



OAS | CICAD



**MULTILATERAL EVALUATION
MECHANISM
(MEM)**

PROCEDURAL MANUAL

EIGHTH EVALUATION ROUND

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I. MULTILATERAL EVALUATION MECHANISM (MEM)

A. Background and principles

The Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) is an instrument that measures the Organization of American States (OAS)'s efforts to address the world drug problem and related crimes in the Hemisphere. In 1998, the MEM was established through a Second Summit of the Americas mandate in Santiago, Chile. Specifically, in the Plan of Action of the Second Summit of the Americas, Heads of State mandated member states to:

“...develop, within the framework of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD-OAS), a singular and objective process of multilateral governmental evaluation in order to monitor the progress of their individual and collective efforts in the Hemisphere and of all the countries participating in the Summit, in dealing with the diverse manifestations of the problem.”

According to the Mandate of the Second Summit of the Americas, the process of multilateral evaluation is based upon the following principles:

1. Respect for sovereignty, territorial jurisdiction, and the domestic laws of States.
2. Reciprocity, shared responsibility, and an integrated balanced approach to this issue.
3. The current Hemispheric Drug Strategy (HDS) and its Plan of Action (PoA) and international agreements and instruments in force.

In 1998, the CICAD Declaration on the MEM was approved in Montevideo, Uruguay, which highlighted the importance of the MEM process:

“3. Reaffirm the principles on which the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism is based, that is, respect for the sovereignty, territorial jurisdiction, and domestic law of the states, as well as reciprocity, shared responsibility, and an integrated, balanced approach in dealing with the issue; the Anti-Drug Strategy in the Hemisphere; and the international agreements and instruments in effect.

4. Decide that the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism will be applicable to all states, individually and collectively; that it will be governmental, singular and objective, with the participation of specialized representatives of the governments; that it will be transparent, impartial, and equitable so as to ensure objective evaluation; that it will ensure full, timely participation by the states, based on generally applied norms and procedures, established by mutual agreement in advance, in order to ensure an equitable evaluation process; that it will not contain sanctions of any nature; and that it will respect the confidentiality of deliberations and information administered by the states, in accordance with the norms and procedures established in advance.”

Subsequently, in 2013, the Antigua, Guatemala Declaration “For a Comprehensive Policy against the World Drug Problem in the Americas,” the member states in the OAS General Assembly declared:

“5. That they recognize the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) as the only valid hemispheric tool for evaluating drug control policies in the countries that make up the Inter-American system.

6. Recall that the evaluation of drug control policies must be a multilateral exercise.”

Moreover, in The Bahamas, the 2016 “Nassau Commemorative Declaration in Recognition of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS),” affirmed:

“4. ...commitment to the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism as the only valid hemispheric instrument to measure the progress of Member States in the application of the Plan of Action 2016-2020, recognizing other established multilateral mechanisms, by mutual agreement, for the monitoring, collection and exchange of information.”

The MEM has evolved through the years to take a closer look at the increasing interests such as gender and other crosscutting issues in the various areas of drug control.

B. Objectives and characteristics

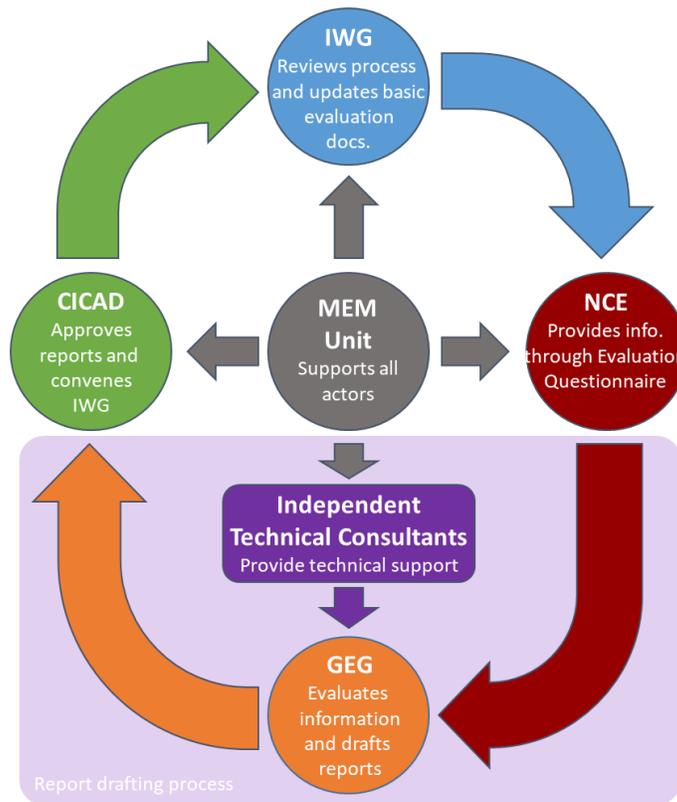
The multilateral evaluation process has the following objectives:

1. Contribute to the full implementation of the HDS and PoA.
2. Strengthen mutual confidence, dialogue, and hemispheric cooperation to confront, with greater efficiency, the diverse aspects of the world drug problem.
3. Follow-up on the progress of individual and collective efforts of OAS member states participating in the MEM to implement the HDS and PoA, as well as noting obstacles to attaining results.
4. Promote the following actions based on the evaluation results and within the framework of CICAD:
 - a) Support member states in planning and executing their national drug plans.
 - b) Contribute to strengthening member states’ capacity to address the drug problem.
 - c) Stimulate more technical assistance and training programs, and the exchange of experiences and best practices according to the needs of each member state.
5. Publish thematic evaluation reports of member states during the first three years of the 8th round, and comprehensive evaluation reports in its fourth year, and a corresponding hemispheric brief annually by CICAD Executive Secretariat.
6. Strengthen multilateral cooperation as the way to ensure objective evaluation of member states’ efforts to confront the drug problem.
7. Foster, through CICAD, ongoing cooperation and coordination with other regions, the United Nations, and other international entities.

The multilateral evaluation process shall be:

1. Governmental, singular, and objective in nature.
2. Transparent, impartial, and equitable.
3. Inclusive of full and timely member state participation, based on mutually agreed rules and procedures of general application.
4. Exclusionary of sanctions of any kind.
5. Respectful of the confidentiality of the deliberations and the information provided by member states, in accordance with rules and procedures.

MEM PROCESS OPERATION AND STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED



The activities of the evaluation process start when the Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) reviews and updates the MEM basic documents to carry out the next evaluation round. The National Coordinating Entity (NCE) of each member state provides the information requested in the evaluation questionnaire, which is assessed by the Governmental Expert Group (GEG) to draft the national reports. The draft reports are approved by the CICAD Commission, which also convenes the next IWG. The MEM Unit of the CICAD Executive Secretariat (ES-CICAD) and the MEM Independent Technical Consultants provide support to the different actors through the entire evaluation process.

II. INTER-GOVERNMENTAL WORKING GROUP (IWG)

The CICAD Commission convenes the Inter-Governmental Working Group (IWG) before each evaluation round and issues any specific guidance concerning the new round.

A. Organizational structure

1. IWG consists of delegates from member states, who are responsible for updating and improving the MEM process and its operational features, based on the current HDS and PoA.
2. The CICAD Commission elects the IWG Chair to represent the Group, among other responsibilities, and the IWG has the option to elect a Vice-Chair.

B. Characteristics

1. Member states designate IWG delegates, one per country. Delegates should have competencies in designing, implementing, and/or evaluating drug policies and/or programs. Additionally, member states can designate one or more alternates to assist/replace the principal delegates.
2. Each member state adheres to the principle “one country, one voice.”
3. Each member state will fund the participation of their delegate to attend the IWG meetings.

