



THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUG TRAFFICKING/ORGANISED CRIME:

Strengthening police investigation systems, financial investigation into money laundering and social reuse of confiscated assets

COPOLAD's actions to reduce the supply of drugs support public policies that offer comprehensive solutions through the combination of public security initiatives, police investigation and the fight against illicit capital and its laundering. The fight against organised crime that supports large-scale drug production and trafficking requires efforts to be directed to investigating its financial

network, through international cooperation mechanisms between justice and security institutions. This is about preventing illegal profits from returning to the drug supply chain and enabling corruption, human trafficking or terrorism. The effectiveness of drug trafficking policies should not be measured solely by drug seizures or the number of arrests, but by the State's ability to cut off the economic flow of drug traf-

ficking and find a way to reuse the confiscated assets for the good of society.

2 implementing PARTNERS: IILA
(Italian Latin American Organization)
FIIAPP
(International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies)



WHAT STRATEGY DO WE FOLLOW

SUPPORT TO REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND NETWORKS

- ▶ Actions are implemented jointly with:
 - the Ibero-American Association of Public Prosecutors (AIAMP), the Network of Anti-Drug Prosecutors (RFAI), Specialised Network on Gender (REG) and Network of Specialised Prosecutors against Human Trafficking and

- Migrant Smuggling (REDTRAM).
- the Latin American Financial Action Task Force (GAFILAT): the Asset Recovery Network (RRAG) (*MoU signed in January 2023*).
- the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF). (*MoU signed in September 2023*).
- Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (CARICOM-IMPACS) (*MoU, January 2024*).

NATIONAL APPROACH

- ▶ Eight national actions have been promoted (six countries), in particular, regarding money laundering and the social reuse of confiscated assets.

BI-REGIONAL APPROACH

- ▶ Committed to strengthening EU-LAC cooperation ties in the fight against drug trafficking.



IN WHICH AREAS DO WE WORK



STRENGTHENING POLICE AND PROSECUTOR INVESTIGATION SYSTEMS WITH AN INTERNATIONAL AND GENDER PERSPECTIVE

At the **REGIONAL** level, the programme has achieved several advances, through support to the AIAMP and a working group of National Police:

- ▶ Support is given to AIAMP Network of Anti-Drug Prosecutors (RFAI) in

preparing a Protocol for Undercover Agents in international investigations into drug trafficking, in order to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of police and anti-drug prosecutors. Undercover agents are key to reaching the upper links of the drug trafficking chain. The programme has financed a regulatory diagnosis on undercover agents, at the level of international law and national regulations (in 19 LAC countries and 4 in the EU). The diagnosis has allowed the prepara-

tion of the technical document of the protocol, aimed at overcoming legal barriers and addressing operational needs. Its validation and final approval is expected in the period 2024-25.

- ▶ Contributions have been made to strengthening the capacities of public ministries to incorporate the gender approach in the comprehensive approach to drug trafficking investigations with women victims of trafficking. The three



ALIGNED with REGIONAL and GLOBAL POLICIES on precursors

Hemispheric Plan of Action on Drugs 2021-2025, OAS/CICAD.

Pillar 3 Measures to control and counter the illicit cultivation, production, trafficking and distribution of drugs and to address their causes and consequences; Objective 6: "Strengthen or develop specific operational and intelligence gathering and sharing mechanisms to detect methods used by criminal organisations, including the exploitation of land, riverine, maritime, and aerial routes."

EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025, European Council.

Strategic priority 1: "Disrupt and dismantle high-risk drug-related organised crime groups operating in, originating in or targeting the EU Member States; address links with other security threats and improve crime prevention."

40 Recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

International standards on combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism & proliferation (February 2012)

thematic networks of the AIAMP involved in the problem, those specialising in the fight against drugs (RFAI), gender problems (REG) and human trafficking (REDTRAM) have worked together for the first time:

- A first regional work meeting was supported in Buenos Aires (December 2023) to draw up a roadmap.

- The programme carried out a diagnosis of the problem of discrimination suffered by vulnerable women involved in drug trafficking who are conditioned or subjected to trafficking circuits.

As a result, an internetwork

- technical working group has been created, in charge of preparing the *Regional Guidelines to incorporating the gender approach in the link between human trafficking and drug trafficking*, with technical support from COPOLAD III).

- The roadmap includes pilot projects in Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay, countries in which training of civil servants in the prosecutors' offices is planned.

- ▶ Apart from this, a Working Group of Anti-Drug Units of the National Police of LAC countries has been created. The need was identified

for training in special investigation techniques, with three axes: controlled deliveries, undercover agents and new technologies. To this end, training has been carried out in Rome, given by experts from the Central Directorate for Anti-Drug Services of the Italian Ministry of the Interior, and in which police representatives from 11 LAC countries participated.

At the **BI-REGIONAL** level, COPOLAD III also contributes to strengthening links between LAC prosecutors' offices and European security agendas, in terms of inter-institutional cooperation, information exchange and best drug interdiction practices. For example, the programme has organised working days on "Transnational investigations into drug trafficking: alliances between Ibero-American and European Anti-Drug Prosecutors" (Valencia, December 2023).



STRENGTHENING COOPERATION FOR THE EXCHANGE OF FINANCIAL AND ASSET INFORMATION LINKED TO MONEY LAUNDERING CRIMES

At the **Latin American REGIONAL** level, the strengthening is aimed at the GAFILAT Asset Recovery Network (RRAG):

- ▶ It has contributed to enhancing the RRAG information exchange platform, hosted in Costa Rica, through two actions:

- The technical features of the platform have been improved, in particular operational and computer security aspects;
- The RREG contact points (18 countries) have been supported to improve their technical skills for the management and use of the platform, through training in multimedia tools (user manuals and video tutorials).

- ▶ Technical support has been provided in the preparation of two regional good practice guides on: i) development of financial investigations parallel to criminal investigations (approved in December 2023); and ii) forfeiture of ownership, that is, confiscation not based on conviction and return (approved in January 2024). Both guides constitute fundamental tools for the fight against drug trafficking, since they consolidate money laundering as an "autonomous" crime, that is, not necessarily linked to a previous drug trafficking crime.

- ▶ In coordination with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (*INL*) Affairs Sections



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of the US Embassy in Colombia, COPOLAD III has supported the annual meeting of the RRAG (Cartagena de Indias, November 2023). The so-called Cartagena Declaration: “A call to strengthen commitment and asset recovery measures at the regional level”, approved by the GAFILAT plenary session (14 December 2023) constitutes a revitalisation of countries’ political and technical commitment in the fight against organised crime.

- ▶ The exchange and discussion on research practices has been key to reinforcing standards in the fight against drug trafficking. In particular, GAFILAT has approved modifications and updates to numbers 4, 31, 38 and 40 of its Recommendations. The changes are aimed at encouraging countries urgently to strengthen their legal framework for asset recovery and close legal loopholes that prevent effective and timely action throughout the confiscation cycle.

At the **Central American and Caribbean REGIONAL** level, COPOLAD III reinforces CFATF and CARICOM-IMPACS initiatives:

- ▶ It supports the CFATF in strengthening its technical and institutional capacities for information exchange:
 - A training course has been given on new money laundering risks arising from the use of virtual assets such as crypto-currencies, aimed at analysts and technical staff of the Financial Intelligence Units of the 15 beneficiary countries of COPOLAD III (of the total of 24 member countries of the organisation).
 - The development of a technical guide for the regulation of virtual assets and virtual asset service providers is planned.

- ▶ The support of COPOLAD III to CARICOM-IMPACS, provides for the carrying out of training, in person and virtual, on:

- Synthetic drugs, and online trading of psychoactive substances.
- *Modus operandi* of drug trafficking networks on the Caribbean-EU route.
- Asset prevention measures.

From a **NATIONAL** perspective, the programme seeks to improve the regulations, mechanisms and technical capacities of countries for investigating money laundering crimes and identifying and recovering assets from international drug trafficking. In particular, the contribution of programme has focused on three countries:

- ▶ CHILE: Within the framework of the National Policy against Organised Crime (2022), support is provided to the Financial Analysis Unit (UAF), the Internal Revenue Service (SII) and the Public Prosecutor’s Office in several actions: a) a comparative study on the registration of beneficial owners; and b) updating the Financial Investigations Guide, including the systematisation of good practices for information exchange.
- ▶ HONDURAS: Support to the National Directorate of Investigation and Intelligence in the structuring of the money laundering component of the National Anti-Drug Strategy. A recommendations document has been prepared.
- ▶ PERU: Through an agreement with the National Commission for Development and Life Without Drugs (DEVIDA), the program supports the Working Group No. 02 on Training of the Multisectoral Commission against Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism (CONTRALAFT) in developing training

tools for prepare expert evidence in processes involving the laundering of assets from drug trafficking.

Lastly, the programme has promoted the **BI-REGIONAL** EU-LAC exchange on methods of money laundering and practices to combat it, through the International Seminar “Follow the Money” (Santo Domingo, 2023). Through the final declaration of the Seminar, the signatory countries defined a regional roadmap to improve investigation strategies for crimes related to money laundering associated with drug trafficking, which has served to fuel debates within the framework of the Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs, EU-CELAC.



SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES FOR SEIZED ASSETS

COPOLAD III intervenes at the **NATIONAL** level, taking as reference various European experiences. COPOLAD accompanies three countries in updating their legal frameworks and procedures for better management of confiscated assets for the benefit of the community, with a view to compensating society for the damage caused by criminal activities.

- ▶ COLOMBIA: A regulatory reform of the social and community use of confiscated assets is accompanied within the framework of the new Drug Policy 2023-33, which prioritises the issue. The Ministry of Justice and Law (MJD) and the Special Assets Company (SAE) promote a technical table to discuss the reform, in which other public institutions participate. In addition, it is planned to activate a specific subsidy to promote the participation of civil society in the reform process.

▶ COSTA RICA: Support to the Costa Rican Drug Institute (ICD) in the project to reform the law on social use of confiscated assets. This action is carried out in collaboration with the Italian network Libera, an

association of social organisations against the mafia, corruption and other forms of illegality.

▶ URUGUAY: Technical assistance is provided to the National Drug

Board (JND) to strengthen procedures for managing the Confiscated Assets Fund. It is planned to generate a document of technical recommendations.

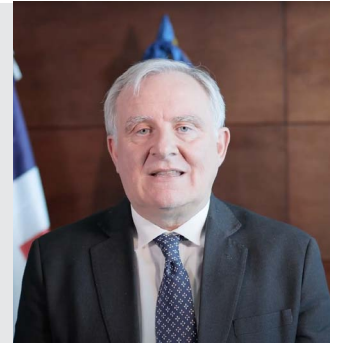


INTERVIEWS

[Follow the Money: money laundering and the fight against drug trafficking](#)

[Sergio Espinosa, Superintendent of the Peruvian FIU and National Coordinator](#)

[Interview with Antonino Maggiore, director of the Central Directorate of Anti-Drug Services of Italy](#)



PUBLICATIONS

[Good practice guide on parallel financial investigations](#) (only available in Spanish)

[Best practice guide on asset forfeiture and confiscation without conviction](#) (only available in Spanish)

[Joint declaration and final recommendations of the International Seminar "Follow the Money: new ways of combating drug trafficking and money laundering" \(Santo Domingo, 28 and 29 March 2023\)](#). (only available in Spanish)



MEETINGS

['Follow the money: new ways of combating drug trafficking and money laundering'](#).

[Prosecutors from Latin America and Europe promote the protection of women victims of human trafficking recruited by drug traffickers](#)

[Improving confiscation and social use of drug trafficking goods and assets](#)



COPOLAD III is a consortium formed by:



Collaborating partners:

