

Global Partnership on Drug Policies and Development (GPDPD)

We promote globally transformative approaches in drug policy, focusing on development, human rights, and health

Did you know

... that the illegal drugs business breaks new records every year? Cocaine and heroin production are at an all-time high. Disadvantaged regions in developing and emerging countries are particularly affected, where state weakness limits attempts to address illicit drug economies. Corruption, violence, and organised crime are closely interwoven with the expansion of illicit drug economies, impeding sustainable development.

The challenge

Illicit drug economies exploit people and the environment, particularly in the Global South. For millions of marginalised small-scale farmers, the illegal cultivation of coca, opium poppy and cannabis, is an issue of survival. Their whole situation is fragile. They suffer from poverty, lack of infrastructure and limited access to education and health systems. Illicit cultivation and processing of drug-producing plants cause massive damage to the local environment – which also results in damage to people's livelihoods.

The repressive policy approaches of previous decades (the “war on drugs”) have hardly improved the situation while entailing high social, economic, and ecological costs.

Who we are

We are a global project that concentrates on tackling the causes of illicit drug economies and achieving damage limitation. We address the complex challenges with holistic approaches, taking human rights into account as we unite concepts for rural development with protecting public health as well as the environment. Our aim is to work with governments and international partner organisations to promote gender-sensitive approaches oriented towards development, health, and human rights and to make these approaches the norm in international drug policy. We work on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The Federal Government's Commissioner for Drug and Addiction Policy in the Ministry of Health (BMG) has the political lead of the global project.

Our partners

We work closely with a partner network of political and civil society institutions, including: the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Mae Fah Luang Foundation Under Royal Patronage, the Transnational Institute, the International Drug Policy Consortium, Harm Reduction International and the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, the Universidad de los Andes and the University of Essex.



How we work

We work with our partners on four levels:

1. We shape the international drug policy dialogue at UN level on behalf of the BMZ, particularly in the context of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). Within the CND we establish the German government and EU approaches as normative guidelines for global drug policy.
2. We promote and present research and best-practice experience as a basis for evidence-based drug policy and alternative development within the CND framework.
3. We do public relations and use digital political spaces to increase the international visibility and relevance of these drug policy approaches.
4. We advise government institutions in Latin America, South-Eastern Europe, and Africa on reshaping their drug policy.

Project name	Global Partnership on Drug Policies and Development (GPDPD)
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Global
Political lead	BMZ; Political lead of the Federal Government's Commissioner for Drug and Addiction Policy (BMG)
Project term	Phase III: 05/2022-01/2025

Impacts

We have successfully negotiated six UN resolutions since 2015 (status: 2022) on behalf of the BMZ and in collaboration with Thailand and Peru to anchor sustainable approaches in international drug policy. We worked successfully towards the inclusion of these approaches in the outcome document of the Special Session of the General Assembly (UNGASS) in 2016.

We made a decisive contribution to the first International Guideline on Human Rights and Drug Policy. Working together with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the University of Essex and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, a game-changing document was created to provide orientation for states in the challenging attempt to balance the demands of the UN Human Rights Council and the UN Drug Control Regime.

We support reformed approaches to dealing with the cultivation of drug plants and drug use in South America, South-East Asia, and South-East Europe. Our advice has assisted Albania, Colombia, and Thailand in amending and adapting their laws and strategies for dealing with the drug problem. In collaboration with our partner governments, we have established legal income sources and access to value chains, opening prospects for people in drug crop cultivation regions.

We have supported research projects on the illegal cultivation of drug crops, drug use, drug production and environmental destruction, whose results were included in the UN World Drugs Reports of 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019 and 2022.

Our digital campaign in social networks to promote the EU's drugs strategy 2021–25 reached 20 million people in 2022.

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