

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES



INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION

cicad

THIRTY-FIFTH REGULAR SESSION
April 27- 30, 2004
Washington DC, USA

OEA/Ser.L/XIV.2.35
CICAD/doc1302/04
20 April 2004
Original: English

Scientific Advisory Committee Report
First Meeting

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March 23-25, 2004**

At its thirty-fourth regular session held in Montreal, Canada on November 17-20, 2003, the CICAD Commission formally approved the formation of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC). Following the SAC's approval, the members agreed to meet for the first time in Washington, D.C. from March 23-25, 2004.

CICAD views the SAC as a forum to recommend policies and provide orientation to CICAD, and its Executive Secretariat, for the more effective and efficient development and execution of CICAD's programs and research activities. In addition, the SAC may suggest science and technology solutions to drug-related problems at the national, regional and hemispheric levels, and make recommendations on CICAD's drug research programs. Finally, the SAC could suggest strategic and institutional alliances, and possible resources to support further development of programs and activities.

During its first meeting, the SAC was briefed on the full range of programs carried out by CICAD, with special emphasis on the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism and the Program to Estimate the Human, Social and Economic Cost of Drugs in the Americas. The SAC was asked to provide a series of recommendations to the CICAD Executive Secretariat and Commission on how these programs might be enhanced or strengthened.

Based on that information the committee saw some additional ways in which it might be useful to CICAD. For example, it could conduct in depth reviews of specific projects and programs, such as the SIDUC or CICDAT systems; serve as a sounding board for ideas under development; offer alternative perspectives on current CICAD activities, and provide advice on specific issues raised by CICAD.

The SAC recommends that it meet 1-2 times a year, generally about one month before the CICAD Commission meetings. If the first meeting is held in the Spring, the SAC should determine at that meeting whether it recommends holding a second meeting that year. Between meetings the SAC will hold discussions online, and maintain contact with the CICAD Secretariat.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) commends CICAD on its present activities and initiatives. It is evident that CICAD has resourcefully employed its limited budget to address a broad array of counter-drug issues. On the basis of the presentations it received from CICAD Secretariat staff regarding CICAD programming, the SAC views the promotion of sustained anti-drug programs in the hemisphere

through capacity-building, institutional-development, and the establishment of model standards as one of CICAD's most important strengths, but one that is not yet fully realized.

CICAD possesses tools such as the MEM which provide broad opportunities for seizing the initiative and anticipating events, and CICAD has done so by, for example, identifying priority projects through the MEM requests for assistance process. This process could be further developed by improving the current criteria for selecting projects for funding.

In addition, it is the judgment of the SAC that CICAD can do a better job of marketing itself to potential donors, including corporate and private foundation donors, by more successfully highlighting CICAD's work in training, education, and institution-building in the counter-drug field.

At the core of SAC recommendations is that CICAD establish a **5 year strategic plan**, based on the existing 1996 ***Anti-drug Strategy in the Hemisphere***, that sets forth clearly enunciated goals along with priority actions to achieve them.

The following are observations and recommendations to the CICAD Executive Secretariat and the Commission:

CICAD PROGRAMMING

- 1. The SAC recommends that CICAD focus on institutional-development and capacity-building as the basis for proactive work, and continue to examine other ways in which its work can be more proactive. In addition, sustainability should be a key goal for any CICAD program.**
- 2. The SAC sees a need for a more systematic planning and evaluation approach to CICAD programs. CICAD has a clear and appropriate mission statement ("CICAD's core mission is to harness the collective energy of its member states to reduce the use and abuse, production and trafficking of drugs in the Americas"). However, CICAD does not appear to have a strategic plan to achieve that mission. A strategic plan and its component goals are essential to CICAD's ability to set priorities, evaluate its progress, and deliver a clear professional presentation to other organizations and donors. The SAC recommends that CICAD develop a strategic plan that responds directly to CICAD's mission and provide objective measures by which progress can be evaluated.**
- 3. In the SAC's judgment, institutional strengthening, capacity-building and sustainability should be the foundation on which CICAD programs are built. CICAD programs should actively promote partnerships and**

cooperation among countries and encourage national and local progress within countries. This should be done while encouraging cooperation between countries and other international organizations where possible.

4. Community-based interventions, usually with volunteer help and few resources, are active in all member countries. With minimal technical and financial support such ongoing interventions would reduce demand with a multiplier effect. **CICAD should develop a pilot program to support such community-based programs.**
5. In addition, the **SAC recommends that CICAD examine its projects to see how they fit into the overall CICAD strategic plan.**
6. All projects and programs should have cost-effective monitoring or evaluation components built into them. The ability to demonstrate progress through evaluation is essential both to providing high quality, effective programs and to marketing CICAD programs and activities to outside institutions, potential collaborative partners and potential donor institutions. **The SAC recommends that all CICAD programs include an evaluation or monitoring component.**
7. The SAC observes that there are more action programs related to **drug control** activities than **drug demand reduction**. (NOTE: It's clear the balance is skewed). **The SAC recommends that CICAD examine the balance between its drug control and demand reduction programs.**

MULTILATERAL EVALUATION MECHANISM

The SAC recognizes that the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) is an important tool to assess hemispheric and individual member state counter-drug institutional capacity and performance; to promote multilateral and bilateral cooperation, and to stimulate member states and the hemisphere as a whole to take appropriate ameliorative steps where gaps in counter-drug performance are identified. The SAC also sees the potential for CICAD to use the MEM as an effective marketing tool for fundraising, because it is viewed as a serious process for tracking progress and identifying areas that need improvement. Furthermore, potential projects that arise from the MEM will have greater credibility to potential donors.

1. The Executive Secretariat **should develop, and provide requesting countries with guidelines and technical assistance on project proposal drafting and budgeting, including suggested minimum and maximum funding levels.**
2. The current system by which CICAD determines which member state requests for priority assistance it will support in response to MEM recommendations needs to be further developed. The current system uses the number of requests for a certain type of project, combined with the level of priority that the requesting

country assigns to the project, as the only criteria. The SAC believes that while a good start, this is insufficient. **The SAC recommends that the process for selecting proposals for priority assistance be broadened also to include the following additional criteria:**

The requesting country should:

- a) Demonstrate that the request is consistent with its own strategic plan and priorities;
 - b) Show that the proposal is consistent with overall CICAD priorities;
 - c) Provide an explanation as to how the project would satisfy the MEM recommendations to that country;
 - d) Describe the expected impact of the program;
 - e) Describe how the requested project promotes capacity-building and institutional strengthening and is sustainable; and
 - f) Show the degree to which the request for assistance is consistent with the MEM hemispheric recommendations.
3. Finally, there should be a process to assure **some rotation of countries selected to receive assistance so that no country is continuously left out.**

CICAD RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Given its limited budget, CICAD/OID has good a basic research program. The amount of work that CICAD is able to carry out demonstrates innovation and cost effective strategies. However, the SAC sees ways where CICAD can get more out of its research without a large additional financial investment.

1. There are a variety of qualitative research methodologies that can be applied to the CICAD/OID research program. Qualitative research can provide additional important contextual information to existing CICAD quantitative research analysis such as the SIDUC and CICDAT surveys, and can be used for other analyses such as the Emerging Trends Assessments Project. Data should be reported within a context that highlights unique issues in each country to provide insight into the data being interpreted. **The SAC recommends that CICAD increase the integration of qualitative and quantitative information in its research.**
2. CICAD's international status can be used to promote its activities and programs by establishing and hosting international *fora* to present research findings, and exchange new information. **The SAC suggests that CICAD follow the NIDA**

INVEST College on Problems of Drug Dependence (CPDD) model, or take advantage of the recently formed Ibero-American Congress on Addictive Disorders, to create a forum where new researchers can present and share their latest work on drug research.

The Program to Estimate the Human, Social and Economic Costs of Drugs in the Americas (Cost Program)

The SAC commends CICAD for its Program to Estimate the Human, Social and Economic Costs of Drugs in the Americas. The SAC's general view of the Cost Program is that it is well designed, and possesses the necessary basic components to produce reasonable cost estimates on the drug problem in the hemisphere. The following recommendations refer specifically to the Cost Program.

1. In the view of the SAC, one of the major strengths of the Cost Program is its ability to identify gaps in data and in data collection systems in the member states' anti-drug programs, research, and related social systems, such as the need to validate statistical data essential to producing accurate cost estimates. **The SAC recommends that CICAD continue to use the Cost Program to identify these shortcomings and to use that information to develop additional programs and projects to strengthen those areas.**
2. The SAC recognizes that costing research is a new field of drug research, and that as a consequence, the data it produces will have limitations. While these limitations should not be seen as negative, it is important to discuss them in all reports so that the broad context is clear, and the impact of the drug problem in human, social and economic terms is easily understood. **The SAC recommends discussing the limitations of data in all Cost Program reports.**
3. The SAC recognizes that costing research data are difficult to understand out of context. For example, estimates on the amount of expenditures in the health system for illnesses and injuries related to drug use have little meaning unless they are compared with overall healthcare expenditures, and placed within a descriptive context of the type of health care system. Simple ways of addressing this problem are to use additional information (such as descriptions of health care systems, criminal justice systems) to establish the context for the cost estimates, and to provide meaning to comparisons of health budgets, national spending, mortality, and life expectancy that will provide a robust context for demonstrating what the impact of drug use in a given nation. **The SAC recommends contextualizing the quantitative data in cost analyses to provide a more complete basis for interpretation.**

Other Research Studies

The SAC sees some potential areas where the CICAD Executive Secretariat could carry out additional research and analysis that would benefit its overall research program.

- 1. Due to its privileged position, CICAD should produce a comparative assessment of the problem of drug use in the hemisphere using SIDUC data and other information that is available.**
- 2. CICAD should seek to publish a summary of the results of this study in a peer-reviewed journal (such as *Addiction*, *Substance Use and Misuse*, *The Pan American Journal of Public Health*, *UN Narcotics Bulletin*).**

CICAD PROGRAM FUNDING AND MARKETING

The SAC believes that CICAD has a great potential for successful fundraising. However, for fundraising efforts to be effective, a well planned marketing strategy to promote CICAD activities is necessary. CICAD's current funding comes overwhelmingly from the public sector. While the public sector will continue to provide the majority of CICAD's funding, corporate and private foundations are a potential resource that remains largely untapped by CICAD. The SAC offers the following suggestions on how to incorporate some of CICAD's strengths into its funding strategy.

- 1. In the future, the CICAD Executive Secretariat should place more emphasis on marketing and presentation to the corporate and private foundations.**
- 2. CICAD's nature as an agency whose programs and projects promote capacity-building and institutional-development that produce lasting results with long term impact would be a key selling point in attracting the attention of all donor institutions, whether in the governmental or corporate and private foundations. CICAD's presentation to potential donors should emphasize CICAD's programming within the context of a clear strategic plan and well conceived goals and sound business practices, including, for example, regular reporting to donors, publications of annual reports, evaluation of programs, and a transparent accounting system audited each year by external auditors.**
- 3. As an element of a marketing strategy, CICAD should make widely available the SIDUC and CICDAT instruments and methodologies.**
- 4. Fundraising and marketing require time and effort. Consider assigning a staff member to make contacts with potential donors and funding institutions.**