



COMPREHENSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT:

Breaking the dependency of drug economies

To address the causes leading to the illicit cultivation of plants for drug production we need to tackle the dependency generated by the drug economy in the region, by means of policies aimed at promoting new opportunities for legal and sustainable economic development. In line with the progress made in the regulatory framework in recent years, Alternative Development (AD) initia-

tives constitute a supply reduction strategy. The evolving interpretation of AD is also linked to a broader understanding of the illicit drug supply chain as a highly profitable global business model at the highest levels of criminal organisations involved in drug-related crimes. In this context, AD in rural and non-traditional environments becomes a sustainable and effective measure of a development-oriented drug policy to

address the socio-economic vulnerabilities of populations dependent on illicit drug-related activities and promote their transition to licit economies.

1 Implementing PARTNER: GIZ
(Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GmbH, the main German
development agency)



WHAT STRATEGY DO WE FOLLOW

REGIONAL SCHEME

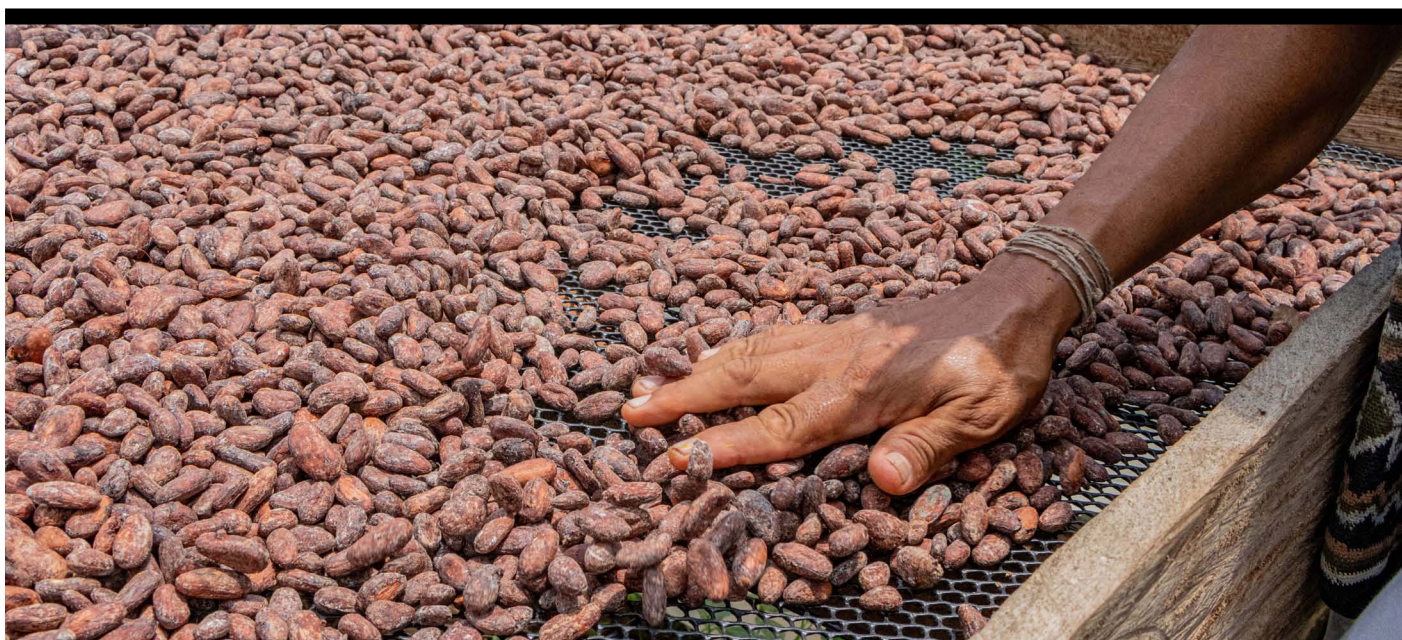
- ▶ A Working Group of 17 countries was formed to generate debate and reflection, through:
 - I. Webinar programmes with three basis themes: sustainability, the environment and gender and innovative approaches.
 - II. Regional forums to promote exchange of experiences.
 - III. Study visits.
 - IV. Online gender training.
 - V. Preparation of practical guides and studies.

INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION OF GIZ WITH CICAD

- ▶ GIZ participates as an observer in the annual meeting of the AD Expert Group (GEDAIS in the Spanish acronym) of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), which makes it possible to coordinate activities, create synergies and avoid duplication.



IN WHICH AREAS DO WE WORK



DISCUSSION AND EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND INNOVATION CHALLENGES IN AD

From a regional point of view, the COPOLAD III Working Group has progressed as follows:

- ▶ The environmental sustainability challenges have been discussed with representatives of LAC (Latin American and Caribbean) countries:
 - A programme of four webinars has been held on alternative development and a regional forum on drug policies and “green development” was held in Bogotá, in

July 2022. Between both events, a wide range of thematic contents have been addressed and good practices and lessons learnt have been shared regarding the environmental impacts of illicit crops, the problems in protected areas, the role of the private sector, access to land, and payment for environmental services..



