

# Overview of information and data collection systems in countries of Central Asia



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## Acronyms

<b>CADAP</b>	Central Asian Drug Action Programme
<b>DIS</b>	Drug Information Systems
<b>EMCDDA</b>	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
<b>EUDA</b>	European Union Drugs Agency
<b>EWS</b>	Early Warning Systems
<b>NCMPDA</b>	National Centre for Monitoring and Prevention of Drug Addiction
<b>NFP</b>	National Focal Point
<b>NPS</b>	New Psychoactive Substances
<b>PWID</b>	People Who Inject Drugs
<b>PWUD</b>	People Who Use Drugs
<b>Reitox</b>	Réseau Européen d'Information sur les Drogues et les Toxicomanies
<b>SPR</b>	Společnost Podané ruce
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

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## 1. Introduction

CADAP has long been a pivotal initiative aimed at supporting the governments of Central Asian countries in the development and implementation of integrated and evidence-based drug policies. The programme seeks to improve access to high-quality drug demand reduction interventions, focusing particularly on vulnerable groups and incorporating gender-conscious perspectives alongside human rights-based approaches. CADAP has progressed through several phases, each building on the previous efforts to enhance national capacities and foster regional cooperation. In its seventh phase, the Programme has continued this mission with renewed vigour, focusing on enhancing the capabilities of national information systems and data analysis to ensure that drug policies are grounded in solid empirical evidence.

From February 12, 2023, over an 18-month period, SPR has embarked on this initiative by providing technical assistance as specified in contract APAS-2022-020 to achieve Result 2. The primary objective of this result is focused on data collection, specifically on strengthening national information systems to gather and produce objective, reliable, gender-sensitive, and scientifically standards-based information on the drug situation in Central Asia. In close cooperation with the governments of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, the technical assistance provided aims to bolster drug information and Early Warning Systems, particularly concerning NPS. This assistance seek to enhance the efficacy of the data collection systems and methods in each of the CADAP participating countries.

This closing report aims to document the technical assistance provided, describing the purpose and processes followed in each of the Central Asian countries. It addresses the main findings, difficulties, challenges, and proposals for their implementation.

The report includes two annexes: Annex 1: Guidelines – Compiling Country Situation Profile (Drug Situation) provides structured templates and methodologies for developing national drug situation profiles. Annex 2: Reporting Guidelines – Compiling the National Drug Situation Report (Country Profile) offers checklists, detailed analysis techniques, and protocols for ensuring the quality and consistency of drug monitoring and reporting across the region.

## 2. Purpose and Objectives

**The primary purpose** of this report is to provide a detailed account of the technical assistance on information systems and data analysis provided under the CADAP Programme. This assistance is crucial for the development of National Drug Reports, which are essential tools for policymakers and stakeholders in each country.

The objectives of this report are multifaceted.

1.	It aims to describe the overarching purpose of the technical assistance, which is to enhance the capacity of national information systems in gathering and analysing drug-related data.
2.	It outlines the specific processes followed in each country, detailing the steps taken to achieve the desired improvements in data collection and analysis.
3.	The report addresses the main findings from these efforts, highlighting both the successes and the areas that require further attention. Finally, it discusses the difficulties and challenges encountered during the implementation process and proposes practical solutions to overcome these hurdles.

Guiding the CADAP participating countries in development National Drug Reports formed a key element of this initiative. These reports serve as comprehensive documents that provide a detailed analysis of the drug situation in each country, including prevalence rates, patterns of drug use, treatment demand and drug-related consequences. According to the EUDA (formerly EMCDDA) national reports are a critical component of effective DIS and data analysis as they provide a comprehensive and detailed overview of the drug situation in each country, allowing for a systematic and comparable analysis of trends and developments. Furthermore, they enable the collection of standardized data across different regions, ensuring consistency and reliability in the information gathered. This standardized approach facilitates the identification of patterns, emerging trends, and potential issues that require targeted interventions. By compiling data on various aspects such as drug use prevalence, treatment demand, and law enforcement activities, national reports offer a holistic view of the drug landscape. EUDA goes on further to emphasise the importance of these reports in supporting evidence-based policymaking and on the crucial role they play in monitoring the effectiveness of existing policies and programs, enabling adjustments and improvements based on empirical evidence.

### 3. Methodology and Process Overview

The methodology employed during our participation in CADAP VII was comprehensive and systematic, designed to address the specific needs and contexts of each participating country.

The process began by conducting an initial assessment of the existing data collection and analysis systems in each country. This assessment involved a thorough review of current practices, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and pinpointing areas that required improvement.

- In August 2023, we prepared a review for each country using the same layout to allow for better comparison and compiled reports on the current situation of data collection and drug EWS in each of the CADAP countries (Deliverable 1). Each report analysed the strengths and areas for improvement in each country and provided targeted suggestions. The reports were then consulted with the national coordinators and key stakeholders in each country, and their comments were incorporated before finalizing them.
- Following the stakeholder consultations, capacity-building workshops were conducted in each country bringing together professionals from civil society as well as government officials as a means

of encouraging and facilitating their cooperation. These workshops aimed to enhance the skills and knowledge of national experts in data collection and analysis, introducing them to new methodologies and tools, as well as to identify capacity building gaps. They were carefully planned in close cooperation with the national coordinators and included comprehensive sessions on data collection and analysis, emphasizing the importance of robust information systems in developing effective drug policies. By bringing a European perspective, the workshop featured presentations and discussions led by European experts, who shared best practices and experiences from various countries. These experts contributed to interactive sessions, breakout discussions and collaborative case studies, ensuring that the participants gained valuable insights and actionable strategies for enhancing their information systems and data analysis, as well as the countries' drug monitoring frameworks.

- The national workshops happened between late autumn 2023 and early spring of 2024. Participants were trained on best practices and innovative approaches, equipping them with the necessary skills to improve their national information systems.
- Based on the findings from the assessments and the inputs from the stakeholder consultations and workshops, tailored technical assistance plans were developed for each country. These plans outlined the specific steps to be taken to enhance the data collection and analysis systems, addressing the unique needs and contexts of each country. The implementation of these plans was closely monitored, with regular follow-up monitoring on-line sessions and consultations to ensure that the proposed improvements were being effectively implemented. The mentoring process was further supported by the provision of guiding documents to assist the countries in compiling national drug situation annual reports was provided to each of the CADAP countries.

#### 4. Information Systems – Data Analysis

An **Information System** provides a comprehensive framework for monitoring various forms of addiction, such as substance use, gambling and, more recently, digital addiction. Most information systems in Europe Initially focused on illegal drugs and during the early 21<sup>st</sup> century expanded to include legal substances like alcohol and tobacco, ensuring ongoing, systematic tracking of their social and health impacts.

- ⇒ In Europe the system is managed by National Monitoring Centres (NMS) which play a critical role in collecting, analysing and disseminating data on addiction-related issues. It serves as a vital tool for national policy-making, providing timely data that aligns with international standards, particularly those of the European Drug Agency (EUDA – former European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction – EMCDDA). This alignment allows for consistent monitoring of addiction trends, including emerging threats such as new psychoactive substances (NPS) and growing concerns over digital addiction.
- ⇒ By ensuring continuous monitoring of legal and illegal substances, as well as behavioural addictions, the system enables stakeholders to adapt quickly to changing trends. Comprehensive approach that not only supports public health efforts, but also guides policy development, ensuring that interventions remain effective in the face of evolving addiction patterns.

Figure 1. Key monitored indicators

1. **Prevalence of Drug Use:** Monitoring substance use in the general population and high-risk groups.
2. **Treatment Demand:** Collecting data from addiction treatment centres on the number and characteristics of clients seeking help.
3. **Drug-Related Infectious Diseases:** Tracking the incidence of infections like HIV and hepatitis among drug users.
4. **Drug-Related Deaths:** Extracting data from mortality statistics related to overdose and drug-related incidents.
5. **Supply Indicators:** Information on drug seizures, price/purity of drugs, and market trends.

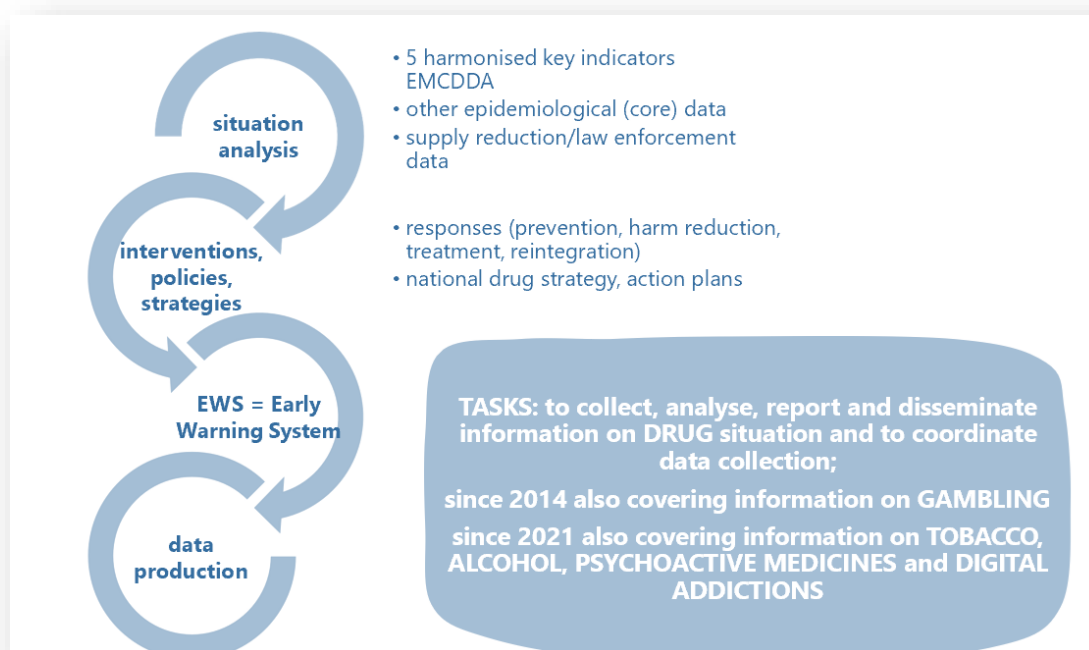
⇒ The National Action Plan for the Addiction Information System (NAPIS) of the Czech Republic formulated as a tool for planning and evaluating the information system of the country was extensively presented and discussed with the CADAP countries both, during local and as well as regional events.

⇒ The essential role that National Focal Points (NFPs) play in the information system was also extensively covered during the interventions. Providing the example of Europe and as a means of introducing European and international standards to the CADAP participants, the NFPs' role within the EMCDDA framework was presented as key institutions in each country responsible for collecting, analysing, and reporting on national drug trends. NFPs form the Reitox network<sup>1</sup>, ensuring that data on drug use, trafficking and related health impacts are consistently gathered and communicated to both national policymakers and EUDA. This allows for comprehensive, evidence-based strategies to combat drug addiction across Europe, fostering collaboration between member states and aligning national approaches with broader EU standards.

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<sup>1</sup> Reitox is the European information network on drugs and drug addiction created at the same time as the EMCDDA in 1993. The abbreviation 'Reitox' is derived from the French 'Réseau Européen d'Information sur les Drogues et les Toxicomanies'.

Figure 2. Czech National Focal Points and their Tasks<sup>2</sup>



#### 4.1 Country Specific Findings in Information Systems and Data Analysis



##### Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan's drug situation is marked by a significant proportion of people who inject drugs (PWID), with estimates suggesting a decrease in PWID numbers from 116,840 in 2011 to 85,300 in 2021<sup>3</sup>. The prevalence of drug use among youth remains concerning, with RSPC MSPDA Survey in 2012 revealing that 16.1% of young people aged 16, 19, and 22 had used narcotics at least once in their lifetime.

This situation is monitored through Kazakhstan's drug information system, which is renowned for its efficacy in tracking a wide array of drug use trends, patterns, and behaviours. The system benefits from a robust collaborative framework involving key governmental agencies such as the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health and several specialized narcology centres. These collaborations are instrumental in facilitating a comprehensive and integrated approach to drug monitoring across the nation. Through coordinated efforts, these agencies conduct in-depth cross-sectional surveys, with a particular focus on the youth demographic, to collect critical data that informs both preventative measures and targeted intervention strategies.

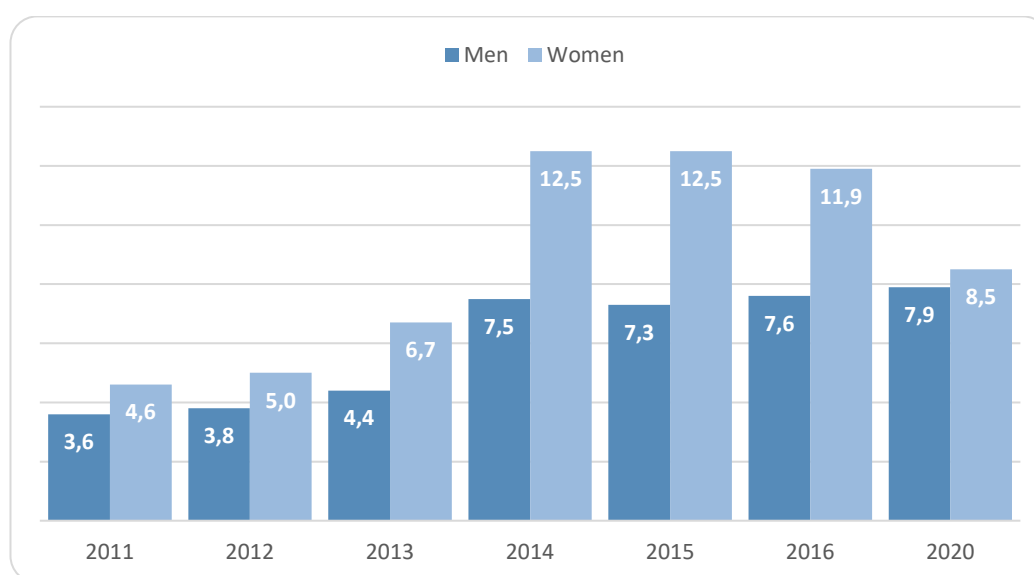
Moreover, Kazakhstan's routine data collection infrastructure encompasses a broad spectrum of treatment modalities and outcomes, alongside vital epidemiological data on infectious diseases linked to drug use, including HIV/AIDS and hepatitis (as depicted below). The country also undertakes detailed data collection regarding the demographics and usage patterns of PWID.

<sup>2</sup> Pavla Chomynová, Head of the National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addictions of the Czech Republic, 2023

<sup>3</sup> UNAIDS. Key Population Atlas. Available at: <https://kpatlas.unaids.org/dashboard>



Figure 3. HIV prevalence among PWID (in %) - disaggregated by sex<sup>4</sup>



Internationally, Kazakhstan maintains active engagement with global entities such as UNODC, ensuring alignment with international drug policy trends and innovations. This global engagement is supported by a strong domestic foundation of drug monitoring expertise, characterized by a dynamic community of researchers and academics who contribute significantly to the national drug strategy through rigorous study and analysis. This holistic approach ensures that Kazakhstan not only effectively manages its internal drug issues but also actively contributes to the international dialogue on drug control strategies.

Ongoing challenges still remain. One of them being the fact that the formal establishment of a National Focal Point (NFP). Despite the absence of an official mandate, the Monitoring Centre on Alcohol and Drugs (MCAD) has informally assumed many of the functions typically associated with an NFP. As a non-governmental organization, MCAD plays a pivotal role in gathering and disseminating drug-related data. However, efforts to formalize its role within the government structure have yet to bear fruit. Notably, the National Institute for Mental Health, created from the merger of the Pavlodar Scientific and Practical Centre and the Almaty Mental Health Centre, has established an analytical and monitoring department that could potentially serve as the NFP. Recommendations and concept notes provided under previous CADAP programmes aimed at formalizing this function have not led to its formal recognition. The lack of an official NFP continues to limit the sustainability of national drug monitoring efforts in Kazakhstan.



### Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan demonstrates a firm commitment to challenges through its active engagement with numerous international organizations dedicated to drug control and public health. The country's committed participation in significant initiatives such as the Central Asia Drug Action Programme (CADAP) highlights its dedication to fostering collaborative regional efforts aimed at enhancing drug control measures comprehensively. Kyrgyzstan has invested substantially in capacity-building programmes designed to significantly enhance the expertise of its national professionals, particularly in addressing the challenges posed by emerging NPS.

<sup>4</sup> <https://kpatlas.unaids.org/dashboard>

The country has established a methodological framework for conducting insightful surveys among school-aged children (ESPAD 2017 and ESPAD 2019), a demographic particularly vulnerable to NPS influences. These surveys are instrumental in gathering valuable data on the prevalence and behavioural patterns of NPS use. The findings from these surveys provide critical insights into drug use trends among young people, enabling Kyrgyzstan to design evidence-based interventions tailored to youth.<sup>56</sup>

**Figure 4. Prevalence of use of psychoactive substances by gender - ESPAD studies – 2017 vs 2019 (in %)<sup>7</sup>**

	ESPAD 2017			ESPAD 2019		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
<b>Lifetime prevalence</b>						
Cannabis	4.5	0.8	2.3	3.3	1.2	2.2
Ecstasy	1.4	0.4	0.9	0.3	0.4	0.4
Amphetamine	1.6	0.4	1.0	0.6	0.5	0.6
Methamphetamine	0.9	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.3
Inhalants	10.4	11.6	11.0	7.6	4.1	5.8
<b>Past 12 months</b>						
Cannabis	2.5	0.3	1.4	1.3	0.7	1.0
Ecstasy	0.8	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.3
Amphetamine	0.9	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.4
Methamphetamine	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.1	0.1
Inhalants	4.0	5.4	4.7	3.1	1.9	2.5
<b>Past 30 days</b>						
Cannabis	0.7	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5
Inhalants	2.2	3.3	2.8	1.7	1.3	1.5

Kyrgyzstan’s continued efforts in conducting such surveys contribute significantly to its national drug control framework. Such data collection efforts help inform evidence-based interventions, which are crucial for understanding the scope of substance use in youth populations. Moreover, Kyrgyzstan's regular submissions to international data pools, particularly regarding new psychoactive substances (NPS), assist in enhancing the global understanding of drug markets and trends.

The country has successfully institutionalized its NFP. The analytical department of the Service for Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking, operating under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, has been formally designated as the national coordinator of the drug information system. This department facilitates the collection, analysis and dissemination of data, ensuring that national drug monitoring activities are both systematic and sustainable. Strong communication channels between the core members of the drug monitoring group further reinforce this system, fostering a collaborative approach to drug data management. The institutionalization of the NFP has enabled Kyrgyzstan to establish a more structured

<sup>5</sup> Madybaeva D and Aida Karipova A. Survey of substance use and behavioural addiction among pupils in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2017. ResAd, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> 2019 Substance Use and Addiction Among Youth in Kyrgyzstan, Author: Dinara Madybaeva, M.D. – monitoring and evaluation specialist / PF “AIDS East-West, Foundation in the Kyrgyz Republic”; Reviewers: Assoc. prof. Viktor Mravcik, M.D., Ph.D. – CADAP 6/Component “National Focal Point”, senior scientist; Biljana Kilibarda, M.D., Ph.D. – CADAP 6/Component “National Focal Point”, scientific expert.

<sup>7</sup> Grohmannová, K., Prilutskaya, M., & Mravčík, V. (2017 and 2019). *European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) 2019 in Kyrgyzstan*. ResAd.

approach to its national drug information system, which helps align the country's data reporting with international standards, such as those set by EUDA.

While these efforts have strengthened the country's monitoring systems, there are challenges in data coordination and regular reporting. Kyrgyzstan's drug information system faces some gaps, particularly in obtaining reliable data on general population drug use and specific problem drug use for substances other than opiates. This lack of comprehensive data can hinder the ability to develop precise, evidence-based policies that address the full scope of drug issues within the country. The NFP, though functional, requires further enhancement to ensure more consistent and sustainable data collection and reporting practices. Kyrgyzstan should continue to improve its national drug monitoring efforts, ensuring that accurate and timely information informs both national and international drug policies.



## Tajikistan

The Republic of Tajikistan employs a strategic approach to drug-related issues, exemplified by the robust operation of its National Drug Observatory. This institution, officially known as the National Centre for Monitoring and Prevention of Drug Addiction (NCMPDA), was established in 2008 under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan. It is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities and staffed by an approximate team of 50 staff. The NCMPDA encompasses a wide range of surveys and routine data systems. Among the most prominent is the general population survey conducted in 2018, which involved a representative sample of 1,000 adults aged 18 to 64, assessing drug use, knowledge, and attitudes towards psychoactive substances.

**Figure 5. Prevalence of illicit drug use in the general population, 2018<sup>a</sup>**

		Men (n=499)	Women (n=501)	Total (N=1000)
Heroin	Throughout the life	0.4%	-	0.2%
	During the last 12 months	-	-	-
	During the last 30 days	-	-	-
Cannabis group	Throughout the life	1.8%	-	0.9%
	During the last 12 months	0.2%	-	0.1%
	During the last 30 days	0.2%	-	0.1%
Volatile solvents (Inhalants)	Throughout the life	0.8%	1.4%	1.1%
	During the last 12 months	-	0.4%	0.2%
	During the last 30 days	-	0.4%	0.2%
Ecstasy	Throughout the life	0.2%	-	0.1%
	During the last 12 months	0.2%	-	0.1%
	During the last 30 days	0.2%	-	0.1%

<sup>a</sup> ibid

Additionally, the NCMPDA has conducted school-based surveys as well as collects routine statistics on critical health indicators such as drug-related infectious diseases (DRID), specifically focusing on HIV prevalence among people who inject drugs (PWID). These data are collected annually in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. Other routine data gathered include drug-related deaths, overdose cases, and the number of clients in drug treatment. This also extends to monitoring the availability and impact of harm reduction programs such as needle and syringe programs (NSP) and opioid substitution therapy (OST), crucial for preventing drug-related infections and supporting rehabilitation efforts.

The country's commitment to international collaboration is illustrated through its active participation in projects like CADAP, which not only highlights its dedication to tackling drug issues within its borders but also underscores its commitment to contributing to regional and global drug control efforts. Through its involvement in CADAP, Tajikistan has made significant strides in capacity-building efforts.

While Tajikistan has a strong foundation in data collection, there are still areas requiring improvement. The country lacks focused research on new psychoactive substances (NPS), and the absence of an Early Warning System (EWS) for NPS remains a critical gap. Additionally, the dissemination of drug-related research findings in professional journals is limited, affecting the global awareness of Tajikistan's drug situation. Strengthening these areas, along with improving gender-sensitive data collection, particularly in the areas of law enforcement and drug supply, would significantly enhance the country's capacity for evidence-based policy-making and intervention.



Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan recognizes the value of international collaboration in enhancing its strategies for drug control. This recognition is reflected in its strategic alliances with prominent global organizations such as UNODC, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the European Union. Although these partnerships are fundamental to Turkmenistan's efforts to integrate into broader regional and global drug control frameworks, facilitating the exchange of resources, best practices, and critical information, the country lacks engagement with international drug monitoring efforts.

Tajikistan's DIS is key to collecting comprehensive drug-related data, ranging from drug use surveys to statistics on clients in treatment and drug-related infectious diseases. The National Report on the Drug Situation, which is published annually, is prepared in accordance with EUDA standards and provides comprehensive data on drug use prevalence, drug-related health issues, law enforcement activities, and drug trafficking trends.

The government maintains that drug use has been eradicated, a position that has stymied any efforts to establish a National Focal Point. Despite multiple engagements through CADAP, including three National Drug Policy Dialogues (NDPDs), Turkmenistan has yet to establish any formal structures for drug monitoring or data collection.

The Republic of Uzbekistan has developed a framework for addressing the challenges associated with drug use, highlighted by its active cooperation with a diverse array of international organizations. This broad engagement supports the operations of its National Information-Analytical Centre on Drug Control, which plays a crucial role in the ongoing assessment and management of the national drug situation. Backed by strong policy support for comprehensive DIS, Uzbekistan consistently produces detailed analytical reports that delve into the complexities of the drug landscape, providing valuable insights that guide policy and intervention development.

This framework is reinforced by Uzbekistan's legal foundation, rooted in international treaties like the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs. National laws, such as the 1999 Law on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and the 2021 Law on the Prevention and Treatment of Narcological Diseases, also play a key role.

These efforts are further enhanced by targeted data collection initiatives, including the systematic gathering of sex-disaggregated data, which ensures that Uzbekistan's drug policies and interventions are meticulously crafted to address the diverse needs of its population effectively. However, gaps remain in the availability of comprehensive data on drug use among the general population and youth, as well as difficulties in estimating the size of hidden PWUD populations. Limited data on synthetic drugs and NPS, despite their increasing prevalence, also poses a challenge.

Uzbekistan's drug monitoring system also involves various surveys and routine data collection mechanisms. However, the country has not conducted a general population survey on drug use in recent years. Data collection efforts primarily focus on the narcological register, which tracks individuals diagnosed with drug dependence, as well as those receiving treatment. Despite these mechanisms, there is limited data on drug use among specific subpopulations, such as youth in nightlife settings, and the overall system lacks comprehensive monitoring of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances.

The country has made strides in some areas, such as the reduction in heroin use and injecting drug use, but challenges remain in addressing the rising prevalence of synthetic drugs, such as synthetic cannabinoids and cathinones. Additionally, the narcological registration system has been identified as a barrier to accessing treatment services, as individuals fear the social and legal consequences of being registered. Efforts to strengthen data collection systems, particularly with regard to synthetic drugs and NPS, as well as the establishment of an Early Warning System (EWS), are crucial for improving Uzbekistan's capacity to respond to emerging drug trends.

There are plans to conduct a general population survey as part of the *Action Plan for Complex Measures to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking for 2021-2025*.

## 4.2 Areas of improvement



### Kazakhstan

- ⇒ While Kazakhstan's drug information system is recognized for its comprehensiveness, certain areas require targeted improvements to further enhance its effectiveness. Coordination within the existing drug information system occasionally exhibits gaps, leading to inefficiencies in data integration and analysis. There is a noticeable deficiency in the availability of comprehensive, current reports that fully encapsulate the national drug situation, which hampers the ability to make informed policy decisions. Additionally, the data concerning drug use among the general population and specific groups, such as recreational users, is frequently outdated, significantly impeding the development of precisely targeted intervention strategies.
- ⇒ There is also insufficient information on hidden populations, such as undocumented migrants and the homeless, who often remain outside the scope of traditional surveys and data collection mechanisms. These groups, while vulnerable, are at risk of being overlooked in national strategies, which limits the country's ability to provide targeted prevention and treatment programs.
- ⇒ Furthermore, the scope of existing research is often too narrow, predominantly focusing on PWID and lacking substantial data on other substances such as cocaine, amphetamines, and methamphetamines. This limitation narrows the scope of potential interventions and underscores the need for a broader research framework that includes a wider range of substances and user demographics. Research on NPS also remains insufficient, as the current data, while valuable, lacks the depth needed to fully understand the extent of NPS use and its impact on public health.
- ⇒ To address these challenges, Kazakhstan needs to strengthen its data collection methods for specific populations, including the general population and hard-to-reach groups. Expanding the scope of research to include emerging drug trends, such as NPS, cocaine, and methamphetamines, will provide a more accurate and complete picture of the national drug landscape, thus enabling more effective interventions.



### Kyrgyzstan

- ⇒ The country's Drug Information System faces challenges from inadequate coordination and infrequent updates on the country's drug situation. The lack of reliable data on drug use in the general population complicates evidence-based policy-making, weakening national drug control strategies. Additionally, limited data on drug-related mortality and non-opiate problem drug use, including stimulants and synthetic drugs, hampers the government's ability to develop targeted interventions. This highlights the need for improvement in data collection and analysis.
- ⇒ Another significant challenge is the limited availability of gender-sensitive data in Kyrgyzstan's drug information system. While some sex-disaggregated data is available, it remains insufficient for developing tailored interventions that address the specific needs of men and women. Expanding the systematic collection of gender-disaggregated data is essential to ensure that drug control measures are sensitive to the different impacts of drug use across various gender groups. Such data would enable policymakers to design more inclusive and equitable prevention and treatment programs, improving the overall effectiveness of national drug policies.



## Tajikistan

- ⇒ Tajikistan's drug information system faces challenges due to limited data on NPS. While progress has been made in collecting routine data on drug-related infectious diseases and drug users, the lack of comprehensive studies on NPS hampers timely responses to emerging threats. Although data on registered drug users is regularly updated, there is insufficient dissemination of drug monitoring and research findings it is not consistently shared through professional journals or scientific publications, reducing broader awareness.
- ⇒ Additionally, there is a significant lack of gender-specific data in critical areas like supply reduction and law enforcement. While some gender-disaggregated data is collected, the absence of gender-sensitive research in supply reduction hinders the ability to address challenges faced by women affected by drug issues. This gap limits the development of targeted and effective drug policies that meet the distinct needs of different gender groups. Addressing stigma and discrimination is also crucial for creating more inclusive drug policies.



## Turkmenistan

- ⇒ Turkmenistan faces challenges due to vague support for developing and improving national drug information systems, which weakens data collection, analysis, and dissemination processes critical for informed decision-making. Monitoring activities are overly focused on drug supply issues like seizures and arrests, while important aspects of drug demand, such as treatment needs and prevalence among different demographic groups, are often neglected.
- ⇒ There is a significant lack of reliable data on high-risk drug use among vulnerable groups and drug-related infectious diseases like HIV and hepatitis, despite Turkmenistan's location near major drug trafficking routes. The absence of national surveys on drug use, especially among youth and high-risk populations, makes it harder to obtain accurate data. Additionally, the limited availability of gender-disaggregated data hinders the creation of gender-sensitive interventions.

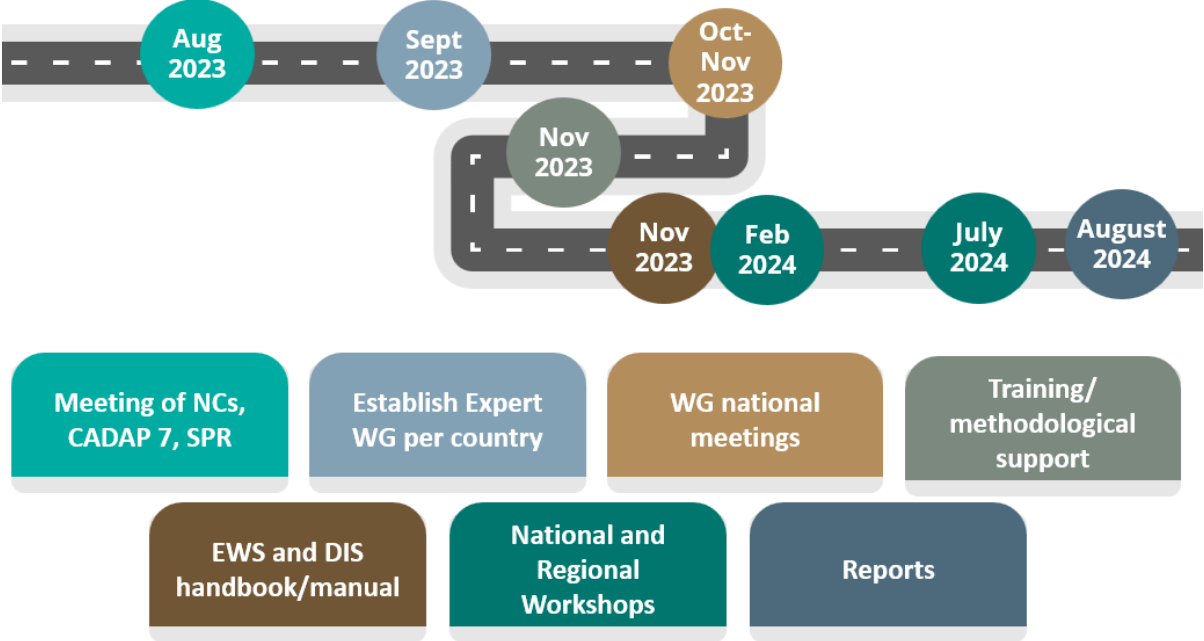


## Uzbekistan

- ⇒ There is a notable imbalance between data on drug demand and supply, leading to a skewed understanding of the drug situation. Limited data on substance use among the general population and specific groups, like youth, hampers the creation of targeted interventions. Despite plans for a general population survey, no recent cross-sectional survey has been conducted. The lack of detailed information on synthetic drugs and NPS, such as synthetic cannabinoids and cathinones, is a growing concern.
- ⇒ The infrequent publication of monitoring results and research findings in scientific journals limits the dissemination of critical information, essential for developing informed drug control measures. This lack of published data has also led to underestimating the true number of PWID, as the narcology registration system discourages treatment-seeking. Furthermore, current data collection and analysis do not adequately consider human rights and gender perspectives.

### 4.3 Strategic Proposals for System Enhancement

In the context of Result 2 of the CADAP Programme, our organization, SPR, conducted an initial assessment and facilitated a series of national workshops across the participating countries. These activities were pivotal in laying the groundwork for a comprehensive understanding of the existing drug information systems and identifying capacity building and knowledge gaps. Through these initial evaluations, we identified critical areas that required enhancement and, based on these findings, we developed a tailored set of recommendations for each country involved.



During the national workshops, we engaged in detailed discussions with key stakeholders, including government officials and representatives from civil society organizations. These interactions were instrumental in refining our understanding of the local contexts and needs, which in turn informed the recommendations we proposed. Following the workshops, through mentoring sessions and the provision of supportive documentation, we actively assisted each country in implementing these recommendations. Our role was not only to propose solutions but also to ensure that these solutions were actionable and effective, taking into account the specific challenges and resources of each country.

This comprehensive approach ensured that the interventions proposed by SPR were grounded in real-world applicability and designed to foster sustainable improvements. By directly engaging with and supporting the stakeholders involved, we facilitated a collaborative environment where these recommendations could be realistically implemented, thereby enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of national drug information systems under the ambit of the CADAP Programme. Through these concerted efforts, we aimed to strengthen the overall framework and operational capabilities of drug monitoring and policy formulation across the region.





## Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan has made substantial progress in developing its Drug Information System (DIS), but several key areas need further enhancement to create a more effective, integrated response to the country's drug-related challenges.

- 1. Strengthen National Focal Point (NFP) Capacity:** The role of the National Monitoring Centre on Alcohol and Drugs (MCAD) should be formalized to act as the centralized body for all drug-related data collection and analysis. Establishing the MCAD as the official NFP will improve coordination between law enforcement agencies, health services, and civil society organizations. This improved coordination will reduce fragmentation across the country's drug monitoring systems and enhance the consistency and quality of data streams. As a result, Kazakhstan can produce more reliable national drug reports, enabling evidence-based policymaking and better-targeted interventions.
- 2. Investment in Early Warning Systems (EWS) and Real-Time Data Systems:** To address the rising threat of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) and other emerging drug trends, Kazakhstan must prioritize investments in real-time data infrastructure. This will provide the country with the necessary tools to detect drug-related threats in real time, allowing policymakers and law enforcement agencies to respond swiftly. The integration of real-time capabilities into the EWS will significantly improve the country's ability to monitor and manage sudden changes in drug trends, ultimately leading to more effective policy interventions.
- 3. Standardization of Data Collection Methods:** Aligning Kazakhstan's data collection practices with the standards of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) is crucial to ensuring consistency and reliability across various data sources. Harmonizing data collection between law enforcement, health services, and treatment centres will result in a more comprehensive understanding of drug use trends. By standardizing methodologies, Kazakhstan can also improve the comparability of its national drug reports with those of other countries, fostering greater regional cooperation in drug monitoring efforts.
- 4. Expansion of Research Scope:** Kazakhstan needs to expand its research efforts by conducting updated and repeated surveys targeting specific demographic groups that are often underrepresented in national drug surveys, such as undocumented migrants, homeless individuals, and other vulnerable populations. Collecting data on these groups will provide a more complete understanding of drug use trends across different sectors of the population, allowing policymakers to design more targeted and inclusive interventions that address the specific needs of these vulnerable groups.
- 5. Adoption of Gender-Sensitive Approaches:** Drug use often affects men and women differently due to social, cultural, and economic factors. Kazakhstan should adopt gender-sensitive data collection methodologies to better understand the impact of drug use on different gender groups. By collecting and analysing gender-disaggregated data, the country can develop more equitable drug policies that address the distinct needs of men and women. Incorporating these approaches into national drug monitoring systems will enable Kazakhstan to better support gender-sensitive interventions.
- 6. Fostering International Partnerships:** Kazakhstan should continue to strengthen its international partnerships, particularly with organizations such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the European Union Drug Agency (EUDA). These collaborations will allow Kazakhstan to align its drug monitoring systems with global best practices and benefit from the latest developments in drug control strategies. Active participation in international knowledge-sharing initiatives will also help Kazakhstan stay ahead of emerging drug trends and implement more proactive, evidence-based drug control measures.



## Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan has made substantial progress in developing its National Focal Point (NFP) and Drug Information System (DIS), but further efforts are needed to improve data collection and enhance the country's response to emerging drug threats.

- 1. Development of a Reliable Early Warning System (EWS):** Kyrgyzstan should prioritize the establishment of a reliable and robust EWS to detect and respond to new and emerging drug threats, particularly the increasing prevalence of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS). An EWS will enable timely detection of new drug trends, providing law enforcement, health services, and social services with the information necessary to take quick, targeted action. Building this system will significantly enhance the country's ability to manage drug-related challenges more effectively.
- 2. Comprehensive Data Collection for Vulnerable Groups:** Kyrgyzstan must improve its data collection efforts, particularly concerning vulnerable and underrepresented populations such as women, youth, and recreational drug users. These groups are often overlooked in national drug surveys, leading to gaps in understanding their drug use patterns. By expanding the scope of national surveys and incorporating diverse data sources like social media analysis, Kyrgyzstan can gain a more comprehensive view of drug trends among these groups. This information will be essential for creating more inclusive drug policies that reflect the realities faced by different population segments.
- 3. Enhancing Coordination Among Agencies:** Improved coordination between law enforcement agencies, health services, and social services is critical for Kyrgyzstan to strengthen its national drug monitoring framework. By fostering collaboration across these sectors, the country can ensure a more unified and cohesive approach to drug control. Additionally, partnerships with international organizations like the EMCDDA and CADAP will enhance Kyrgyzstan's capacity to integrate global best practices and promote data-sharing mechanisms that support a more effective national drug strategy.
- 4. Gender-Sensitive Data Collection:** Gender-sensitive approaches to data collection are essential to ensure that drug interventions are equitable and meet the specific needs of men and women. Drug use often has different social and health impacts on different gender groups, and without gender-disaggregated data, Kyrgyzstan risks implementing interventions that may not address the unique challenges faced by each group. Ensuring that gender-specific information is collected systematically will enable policymakers to design drug control measures that are both inclusive and effective.
- 5. Capacity Building for National Experts:** Continuous investment in capacity-building initiatives is necessary to ensure that national experts can keep up with rapidly evolving drug trends and methodological advancements. Training programs should focus on advanced data collection methods, such as social media analysis and wastewater monitoring, to provide real-time insights into drug use patterns. By strengthening the skills and expertise of national experts, Kyrgyzstan can improve its overall drug monitoring capabilities and ensure that the country remains responsive to emerging drug threats.



## Tajikistan

Tajikistan has been actively engaged in developing its National Drug Information System (DIS), but several critical gaps in data collection and reporting still need to be addressed to ensure that national policies are informed by accurate and comprehensive data.

- 1. Formalization of Cross-Agency Coordination:** Tajikistan should formalize cross-agency coordination mechanisms to improve data sharing between law enforcement, health services, and civil society organizations. A more cohesive framework for collaboration between these entities will ensure the smooth flow of data, resulting in more accurate and comprehensive national drug reports. This integrated approach will enhance Tajikistan's ability to address drug-related challenges in a timely and effective manner.
- 2. Improvement of Data Collection on Key Indicators:** Regular, nationwide surveys must be prioritized to capture critical data on drug use prevalence, treatment demand, and drug-related health issues such as HIV and hepatitis. Previous surveys conducted in collaboration with international organizations, such as the UNODC, have provided valuable insights but need to be repeated regularly to track evolving drug trends. Consistency in data collection efforts will allow policymakers to respond more effectively to emerging drug threats.
- 3. Investment in Technological Infrastructure:** To enhance Tajikistan's capacity to detect emerging drug threats, particularly New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), the country must invest in real-time data collection tools. Improving the technological infrastructure will enable Tajikistan to gather, analyze, and act upon real-time data, providing more accurate insights into the country's drug landscape.
- 4. Strengthening International Cooperation:** By fostering closer ties with international bodies like the EMCDDA and UNODC, Tajikistan can benefit from global best practices in drug monitoring and control. Participating in regional workshops and study tours will provide opportunities to share knowledge and gain expertise in addressing drug-related issues, ultimately leading to more comprehensive and targeted interventions.



## Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan needs to enhance its Drug Information System (DIS) and support evidence-based policymaking through several strategic initiatives.

- 1. Encouraging Cross-Country Exchanges:** Turkmenistan should prioritize cross-country exchanges with other Central Asian nations to facilitate the sharing of experiences and best practices in establishing comprehensive drug information systems, including Early Warning Systems (EWS) for new psychoactive substances (NPS). These exchanges will improve data collection and analysis on drug use patterns and trends.
- 2. Developing a Detailed Roadmap for Data Collection:** Supporting DIS stakeholders through enhanced networking and active participation at the country level is crucial. By identifying existing gaps in the data collection system, Turkmenistan can develop a detailed roadmap for systematic data collection and analysis improvements.
- 3. Strengthening Expertise in Epidemiological Indicators:** Enhancing the knowledge base of national experts in key epidemiological indicators is essential for obtaining a comprehensive and accurate picture of drug use in Turkmenistan and the broader region.
- 4. Addressing Social Issues:** Tackling social issues such as stigma and discrimination against drug users is vital for improving the effectiveness of drug control measures. These initiatives will not only enhance the quality of data collected but also ensure that drug control efforts are sensitive to the needs and rights of all individuals affected by drug issues.

5. **Prioritizing Comprehensive Data Collection:** Turkmenistan should develop a national drug information system that addresses both drug supply and demand issues equally. This involves creating standardized methodologies for collecting data on drug use prevalence, treatment needs, and drug-related health issues like HIV and hepatitis.
6. **Introducing National Surveys:** Implementing national surveys, particularly those focused on youth and vulnerable groups, will provide more accurate and comprehensive data, enabling better-informed drug policies.
7. **Conducting Capacity-Building Workshops:** Organizing workshops aimed at training national experts in data collection and analysis should be a key component of this effort, helping Turkmenistan align its methodologies with international standards.
8. **Addressing Gender-Disaggregated Data Gaps:** Focusing on gender-disaggregated data is crucial for ensuring that drug control interventions are responsive to the specific needs of women and other vulnerable populations



## Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan has made notable progress in developing a functional Drug Information System (DIS), but several key areas require improvement to enhance the country's drug control strategy.

1. **Balancing Data Collection on Drug Supply and Demand:** Currently, Uzbekistan collects substantial data on drug supply-related activities like seizures and arrests but places less emphasis on drug demand metrics such as drug use prevalence and treatment needs. The country must focus on gathering comprehensive data from underrepresented populations, particularly youth and women.
2. **Conducting General Population Surveys:** As part of the 2021-2025 Action Plan, conducting a general population survey on substance use can bridge data gaps by providing insights into the prevalence and patterns of drug use across the country. This will enable policymakers to formulate targeted interventions.
3. **Improving Dissemination of Research Findings:** There's a need for more frequent publication of drug-related research in scientific journals, especially concerning New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) like synthetic cannabinoids and cathinones. Timely studies will inform policymakers of emerging drug trends and enable effective responses.
4. **Strengthening Electronic Information Systems:** Enhancing the Electronic Information System for the Management of Narcological Services and conducting targeted studies based on national needs will further improve the overall drug control strategy in Uzbekistan.
5. **Addressing Gender Disparities in Data Collection:** Women often face higher mortality rates from drug use and are more vulnerable to drug-related harm. By incorporating gender-disaggregated data into national surveys and research efforts, Uzbekistan can ensure its drug policies address the unique challenges faced by women.
6. **Prioritizing Human Rights in Drug Control Policies:** Uzbekistan should embed human rights considerations into its drug control policies, ensuring interventions respect the dignity and rights of all individuals, particularly marginalized groups. This approach will lead to more humane and comprehensive strategies that promote the well-being and inclusion of those affected by drug-related issues.

## 5. Challenges Encountered

We encountered a series of challenges while working on improving information gathering and data analysis in the CADAP countries. These challenges included the initial lack of robust data collection systems and standardized methodologies across different national contexts. Addressing discrepancies in data collection techniques and ensuring the accuracy and consistency of information were significant hurdles. Additionally, fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders and integrating new, innovative approaches into existing systems required ongoing mentoring and support. Although we successfully passed all the necessary information and recommendations to the participating countries, we were unable to monitor the level of change effectively. As a result, we can only assume the extent to which these improvements have been implemented.

Some of the challenges identified include:

1.	Institutional Capacity and Coordination Deficiencies
2.	Data Gaps
3.	Resource Limitations
4.	Training and Capacity Building
5.	Data Quality and Standardization
6.	Implementation of Evidence-Based Policies
7.	Adoption of New Concepts
8.	Social and Legal Barriers
9.	Cross-Border Data Integration

1. Despite establishing national frameworks for data collection, the institutional capacity of CADAP countries remains varied. Coordination issues among agencies, such as between health services, law enforcement, and public health authorities, continue to affect data integration and consistency. This is especially evident in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, where the formalization of National Focal Points (NFPs) is inconsistent, leading to fragmentation across information systems. This lack of coordination between law enforcement, public health authorities, and civil society organizations often resulted in fragmented data streams, reducing the overall quality and reliability of the information collected. Without a coordinated approach, the response to

drug-related issues is delayed, and inefficiencies arise, which hampers the implementation of effective interventions. These deficiencies highlight the need for improved collaborative mechanisms within and between agencies to ensure a more cohesive approach to drug monitoring. Another ongoing challenge is fostering consistent stakeholder engagement across CADAP countries. While there has been progress in promoting collaboration among various stakeholders—such as government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international partners—there are still significant differences in the level of commitment and resources available from different actors.

2. One of the most pressing challenges has been the consistent issue of data gaps, particularly in the availability of current and comprehensive information on drug use patterns among the general population and specific demographic groups such as youth and women. This lack of data severely limits the capacity of national authorities to develop targeted interventions, undermining the effectiveness of drug control strategies. For instance, in countries like Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, the limited data on New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) and synthetic drugs creates significant blind spots in national drug strategies.
3. Another key challenge is the insufficient resources allocated to maintaining and upgrading drug information systems. Resource constraints, including budget limitations and a lack of access to advanced technologies, have hindered efforts to implement necessary improvements in drug monitoring systems. In countries such as Kyrgyzstan, limited financial resources prevent the adoption of modern tools like Early Warning Systems (EWS). The challenge is particularly pronounced in the integration of real-time data capabilities to track emerging drug trends such as NPS. The scarcity of resources also impacts training opportunities for national experts, reducing the effectiveness of capacity-building initiatives.
4. While significant strides have been made in enhancing the skills of national experts through technical assistance and training, the depth and sustainability of these skills remain inconsistent across countries. Continuous mentoring and further development are necessary to ensure that the knowledge gained is not only retained but also applied effectively in the daily work of professionals managing drug information systems. In countries like Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, where national experts have limited exposure to advanced data collection techniques, ongoing training is essential to fully capitalize on the opportunities provided by CADAP. Without sustained capacity-building efforts, the long-term impact of these trainings may be diminished.
5. Despite improvements, maintaining the consistency and quality of data across various collection points remains a significant challenge. Inconsistencies in the methodologies used for data collection have affected the reliability of the data. Data collection on drug use, treatment demand, and drug-related infectious diseases often lacks the standardization needed for meaningful cross-country comparisons. The absence of common data collection protocols aligned with international standards, such as those from EUDA, undermines the ability to develop evidence-based drug policies. This lack of consistency also affects efforts to compile comprehensive National Drug Reports (NDRs), which are essential for effective policy formulation.
6. Translating improved data collection and analysis into actionable, evidence-based drug policies remains an ongoing challenge for many CADAP countries. While the technical infrastructure for data collection has been strengthened in several nations, the ability to interpret this data and convert it into strategic policy decisions is still developing. In some countries, there is a disconnect between the availability of data and the capacity to use that data to inform policy decisions. Developing the strategic thinking and policy design capabilities necessary to

implement effective, evidence-based interventions will require continued technical assistance and capacity-building.

7. Through CADAP's technical assistance, several new concepts have been introduced to enhance drug monitoring and data analysis efforts. However, the adoption of these concepts, such as the integration of gender-sensitive approaches and the use of EWS for NPS, remains uneven. Further mentoring and support are required to ensure that these concepts are fully understood and effectively implemented. Adapting these innovations to local needs and conditions is critical to ensuring their long-term success and sustainability. Without continued guidance, there is a risk that these new methodologies may not be fully integrated into national system.
8. Stigma and fear of criminalization among drug users limit the accuracy of data collected, especially from vulnerable groups like People Who Inject Drugs (PWID) and women. From analytical point of view, this leads to underreporting and incomplete datasets. However, these barriers also represent factors hampering implementation of gender-sensitive and human-rights-based drug policies. This is especially a case of drug users registration system ("narcological registration"), which is interlinked with health (narcological) care and other various legal restrictions (such as driving license or person's eligibility for a job in state service), which represents barrier for people who use drugs to contact addiction care.
9. Due to the geographical positioning of Central Asia as a transit route for drugs from Afghanistan to Europe, cross-border cooperation in data collection remains limited. Although efforts have been made to encourage collaboration, political tensions, and different national priorities hamper the development of integrated regional data-sharing mechanisms. This challenge is particularly pronounced when monitoring drug trafficking routes and patterns.

## 6. Conclusion and Closing Remarks

The technical assistance delivered under Result 2 of the CADAP Programme, which focused on improving information systems and data analysis across the Central Asian region, played a pivotal role in enhancing the capacity of national drug information systems. These efforts were crucial in fostering a more evidence-based approach to drug policy and intervention strategies. Through the implementation of advanced methodologies, training sessions, and collaborative frameworks, substantial progress was achieved in several key areas.

One of the significant accomplishments was the contribution towards adopting innovative data collection and analysis methodologies, such as the integration of social media and internet analysis and wastewater monitoring. These new approaches would provide participating countries with advanced tools to track drug use patterns and trends, particularly in relation to emerging threats such as New Psychoactive Substances (NPS).

Capacity-building initiatives were another cornerstone of the assistance provided. The workshops and training sessions conducted across the region elevated the expertise of national professionals, equipping them with the skills necessary to manage, analyse, and interpret drug-related data more effectively. These initiatives not only strengthened the technical capabilities of the countries but also promoted a more collaborative approach to drug data collection, involving both governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Despite these advancements, challenges remained in various areas, particularly concerning institutional coordination, the availability of reliable data, and the overall capacity for maintaining high-quality drug information systems. In some countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan), the national focal points (NFPs) are still to be formally established, and in those countries, where NFPs play a crucial role in gathering and disseminating drug-related data (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan), they require further support to fully realize their potential. Moreover, the need for more comprehensive data collection, especially regarding gender-sensitive and youth-related drug trends, was highlighted as an area requiring further development.

The challenges of resource constraints limit the capacity for widespread adoption of more advanced tools such as real-time data monitoring systems. The lack of reliable data on drug use in general populations, including hard-to-reach and vulnerable groups, pose a significant barrier to the development of targeted interventions. Additionally, the stigma surrounding drug use, particularly among women and People Who Inject Drugs (PWID), hinder the collection of accurate data, making it difficult to develop inclusive and humane drug policies.

To address these challenges, the report proposed several strategic recommendations, including the formalization and strengthening of the national focal points, enhanced cross-country cooperation, and the adoption of standardized data collection methodologies aligned with international standards. By focusing on the expansion of gender-sensitive data collection and incorporating emerging drug trends, such as synthetic drugs and NPS, countries could significantly improve their understanding of the drug landscape and create more targeted, evidence-based interventions.

Furthermore, fostering international partnerships, particularly with organizations such as the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), was emphasized as a critical step in ensuring that national efforts aligned with global best practices. Participation in international knowledge-sharing initiatives would enhance the regional response to drug-related issues, facilitating the exchange of expertise and resources necessary for long-term sustainability.

In conclusion, while the technical assistance under the CADAP Programme has laid a solid foundation for the development of more robust drug information systems, ongoing efforts are essential to ensure these improvements are sustained. Future initiatives should prioritize continuous capacity-building efforts, enhanced stakeholder engagement, and the integration of modern data collection technologies to address the evolving challenges of drug use in Central Asia. Through a combination of national dedication and international collaboration, the region is well-positioned to make further strides towards more effective and responsive drug monitoring and policy frameworks.



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