C. Roles and responsibilities

1. IWG considers prior MEM evaluation documents before drafting the new thematic evaluation questionnaires, procedural manual, evaluator’s manual, and a calendar of activities, for the corresponding round.
2. IWG Chair/Vice-Chair has the following responsibilities with the support of the ES-CICAD/MEM Unit:
 - a) Preside over all IWG activities and coordinates plenary debates.
 - b) Assist the ES-CICAD, especially the MEM Unit, in the coordination, organization, and preparatory work for IWG meetings, as well as fulfill the IWG work plan.
 - c) Prepare and present reports and IWG recommendations to the respective CICAD regular sessions.
 - d) IWG Vice-Chair replaces the IWG Chair during temporary/permanent absence, assists in the fulfillment of duties, and may enlist the support of other IWG members.

D. Operating procedures

1. The Units of the ES-CICAD support and work with the IWG Chair/Vice-Chair or other IWG members, in their areas of expertise, as necessary.
2. MEM Unit maintains ongoing contact with the IWG and provides technical, coordination, and managerial support to this Group.
3. IWG operates through virtual and in-person meetings. Country delegates actively collaborate in the meetings, including by drafting updates that improve the evaluation documents and corresponding manuals.

4. The quorum for IWG plenary meetings shall be one-third of the representatives of the member states making up this body. The quorum for adopting decisions shall be a majority of the representatives of the member states making up this body¹. IWG plenary decisions are taken by consensus and, if is not possible, by a majority vote of the member state representatives².
5. IWG Chair and Vice-Chair works on behalf of the Group to reach consensus, for specific proposals. This includes helping the Group reach compromises when consensus is challenging to attain.
6. IWG Chair, Vice-Chair, and any members are encouraged to seek compromise as the preferred outcome to differences within the Group regarding the MEM, as the desirable alternative to adopting plenary decisions through a majority of the member states.

III. GOVERNMENTAL EXPERT GROUP (GEG)

The Governmental Expert Group (GEG) is composed of Experts from the diverse drug-related areas, designated by each participating member state. 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. Member states provide the ES-CICAD the name of their Expert in a timely fashion and provide his/her curriculum vitae and current contact information. Each member state finances the participation of its Expert in the GEG meetings.

A. Organizational structure

1. GEG consists of one principal designated Expert per member state, and one or more alternates who can carry out tasks and attend meetings, adhering to the principle “one country, one voice.”
2. GEG is headed by a General Coordinator and a Deputy General Coordinator.
3. GEG may form working sub-groups, with each sub-group headed by a Working Sub-Group Coordinator and a Deputy Coordinator. (comprehensive evaluations³)
4. GEG determines its internal organization, operation, and methodology, such as:
 - a) Electing a General Coordinator and Deputy General Coordinator, taking into account the most experienced experts in drug-related areas, together with their leadership skills and regional representation and gender inclusion.
 - b) Forming working sub-groups to draft the national reports, with the support from the MEM Independent Technical Consultants. (comprehensive evaluations)

B. Characteristics

1. GEG Experts have solid technical background and experience in one of the thematic areas, in accordance with the thematic or comprehensive evaluation process established in the

¹ In accordance with the OAS Permanent Council Regulations, Article 44, August 16. 2017.

² In accordance with the OAS Permanent Council Regulations, Article 57, August 16. 2017.

³ Subgroups are focusing primarily on the comprehensive evaluation year.

corresponding Calendar of Activities, as well as working knowledge of English and/or Spanish.

2. Experts are selected to objectively evaluate countries' progress on drug policies and programs based on their national realities.
3. The Expert should not be the National Coordinating Entity (NCE), when possible.
4. Experts are designated with the authority to make autonomous judgments and take appropriate and timely decisions.
5. Expert can perform stable and continued service throughout the evaluation process.

C. Roles and responsibilities

1. General Coordinator and Deputy General Coordinator

- a) The General Coordinator and Deputy General Coordinator have the following responsibilities:
 - i. Preside over all GEG activities and coordinate plenary meeting debates;
 - ii. Ensure that the draft reports are following established guidelines (evaluator's manual, procedural manual, and agreements reached in any pertinent GEG meetings).
 - iii. Fully participate as Experts in their respective working sub-group meetings; (comprehensive evaluations)
 - iv. Meet with Working Sub-Group Coordinators to address any issues; (comprehensive evaluations)
 - v. Communicate with Experts in between GEG sessions and the MEM Independent Technical Consultants; and
 - vi. Ensure that the GEG work plan is carried out for the corresponding evaluation round.
- b) GEG General Coordinator prepares and presents reports at CICAD regular sessions. This report may also include any review of the evaluation process.
- c) GEG Deputy General Coordinator replaces the General Coordinator during temporary/permanent absence, assists in the fulfillment of duties, and may enlist the support of other GEG members.
- d) GEG General Coordinator and Deputy General Coordinator fully participate in working sub-groups but do not function simultaneously as Working Sub-Group Coordinators. (comprehensive evaluations)

2. GEG Working Sub-Group Coordinators (comprehensive evaluations)

The Working Sub-Group Coordinators have the following responsibilities:

- a) Coordinate, participate, and keep record of discussions/progress of all meetings for their respective working sub-groups during the GEG evaluation round.
- b) Fully report to their working sub-group on topics discussed at the Coordinators' meetings, and address arising issues and/or suggest solutions.
- c) Communicate with Experts in their capitals and with the General Coordinator and Deputy General Coordinator.
- d) Ensure that the draft reports are in accordance with established guidelines (evaluator's manual, procedural manual and agreements reached in any pertinent GEG meetings).

3. Governmental Expert Group (GEG)

- a) Experts participate actively and in a timely fashion in all the drafting exercises, during the GEG meetings as well as in his/her country.
- b) Experts are in constant communication with the respective Working Sub-Group Coordinator and the MEM Unit from their capitals. (comprehensive evaluations)
- c) GEG is responsible for evaluating member states, as well as drafting, reviewing, and editing the national evaluation reports, based on an agreed format to then submit to the CICAD Commissioners for approval.
- d) The GEG may receive support from the Independent Technical Consultants with expertise in the various areas related to the world drug problem.
- e) GEG may consult country experts during their meetings, on information provided by their country's National Coordinating Entity (NCE) for clarification purposes. Any other information requested by the GEG from the country will be conducted through the NCE.
- f) Experts are responsible for completing draft reports, comparing information with previous rounds, during the GEG meetings as well as assignments in their capitals.
- g) Experts complete their respective drafting assignments before working sub-group meetings and review draft reports prepared by other sub-group members. (comprehensive evaluations)
- h) Experts and their alternates remain in the same working sub-groups during meetings, save specific exceptions which will be resolved in the plenary, according to its rules. (comprehensive evaluations)
- i) When the country's Expert is GEG Coordinator/Deputy Coordinator, the alternate may occupy the country's seat at the plenary, respecting the "one country, one voice" rule.
- j) Alternate Experts can provide technical opinions on their area of expertise during the GEG meetings.
- k) Experts do not participate in the evaluation of their own country.

D. Operating procedures

1. GEG Plenary (online/in-person)

- a) The quorum for GEG plenary meetings shall be one-third of the Experts making up this body. The quorum for adopting decisions shall be a majority of the Experts making up this body⁴. GEG plenary decisions are taken by consensus and, if not possible, by a majority vote of the Experts⁵.
- b) Plenary reviews the text for each draft report in a timely fashion, with all countries evaluated with equal attention.
- c) The GEG General and/or Deputy Coordinator determine the order in which draft national reports are reviewed by the plenary, based on level of complexity, language, and regional distribution.

⁴ In accordance with the OAS Permanent Council Regulations, Article 44, August 16. 2017.

⁵ In accordance with the OAS Permanent Council Regulations, Article 57, August 16. 2017.

- d) During the GEG plenary, Experts contribute to reviewing all draft reports, except their own, with emphasis on their areas of expertise.
 - e) The Units of the ES-CICAD support and work with the GEG, in their thematic areas, as appropriate.
2. Working Sub-Groups (comprehensive evaluations)
- a) The working sub-group meetings operate with the presence of one-third Experts (and/or their alternates) assigned to specific sub-groups and accredited to participate in the GEG. Working sub-group decisions will be taken by consensus and, when this is not possible, by a majority vote of its members.
 - b) Working sub-groups prepare, evaluate, and review all assigned reports.
 - c) The MEM Unit submits a proposal for assigning Experts to sub-groups, based on professional background and experience.
 - d) The Units of the ES-CICAD support and work with the GEG and MEM Independent Technical Consultants, in their thematic areas, as appropriate.

IV. MEM INDEPENDENT TECHNICAL CONSULTANTS

The MEM Independent Technical Consultants are a supporting arm of the GEG that provides Experts with additional expertise in the various drug -related areas. The consultants accompany the GEG during the evaluation process and remain on a consultative basis.

A. Organizational structure

1. MEM Independent Technical Consultants will consist of four/five consultants with expertise in one of the thematic areas evaluated by the MEM process, in accordance with the corresponding thematic or comprehensive evaluation.
2. Consultants will be selected based on their experience in the drug-related thematic area(s).
3. ES-CICAD will identify consultants two months before the onset of each evaluation round or year and submit the names to the CICAD Chair for approval.
4. ES-CICAD, through its MEM Unit, will support the consultants and provide them with the appropriate documents outlining responsibilities and work plans during the round.

B. Characteristics

1. Non-governmental consultants.
2. Rotation of different consultants will be encouraged.
3. Consultants, as a whole, should have expertise covering all the thematic areas.

C. Roles and responsibilities

1. Supportive body to the GEG and will not carry out any evaluative functions.
2. Consultants will give support to the GEG by preparing the first drafts of the national evaluation reports and will continue providing it in further reviews.
3. Consultants may be nationals from member states or other countries outside this Hemisphere.

D. Operational procedures

1. ES-CICAD will handle the contractual arrangements for the consultants.
2. Consultants will be provided with guidelines regarding confidentiality of the information provided by member states and any related deliberations, following established norms and procedures of the MEM process.

V. FINANCING OF EXPERT PARTICIPATION AT GEG MEETINGS

Each member state finances the participation of its Expert to the GEG meetings. However, under exceptional circumstances, member states may request assistance to finance their Expert's participation in the GEG meetings.

A. Procedures to request assistance

1. To request assistance, a member state sends a letter to the ES-CICAD, at least three weeks before the meeting, with the reason for its request. All communications are considered confidential and assistance may be requested once per round.
2. ES-CICAD sends a response letter to the member states on the type of assistance available including the details of what would be covered under such assistance. Portions not covered under the assistance would be the responsibility of the member state.

B. Criteria for the approval of requests

The MEM Unit Chief reviews assistance requests taking into account the following criteria:

1. The exceptional circumstance of the country (based on the assistance request letter).
2. Current availability of funds and counterpart funding from the member states to cover its Expert's participation.
3. Strong commitment and by the country to the MEM process and expert experience.
4. Expert's active participation and fulfillment of responsibilities (during the GEG meetings and in their capitals).

VI. NATIONAL COORDINATING ENTITY (NCE)

The National Coordinating Entity (NCE) is appointed by each member state at the beginning of each evaluation round to provide its country information for the GEG to carry out the corresponding evaluation.

A. Roles and responsibilities

1. Compile information received from national institutions in response to the evaluation questionnaires, as well as related updates to the annual thematic national evaluation reports for the comprehensive evaluation year; review and analyze the collected information to ensure accuracy and consistency.

