

Sistemas de Alerta Temprana sobre Drogas: Retos e Innovaciones para una Respuesta Efectiva / Early Warning Systems on Drugs: Challenges and Innovations for an Effective Response

Pernell Clarke, Especialista en Investigación
Research Specialist,
CICAD, OEA/OAS

Mexico City
11-12 September 2025/
Ciudad de México
11 y 12 de septiembre de 2025

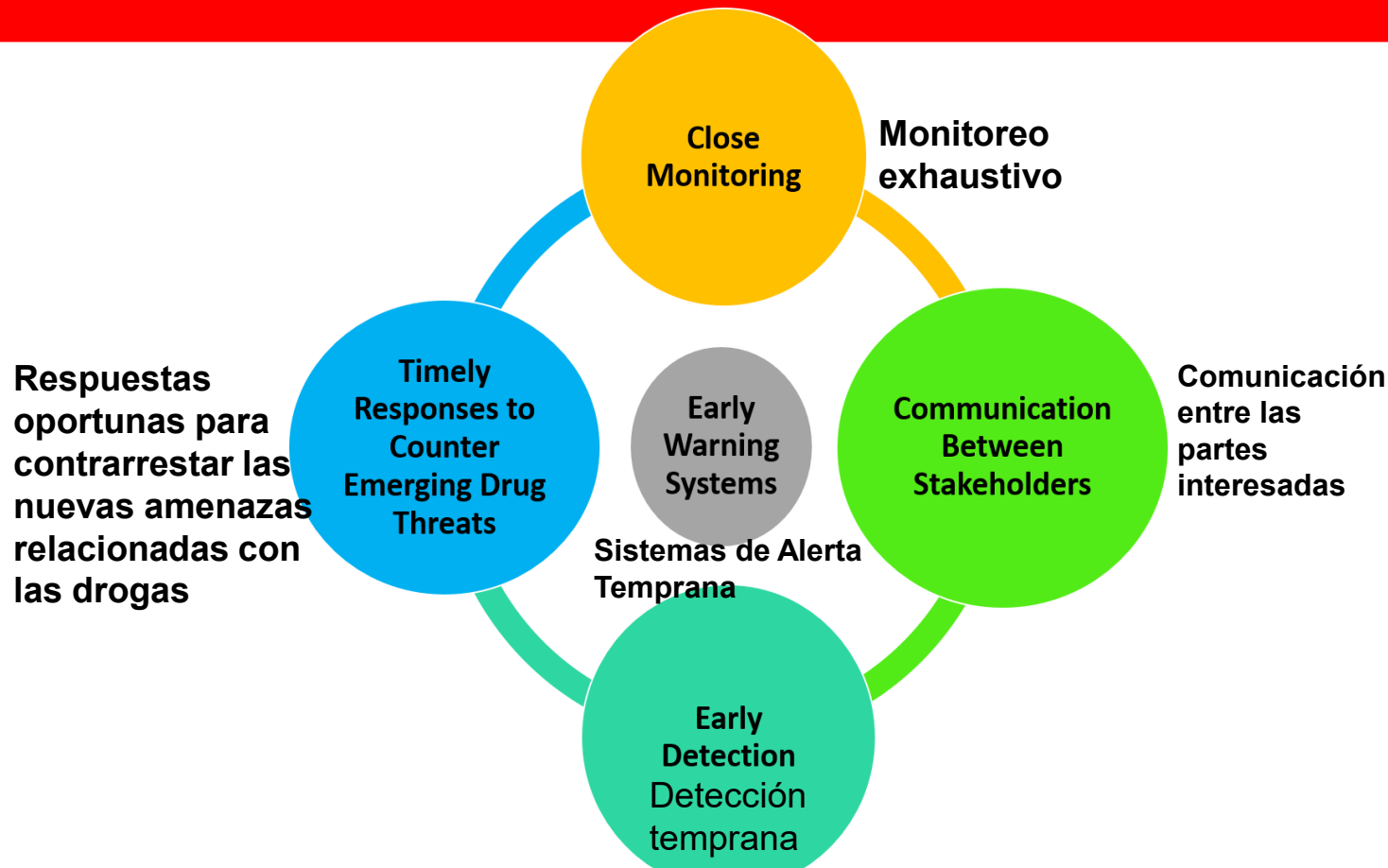
COPOLAD III es un consorcio formado por:



Socios colaboradores:



Early Warning Systems in the Americas/Sistemas de alerta temprana en las Américas



Rationale/Razón fundamental

New psychoactive substances (NPS) have spread rapidly along with new use patterns and toxic adulterants. This fast-changing and very dynamic drug market requires close monitoring, early detection and timely responses to counter such emerging drug threats.

