



**INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE  
CONTROL COMMISSION**

**CICAD**

Secretariat for Multidimensional Security

**SIXTY-EIGHTH REGULAR SESSION OF CICAD  
December 9 - 11, 2020  
Bogotá, D.C., Colombia**

**OEA/Ser.L/XIV.2.68  
CICAD/doc.2547/20  
7 December 2020  
Original: English**

**REPORT OF THE INTER-GOVERNMENTAL WORKING GROUP (IWG) OF THE MULTILATERAL  
EVALUATION MECHANISM (MEM)**

**INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION**  
**68<sup>th</sup> regular session, Bogotá, D.C., Colombia, December 9 – 11, 2020**

**REPORT OF THE INTER-GOVERNMENTAL WORKING GROUP (IWG) OF THE MULTILATERAL EVALUATION MECHANISM (MEM)**

**Bobby Chauhan, IWG Chair**

Distinguished Commissioners,

In accordance with the decision by the Commissioners at the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) sixty-sixth regular session (2019), the Inter-Governmental Working Group (IWG) presents, for consideration of the Commission, the following components that constitute the updated operational process and instruments for the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) eighth evaluation round.

The eighth evaluation round will be carried out taking into account the objectives of the Plan of Action 2021-2025 of the OAS Hemispheric Drug Strategy 2020 and the related priority actions to achieve them. The main purpose of the evaluation is to identify the current situation that each member state faces regarding the implementation of each one of the objectives.

As we are all well aware, the MEM is a unique mechanism as it is the only multilateral evaluation of its kind in the world which highlights strengths and weakness of OAS member states in its national and hemispheric reports, based on a peer review process.

There have been seven MEM rounds over 20 years, with adjustments being made in order to ensure that information is accurately collected with respect to member state approaches regarding the drug problem, outlining clearly the challenges encountered, the strengths and the collective progress in implementing drug policies.

This year, we have an opportunity to make further adjustments to the MEM for the eighth evaluation round process. In addition, we have a unique opportunity to launch the evaluation at the same time as we launch the OAS Hemispheric Drug Strategy 2020 and corresponding Plan of Action 2021-2025, providing us with more time to perform evaluation activities.

---

The IWG included the participation of 34 member state's representatives. Due to the current COVID-19 context, all of the IWG meetings were held virtually through an online platform. There were three virtual plenary meetings, which took place in September, October, and November 2020.

The work of the IWG involved drafting the questionnaire, the related manuals and supporting material. However, prior to developing these documents, the initial focus of the IWG was to explore areas of improvement for the evaluation and design of the methodology, that will guarantee enhanced and timely analysis, as well as high quality national reports and hemispheric briefs. This is to provide member states with an effective hemispheric tool to use in formulating drug policies; increase the MEM's relevance on a national, hemispheric, and international level; and reduce its current annual operating costs.

The efforts of the IWG over the past year resulted in the development of a four-year operational process, which includes an evaluation of all selected objectives of one thematic area per year. The first year, in 2021, will focus on Measures of Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Support; followed by Measures to Control and Counter the Illicit Cultivation, Production, Trafficking, and Distribution of Drugs, and to Address their Causes and Consequences in 2022; and finally Institutional Strengthening; Research, Information, Monitoring, and Evaluation; and International Cooperation in 2023. Following the evaluation of all thematic areas, in 2024 member states will be asked to provide any updates to the national reports that were published during 2021 to 2023, with the purpose of building comprehensive national evaluation reports.

Similar to previous rounds, the evaluation will be carried out by the Governmental Expert Group (GEG), to identify progress, setbacks and shortcomings in order to provide an objective view of the current situation and approach to the drug problem in each country. However, the eighth evaluation round introduces a new role in the form of MEM Independent Technical Consultants. These Consultants will support the GEG as they carry out the evaluation of each thematic area over the first three years, and the comprehensive evaluation in the last year, by providing additional expertise in the various drug-related areas being evaluated; thereby helping to reduce the resource constraints on member states during the evaluation process.

---

As part of their work, the IWG drafted the following six documents, which are presented for your consideration for the eighth round:

### **1) Updated Operational Process**

This document outlines the parameters under which the evaluation will be carried out, based on the objectives of the Plan of Action 2021-2025 of the OAS Hemispheric Drug Strategy 2020. Annual evaluations will be done on a thematic basis, followed by a comprehensive assessment.

### **2) Procedural Manual**

This manual details the operation of the actors (structure, roles, and responsibilities) as well as guidelines for the preparation of the reports and briefs.

The procedural manual has some key components which should be noted:

The first is the new role of the MEM Independent Technical Consultants. Details are provided throughout the procedural manual on how these Consultants will support the GEG experts during the evaluation process. Specific details including organizational structure, characteristics, role and responsibilities, and operational procedures are outlined within the document.

Second, since the eighth round will focus on a specific thematic area each year, GEG experts will be designated on a yearly basis according to the thematic area for the given year. For the comprehensive evaluation year, countries can designate an expert from any of the various drug-related areas.

In addition, the National Coordinating Entity (NCE), which is the institution in each country responsible for collecting the information requested in the evaluation questionnaire, are appointed by each member state at

the beginning of the evaluation round to provide its country information for the GEG to carry out the corresponding evaluation. This designation would remain throughout the four-year operational process of the eighth round.

Finally, national evaluation reports, which are critical to the MEM process, as they reflect the country's internal reality in implementing the objectives within the Plan of Action, will be published annually based on the thematic area being evaluated, with comprehensive evaluation reports developed in the fourth year. In addition, hemispheric briefs will be developed annually by the CICAD Executive Secretariat, which will be concise and will reflect the reality of the member states as a whole with regard to the drug problem and the collective progress in the fulfilment of the objectives of the Plan of Action.

### **3) Evaluation Questionnaire (Measures of Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Support)**

This document is the key component of the evaluation process that contains questions for countries to respond. The information received is used by the GEG to analyze the reality of the country (supported by the MEM Independent Technical Consultants). For 2021, the questionnaire will cover the thematic area of Measures of Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Support. The questionnaires for the remaining thematic areas of the Plan of Action 2021-2025 will be drafted during 2021 by the IWG.

### **4) Outline of the Introductory Document to the Evaluation Questionnaire**

This document provides a template that each country is expected to include as an Introductory Document to contextualize its situation and the particular challenges faced in addressing the drug problem. This document offers countries the opportunity to provide information that was not requested in the relevant thematic questionnaire, but offers valuable insight and relevant context of the country's reality. Member states should submit this document for each year of the eighth evaluation round, focusing on the thematic area under evaluation during each of the first three years of the round. In the fourth year, the introductory document would offer a general overview of the country's situation.

### **5) Evaluator's Manual (Measures of Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Support)**

This manual guides the GEG, in accordance with the Procedural Manual, in the assessment of member states' progress in the implementation of the Plan of Action 2021-2025. Similar to the evaluation questionnaire, this manual focuses on the thematic area of Measures of Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Support, and includes interpretive notes for each priority action. The evaluator's manual containing interpretive notes for the remaining thematic areas of the Plan of Action 2021-2025 will be drafted during 2021 by the IWG.

### **6) Calendar of Activities**

This component is a timeline of activities for the MEM eighth round, including deadlines, such as information submitted by member states, GEG meetings, training activities, and official publications.

---

Before I close my report, I would like to thank the efforts of all IWG members for the excellent discussion, perspective, and commitment in the development of the updated operational process and instruments for the

MEM eighth evaluation round. It has been a difficult time for many due to the current environment we are working in, but I have seen nothing but a strong dedication amongst IWG members to share their expertise.

I would also like to thank all the CICAD Executive Secretariat and specially the MEM Unit led by Adrian Noble, and previous to that Sofia Kosmas. Adrian and his team, including Martin Cubas, Karen Sanjines, and Ilka Walker, have provided phenomenal support since we first began our discussions, which also included guidance from Angela Crowdy.

As the IWG continues its efforts in 2021, we will focus on the development of evaluation questionnaires and related evaluator's manuals for the thematic areas of Measures to Control and Counter the Illicit Cultivation, Production, Trafficking, and Distribution of Drugs, and to Address their Causes and Consequences for GEG evaluation in 2022; and Institutional Strengthening; Research, Information, Monitoring, and Evaluation; and International Cooperation for GEG evaluation in 2023.

Given these timelines, I would like to formally request an extension of the mandate of the IWG in order to prepare these documents for your consideration at CICAD 70.

Thank you.