



2024

ANNUAL REPORT





This annual report provides a comprehensive review of our policy advancements, strategic enforcement measures, and evidence-based prevention initiatives in 2024. With a data-driven approach and multisectoral collaboration, we continue to refine national drug control strategies, ensuring a more resilient and secure Trinidad and Tobago.

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LIST OF ACROYNMS	
ADAPP	Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme
ATI	Alternatives to Incarceration
CAPA	Crime and Problem Analysis Branch
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CCITS	Caribbean Counterdrug Intelligence Training School
CCM	Case Care Management
CICAD	Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission
CND	Commission on Narcotic Drugs
CSO	Central Statistical Office
COPOLAD	Cooperation Programme between Latin America, Caribbean and the European Union on Drugs and Policies
DIN TT	Drug Information Network of Trinidad and Tobago
DTC	Drug Treatment Centre
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EWS	Early Warning Systems
FIB	Financial Investigation Branch
FIUTT	Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago
FOCTALI	Strengthening Therapeutic Communities and Treatment Centers in Latin America and the Caribbean with Italian Support
GENLEA	Gender Equality in Counterdrug Law Enforcement Agencies
INCB	International Narcotics Control Board
NADAPP	National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme
NDCTT	National Drug Council Trinidad and Tobago
MEM	Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism
PRTU	Penal Reform and Transformation Unit
RSA	Rapid Situational Assessment
SERVOL	Service Volunteered for All
SSA	Strategic Services Agency
SIU	Special Investigations Unit

LIST OF ACROYNMS

THA	Tobago House of Assembly
TOR	Terms of Reference
TYC	Trinidad Youth Council
TOCU	Transnational Organized Crime Unit
UN	United Nations
UNDCP	United Nations Drug Control Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USC	University of the Southern Caribbean
UTT	University of Trinidad and Tobago
UWI	University of the West Indies
YTC	Youth Training Centre
YTEPP	Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme

CHAIR'S FOREWORD



It is my honour to present the Annual Report of the National Drug Council for 2024. This report provides an overview of our key initiatives, achievements, and the steps taken to strengthen national efforts in drug control, prevention, and rehabilitation.

Throughout 2024, we remained steadfast in our commitment to implementing evidence-based strategies that address the complex challenges of substance use and misuse. We have expanded prevention programs, improved access to treatment, and worked collaboratively to address the root causes of addiction. With a data-driven and people-

centred approach, we have prioritized education, recovery support, and policies that reduce harm while fostering long-term well-being.

While we celebrate the progress made, we recognize that our work is far from over. The fight against substance misuse requires a united effort—one that brings together government agencies, healthcare professionals, law enforcement, community organizations, and the people of Trinidad and Tobago. By strengthening our partnerships and remaining focused on sustainable solutions, we can continue to make meaningful strides toward a healthier and more resilient society.

As we look ahead to 2025, I am confident that the Council will build on its successes, advancing policies and programs that empower individuals and communities. With renewed dedication, we will navigate the challenges ahead, ensuring that every step we take moves us closer to a future where prevention, treatment, and support systems are accessible to all.

I extend my gratitude to our partners, stakeholders, and citizens who share in this mission. Your commitment and collaboration are the driving forces behind our progress. Let us move forward together, strengthening our collective resolve to create a society where every individual has the opportunity to lead a healthier, substance-free life.

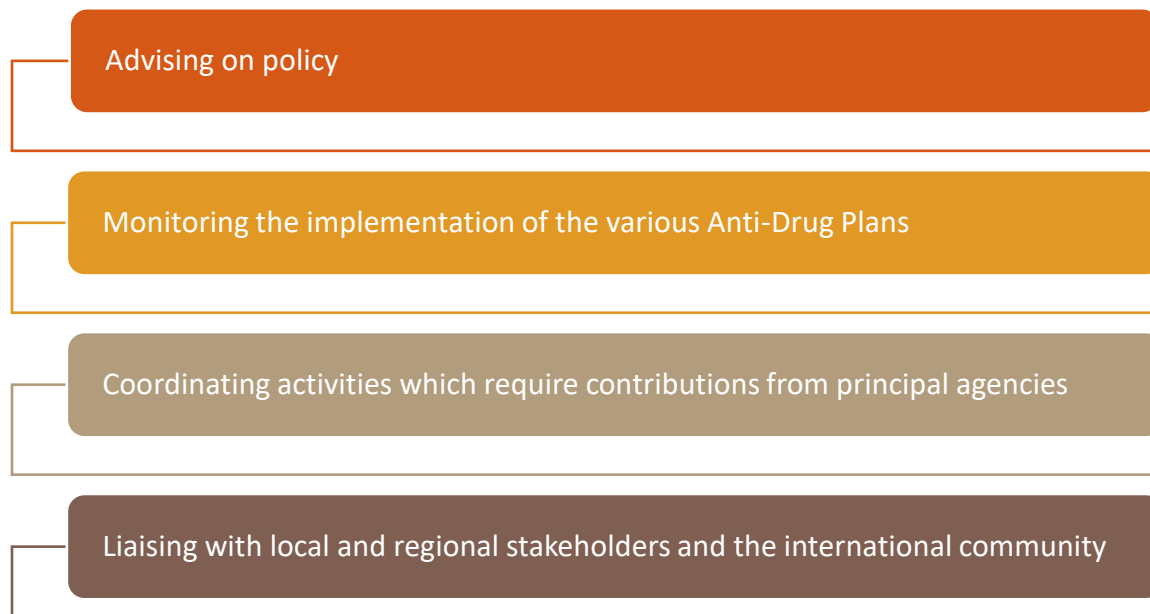
-Mrs. Jennifer Boucaud-Blake

OVER VIEW OF THE NATIONAL DRUG COUNCIL

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL DRUG COUNCIL

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) on July 5th, 2000, by Cabinet Minute #1231 established the National Drug Council. This was in alignment with the internationally recommended structure for a national entity with responsibility for overseeing the implementation of all aspects of drug control.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago established the Council with primary responsibility for:



The Cabinet approved Mandate is attached at **Appendix I**.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL DRUG COUNCIL TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The Council is composed of the highest decision-makers in agencies with responsibility for Drug Control. The Council is comprised of the Chair and thirteen (13) representatives from Ministries, drug demand and supply reduction agencies, non-governmental agencies (NGO), the Tobago House of Assembly (THA), and the business community. The current membership of the Council is attached at **Appendix II**.

MEETINGS OF THE NATIONAL DRUG COUNCIL

The Council hosted meetings both virtually and in person during the 2024 period, adapting to structural changes that made virtual meetings a more efficient option for members to convene and discuss ongoing multi-sectoral collaborative approaches to drug control matters. Further one in person meeting was hosted quarterly.

REPRESENTATIVE/ AGENCY ON THE COUNCIL	NUMBER OF MEETINGS ATTENDED	NUMBER OF MEETINGS EXCUSED
Chair	10	0
Director of Public Prosecution	1	9
Commissioner of Police	6	4
Executive Director, National Security Secretariat	7	3
Director, SSA	7	3
Director (Ag.) Financial Intelligence Unit (FIUTT)	7	3
Comptroller of Customs and Excise	5	5
Director, Multilateral Relations, Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs	7	3
Coordinator, NADAPP	10	0
Representative of the THA- Coordinator, Planning, and Development, Tobago House of Assembly	3	7
Manager, NDC Secretariat	10	0
CEO, Rebirth House	9	1
President, National Council on Alcohol and Other Addictions	10	0
Representative, chamber of Industry and Commerce	0	10
Representative of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services	7	3

THE NATIONAL DRUG COUNCIL SECRETARIAT

The NDC Secretariat was established in 2001 to implement the decisions of the Council, and to undertake all activities in fulfilment of the Council's Mandate. It functions as the operational arm of the Council.

The Secretariat remains under the supervision of Mrs. Cheryl St Louis-Felix, who assumed duties as Manager in February 2022. By December 2024, 100% of positions in the Secretariat were occupied.

The current staff positions are:

- **Manager**
- **Programme Officer**
- **Research Specialist**
- **Research Assistant**
- **Business Operations Assistant II**
- **Business Operations Assistant I**
- **Policy Analyst Trainee (OJT)**
- **Communications Assistant (OJT)**
- **Driver / Courier**

The Research Specialist proceeded on leave from July 2024 – March 2025. Additional human resources were made available during 2024 through the acquisition of two (2) On-The-Job (OJT) Training Programme employees who assumed duty as Policy Analyst Trainee and Communications Assistant. The Programme Officer assumed duty in December 2024. Additionally, the unit benefited from a practicum student from the University of the Southern Caribbean (USC) who joined the unit for a period of 6 weeks in October 2024 and functioned as technical support.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2024 Annual Report of the National Drug Council of Trinidad and Tobago (NDCTT) highlights the organization's accomplishments, challenges, and strategic progress over the past year. NDCTT remained steadfast in its commitment to overseeing the implementation of the National Drug Policy and the Operational Plan for Drug Control in Trinidad and Tobago (2021–2025), a core mandate throughout 2024.

A key focus for the NDCTT Secretariat was the emphasis on Monitoring the implementation to ensure the effective execution of the Operational Plan, particularly in light of the fact that this drug plan comes to an end in early 2025. One of the major goals for 2024, was to enhance M&E capacity across the thematic pillars and improve the efficiency of monitoring the National Drug Plan 2021–2025.

With the rebranding of the National Drug Council Trinidad and Tobago in 2023, it was further highlighted by new initiatives such as the introduction of podcast episodes to increase awareness of the NDC TT and its goals and objectives. This rebranding reflects the organization's commitment to enhancing collaboration with national stakeholders and underscores its adaptability in addressing emerging challenges within the drug control landscape.

Further, the NDC TT continued the operational development of the Drug Information Network of Trinidad and Tobago (DIN-TT). This included convening the Technical Committee and Stakeholder group quarterly meetings. The DIN-TT was able to publish its 10th Annual Report in 2024, while exploring areas for expansion.

For 2024, a number of workshops, webinars and trainings were held with international partners, namely OAS/CICAD and COPOLAD that provided training and information opportunities for participants in drug-related matters. These strengthened existing partnerships, fostered new collaborations, and broadened the institutional knowledge of the NDC and its partner agencies.

In addition, to these key highlights, this Annual Report will highlight other areas of accomplishments according to the varying thematic areas of the Operational Plan for Drug Control in Trinidad and Tobago.

OVER VIEW OF HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

As we reflect on the year 2024, the National Drug Council is proud to share the significant strides we have made in advancing our mandate. This year has been marked by collaborative efforts, innovative initiatives, and a steadfast commitment to addressing the evolving challenges of substance use and its impact on society.