Las nuevas sustancias psicoactivas (NPS) se han extendido rápidamente, junto con nuevos patrones de consumo y aditivos tóxicos. Este mercado de drogas, que evoluciona y cambia constantemente, requiere una vigilancia exhaustiva, una detección temprana y una respuesta oportuna para contrarrestar estas nuevas amenazas.

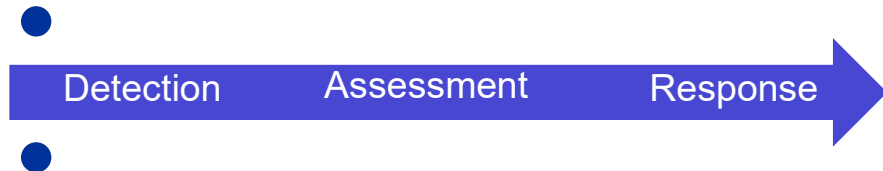


Early Warning Systems on Drugs / Sistemas de Alerta Temprana sobre Drogas



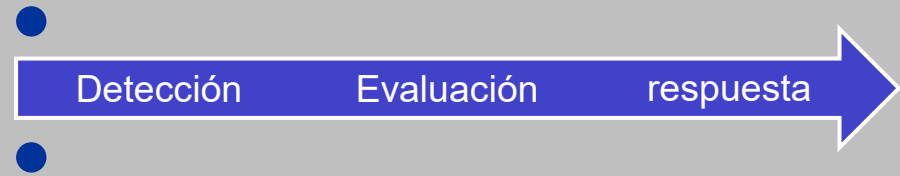
An EWS is defined as an inter-institutional, multidisciplinary network comprised of key stakeholders that generate and exchange information for:

- a) the early detection of events that may pose a threat to public health and which result from the appearance of NPS and other or emerging drug phenomena,
- b) the assessment of risks related to the presence of those substances and
- c) the issuance of early warnings to produce effective, real-time responses.



Un SAT se define como una red interinstitucional y multidisciplinaria compuesta por actores clave que generan e intercambian información para:

- a) la detección precoz de eventos que puedan suponer una amenaza para la salud pública y que resulten de la aparición de NSP y otros fenómenos farmacológicos o emergentes,
- b) la evaluación de los riesgos relacionados con la presencia de dichas sustancias, y
- c) la emisión de alertas tempranas para producir respuestas efectivas y en tiempo real.





Legal frameworks / Marcos legales



Many national EWSs operate under a legal framework which defines the role of the system, determines the tasks of the various stakeholders and provides a legal basis for information sharing.



In most countries, setting up legal frameworks take time, so there are alternatives that have been developed depending on the country situation.



Having a legal framework is a best practice, but by itself does not guarantee success.

Law/statute/Act, Regulation, Decree, Cabinet Note, Policy

Muchos SAT nacionales operan bajo un marco legal que define la función del sistema, determina las tareas de las distintas partes interesadas y proporciona una base legal para el intercambio de información.

En la mayoría de los países, establecer marcos legales lleva tiempo, por lo que se han desarrollado alternativas según la situación del país.

Contar con un marco legal es una buena práctica, pero por sí solo no garantiza el éxito.