2. Prepare and submit an introductory document supporting these responses, to contribute to the GEG's evaluation within the established timeframe.
3. Submit on time a completed evaluation questionnaire as well as related updates to the annual national evaluation reports for the comprehensive evaluation year.
4. Review the GEG's "notes to the country" in the draft report and distribute them to the appropriate national institutions.
5. Review responses received from national institutions to the GEG's "notes to country" in a timely fashion, in addition to overall text in the draft report.
6. Clarify any information requested by the GEG or the MEM Unit.
7. Promote MEM reports in their country and share said activities with the MEM Unit.
8. Provide technical assistance jointly with the MEM Unit and raise awareness on the MEM process with all participating institutions in the country.

VII. MEM UNIT

The MEM Unit is under the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) and provides technical, coordination, and managerial support for those actors involved (IWG, GEG, NCEs, and MEM Independent Technical Consultants) in the MEM process.

A. Roles and responsibilities

1. Maintain continuous communication with the IWG, GEG, NCEs, and the MEM Independent Technical Consultants.
2. Communicate with the CICAD Commissioners regarding the MEM process.
3. Verify that information received from the countries is complete.
4. Prepare the narrative documents based on information included in the questionnaire from member states.
5. Support the GEG in drafting tasks, plenaries, and organizing the working sub-groups.
6. Arrange the appropriate contracts for the MEM Independent Technical Consultants, as well as coordinate, oversee, and support the work outlined for the group.
7. Prepare hemispheric briefs based on the national evaluation reports.
8. Organize training/workshops (including online) for those actors in the MEM process.
9. Provide Experts with evaluation guidelines and NCEs with appropriate guidance.
10. Publish and distribute the MEM national reports once approved by the CICAD Commissioners, as well as the hemispheric briefs, or other MEM-related material.
11. Execute promotional activities on the MEM reports and raise awareness on the evaluation process, together with member states and/or regional/international organizations.

VIII. REPORTS AND BRIEFS

A. National evaluation reports

1. The national evaluation report of each OAS member state is concise and reflects the country's internal reality in implementing the EHD and PoA, outlining strengths, challenges encountered, and progress made in executing drug policies, as well as pending actions.
2. The thematic structure of the reports will be in line with the HDS and PoA.
3. Reports are produced in accordance with the following stages:
 - a) The narrative document serves as the basis for the draft national reports.
 - b) GEG analyzes, evaluates, and drafts the corresponding national reports based on an initial document prepared by the MEM Independent Technical Consultants.
 - c) GEG first drafting meeting takes into account the interpretive notes in the evaluators' manual, reviews and suggestions by the MEM Independent Technical Consultants, and incorporates "notes to country" to draft national reports.
 - d) Each participating member state is sent their country's draft report for comments and data update through the "notes to country."
 - e) GEG reviews comments and updates submitted by the country, with the support of the MEM Independent Technical Consultants, incorporating conclusions, and finalizing one draft report per country.
 - f) Each participating member state receives its final draft national report.
 - g) CICAD Commission, in its regular session, receives final draft national reports for approval.
 - h) ES-CICAD presents the MEM reports to the OAS Permanent and Observer Missions, the Committee of Hemispheric Security, the Permanent Council, and the OAS General Assembly.
4. Sources of information used for the evaluation reports are the following:
 - a) Member states' responses to the evaluation questionnaires and the introductory document, as well as the updates to the thematic annual national evaluation reports, for the comprehensive evaluation year.
 - b) National reports from prior MEM rounds.
 - c) Authorized external sources of information, such sources as official websites of national drug agencies/institutions, other official national websites, official national reports, and documents from regional/international organizations/entities.
 - d) GEG consultations with the NCEs during the evaluation process.
 - e) Consultations with the ES-CICAD.

B. Hemispheric briefs

The hemispheric evaluation briefs are concise and 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 Hemispheric Plan of Action 2021-2025.

1. Briefs are produced annually by the MEM Unit of the ES-CICAD as a result of the thematic area that was evaluated.

2. Non-evaluative and informative briefs, identifying trends stemming from the national reports.
3. They contain information already approved by the CICAD Commission.