages private sector entities to develop innovative approaches in the implementation of drug policies and exchange information and best practices. CICAD notes that El Salvador takes into account the OAS 2020 Hemispheric Drug Strategy and its corresponding Plan of Action to formulate or update national drug policies and strategies. Moreover, these policies and strategies take into account the UN

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. CICAD observes that the country's national drug policies and strategies take into account the human rights approach and the gender perspective but not the social inclusion approach. Additionally, CICAD notes that El Salvador does not have the necessary resources to implement drug policies and programs.

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.

CICAD notes with satisfaction that El Salvador has interagency and multisectoral policy and technical coordination mechanisms to address the drug problem through a comprehensive, balanced, and multidisciplinary approach, including its causes and consequences. Moreover, CICAD observes that the country has concrete multisectoral plans and programs to address the causes and socioeconomic consequences of the drug problem. On the other hand, CICAD notes that El Salvador participates in international cooperation programs at the bilateral and multilateral levels to strengthen policies, programs, institutions and their internal processes. Additionally, CICAD observes that the country promotes comprehensive and cross-cutting public policies to reduce and prevent crime, violence, social exclusion, and corruption. Also, CICAD notes that El Salvador implements measures that promote equal access to justice and due process, taking into account gender, age, community, and cultural context approaches. Moreover, CICAD observes that El Salvador implements measures that foster citizen participation in crime prevention, build community cohesion, increase public safety, and emphasize social inclusion.

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.

CICAD notes that El Salvador's law provides for alternative measures to incarceration for minor or non-violent drug-related offenses, which respect human rights and take into account the gender perspective in accordance with relevant international instruments. Moreover, CICAD observes that the country develops mechanisms to monitor and evaluate these measures, but these mechanisms do not involve academic and research institutions or civil society. Additionally, CICAD notes that El Salvador does not promote a common understanding of national legal norms, regulations, or internal procedures for the implementation of the aforementioned measures.

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.

CICAD notes with satisfaction that El Salvador has 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. Moreover, CICAD observes that the country disseminates best practices and lessons learned to improve institutional responses to the needs of at-risk populations.

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.

CICAD observes that El Salvador promotes legislation that provides for proportional legal sentencing for minor drug-related offenses in accordance with domestic law but does not have special courts for these offenses. Moreover, CICAD notes that the country does not promote legal reforms regarding proportional sentencing for minor drug-related offenses.

RESEARCH, INFORMATION, MONITORING, AND EVALUATION**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.

CICAD notes that El Salvador has a National Drug Observatory (NDO), which has been assigned financial and human resources to carry out its functions. Moreover, CICAD observes that the country has established and maintained working relationships with academic and research institutions but has not carried out studies on the drug problem through them. On the other hand, CICAD notes that El Salvador has developed and adopted quantitative and qualitative methodologies and information-gathering mechanisms that allow for the comparison of data among countries, has carried out studies on drug use applying the SIDUC methodology and has used the CICAD standard indicators for drug information networks for the collection, analysis, and reporting of national drug related data and information. However, the country has not carried out studies using methods that are non-representative of the population to obtain information on drugs that can be shared with other countries that have carried out studies with similar methodologies. Nevertheless, CICAD notes that El Salvador's observatory has a national

drug information network (DIN), which interacts through meetings and document exchange, and publishes a periodic report. Also, the country has an early warning system (EWS) to identify NPS or other emerging drug-related threats, which shares information, alerts, and reports with the Early Warning System of the Americas (SATA) and has a mechanism to share information in real-time. Additionally, CICAD notes that the country's observatory carries out training sessions with local stakeholders to enhance data collection and management, as well as meetings and other workshops where the results of studies and other information gathering activities are shared with local stakeholders. Nevertheless, CICAD observes that El Salvador has not established forums that allow drug researchers to present their findings to policymakers. However, CICAD notes that the country's observatory promotes and disseminates best practices or the exchange of successful experiences in research among member states.

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.

CICAD notes that El Salvador has carried out and published two demand reduction studies during the evaluation period (2019-2023). Additionally, CICAD observes that the country has a national system for the collection of data on the number of patients treated, diagnoses, clinical history, and available information on treatment outcomes. However, CICAD notes that El Salvador has not carried out studies to evaluate treatment and prevention programs or interventions, nor process or intermediate outcome evaluations or impact evaluations of these programs. On the other hand, the country has a mechanism to continually monitor and evaluate the results of care and treatment in the public health and/or social protection network, but not of rehabilitation or recovery and social integration programs and services.

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.

CICAD notes that El Salvador has mechanisms to collect and analyze information related to the illicit supply of drugs and has information related to supply reduction, trafficking, and related crimes. Moreover, the country carries out periodic studies or research on the drug market for illicit drugs but not on the medical and scientific uses or other legal use of narcotics or psychotropic substances, subject to the international control system. CICAD observes that El Salvador collects information on drug prices, purity or concentration and chemical profile of these substances. Also, the country conducts chemical characterization and tests of purity for substances that may or may not be subject to international control. CICAD notes that El Salvador has an agency that is responsible for analyzing chemical substances, precursors, and

pharmaceutical products, including new psychoactive substances, and is part of the early warning system (EWS) and the national drug information network (DIN). Additionally, the country participates in periodic training programs for personnel involved in the analysis of these substances. CICAD observes that El Salvador's DIN relies on standardized indicators for the collection of data on drug supply and that the country implements and participates in training activities for DIN stakeholders to improve and strengthen the mechanisms that are needed for the collection and exchange of information on drug supply.

Objective 4

Participate in and strengthen the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) process, considering its recommendations.

CICAD notes that, for the eighth round of evaluation of the MEM, El Salvador collected information on the implementation of the Hemispheric Plan of Action on Drugs 2021-2025 and submitted it in a timely manner for evaluation by the Governmental Expert Group (GEG). CICAD observes that, for the eighth evaluation round of the MEM, the country designated delegates for all the MEM groups, actively participating and contributing to the evaluation process. However, CICAD notes that El Salvador did not carry out periodic activities to promote and raise awareness of the MEM Drug Policy Evaluation Reports aimed at national institutions. On the other hand, CICAD observes that the country has promoted the analysis of the findings of MEM Evaluation Reports on Drug Policies for national institutions to identify areas where technical assistance is needed to improve national drug-related policies and programs. Nevertheless, CICAD notes that El Salvador has not reviewed the MEM Evaluation Reports on Drug Policies nor identified opportunities to increase cooperation and partnerships with other member states or share best practices and lessons learned (horizontal cooperation).

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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.

CICAD notes that El Salvador develops and implements a plan for the promotion and strengthening of technical assistance and horizontal cooperation among member states and with states outside of the Western Hemisphere, and related initiatives and programs with relevant international regional organizations. Moreover, the country has established secure communication channels for the exchange of intelligence information on drug interdiction and control. Additionally, El Salvador promotes the exchange, with member states and with states outside of the Western Hemisphere, and with relevant international and regional organizations, of best practices on training, specialization, and professional development of the staff responsible for implementing the national drug policies and strategies. Also, the country

participates in regional coordination activities to prevent crimes related to drug trafficking, such as firearms trafficking, extortion, kidnapping, money laundering, and corruption, among others. Furthermore, El Salvador has bilateral mechanisms for coordination and collaboration with other countries, focused on the dismantling of criminal groups linked to drug trafficking and related crimes. However, CICAD observes that the country has not promoted technology transfers among and between OAS member states and international (including regional) organizations but has promoted information sharing among them. In addition, CICAD notes that El Salvador promotes the dissemination of good practices or the exchange of successful research experiences among and between member states and international 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.

CICAD notes with satisfaction that the competent authorities of El Salvador carry out cooperative activities at the regional and international levels to investigate and prosecute criminals for drug-related offenses. Moreover, CICAD observes that the country carries out activities to 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. Additionally, CICAD notes that El Salvador has adopted, during the evaluation period (2019-2023), legislative measures to improve the implementation of the obligations set forth within international legal instruments related to the world drug problem, respecting human rights and gender equality. Moreover, CICAD observes that the country has ratified or acceded to all of the international legal instruments of the United Nations and all of the OAS Inter-American legal instruments regarding the world drug problem and related crimes.



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