In 2024, we have achieved key milestones that underscore our ongoing dedication to evidence-based policy development, prevention, and treatment programs. From strengthening partnerships with national and international organizations to launching new research-driven initiatives, our work has focused on creating a holistic approach to drug prevention, treatment, and harm reduction.

These achievements are the result of the tireless work of our team, stakeholders, and the broader community working together toward common goals.



2024 HIGHLIGHTS

1. PODCAST SERIES



Picture 1: Set for podcast episodes

The National Drug Council Trinidad and Tobago, expanded its public awareness strategy in 2024 by launching a podcast series, providing a platform for experts, policymakers, and affected individuals to discuss drug prevention, mental health, rehabilitation, and law enforcement strategies. This podcast series, created in recognition of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking 2024. Its intent is to strengthen action and cooperation to achieve a world free of drug abuse. The podcast series features six episodes that cover various critical topics, including synthetic drugs, mental health, and the illicit production of drugs, reinforcing the Council's commitment to public education and informed dialogue on drug-related issues.

The series aims to raise awareness of these important issues in a more accessible and engaging format by involving subject matter professionals in casual discussions. This helps bridge the gap between policy frameworks and the everyday experiences of the public. Key stakeholders and individuals with success stories, contributed to advancing the National Drug Council's (NDC TT) mission as a critical point of contact for efforts in both demand and supply reduction. This podcast series will contribute in educating the public about the NDCTT's objectives and initiatives. The intent is to engage a broader audience and foster a better understanding of the Council's work.

Episode 1 Breaking the Stigma

"Not all experimentation can lead to addiction, but all addiction has been because of experimentation." In the first episode of our podcast, we dive into the deep-rooted stigma

surrounding addiction and how it affects the society as a whole, individuals, communities, and workplaces. What is addiction? We speak with mental health advocates who shed light on this sensitive topic. From the hesitation to seek help to the harmful stereotypes that prevent open dialogue, the discussion highlights the importance in fostering understanding, empathy, and support. Listeners are given practical tips on how to challenge stigma in their own lives and contribute to a more accepting, compassionate society, one where we can recognize when there is a problem of addiction and treat with it, rather than ridicule others.

Episode 2 Breaking Bad Business

This episode deals with the complex and multifaceted challenges posed by the global drug trade and the innovative strategies used to combat this pervasive issue. Experts from the Trinidad and Tobago police service, International Affairs Bureau and the Financial Intelligence unit share the various ways these sectors collaborate to tackle this issue of illicit drug trade and the role the increase in technological advancements plays in adding to the challenges faced.

Episode 3 Mental Health Matters

This episode delves into the crucial connection between mental health and overall well-being. We explore the challenges faced when it comes to maintaining good mental health, particularly in high-pressure environments. Mental health professionals share their expertise, offering advice on managing stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues. Additionally, we enlist the thoughts of the youth on this episode, ensuring that all voices are being represented. This episode also highlights the importance of destigmatizing therapy, self-care, and emotional wellness. Tune in for an inspiring discussion on why mental health truly matters and how to prioritize it in our daily lives. This episode all looks at the distinction between mental health, which refers to our psychological, emotional and social well-being, while mental illness impairs how an individual think and behaves, this can manifest in illnesses such as schizophrenia, post-traumatic stress disorder or bi-polar disorder. From virtual therapy options to new research on wellness, this episode highlights how innovation is revolutionizing mental health practices.

Episode 4 Innovative Approaches

In our fourth episode, we explore the cutting-edge strategies and technologies that are changing the way we approach the growing drug surge, from detection to identification, in the age of technological advancements, devices such as the handheld Raman spectrometer aid authorities in being able to test suspected items on site and determine if they require further analysis at a lab. We speak with industry experts from forensics and the Trinidad and Tobago police department who are driving these changes and discuss the potential of these advancements in identifying new and emerging drugs.

Episode 5 Synthetic Drugs

In this episode, we explore the growing concern of synthetic drugs and their impact on individuals, families, and communities. We delve into the science behind these substances, the

reasons they've become more prevalent, and the serious health risks they pose. With insights from specialists, we aim to understand the devastating effects of these new and emerging drugs and the steps that are being taken to combat this national surge, at the ground level as well as from a policy level, with the amendments to the Dangerous Drugs Act to include these new and emerging drugs to ensure the chemical components that are used to create these drugs are detectable.

Episode 6 Success Stories

In the final episode of the season, we celebrate resilience and recovery by sharing powerful success stories. From overcoming addiction to triumphing over mental health challenges, our guest shares a personal journey of transformation and the role the rehabilitation centers play in recovery. We also hear from professionals in the supply reduction and demand reduction, who offer guidance on how to support others in their own paths to success. If you're looking for motivation or a reminder of the potential for growth and healing, this episode is a heartwarming listen. Recovery and rehabilitation are not solely in the hands of the addict, rather it is a collaborative effort, utilizing the services of the rehabilitation facilities as well as support from family and community and law enforcement.

Through these initiatives, we intend to increase the awareness of the NDC TT and to engage the public on social media platforms, below is a breakdown of the increased engagement across social media for the 2024 period.

2. THE NATIONAL DRUG POLICY AND OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR DRUG CONTROL 2021-2025



Picture 2: The Honourable, Dr. Terrence Deyalsingh, M.P, Minister of Health (left), and the Honourable Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds, Minister of National Security, M.P, (right) at the unveiling of the National Drug Policy operational plan 2021-2025

The National Drug Policy and the Operational Plan 2021-2025 outline the programme of action to be pursued by relevant state agencies to address the problems created by and associated with, the use of illicit drugs, illicit production, trafficking and distribution of drugs in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. These sought to address the complex issue of drug control through a

balanced and multi-pronged approach which prioritizes the promotion of a healthy and safe environment for the people of this country, and further aims to reverse the negative impact of drug trafficking, other related criminal activities and the use of licit and illicit drugs on the physical, social and economic well-being of all citizens.

The National Drug Policy is firmly anchored in the objectives, key principles and policies of the international conventions, as well as the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago's, Vision 2030 National Development Strategy (NDS), and the Roadmap for Trinidad and Tobago: Transforming to a new economy and a new society. Each facet of the drug problem:– production, trafficking, and use - impacts national development because of the many risk factors which contribute to the potential impact of drugs on individuals, communities, and society as a whole. The NDS and Roadmap documents provide the overarching national development framework for action to mitigate this negative impact. It is in this context that the Policy and the activities elaborated in the Operational Plan balance the public health/ people-centered approach to drug control with the need to enhance initiatives to reduce the impact of the trade in illicit drugs, and its associated activities, on national security and other sectors.

The Drug Policy is also aligned with the Ministry's strategic mission to advance national development by creating a safer and more secure society through collaboration among stakeholders and strengthened inter-agency structures and systems. As a consequence, the policy is hinged on the focal areas which include:

- I. Control Measures.**
- II. Supply Reduction**
- III. Demand Reduction**
- IV. Research**
- V. Institutional Strengthening and International Cooperation**

The Operational Plan for Drug Control 2021-2025 is outlined under the five (5) above-mentioned focal areas, each with a logic model outlining the goal, inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes.

The Steering Committee for the Operational Plan for Drug Control for Trinidad and Tobago

The Steering Committee is tasked with guiding the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Operational Plan 2021-2025 of Trinidad and Tobago. Primarily, the Steering Committee was established to provide oversight and guidance for the efficient implementation of the Action Plans of the various Pillars, and increase the opportunities for policy and programme success through close alignment with the organizational goals of all stakeholders. The Steering Committee comprised the following representatives:

- **All Pillar Leads and Co-Leads**
- **A member of the National Drug Council**
- **A representative of the Tobago House of Assembly**
- **A representative of the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit- MNS**
- **A representative of the Corporate Communications Unit – MNS**
- **A representative of the NGO Community**

2024 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

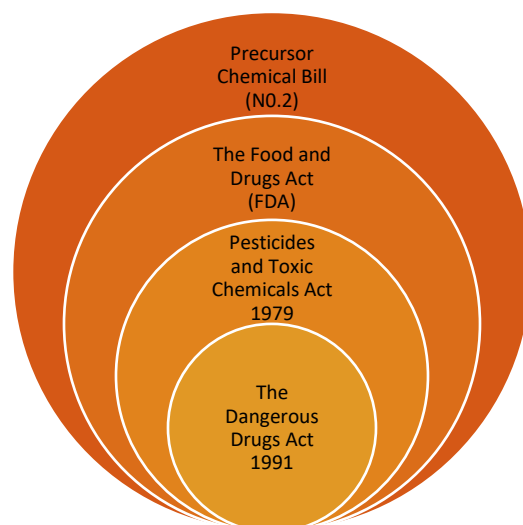
1. POLICY DEVELOPMENT & LEGISLATIVE ADVANCES

The Precursor Chemicals (No. 2) Bill 2014 was introduced in the Senate in 2014 by the then Minister of National Security. Subsequently, the Bill was laid in the House of Representatives and debate on it commenced, however Parliament was dissolved and the Bill lapsed. The Dangerous Drugs Act, the Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Act, and the Food and Drugs Act currently provide limited measures to regulate precursor chemicals. However, these frameworks are insufficient to address emerging threats and do not fully align with international best practices.

In 2024 the National Drug Council Trinidad and Tobago in partnership with other government stakeholders such as the Office of the Attorney General, the Customs and Excise Division, the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance, in response to the growing concerns on the misuse of precursor chemicals in the illicit production of drugs continued building upon the previous framework and explored the reintroduction of the Precursor Chemical Bill. Precursor Chemicals are essential components in the manufacture of illicit drugs such as cocaine, heroin, and synthetic narcotics. These substances, while often used in legitimate industrial and commercial activities, have been increasingly diverted for illegal purposes.

The Policy and legislation are designed to strengthen the control, monitoring, and regulation of precursor chemicals to combat illicit drug manufacturing and trafficking, in alignment with Trinidad and Tobago's international obligations.

The policy also includes provisions for greater cooperation between law enforcement agencies and chemical suppliers, as well as the establishment of more robust reporting systems for the movement of precursor chemicals. By targeting the supply chain of illicit drug production at an earlier stage, this new bill is positioned to complement and enhance ongoing efforts to curb the prevalence of drug-related crimes and protect public health.



2. PREVENTION & PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

Run, Walk, Crawl (Collaboration with Rebirth House and NADAPP)

In recognition of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) International Committee for the International Day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking Rebirth house held its annual Run, walk or crawl, a 7k against drug abuse, this year's theme was *"The evidence is clear: Invest in Prevention"*. The event was geared towards educational awareness, community development and the establishment of new relationships with key stakeholders.

All youth groups, children's homes, non-governmental organizations and other rehab centres are invited to the Rebirth House sports and family day, promoting healthy and drug-free fun and entertainment.



Picture 4: Pamphlets and other informative booklets that were available to the public at the annual Run, Walk, Crawl.



Picture 3: CEO of Rebirth House Ms. Neela Birjah and staff at an outreach event

Apart from being a fun venture, the event is also a fund-raiser to help finance Rebirth Houses' ongoing charitable operations throughout the year and bring awareness to the center.

Restorative Justice Week 2024

Restorative justice is an approach adopted by the Prison Service in Trinidad and Tobago that aims to repair harm caused by crime through facilitating communication between victims and offenders, allowing offenders to take responsibility for their actions, and providing opportunities for community involvement, with the goal of restoring relationships and reducing re-offending rates; this philosophy is considered a key part of penal policy and practice in the country, with initiatives like the "Sycamore Tree Project" actively implementing restorative justice principles within prisons.

Key points about restorative justice:

- **Government endorsement:**

The Trinidad and Tobago government has officially adopted restorative justice as a guiding concept for penal policy, based on recommendations from the task force on prison reform.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE WEEK
NOV 18-22, 2024
CRIME HURTS; JUSTICE MUST HEAL

The Trinidad & Tobago Prison Service, in collaboration with the Penal Reform & Transformation Unit of the Ministry of National Security, joins the international community in celebration of Restorative Justice Week 2024 (RJW2024), by hosting a series of events. These events are intended to raise awareness about RJ and its potential to promote healing and restoration.

Monday 18
 Panel Discussion
 Prisons Sports Club
 9:00a.m. - 12 noon
 'Crime Hurts; Justice Must Heal'
 Sycamore Tree Graduation Ceremony
 Prisons Sports Club
 1:30p.m. - 2:30p.m.

Tuesday 19
 Debate
 Prisons Combined Debate Team vs Cipriani Labour College
 Prisons Sports Club
 3:00p.m. - 4:30p.m.
 'Be it resolved that criminal charges should be brought against minors who commit serious bodily harm against others instead of the use of Progressive Discipline'

Wednesday 20
Outreach Program
 Inmates' visit to Five Rivers Secondary School

Thursday 21
 Gospel Concert & Award Ceremony
 Golden Grove Parade Square
 1:00p.m. - 4:00p.m.
 All members of staff are invited

Friday 22
Open Market - Made in Prison
 Brian Lara Promenade, POS
 9:00a.m. - 5:00p.m.

Visit our social media platforms for more on RJW2024

- **Victim-offender mediation:**

A central aspect of restorative justice in T&T is facilitating meetings between victims and offenders to allow for open dialogue, understanding of the impact of the crime, and potential for offender accountability.

- **Community involvement:**

Restorative justice aims to involve the community in addressing crime by providing opportunities for offenders to make amends through community service or other restorative actions.

- **Focus on rehabilitation:**

The philosophy emphasizes the rehabilitation of offenders by encouraging them to take responsibility for their actions and work towards positive change.



Picture 5: Showcasing the contributions of inmates of the Maximum-Security Prison for Restorative Justice Week.

3. RESEARCH & DATA INSIGHTS

As we continue to navigate the complex landscape of drug use and its impact on our communities, the National Drug Council remains committed to advancing evidence-based approaches to drug control. Central to this commitment is the understanding that effective policy development hinges on sound, rigorous research.

Research plays a pivotal role in shaping policies that not only address current challenges but also anticipate future trends. It provides the empirical foundation necessary for informed decision-making, ensuring that interventions are both targeted and effective. By integrating the latest findings into our policy development process, we can identify emerging issues, evaluate the effectiveness of existing strategies, and enhance our collective ability to respond to the evolving dynamics of drug use and abuse.

In this annual report, we highlight the crucial role of research in driving meaningful policy change. We reflect on key initiatives supported by research, and reaffirm our commitment to using evidence to guide the way forward. Through continued collaboration with researchers, experts, and communities, we aim to craft policies that not only address the immediate needs of individuals affected by drug use but also build a sustainable foundation for future generations.

Together, we can ensure that our policies are grounded in knowledge, rooted in the best available evidence, and aligned with the health and safety goals of our society.

Synthetic Drugs Study



In partnership with OAS/CICAD, Trinidad and Tobago has undertaken a study to understand the rise of synthetic drugs in the region. Synthetic drugs, as opposed to natural drugs, are chemically produced in a laboratory. Their chemical structure can be either identical to or different from naturally occurring drugs, and their effects are designed to mimic or even enhance those of natural drugs. Trinidad and Tobago is situated in a unique transshipment

area, where drugs are shipped from Europe and Africa to the United States and vice versa. Synthetic drug consumption has remained small-scale in Latin America and the Caribbean, partially due to a lack of an established consumer market for opioids. The consumption of plant-based drugs such as marijuana and cocaine pave the way for increased synthetic drug use in the population.

Synthetic drugs offer criminals unique advantages, predominantly, lower operational costs, reduced risk of detection and fewer barriers to production.

The first methamphetamine laboratory in Trinidad and Tobago was located and dismantled after an extensive intelligence-led operation in partnership with US law enforcement by the Special Branch Unit officers in August 2023 in south Trinidad. During this raid they discovered a quantity of cash, precursor chemicals, such as boxes of Panadol cold and flu and crystals of varying sizes resembling methamphetamine. Thereafter in 2024 according to data received from the Trinidad and Tobago police service marijuana and cocaine were the top seized drugs. Among the synthetic drugs ecstasy (MDMA) followed by methamphetamine, ketamine and synthetic cathinone (MDPV) were the main seizures.

The development of new synthetic drugs poses a significant challenge to regulatory bodies, public health, law enforcement, and the medical community. These substances are often more potent and unpredictable than their natural counterparts, leading to a higher risk of adverse effects, including overdose and death.



Figure 1: Table showing the areas of eradication exercises for 2024 by the TTPS.

4. LAW ENFORCEMENT & BORDER SECURITY

Maritime Narco-Trafficking Meeting

In 2024 Trinidad and Tobago had the pleasure of chairing in the Maritime Narco-Trafficking Meeting in collaboration with OAS. This meeting provides a forum for OAS member states to exchange information and best practices to counter maritime and riverine drug trafficking. The group aims to foster inter-institutional, regional and international cooperation. Key issues highlighted include, submersibles and synthetic drugs.

The aim of these meetings was:

- a. Provide a forum for the exchange of best practices on the control of maritime and riverine drug trafficking in OAS member states;
- b. Support OAS member states to increase their maritime and riverine interdiction capacities; and
- c. Foster interagency, regional, and international cooperation.



Picture 6: OAS/CICAD 2024 Meeting in Trinidad and Tobago with experts on maritime narcotrafficking.



Picture 7: OAS/CICAD 2024 Meeting in Trinidad and Tobago with experts on maritime narcotrafficking.

OVERVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL COOPERATIONS

In 2024, COPOLAD continued its commitment to strengthening international cooperation and advancing the global fight against drug trafficking and abuse by sponsoring a series of high-level technical meetings. These gatherings served as crucial platforms for professionals, policymakers, and experts in the field of drug control to collaborate, share knowledge, and develop effective strategies.

These meetings brought together stakeholders from diverse regions, allowing for the exchange of best practices, the review of emerging trends, and the implementation of collaborative solutions to global drug control challenges. COPOLAD's sponsorship facilitated access to specialized training sessions and expert-led discussions, in total 141 persons participated in the various meetings and training sessions.

By fostering cooperation and capacity-building, these meetings played a significant role in advancing the shared objectives of reducing the production, trafficking, and consumption of illegal drugs.



INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL COOPERATIONS

In 2024, continuing on previously forged relationships the NDCTT continued its work with the Cooperation Programme between Latin America, Caribbean and the European Union on Drugs and Policies (COPOLAD) and the Organization of American States, Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (OAS/CICAD).

Building on the progress made in the previous stages, COPOLAD III continued to promote technical cooperation as well as political dialogue between Latin America, the Caribbean and the EU, to support the region in the implementation of more effective drug policies and with results that substantially improve the lives of people and, especially, of the most vulnerable.



Picture 8: Delegates of the COPOLAD Annual Meeting in Bolivia 2024

Gender in the Criminal Justice: Alternatives to Incarceration for Drug-Related Offenses



Picture 9: COPOLAD Meeting for Gender in the Criminal Justice System

Through the “**Gender in the Criminal Justice System**” project, in collaboration with the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), the Executive Secretariat of CICAD seeks to generate data, raise awareness, and build capacity to promote the design and implementation of gender-sensitive alternatives to incarceration (ATI) programs and policies in OAS Member States.

In September 2024, COPOLAD hosted an in-person session to sensitize the various stakeholders on this pertinent topic, this included representatives from Probations, Judiciary, Youth Ambassadors, Inter – Religious Organizations as well as the NDC. The session was geared towards understanding the challenges faced in the region in implementing such policies as well as a sensitization to stakeholders.

It is expected that ATI policies and programs that consider the particular gender-based circumstances and needs of individuals will be more effective and contribute to better rehabilitation outcomes, as well as lower incarceration and recidivism, especially in women.

The objectives of the program are:

- Increase awareness and understanding of the gender dimensions of drug-related crime and criminal justice.
- Generate data and knowledge to understand how justice systems incorporate a gender perspective when offering ATIs for drug-related offenses.
- Identify and disseminate good practices for the incorporation of the gender perspective into ATI, legislation, policies, and programs.
- Support the design and implementation of gender-sensitive ATI policies and programs for drug-related offenses.
- Promote inter-institutional coordination, and coordination with civil society organizations and the academic sector for the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of ATIs that include a gender perspective.

There has been a notable rise in the proportion of women incarcerated in Latin America and the Caribbean, frequently due to drug-related offenses.

Traditionally, however, few of the responses or interventions that tackle the consequences of drugs include tangible components and solutions that address gender imbalances in access to justice and services and other issues that may impact individuals differentially based on their gender.



Picture 10: Delegates from various stakeholder agencies participate in the OAS/CICAD forum for Gender in the Criminal Justice system in Trinidad and Tobago 2024

Strengthening Therapeutic Communities and Treatment Centers in Latin America and the Caribbean with Italian Support (FOCTALI)



Picture 11: Delegates participate in an in person tour of the facilities in San Patrignano, which is a community that welcomes those suffering from drug addiction and marginalization.

Foctali promotes innovative approaches for the effective socio-occupational integration of justice-involved individuals with substance use disorders, presenting opportunities for the development of programs that are culturally, age and gender sensitive. This program supports the exchange of good practices, and facilitates knowledge-sharing and international cooperation on social integration among member states and the San Patrignano Therapeutic Community, a key expert in the area from Italy.

It offers examples of educational opportunities and trainings tailored to strengthening the life skills and employability of people involved in social integration programs. In particular, the development of individualized plans centered on the participants of programs, seeks to enhance both their employability and resilience as a way of ensuring their effective recovery and social integration.

It also supports the inclusion of a monitoring and evaluation component in social-occupational programs and provides training and assistance in the design of indicators and data collection mechanisms in socio-occupational integration programs.

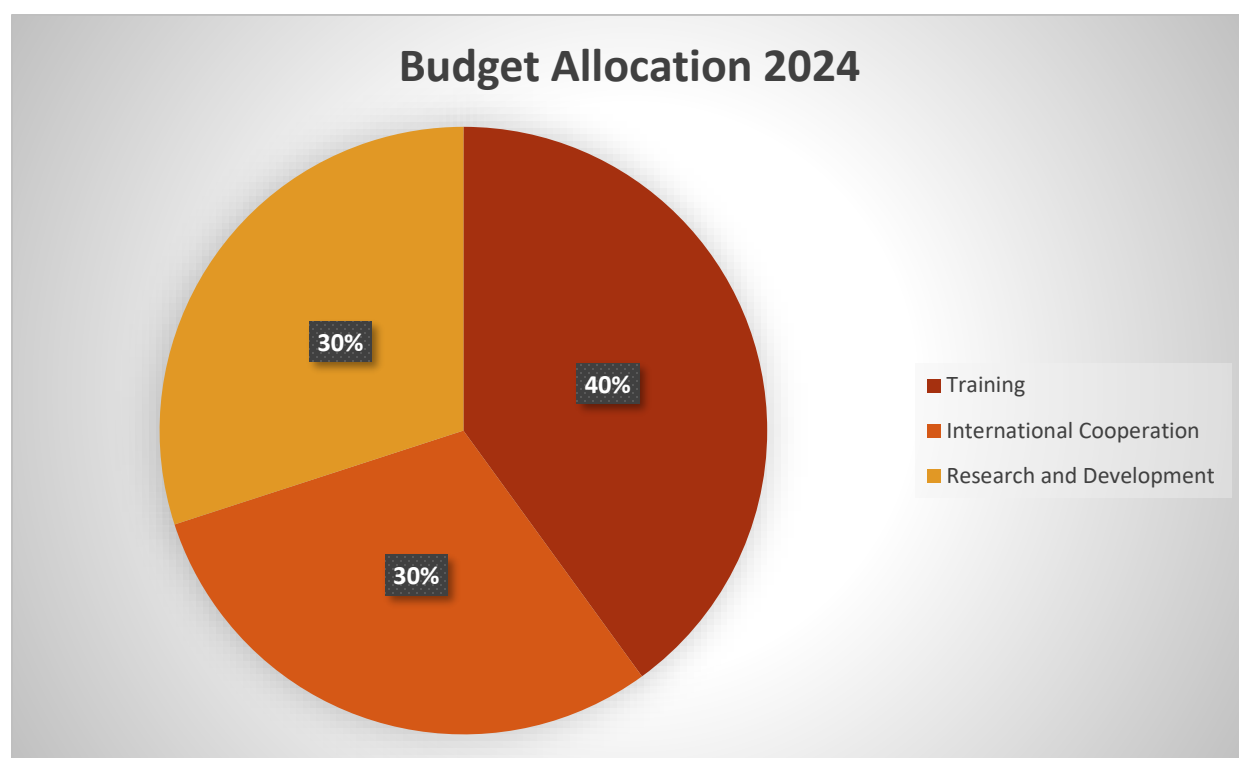
FOCTALI also participates in international dialogue on socio-occupational integration, presenting guidelines on best practices to decision makers and key stakeholders in the field.

FINANCIAL REPORT AND BUDGET OVERVIEW

The budget for the fiscal year 2024 was designed to support the strategic priorities of the NDCTT, focusing on growth, innovation, and financial sustainability. It was aligned with the long-term objectives and set with the aim to effectively allocate resources across key initiatives.

The total budget for 2024 was \$300,00.00 TT Dollars, allocated as follows: 40% for training, 30% for research and development, and 30% for international cooperation.

Overall, the 2024 budget allowed the organization to remain financially strong despite some challenges, and we are well-positioned to pursue growth opportunities in the coming year.



COMMUNICATIONS

The social media report was conducted for the Ministry of National Security's National Drug Council. The social media platforms evaluated were the department's TikTok and Facebook pages respectively for the months of October to December 2024. This report covers an overall evaluation of the social media channels as well as independent analyses of the TikTok and Facebook pages that carefully assess topics like demographics, engagement, target audience and overall statistics.

The research and investigation were relevant since the NDC looked to social media networks as a platform to increase awareness about the effects of drug abuse by enabling communication with and between people who use drugs. The National Drug Council also believes that social media can be utilized as a tool to discourage the sale and abuse of illicit drugs through digital media campaigns that provide new information on all drug-related initiatives, raising awareness of the harmful effects of drug abuse and most importantly promoting healthy lifestyles.

The National Drug Council is using both its TikTok and Facebook pages to conduct drug abuse awareness, utilizing awareness-raising messages on drug-related risks. Globalization and commerce rely on technological advancements and digitalization. Social media platforms and e-commerce have the potential to facilitate illegal activities if their usage is not monitored and managed. To prevent more criminal offenses from occurring online, social media campaigns that are designed to pursue the reduction of the illicit trafficking of drugs are increasingly important.

WAY FORWARD 2025

As we reflect on the achievements of the past year, it is equally important to focus on the path ahead. The "Way Forward 2025" section of this report outlines the strategic goals and initiatives that will guide our efforts as we continue to grow, innovate, and create lasting impact. Our commitment to excellence, sustainability, and inclusivity will remain at the forefront of our endeavors.

This section provides insight into the key priorities, upcoming projects, and the collaborative approach that will drive our success in the coming years. Together, we are building a strong foundation for the future, ensuring that NDCTT remains a leader in its field and continues to serve the needs of our community.

ANNUAL REPORT ROADMAP 2025***National Drug Council***

• Coordinating the consultation and drafting of the New Plan for 2026-2030 as the present plan expires.

• The NDC, supported by the Secretariat will explore the following key activities for 2025:

• Continued awareness to the public through forums such as the posting of podcast episodes

• 9th round of MEM

• Finalization of the Precursor Chemical Control Bill to enhance regulations on illicit drug manufacturing.

• Developing the New Drug Plan and Policy

• Strengthening law enforcement intelligence sharing to combat drug trafficking.

• Enhancing treatment and rehabilitation services, through NADAPP

• Coordinating train, the trainers to ensure prevention programmes meet the vulnerable by NADAPP

• Increasing international collaboration, securing new partnerships for funding and technical assistance.

• Strengthening Cross-Sectoral Collaboration- from Youth, business community and blind, deaf and dumb

• Enhancing Data-Driven Decision Making

• Expanding Public Awareness and Education Campaigns on the National Drug Plan

• Strengthen the implementation of alternative to incarceration programs such as Case Care Management

CONCLUSION

This Annual Report highlights the National Drug Council's ongoing commitment to overseeing the implementation of the National Drug Policy and Operational Plan 2021-2025. Despite facing challenges, the Council remains focused on moving forward, working closely with stakeholders, and advocating for research-driven policies and legislation. A key priority for the Council's work was the monitoring of the implementation of the Operational Plan. Monitoring the achievements will be thoroughly addressed and completed during the first quarter of 2025.

We recognize that despite our progress, there remain areas which needed more focus. We recognize that challenges persist in certain sectors, such as the timely implementation of some programmes and the need for enhanced inter-agency collaboration. These areas of shortfall are not obstacles but opportunities for growth and refinement as we move forward.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all our stakeholders for their continued support and collaboration. Looking to the future, we are excited about the new initiatives that will build on our successes and address the remaining challenges. The upcoming projects aim to strengthen prevention and treatment programs, expand our outreach efforts, and continue advocating for policies that will have a long-lasting impact on the drug control. With continued dedication and a collective effort from all stakeholders, we are confident that we can make even greater strides in the year to come.

As we move forward into 2025, we remain committed to building on these successes, ensuring that our efforts continue to be driven by the latest research and guided by the voices of those who are directly impacted by drug use. Together, we will continue to innovate and drive progress toward a healthier, safer future for all.

APPENDIX I

MANDATE OF THE NATIONAL DRUG COUNCIL OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

- Monitor and evaluate the progress made during the implementation of the National Anti-Drug Plan, relative to both demand and supply reduction and make appropriate recommendations.
- Advise Government on all related sectorial plans and budgets for implementation of the projects, programmes and interventions in the Plan.
- Serve as the point of contact between Demand and Supply Reduction sectors locally, regionally and in the hemisphere.
- Maintain a performance matrix of the implementation of all Plans of Action to which Trinidad and Tobago is obligated under various international initiatives and advise Government accordingly.
- Serve as the National Co-coordinating Entity (NCE) for the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) process as required by CICAD (this committee might also be regarded as the nucleus of the National Commission).
- To perform all other activities relevant to the formulation, development, co-ordination and monitoring of national strategies and plans against illegal narcotics supply and demand.

APPENDIX II

THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL DRUG COUNCIL AS AT
DECEMBER 31ST, 2024

Mrs. Jennifer Boucaud-Blake	Chairperson
Mrs. Erla Harewood- Christopher	Commissioner of Police Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, Ministry of National Security
Brigadier General (ret'd) Anthony W J Phillips Spencer	Director, Strategic Services Agency, Ministry of National Security
Mr. Roger Gaspard	Director of Public Prosecutions
Mrs. Gillian Gellizeau-Menzies	CEO, National Security Council, Secretariat, Office of the Prime Minister
Ms. Yasmin Harris	Comptroller of Customs and Excise, Ministry of Finance
Mr. Garvin Pettier	Director, Multilateral Relations Division, Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs
Mr. Nigel Stoddard	Director, Financial Intelligence Unit, Ministry of Finance
Ms. Lisa Ifill	Senior Planning Officer, Ministry of Social Development and Family Services
Mr. Bobby Andrews	Planning Coordinator, Representative, Tobago House of Assembly
Ms. Lyra Hollingsworth-Thompson	Coordinator, National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme, Ministry of Health
Mr. Philip Ryan	President, Trinidad and Tobago National Council on Alcoholism and Other Addictions
Mr. John Aboud	Representative, Chamber of Industry and Commerce
Ms. Neela Birjah	CEO, Rebirth House
Mrs. Cheryl Ann St. Louis-Felix	Manager, NDC Secretariat