Ley/estatuto/ley, reglamento, decreto, nota del gabinete, política



EWS Stakeholders / Partes interesadas del SAT



EWS Stakeholders

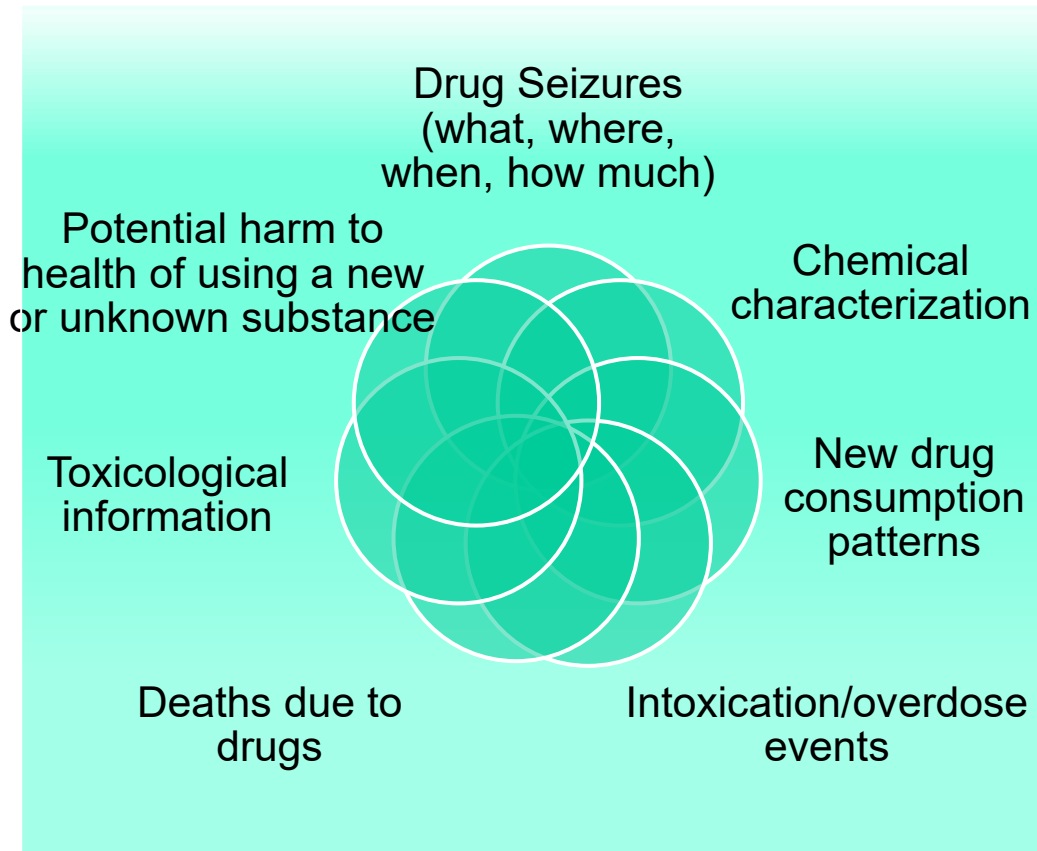
- National drug Commission
- National drug observatory
- Police and other law enforcement
- Customs
- Forensic, toxicological and other laboratories
- Treatment
- Public Health
- Health care services and facilities
- Researchers
- Others

Partes interesadas del SAT

- Comisión Nacional de Drogas
- Observatorio Nacional de Drogas
- Policía y otras fuerzas del orden
- Aduana
- Laboratorios forenses, toxicológicos y de otro tipo
- Tratamiento
- Salud pública
- Servicios e instalaciones de atención médica
- Investigadores
- Otros



EWS Data / Datos del SAT



There are around 18 countries with an EWS in the Americas/Hay alrededor de 18 países en las Américas que cuentan con un SAT.

- USA
- Canada
- Colombia
- Uruguay
- Chile
- Argentina
- Brazil
- El Salvador
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Barbados
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Dominican Republic
- Guatemala
- Jamaica
- Mexico
- Suriname
- St. Lucia
- Paraguay

Early warning systems have been identified by OAS member states as a best practice for collecting data and developing rapid responses to new and emerging threats.

Los Estados miembros de la OEA han identificado los sistemas de alerta temprana como una buena práctica para recopilar datos y desarrollar respuestas rápidas a amenazas nuevas y emergentes.

EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS ON DRUGS IN THE AMERICAS 2024

 **Operational
EWS**

 **Under development
EWS**

 **No EWS**

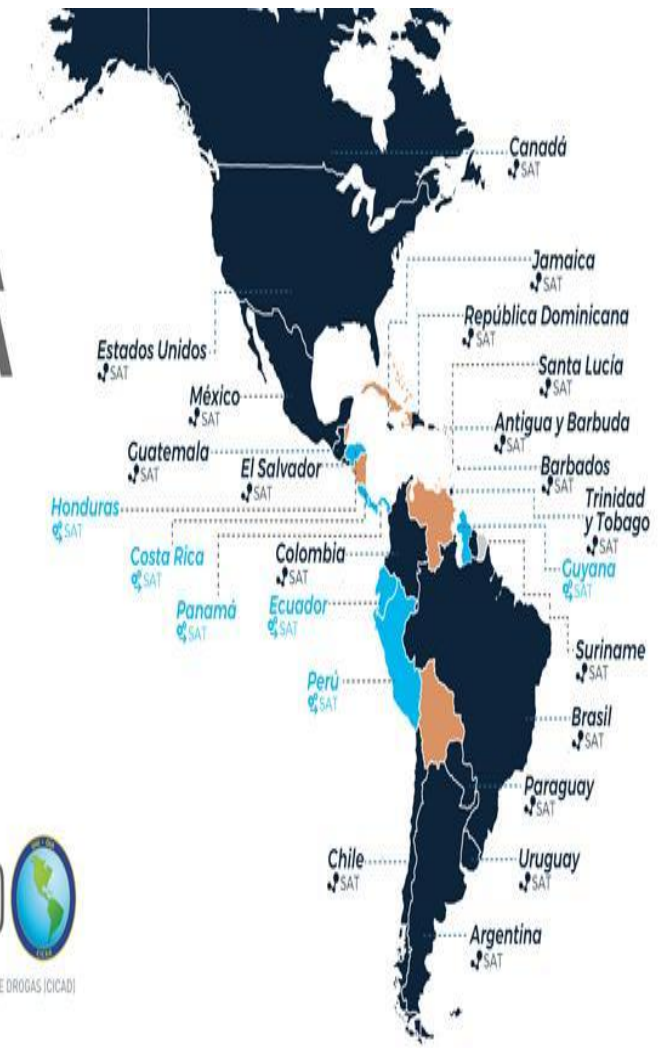


SISTEMAS DE ALERTA TEMPRANA 2025

 **SAT
en funcionamiento (18)**

 **SAT
en proceso de confirmación (6)**

 **Sin SAT**





Challenges/Desafios



Lack of data/information

Data fragmentation across multiple sources.

Legal and privacy concerns with data collection.

Inability to detect

Lack of forensic and toxicological services

Complex validation of actionable alerts.

Timely dissemination to relevant stakeholders.

Lack of communication

Falta de datos/información

Fragmentación de datos en múltiples fuentes.

Preocupaciones legales y de privacidad con la recopilación de datos.

Incapacidad para detectar

Falta de servicios forenses y toxicológicos

Validación compleja de alertas procesables.

Difusión oportuna a las partes interesadas relevantes.

Falta de comunicación



Technological Innovations / Innovaciones tecnológicas



Wastewater analysis detects community-level drug use.

Rapid assessment surveys

Online surveys

Web and discussion forum monitoring to detect emerging substances.

Artificial Intelligence to help web monitoring and predict drug trends.

Improves accuracy, speed, and scalability of detection.

El análisis de aguas residuales detecta el consumo de drogas a nivel comunitario.

Encuestas de evaluación rápida

Encuestas en línea

Monitoreo en la web y en foros de discusión para detectar sustancias emergentes.

Inteligencia artificial para ayudar a monitorear la web y predecir tendencias de medicamentos.

Mejora la precisión, la velocidad y la escalabilidad de la detección.



Impact of EWS/ Impacto del SAT



Advise the corresponding authorities on the differential contents of the alerts that are being disseminated

Advise the authorities on the actions that should accompany the release of the alerts according to the different addressees.

Propose a monitoring scheme on the impact of these measures and actions.

Asesorar a las autoridades competentes sobre el contenido específico de las alertas que se están difundiendo.

Recomendar a las autoridades las medidas que deben adoptarse en función de los destinatarios de las alertas.

Proponer un sistema de seguimiento para evaluar el impacto de estas medidas.

Effectiveness of Alert				
Effectiveness Questions	Rating - (see relevant scale)	Possible Information Sources	Other Evidence	Rating - (see relevant scale)
Was the alert/warning received and understood correctly?	○ Not received/not understood = 0 ○ Received but not understood = 1 ○ Received but misunderstood = 2 ○ Received and understood correctly = 3	○ EWS-TT Member Agencies' feedback ○ Traditional Media ○ Social Media ○ LE/Seizure Agencies ○ Substance Abuse Treatment Centres ○ RHAs ○ Anecdotal Reports	Were any target groups/population sectors missed by the alert/warning?	○ All = 0 ○ Most = 1 ○ Few = 2 ○ None = 3
Did the alert/warning result in knowledge gain (greater public awareness/avoidance), and therefore, risk reduction?	○ No = 0 ○ Minimal = 1 ○ Average = 2 ○ Good = 3	○ EWS-TT Member Agencies' feedback ○ NADAPP ○ Traditional Media ○ Social Media likes/follows ○ Substance Abuse Treatment Centres ○ RHAs ○ SSSD, Ministry of Education ○ LE reports ○ Requests for further sensitisation	Was the alert/warning counter-productive (i.e. evidence of a) more persons attempting to access or accessing the NPS, and b) an increase in NPS-related casualties) after the alert/warning was issued?	○ a) Increased demand and supply; b) increase in casualties = 0 ○ a) Increased demand but little or no supply; b) few casualties = 1 ○ a) No increase in demand so suppliers offering discounts to regular customers; b) no casualties = 2 ○ a) No demand or supply; b) no casualties = 3

Was the response to the alert/warning such that LE and other seizure and testing agencies, EMS, TTFS (Paramedics), A&E Depts, and Substance Abuse Treatment Centres reported a decrease in seizures/admissions?	○ No change/increase = 0 ○ Minimal = 1 ○ Average = 2 ○ Significant = 3	○ LE/Seizure Agencies ○ Testing Agencies ○ EMS ○ TTFS (Paramedics) ○ A&E Depts ○ Substance Abuse Treatment Centres	Did treatment centres report any change(s) in user consumption patterns (=decrease) subsequent to the issuance of the alert/warning?	○ No change/increase = 0 ○ Minimal = 1 ○ Average = 2 ○ Significant = 3	
Did the alert/warning adequately address the current or emerging situation?	○ No = 0 ○ Slightly = 1 ○ Mostly = 2 ○ Yes = 3	○ EWS-TT Member Agencies' feedback ○ NADAPP ○ Traditional Media ○ Social Media likes/follows ○ Substance Abuse Treatment Centres ○ SSSD, Ministry of Education ○ Requests for further sensitisation	Intentionally left blank		
Tally					
Maximum Totals	12			12	24
Based on the responses above, should any modifications be made that could improve the effectiveness of this or future alerts?	Justification/explanation, if necessary.				EWS Alert Effective or not? ○ YES ○ NO
15 - 21 - Little or no modification required 8 - 14 - Slight modification may be required. Identify. 0 - 8 - Modification required. Justify.					



Technological Innovations / Innovaciones tecnológicas



What does the EWS need to establish to monitor the impact of the measures and actions that accompany the issuance of the alerts?

- Have the technical capacity and human resources available to do so
- Build alliances with universities that can lead this process.
- Strengthen itself as a stable, reliable, multidisciplinary system with a clear strategic objective.

¿Qué necesita establecer el SAT para monitorear el impacto de las medidas y acciones que acompañan la emisión de las alertas?

- Contar con la capacidad técnica y los recursos humanos disponibles para ello,
- Construir alianzas con universidades que puedan liderar este proceso.
- Strengthen itself as a stable, reliable, multidisciplinary system with a clear strategic objective.



Success Stories and Lessons Learned/ Historias de éxito y lecciones aprendidas



Strong and effective coordination

Training builds capacity and improves adoption.

Written protocols to deal with sensitive, confidential, and classified information

Stakeholder engagement is key and regular meetings are necessary

Real-time communication is necessary for cooperation and information-sharing

Feedback supports continuous system improvement.

Coordinación fuerte y eficaz

La capacitación desarrolla la capacidad y mejora la adopción.

Protocolos escritos para tratar información sensible, confidencial y clasificada

La participación de las partes interesadas es clave y son necesarias reuniones periódicas

La comunicación en tiempo real es necesaria para la cooperación y el intercambio de información

La retroalimentación respalda la mejora continua del sistema.

Gracias/Thank You

Pernell Clarke, CICAD

pclarke@oas.org
www.cicad.oas.org

Mexico City/ Ciudad de México
11-12 September 2025/ 11-12
de septiembre de 2025

COPOLAD III es un consorcio formado por:



Socios colaboradores:

