

REGIONAL ACTIONS FILE

Many of the problems that countries face are transnational in nature, as is the case with drugs trafficking and associated crimes. For this reason, programmes such as COPOLAD III use a regional approach that allows for common responses to shared problems and for connecting the institutions of the affected countries.

COPOLAD III regional actions are structured mainly through **joint work with supranational organisations and networks of public institutions and civil society**, which group together prosecutors' offices (AIAMP),

ministries of justice (COMJIB), public defenders' offices (AIDEF), financial intelligence units against money laundering (GAFILAT and GAFIC), security (CARICOM-IMPACS) or attention to vulnerable populations (RIOD, RAISSS).

The alliance with these entities offers multiple advantages: it generates greater action appropriation and sustainability; it enables scale economies, it allows greater capacity to influence the regional and international agenda; and, finally, the peer exchange is a stimulus for change.

COPOLAD works with these entities through support paths, with the aim of generating and implementing standards, recommendations or protocols aimed at improving aspects of common interest. In a second stage, the Programme supports their agreed implementation at the national level.

The topics covered include **non-custodial penalties, financial and asset investigations, improved care in communities with high social vulnerability and the use of special investigation techniques**.



REDUCING THE DEMAND FOR DRUGS

PROMOTION OF PROCESSES OF TERRITORIALISATION OF POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES IN VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

COPOLAD III promotes processes of territorialisation of policies, programmes and services in communities with high social vulnerability, which allow for effective and contextualised responses that can be scaled up in public policies.

- Training of 117 people from 17 LAC countries on the **Community Treatment Model under the ECO-2 methodology** directed by the American Network of Organisations for Intervention in Situations of Social Suffering (RAISSS) to both technical staff of public institutions and to civil society.
- **Guide to Good Practices and Intervention Models in Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union on addressing social vulnerabilities linked to drugs,**

in collaboration with the Ibero-American Network of NGOs Working on Drugs and Addictions (RIOD).

At the national level, this intervention strategy is implemented through support for 14 projects in 12 countries in the region.

INITIATIVE ON STIGMA AND DRUGS

Women who use drugs often face double stigmatisation resulting from the intersection between gender and consumption.

- **14 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean** have prepared a political positioning document **to address this phenomenon for the comprehensive care and treatment of women and other vulnerable groups who use drugs**.



THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS TRAFFICKING AND ORGANISED CRIME:

UNDERCOVER AGENTS IN THE ORGANISED AND TRANSNATIONAL DRUGS TRAFFICKING INVESTIGATIONS

Investigations with undercover agents are those in which certain public officials or natural persons infiltrate criminal organisations or illegal activities in order to gather evidence about crimes committed or to be committed and their perpetrators.

- **Protocol for action on special investigation techniques** of undercover agents in Latin America, in collaboration with the AIAMP Anti-Drug Prosecutors Network (RFAI). Aimed primarily at prosecutors and public ministry officials who are members of the AIAMP.

THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DRUGS TRAFFICKING AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

The global growth of drugs trafficking is associated with other criminal phenomena such as human trafficking, and thus feeds back into it.

- **Guidelines for jointly addressing situations in which women and LGBTIQ+ people who are victims of trafficking are involved in the production, transit or marketing of drugs**, in collaboration with three AIAMP networks: the Ibero-American Network of Specialised Prosecutors against Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (REDTRAM), the Ibero-American Network of Anti-Drug Prosecutors (RFAI) and the Specialised Network on Gender (REG). In 2025, it is planned to begin implementing these guidelines in specific interventions promoted by the public ministries of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay.

REDUCING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF DRUGS TRAFFICKING

Drugs trafficking has a serious environmental impact, as evidenced by the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest to grow coca leaves or build clandestine laboratories.

- We support the Ibero-American Network of Anti-Drug Prosecutors and the AIAMP Environmental Protection Network to more effectively combat the link between the two issues.

- A diagnosis of the situation is being carried out, identifying good practices and a technical document for the regional and national action of prosecutors investigating drug and environmental crimes to strengthen joint actions.

STRENGTHENING THE GAFILAT ASSET RECOVERY NETWORK (RRAG)

Asset recovery protects the integrity of financial systems and the economy as a whole by reducing the flow of illicit proceeds and by compensating victims of crime.

COPOLAD III has provided support to the GAFILAT Asset Recovery Network (RRAG), which allows member countries to exchange relevant information to facilitate the tracking and identification of assets of illicit origin abroad, as well as mutual legal assistance. The following progress has been made:

- **Platform for more efficient and secure exchange of information** between RRAG contact points at regional and international levels.
- **Good practice guide** which addresses a comparative analysis of the application of asset forfeiture and non-conviction-based confiscation in the region, as well as national policies implemented in this area in GAFILAT countries.
- **Regional guide to good practices on parallel financial investigations**, which seeks to improve the capacity of authorities in this type of investigation.

STRENGTHENING TECHNICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES ON INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Security cooperation is a fundamental key in a transnational phenomenon such as drugs trafficking.

In coordination with the **Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (GAFIC)**, the following has been carried out:

- **Training course** on new money laundering risks arising from the use of virtual assets, such as cryptocurrencies, aimed at technical staff of the financial intelligence units of the 15 Caribbean countries.

- **Technical guide** on financial investigations and analysis of emerging money laundering risks, dedicated to virtual assets.

COPOLAD is contributing to the development of joint actions aimed at strengthening institutional capacities in CARICOM member states with these actions:

- **Course on instruments to combat drug trafficking mafias**, which delves into the dynamics of the main criminal organisations active on the Caribbean-EU route and the strategies to combat drug trafficking, with particular emphasis on the confiscation of illicit capital.
- **Course on strategies for implementing drug legislation to include new psychoactive and synthetic substances.**

The article analyses the global spread of synthetic drugs, classification, detection and concealment techniques, the international legal framework and investigation techniques to combat drug trafficking.

- Based on the knowledge given, **two reference guides will be developed for Caribbean countries** in the first quarter of 2025.
- **Higher education course at the Distance University of Spain (UNED) specialising in the control and research of drug precursors** which will provide advanced training to agents dedicated to the fight against drug trafficking.



PROPORTIONALITY AND NON-CUSTODIAL PENALTIES

REGIONAL PROTOCOL FOR SPECIALISED DEFENCE FOR WOMEN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW FOR COMMITTING DRUG OFFENCES

In recent decades, there has been a sustained increase in the rate of incarceration of women, particularly in the area of minor drug-related crimes, with Latin America being the region with the highest number of people incarcerated in the world for this reason.

- Given this situation, and within the framework of collaboration between COPOLAD III and the Inter-American Association of Public Defenders (AIDEF), a **document has been drawn up of recommendations and practices for the public legal defence of women criminalised for minor drug offences, which promotes**

the gender perspective. These standards are already being applied in Paraguay.

REGIONAL AGREEMENT FOR A CRIMINAL DRUGS POLICY BASED ON PROPORTIONAL PUNISHMENT AND NON-CUSTODIAL PENALTIES.

- **Regional agreement for a criminal drugs policy based on proportionality and non-custodial penalties**, promoted jointly by COPOLAD III and the Conference of Ministers of Justice of Ibero-American States (COMJIB).

The aim is to incorporate these standards into the reforms of the criminal and prison systems of the countries in the region.

COPOLAD III is a consortium consisting of:

Collaborating partners:

