

THE PATH FORWARD

for effective public-private
partnerships in drug control



Summary and recommendations

This roadmap, rather than being a definitive guide, has sought to provide a potential route forward towards implementing some promising practices that can develop or sustain public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the drug control arena. The focus of this PPP roadmap guidance project was on three areas of action, specified and addressed individually. These included drug demand reduction, combatting narcotics trafficking and drug-related financial crime, and diversion of illicit chemicals. Stakeholders from all three areas consistently acknowledged that for effective partnerships, different actors should enjoy strong collaboration and recognize their individual roles and those of each other. Overall, effective solutions were deemed to necessitate multi-stakeholder cooperation in which a variety of public agencies have close and transparent working relationships with the private sector within the PPP framework.

This document has provided insights from which both governments and the private sector can begin to create, expand and/or sustain structured partnerships to address issues related to drug control. UNODC is committed to assisting in the further implementation of PPPs as an effective solution to drug-related crime and matching needs and opportunities for PPPs internationally.

Across the three working areas, some of the more general recommendations included:

- Ensure the terms of partnership/activity and expectations are clear between partners – written or otherwise recorded – and that the outcomes of the PPP are shared even if there is a failure to deliver, so that lessons can be learned and practices improved
- From the outset, it is important to establish a bounded framework on what can be done and said when it comes to any professional activity linked to the partnership
- Take time to build the partnership, putting the right measures in place for it to effectively contribute to successfully tackling the problem that birthed it, via collaboration and not competition
- Undertake the necessary communication to ensure a PPP can be maintained and developed over time, with regular contact between partners to ensure each feels valued and that they have a role and opportunity to contribute
- Ensure that the partnership takes steps to address the need/s of its financiers or funding partners without breaking its own terms
- Good and regular communication should encompass good reporting – ensuring accountability and done face-to-face if possible – and monitoring/evaluation procedures
- Variation in modes and methods of communication can be useful in extending the reach of a partnership's advocacy and engagement efforts – for example, combining one-to-one meetings with potential partners with fundraising events, written communication, and online/social media communications
- Within a PPP, well-known people and their organizations can be given a platform where their words will be well received by an audience that could encourage further engagement and support for the aims of the partnership
- This can also mean working to build respect for the PPP and its member organizations or partners, so that those funding it are happy to be connected to it
- Allow people to see and share the successes of the partnership by communicating this in “their” language
- It is incumbent on the organization/s receiving funds to try and communicate how the work being undertaken contributes to a professional response to the issue at hand, as well as meeting their own needs

Key recommendations

Drug supply and demand reduction

- It is crucial that the PPP's communication efforts are geared towards keeping prevention, treatment and recovery on the agendas of decision makers and lawmakers at local, regional and/or national levels
- Aligning funding and resources with the political and economic framework for action can help to ensure long-term sustainability of a partnership
- PPPs can unite stakeholders towards optimizing use of available resources and advocacy towards making proven, effective evidence-based practices more recognized and financially supported by those with funding or regulatory power
- At the same time, it is important to leave room for innovation in practices, a lack of which has been recognized in the prevention field, and to a lesser extent in the treatment field as well
- Stakeholders should develop clear and effective mechanisms to ensure the integrity of evidence used in practices, taking into account its biases, before it becomes guidance
- It is good practice for PPPs to assist in ensuring that regulatory or legal changes regarding evidence-based practices are communicated to the public for their consent and feedback, rather than decided upon solely between partners
- Digitization of services is a novel and fast-growing area to both prevention and treatment fields that can spark innovation in practices, but could benefit greatly from a regulatory framework including accountability and safeguarding the confidentiality of data
- PPPs should aim to install prevention, recovery and harm reduction processes simultaneously whilst gearing these programmes to the explicit needs of local communities and reversing the community impacts of substance misuse

Combatting the proceeds of narcotics trafficking

- PPPs can make investigations against illicit financial flows much more targeted, improving efficiency at detecting suspicious activity, and yielding highly specific outcomes
- Given that the level of information sharing across jurisdictions has a big impact on PPPs, there is a need to develop information-sharing systems and make them widely accessible, as well as to better utilize existing information-sharing mechanisms, such as the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Networks
- A strong partnership requires a legal framework to effectively share information between government institutions and large financial institutions who credit their involvement in the PPP with adding risk elements to their risk framework
- Different jurisdictions under differing legal codes and risk portfolios provide varied examples of appropriate/effective legal frameworks for sharing information; these should be considered the basis for further work
- Given capacity and jurisdiction differences, general and even specific typologies, and targeted information on patterns and trends, can all be important in putting together a risk picture relevant to give confidence to both private and public sector partners
- Such a partnership can effectively allow financial institutions and governments to better mitigate very high-risk sectors and jurisdictions with a feeling of comfort and security
- Supported by a strong legal framework, a joint investigative task force can be a hyper-efficient model for fast-tracking investigations straight through to their prosecution/recovery/sanctions stage



Diversion of precursors and non-scheduled chemicals

- Building trust and relationships between authorities and industry is one of the most important elements of successful PPP cooperation, whose cooperation arrangements can vary widely
- The open dialogue necessary for this should take the form of a two-way communication based on an open and continuous exchange of information between the public and private sector partners, to facilitate rapid response to risks and threats and prevent diversion
- Identifying suspicious orders and transactions is an integral part of this rapid response and requires timely and regular information sharing
- Single focal points are crucial in ensuring the success of PPPs, with a personal relationship between contact points in industry and authorities necessary to facilitate open and rapid communication
- Industry and law enforcement should make their priorities clear to each other, managing expectations and regularly consulting each other to clarify information to be shared and procedures to be changed
- Voluntary industry commitments have shown tangible benefits for all stakeholders, with industry complying with well-informed information requests from authorities
- Voluntary cooperation agreements often include managing confidentiality issues, as partners must trust that information shared is not passed on without consent
- Cooperation should be tailored to the national context, by seeing which actions are most appropriate for one jurisdiction, then which of those can be carried out with partners
- Some jurisdictions lack awareness on how to shape cooperation – in these, there is an acute need to share practices