



ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS)

Inter-American Drug Abuse Control  
Commission (CICAD)

**REPORT ON ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT  
DURING THE FIRST YEAR OF THE  
TRANSNATIONAL DIGITAL GOVERNMENT PROJECT**

*Prime Grant No. EIA-0131886 / Sub Award US-EIES-0205005-OAS  
/ CFDA No. 47.070*

## INTRODUCTION

This report addresses activities undertaken from May 2002 – April 30, 2003 by the Organization of American States (OAS) - Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) and two of its selected member states - Belize and the Dominican Republic - in connection with Sub Award US-EIES-0205005-OAS under Prime Grant No. EIA-0131886, CFDA No. 47.070 in transnational digital government.

The Transnational Digital Government (TDG) Project, approved by the NSF for financing in May 2002, responds to the real world information needs of both CICAD and its participating member states of Belize and the Dominican Republic in the area of border control. The Project's goal of utilizing advanced information technologies to enable systematized information sharing across two languages and the two participating countries will be a first in transnational digital government<sup>1</sup> efforts. The topic on which the information will be shared – data related to the control of migration across borders and particularly remote borders – is a highly visible and important topic in current international relations. Collateral results of the Project will be an increased ability for this same automatic information sharing among and between national government agencies and between public and private institutions.

From the research standpoint, on February 21, 2003, representatives of the TDG Project's seven university Technical Team met at the University of Florida to hammer out a unified technological approach and an implementation calendar for the construction of the Project's initial research prototype system. The Team refined the system's functions and requirements, agreed upon during the Project's Preliminary and Inaugural Meetings held in September and October 2002 in the Dominican Republic, and achieved consensus on the nature of and responsibilities for the development of an initial system that can be tested among the seven university sites. Concurrently with the initial system's development, Team researchers will be investigating the practical in-country realities that will make the prototype viable for deployment, maintenance and use by immigration agencies and other government agencies as well.

## BACKGROUND

Since its inception in 1986, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) has utilized information technology (IT) and telecommunications to procure the multi-disciplinary, multi-sectorial, multilingual and multinational information it requires to execute its anti-illicit drug mission and to foster connection among the countries of the Western Hemisphere. This interest led in 1998 to the exploration, with United States National Science Foundation officials and researchers working under the NSF aegis, of ways advanced information technology could support CICAD programs. The exchange resulted in the concept of an Hemispheric connectivity framework, entitled the Americas Multilingual Information Grid Alliance (AMIGA), through which drug-related data could be exchanged.

CICAD has also promoted Western Hemisphere cooperation in the tasks of developing and sharing the information content necessary to fulfill its mission. Concurrently with the information technology initiative of the previous paragraph, CICAD was developing a unique peer review

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<sup>1</sup> Digital government is the management of public sector operations and activities in an automated, computer-based and integrated fashion so as to insure effective, rapid and efficient delivery of public sector information needed for policy and program decisions and of services and products to citizens.

system - the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) - to evaluate and report on the nature and effectiveness of the anti-illicit drug efforts of its 34 Member states. The MEM's first implementation round in 1999-2000 clearly showed that a lack of, or a lack of access to, drug-related information for policy making was a major problem for most countries and that unless needed information and/or automated information systems capable of integrating already collected national drug data could be developed and accessed across the Hemisphere, the MEM's potential in combating illicit drugs could be lost.

## **SUB AWARD RESPONSIBILITIES**

The sub award contract grant delineated four main activities for the OAS/CICAD and its two collaborating countries: coordination and facilitation of Project work in and across CICAD member countries and in particular across the countries participating in the Project: facilitation of the creation of a geographically distributed implementation application of the MEM processes under study; substantial participation in the design of a Web portal; enhancement of relationships with the University of Colima in support of the Project, and coordination of transnational Project activities.

During the first year of the grant (May 1, 2002 - April 30, 2003), OAS/CICAD contributed to Project development by:

- a) organizing meetings and venues in which all parties to the Project could discuss their expectations and develop Project execution foci and plans;
- b) fostering a favorable environment for the conduct of the research in both Belize and the Dominican Republic through communications with participating universities and with governmental authorities -- national drug councils and concerned public ministries -- in both countries on the Project's approval and development.

During the first year of the grant, and anticipating the arrival of sub award funding, both national grant beneficiaries -- Belize and the Dominican Republic -- also undertook Project preparatory activities.

## **SUB AWARD EXECUTION**

### **A. MEETING ORGANIZATION**

OAS/CICAD handled organizational and logistical arrangements and provided substantive input in the form of goals development and agenda design for two Project kick-off meetings held in the Dominican Republic.

1. Preliminary Mission Meeting. September 6, 2002. Hotel Santo Domingo, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
2. Inaugural Meeting. October 24-26, 2002. Hotel Santo Domingo, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

It also provided some logistical support for the participation of Belizean and Dominican Republic representatives at the Technical Meeting of the research team held in Gainesville, Florida on February 21, 2003.

## **B. COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF THE PROJECT**

To insure continued support for the Project's development in participating universities and government ministries who would be Project partners in Belize and the Dominican Republic, OAS/CICAD composed, vetted among relevant Project authorities for approval, translated in English and Spanish and transmitted through official OAS diplomatic channels the following formal communications:

1. Notification of the Approval and Financing of the Transnational Digital Government Project and its Potential for the Development of National Digital Government Efforts

- Letter to Jose Coye, Minister of Health, Belize (July 25, 2002)
- Letter to Bonaparte Gautreaux Piñeyro, President, National Drug Council, Dominican Republic (June 5, 2002)
- Letter to Angel Cal, President, University of Belize, Belize (July 25, 2002)

Informal messages with copies of one or more of these communications were provided to other government authorities and Project personnel in both countries and to Project researchers at United States' universities.

2. Formal Notification about and Transmittal of the Results of the Preliminary Mission Meeting of September 6, 2002

- Letters to Jose Coye, Minister of Health, Belize (August 20, 2002 and October 7, 2002)
- Letters to Bonaparte Gautreaux Piñeyro, President, National Drug Council, Dominican Republic (August 12, 2002 and October 7, 2002)

Informal communications with copies of these letters were provided to university and agency executives in Belize and the Dominican Republic.

3. Notification of the Results of the Inaugural Meeting of October 24-26, 2003

- Letter to Jose Coye, Minister of Health, Belize (December 9, 2002)
- Letter to Bonaparte Gautreaux Piñeyro, President, National Drug Council, Dominican Republic (December 9, 2002)
- Letter to Angel Cal, President, University of Belize (December 9, 2002)
- Letter to Monseñor Agripino Nuñez Collado, Rector, Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra (December 9, 2002)
- Letter to Peter Parchue, Director, Department of Migration and Nationality, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Nationality (January 9, 2003)
- Letter to Miguel Vasquez, Director General, General Directorate for Migration, Dominican Republic (January 13, 2003)

Informal communications with copies of these letters were provided to university and agency executives in Belize and the Dominican Republic.

4. Translation / Provision of Materials

Various materials related to the Project, its antecedents and development were translated into Spanish or English for officials in Belize and the Dominican Republic, and/or for Project researchers. Other materials, particularly materials susceptible for the Project's multilingual translation research, were provided to Project researchers.

OAS/CICAD also provided members of the Project research team with background orientation and information on CICAD's Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM).

5. Development / Vetting of a Project Press Release

OAS/CICAD developed and vetted to interested Project authorities a press release on the Project. Circulation awaits NSF approval.

**C. COUNTRY ACTIONS UNDER THE SUB AWARD**

**Belize**

Belize's participation in the Digital Government Planning Grant Meeting in May 2001, and in a CICAD-sponsored national information system workshop in September 2000 had enabled it to develop a plan for the automation of various government offices with illicit drug-related data prior to the receipt of the grant in transnational digital government.

These prior activities were linked into the execution of the approved TDG Project over the period May – October 2002, and the infrastructure constructed to build national activities was put at the service of the Transnational Digital Government Project. Ornel Brooks and Charles McSweeney, respectively Executive Director of the Belizean National Drug Abuse Control Council (NDACC) and Chair, Department of Information Technology, University of Belize participated in the Project's Preliminary Mission and Inaugural Meetings held in the Dominican Republic on September 6, and October 24-26, 2002 respectively.

As Belize's lead Project researcher, Charles Mc Sweeney reported that since October 2002, Belize has:

a) developed two versions (0.1 and 0.2) of a data collection tool, the first of which is being tested at one border site in Belize. Border officials have been uniformly enthusiastic and approximately 256 automated records have been entered. Immigration officials have received the Project well. Officials' only fear now is that the effort not be a one shot deal which disappears after a time, as has happened in the past. Fortunately, the Project has come at a time when Immigration was also looking into automation, and all parties are determined that this initiative will continue on a permanent basis.

b) forged a strong working partnership between the University of Belize and the Department of Immigration and Nationality. University students have been assigned to work on the Project as a part of their coursework and some will shortly visit the border site. The Director of Immigration has indicated his willingness to push to insure the Project's success; has provided facilities and logistical support for several of its activities; and has made a senior immigration official available for Project work and consultation.

c) made a presentation on the Project to Howard Lattin-Rawstrone, Deputy High Commissioner of the British High Commission with a view to obtaining additional funding for Belize's efforts. NDACC coordinated this presentation which was also attended by High Commission Third Secretary Simon Mustard, Belize's Immigration Director Peter Parchue, and Senior Immigration Specialist Gareth Murillo; University of Belize officials Lyndon Flowers and Charles Mc Sweeney, who are respectively Dean and Lecturer and Information Technology Chair of the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology, and Dr. Roy Young, Director of Research; NDACC Executive Director Ornel Brooks; and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Nationality Cooperation Unit Chief, Melanie Quigley. In addition, members of the University's Information Technology faculty and Frieda Palma, a representative of the students who will work on the Project, attended the presentation. The presentation generated considerable interest and a second presentation was made to the British High Commissioner resident in Panama on his visit to Belize.

d) coordinated a meeting of the National Technical Committee charged with the development of Belize's National Observatory on Drugs (NOD). The Committee is made up of representatives of the government ministries and non-governmental institutions in Belize with drug-related information.

e) shared information on the work done in Belize with the Dominican Republic and, in direct response to his request, with Flavio Mirella of the United Nations Drug Control Programme in Barbados.

f) organized a meeting on February 17, 2003 between members of the Executive Committee of Belize's Observatory and Ruth Marie Connolly, TDG Project Co-investigator and Principal Specialist, OAS/CICAD, to provide an update on national developments and advances made in connection with the TDG Project.

g) met with OAS/CICAD officials on February 20, 2003 to discuss the organization of a workshop entitled "Control of Precursor Chemicals." NOD Executive Committee member and Belizean Chief Pharmacist, Sharon Sanchez-Anderson, spearheaded the organization of the workshop with the assistance of Ornel Brooks. The workshop was subsequently carried out as a joint effort between NDACC, Belize's Pharmacy Department and OAS/CICAD.

h) participated in the Technical Team Meeting in Gainesville, Florida on February 21, 2003. This Meeting was designed to ensure that all technical participants were aware of the developments and the responsibilities attached to various elements of the Project. It produced a list of tasks that each member would need to complete in the months that followed.

i) agreed to host a meeting in December 2003 in Belize to launch the first version of the system.

j) organized a meeting on March 18, 2003 to update the Minister of Health and other national institutional stakeholders on the Project-related activities of the Observatory's Technical and Executive Committees, on Belize's national information system, on the OAS/CICAD report on the MEM, and on the proposed submission of the Transnational Digital Government Project to the Boston conference on digital government.

k) reviewed Project and ancillary OAS/CICAD-related activities with the Observatory's Executive Committee on April 2, 2003. The review, provided by Ornel Brooks and Project researcher Charles McSweeney, highlighted plans for accomplishing the tasks decided upon at the Gainesville Meeting.

l) Immigration representative responded to questions from researchers concerning the information solicited at border points.

m) University of Belize students began work on a prototype to be used at the border stations in Belize. The first phase of this work was completed in May 2003, and a final presentation of the prototype is scheduled for June 2003.

These actions have resulted in a strengthened relationship between the Observatory's National Technical Committee and the Department of Immigration and Nationality related to immigration automation efforts under the Project's aegis.

### **Dominican Republic**

The Dominican Republic hosted and supported the organization of the first two Project meetings, the Preliminary Mission Meeting on September 6, 2002 and the Inaugural Meeting from October 24-26, 2002. Following the latter meeting, the "Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra" (PUCMM) [Pontifical Catholic University Mother and Teacher] arranged for a tour of the University and the computer facilities where Project work would be undertaken.

After the Inaugural Meeting, University collaborators in the Project undertook to define process requirements with the national agencies involved, and to identify the questions asked of migrant persons in the country's ports of entry. A person from the University attended the Technical Team Meeting in Gainesville, Florida in February 21, 2002. The Dominican Republic has submitted a Project work plan to OAS/CICAD.

As Project coordinator in the Dominican Republic, Lillian de Brens, Director of PUCMM's Center of Research and Training for Integral Prevention, reported that the Dominican Republic undertook the following activities during the first year of the Project:

a) May 2002. The President of the National Drug Council, Bonaparte Gautreaux Piñeyro and Dr. Manuel Herrera informed the PUCMM of the Project's approval. Agreement was reached on institutional arrangements for its execution. PUCMM assumed the academic leadership of Project activities in coordination with the National Drug Council.

b) June 2002. Project buy-in and acceptance were sought from the PUCMM's academic authorities. The scientific team was constituted with Lilliam G. De Brens being

designated as Coordinator; and Victor Brens, José Luis Ventura y Pedro Manuel Tavéras being designated as technical executors.

c) July 2002. The team established a meetings' timeline with a view to understanding the implications of the Project and to establishing a work strategy.

d) August 2002. Ideas were exchanged with Dr. Herrera and the technicians of the Dominican Republic's National Drug Council, and agreement was reached on the components of the Project which would be executed in coordination with each other.

- Doctor Herrera would continue as interlocutor at the level of the strategies of coordination.
- The person in charge of Information Technology in the National Drug Council (CND) would form part of the technical team.
- Contact with the Migration Directorate would be established by the National Drug Council to formalize the participation of a technical representative from the Directorate.

e) September 2002. Exploratory meetings between PUCMM team members and officials of the Immigration Directorate analyzed the technical aspects of the Project and the information technology infrastructures of both institutions. The meetings also discussed the institutions' working methodologies and operating structures.

Dominican presentations for delivery at the Preliminary Mission Meeting with the researchers linked to the Project's Technical Team and representatives of Belize, the Dominican Republic and OAS/CICAD were developed. PUCMM's participants at the Meeting were: Lilliam G. De Brens, José Luis Ventura y Pedro Manuel Tavéras.

f) October 2002. The team prepared for and participated in the Project's Inaugural Meeting from October 24-26, 2002. To this end, it interviewed officials from Immigration, Border Control, the National Drug Directorate and PUCMM researchers that work in this field. On October 26<sup>th</sup>, the international participants, the professors of the universities of the United States and Belize, and two representatives of the OAS/CICAD, visited PUCMM to get to know the campus and the technical capacity of the institution, as it relates to its participation in this Project.

g) November 2002. Research was conducted and a technical report presented on the structure of the database of the information system of the Migration Directorate. A two-hour video conference was organized with the participation of Dr. Jose Fortes, to build support for the Project among PUCMM professors and students. Exchange activities with the Belize team, with Dr. José Fortes, and with other United States' researchers began with the initiation of Dominican participation in the TDG Project Forum (ACIS).

h) January 2003. The exchange of ideas and information through the Forum continued, with emphasis being given to communication with Professor McSweeney. Conversations were held with representatives of the National Drug Council and the Migration Directorate.

i) February 2003. A review of the Project's technical aspects and activities was carried out in preparation for participation in the Meeting in Florida on February 21, 2003. Professor José Luis Ventura participated in the Meeting for the Dominican Republic.

j) March 2003. Field work and meetings between the National Drug Council and PUCMM were held to share the content of and reach agreement on the results of the Florida Meeting. Information requested by the Florida Meeting on immigration questions and comments suggested was obtained from the Migration Directorate, and the corresponding reports were developed and sent. Field work data was also validated and published on the Project's Forum. In terms of coordination, the general guidelines and basic requirements were made for the Project and its work plan. Starting in March 2003, the PUCMM team began holding weekly Project coordination and monitoring meetings.

#### D. Administrative Activities

Contract negotiations were concluded. Following the arrival of the first installment of TDG Project funds in February 2003, the CICAD Executive Secretariat negotiated agreements with Belize and the Dominican Republic as to which institutions would serve as disbursers of the funds, and on reporting procedures for expenditures' control. Fund transfers of US\$20,000 per country were then obligated and transmitted to both countries.

#### E. The Future

First year activities essentially put the cooperation framework in place and got country teams on board. Second year activities will concentrate on building the Project's Web portal, through which countries can access essential software and services, and on developing a geographic application for the data each country is collecting. Depending on the outcome of elections in Colima, cooperation activities with the State of Colima, designed to support Project activities, will be initiated.

We are at your disposal for any questions or clarifications pertaining to this report.

Ruth Marie Connolly  
Co-Investigator  
Transnational Digital Government (TDG) Project