ALIGNED with GLOBAL AND EUROPEAN POLICIES on Alternative Development

General Assembly resolution S-30-1 on drugs - UNGASS, 2016
“Our Joint Commitment to Effectively Addressing and Countering the World Drug Problem”

▶ Operational recommendations on Alternative Development:

7. We reiterate our commitment to addressing drug-related socio-economic issues related to the illicit cultivation of narcotic plants and the illicit manufacture and production of and trafficking in drugs through the implementation of long-term, comprehensive and sustainable development-oriented and balanced drug control policies and programmes, including alternative development and, as appropriate, preventive alternative development programmes, which are part of sustainable crop control strategies

Council Conclusions: “Towards a new understanding of alternative development and related development-centred drug policy interventions” - European Council, 2018

The EU defines Alternative Development as a holistic strategy that combines rural development measures, the fight against poverty, promotion of access to and ownership of land, environmental protection, the fight against climate change, promotion of the rule of law, security and good governance, in full compliance with international human rights obligations and a commitment to gender equality

▶ A further topic addressed by the Working Group was that of innovative AD approaches in non-traditional contexts:

- A second cycle of webinars on innovative approaches was begun: gender focus in AD projects, the integration of legal cannabis and industrial hemp value chains in the AD context and Alternative Development strategy in urban areas.
- “Since UNGASS 2016, the notion of AD has expanded from “traditional” interventions in rural settings to include actions aimed at fostering socio-economic development in urban areas, border areas and other “non-traditional” contexts.

▶ Because the application of these new approaches is still limited, the programme has decided to promote a regional study on innovative AD approaches in “non-traditional” contexts, in four types of territories: a) urban contexts (Uruguay); b) border and vulnerable areas (Colombia and Peru); c) indigenous and ethnic territories (Colombia and Peru); and d) integration of traditional growers into legal cannabis and industrial hemp chains (St Vincent and the

Grenadines, Jamaica). The study addresses a conceptual framework, identifies trends and inhibiting factors, maps good practices, and proposes guidelines and recommendations to formulate AD policies with an innovative approach.

From a **NATIONAL** perspective, COPO-LAD III promotes an action focused on:

▶ URUGUAY: The National Drug Board of Uruguay has launched a social innovation laboratory on AD, with the support of the Agirre Lehendakaria Centre. The laboratory focuses on actions aimed at preventing women in vulnerable situations throughout the value chain from becoming involved in micro-trafficking.



INCLUSION OF THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN AD INITIATIVES

From a **REGIONAL** perspective the following progress has been achieved:

▶ In March 2023, a digital training programme was launched on the gender approach in AD projects, composed of four interactive modules, an exchange session (May 2023) and a webinar on AD projects with a gen-

der focus (June 2023). The thematic contents include: gender theories, analysis of the role of women in areas where plants are grown for drug production and in AD value chains, as well as mainstreaming tools.

▶ Furthermore, a practical guide was prepared, entitled “Addressing Gender in Alternative Development projects”, which has proven to be a pioneering work at world level. The guide includes several practical mainstreaming tools: i) steps to prepare baseline studies and value chain analysis with a gender perspective; ii) guiding questions and guidelines to institutionalise the gender approach.

▶ Both the study visit to Peru (September, 2022) and the Intra-regional Dialogue Forum in Mexico City (September, 2023) were occasions for the exchange of good gender inclusion practices in AD. For example, on the inclusion of the gender approach in crop substitution policy (Colombia), on the challenges in the marketing of products of women’s associations (Peru), and also experiences from Albania and Malawi.

▶ Furthermore, widespread dissemination of the awareness-raising strategy in this area was promoted:



Since UNGASS 2016, the notion of AD has expanded from “traditional” interventions in rural settings to include actions aimed at fostering socio-economic development in urban areas, border areas and other “non-traditional” contexts.

- The Guide was presented in international forums such as the meeting in Lima of the GEDAIS expert group on AD organised by Peru, Thailand and Germany in collaboration with CICAD-OAS (October 2023), and in the parallel event to the intermediate session in Vienna of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) to commemorate 10 years of the Guiding Principles on Alternative Development (October 2023).
- In addition, both the online training and the Guide have been made available to the public on the GIZ digital training platform (www.atingi.org).

▶ Up until October 2023, 165 officials from state agencies had been trained and presented with an official COPOLAD certificate (146 in Spanish, and 19 in English). In addition, after the online course was opened to all types of public, 53 additional people were trained in the period November 2023-January 2024.

At the **NATIONAL** level, gender training has given rise to different appropriation processes in the various countries. In this context, Peru has demonstrated a high capacity for absorption of the training resources provided by the programme:

▶ **PERU:** The National Commission for Development and Life without Drugs (DEVIDA) opened the GIZ online training to the entire institution, achieving the training of 50 civil servants from various line directorates, decentralised offices and administrative units (about 12% of the organisation's staff). This training complemented the internal awareness-raising work of DEVIDA's own Gender Com-

mittee and was very well received due to its innovative nature (both in terms of content and of the module-based self-learning format). As a result of Peru's participation in the Intraregional Dialogue Forum of Mexico, the management of the institution decided to adopt the Practical Gender Guide as a reference tool in the processes of updating the PIRDAIS (AD Budget Programme) and reviewing the National Anti-Drug Policy. In this regard, the PIRDAIS update (December 2023) incorporates gender elements at the level of priorities, diagnosis and planning of community training activities.



SUPPORT FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF NATIONAL AD POLICIES

COPOLAD III ultimately aims to strengthen national AD policies. From a **REGIONAL** perspective the following progress has been achieved:

- ▶ Exchange of good practices and lessons learnt, including:
 - Lessons learnt from public AD programmes.
 - Good practices of initiatives managed by civil society in matters of gender, inter-cultural aspects, territory and peace.
- ▶ This exchange has generated conditions for greater coordination of civil society and academic on national policies, in terms of both design and discussion and implementation and promotion of pilot schemes.
- ▶ Overall, the programme contributes to the development of techni-

cal capabilities on AD among civil servants of the competent state agencies.

▶ Furthermore, within the framework of the two Intraregional Dialogue forums organised by COPOLAD III to promote south-south exchange, the challenges and difficulties faced by state agencies when promoting AD programmes in different contexts have been shared. These forums are useful for sharing reflections on technical qualifications, inter-institutional and multi-level articulation, territorial conflicts, security, sustainability or financing, among other challenges.

At the **NATIONAL** level, some countries have taken advantage of the programme to strengthen national AD plans and strategies and to design and launch programmes on the ground. In this regard, the case of Ecuador is illustrative:

▶ **ECUADOR:** The participation of the Ministry of Public Health (MSP) in the actions promoted by the programme has served to open the work on AD to the urban area and to the participation of civil society. As a result, the MSP has established a collaboration with PRE-VENSUD, a civil society organisation, to formulate the pilot project "Without Pressure, there is Fun" in the city of Quito. The project is aimed at preventing and reducing the demand for drugs by adolescents and young people from the city centre integrated into programmes at the Cumandá Urban Park. The intention, guided by an educational and communicational approach, is to install social laboratories and a media lab, as well as establishing financial education as a driving mechanism for comprehensive development.



PUBLICATIONS

[GIZ \(2023\), Practical Guide: Addressing Gender in Alternative Development Projects. Bonn, GIZ, within the framework of COPOLAD III](#)

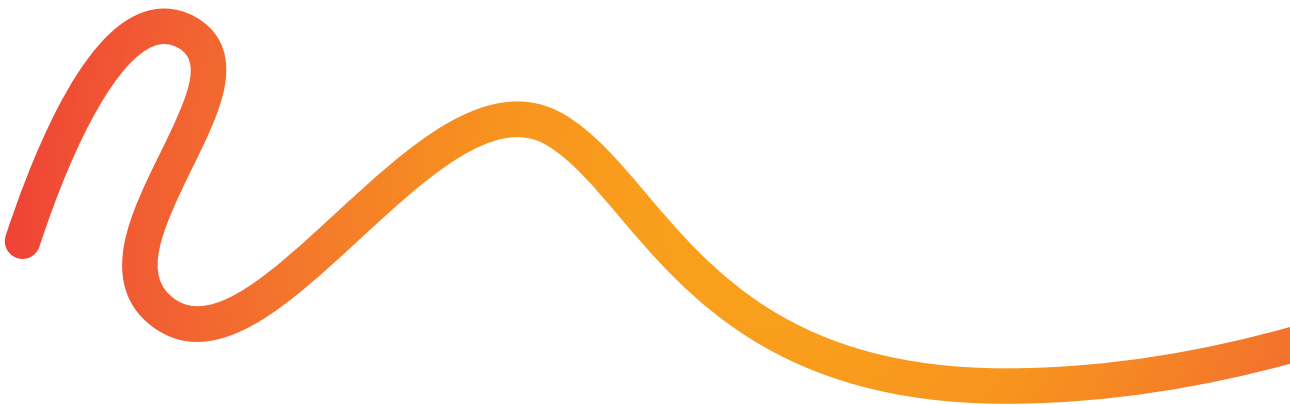
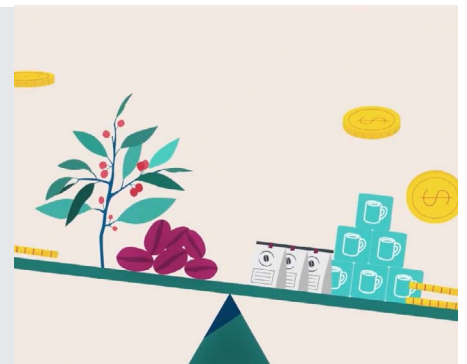


VIDEOS

[Gender analysis of value chains in Alternative Development projects](#)

[The importance of gender roles in Alternative Development projects](#)

[Innovative approaches in urban spaces and indigenous territories](#)



COPOLAD III is a consortium formed by:



Collaborating partners:

