

# MEAL Program Report

Central American and Caribbean Games  
San Salvador 2023

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## Acknowledgments

The WADA team tasked with overseeing the support provided to the 2023 Central American and Caribbean Games (CACG) in the context of the Major Events Anti-Doping Legacy (MEAL) Program was composed of Valentin Capelli, MEAL Sport Movement Relations and Program Manager, and Juan Manuel Lauria, Latin America Office Manager. The team would like to thank the Centro Caribe Sport (CCS), San Salvador 2023 Local Organizing Committee (COSSAN), Pan-American Regional Anti-Doping Organization (PAN RADO), Instituto Nacional de los Deportes de El Salvador (INDES) for their support, their warm welcome and the quality of their work.

Special thanks to Manuel Villalobos (Executive Director of PAN RADO) for his cooperation and commitment, which was key to the success of the program. Our gratitude is extended to other members of the Pre-Games Coordination Committee: Dr. Milton Pinedo (CCS Medical Commission member), Jonathan Iglesias (COSSAN), Dr. Rafael Morales (INDES), Dr. Anabel Pinedo (CCS Medical Commission member) and Dr. Sasha Sutherland (Caribbean RADO Executive Director) for their invaluable commitment and contributions.

Finally, the team would also like to thank the various members of the Sample Collection Personnel (SCP team), the education team, as well as the volunteers, for their effort, dedication, and creativity in fulfilling all their responsibilities during the Games.

## Executive Summary

Through the MEAL program, WADA provided support to the anti-doping program of the 2023 CACG that took place in San Salvador, El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic, from 23 June to 8 July 2023. 36 sports, 36 National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and more than 4.500 athletes participated.

In early 2023, WADA and CCS agreed to cooperate through the MEAL Program to support the implementation of the anti-doping program for the 2023 Games, which COSSAN had delegated to PAN RADO.

The objective of the program's intervention was to assist and support the development and implementation of a Code-Compliant anti-doping program at the Games, the capacity building of the relevant stakeholders involved, as well as the strengthening of their long-term anti-doping legacy.

In order to accomplish this, a Coordination Committee composed of representatives from the relevant organizations was established. Members included officials from the Major Event Organizer (CCS), the Local Organizing Committee (COSSAN), the NADO of the Games' host country (INDES), PAN RADO, and WADA in an advisory capacity. In addition, a member of the CAR RADO was also included in the work of the group to increase the legacy for the region.

The Coordination Committee supported the work of PAN RADO to develop activities to be carried out for the benefit of 20 ADOs<sup>1</sup> in the region.

As part of the support offered through the MEAL Program, WADA attended the Coordination Committee meetings and was present at the Games to provide guidance on several program areas. This cooperation proved to be very fruitful, as it contributed to enhance the quality of the Games' anti-doping program, while simultaneously increasing the capacity of the different organizations involved.

In a spirit of progression for future events, the team would like to make important recommendations on some challenges encountered before and during the Games.

The MEAL team would like to commend once again CCS, the PAN RADO and the Coordination Committee for their commitment to clean sport and congratulate them on the implementation of a successful anti-doping program.

Please consult the table in the following pages for a summary of the program interventions, achievements, and recommendations.

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<sup>1</sup> Belize, Cayman Islands, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines PAN RADO and CAR RADO

Program Area	Support provided	Achievements of CACG Coordination Committee	Recommendation
Coordination between stakeholders	<p>Establishment of the Games Coordination Committee</p> <p>Holding of biweekly stakeholder meetings</p>	Maintaining effective communication between the various stakeholders before and during the Games	<p>Maintain the Coordination Committee model due to its proven effectiveness.</p> <p>Ensure adequate and sufficient representation from the MEO, LOC, NADO, as well as other key regional stakeholders (e.g., RADOs) to avoid overburdening responsibilities</p>
Rules and Regulations	Revision of anti-doping rules to ensure that all provisions are implemented	Anti-doping rule provisions applied during the Games	Ensure that the provisions of the rules can be applied in practice prior to their adoption, in particular those relating to the disciplinary panel or TUE Committee (TUEC)
Testing	<p>Exchange on the Risk Assessment (RA) and Test Distribution Plan (TDP), which were reviewed by the WADA Testing Department</p> <p>Facilitated communication with key stakeholders.</p> <p>Coordination of a Q&amp;A session about DCO Central</p>	<p>Compliant RA and TDP</p> <p>689 tests performed: In-Competition (IC), Out-of-Competition (OOC).</p> <p>Program included urine, blood, and dried blood spot (DBS) testing.</p> <p>Communication established between the operations team and ITA, International Federations (IFs), WADA Intelligence and Investigations Department and several NADOs to improve target testing.</p> <p>The SCP included DCOs from 18 NADOs</p> <p>Five DCOs from five priority countries in the Caribbean region attended the Games to help strengthen their national anti-doping programs.</p> <p>Agreement signed with WADA-accredited laboratory in Havana, Cuba, for analysis of samples collected during the Games.</p> <p>Event created in ADAMS.</p> <p>DCO Central used</p>	<p>Ensure that a strategy is in place to access whereabouts information (e.g., athletes RTP in ADAMS, room list, or an early request to gather the information through head of delegation)</p> <p>In close cooperation with the involved NADOs and IFs develop and adopt a sample retention strategy in accordance with WADA International Standards for Testing and Investigations.</p> <p>Organize a pre-Games testing event to identify outstanding challenges.</p> <p>Ensure that the operations team is on-site prior to the start of the Games to coordinate logistics and verify that all doping control stations (DCSs) are fully equipped with furniture, sample collection equipment and necessary signage by the time the village opens.</p> <p>Ensure that all SCP sign confidentiality agreements.</p> <p>Ensure that the SCP is familiarized with the DCS and the competition and training venues prior to the start of the Games.</p> <p>Ensure that detailed information on sport specificities and testing requirements is included in mission orders and communicated to the SCP to ensure a consistent approach across all sports</p>

<p>Results Management</p>	<p>Support in the constitution of the Results Management Panel, in line with the provisions of the CCS rules.</p> <p>Facilitation of coordination with the Continental Results Management Panel of the Americas (CRMP)</p> <p>Support for the training of experts</p>	<p>Results Management Panel formed.</p> <p>Three experts from the CRMP of the Americas were part of the Results Management Panel</p> <p>Q&amp;A session by the WADA Legal Department</p>	<p>For future events, appoint experts to the Results Management Panel and TUEC well in advance of the start of the Games to ensure that they are properly briefed on their responsibilities and are aware of what is expected of them.</p> <p>Ensure that all relevant information regarding the composition of its Results Management Panel and TUEC is published on the MEO's website</p>
<p>Therapeutic Use Exemptions</p>	<p>Provision of documents and information on TUEs</p> <p>Support in the constitution of the TUEC</p>	<p>Publication of the approved TUE form and process prior to the Games</p> <p>TUEC constituted.</p> <p>TUEC received training material and pertinent information on the TUE process.</p> <p>14 TUEs received by the TUEC for assessment</p>	
<p>Education</p>	<p>Support provided to the activities planned by the operations team</p>	<p>Athlete Engagement program conducted in the athletes' village.</p> <p>A central booth was animated by educators from eight NADOs, under the supervision of PAN RADO staff.</p> <p>Play True images were placed in the DCSs.</p> <p>Play True messages were broadcast in the stadiums to the public.</p> <p>A survey on the prevalence of doping was conducted</p>	<p>Ensure pre-Games Education is implemented and mandatory for participation.</p>



At left, education officials and WADA representatives in the central booth; at right, doping control officers in the control tower gathering information at the Games venue during the athletics competitions.

## Project overview

This section describes the situation of the Games' anti-doping program before the start of the cooperation with MEAL Program. It then provides an overview of the Pre-Games Coordination Committee' activities. Finally, it provides a summary of achievements as well as recommendations for the future.

### State of play at the start of the cooperation (Mid-February 2023)

- **Coordination between stakeholders**
  - A cooperation agreement between COSSAN and PAN RADO has been signed in October 2022, putting PAN RADO entirely in charge of preparing and implementing the anti-doping program for the 2023 CACG.
  - By February 2023, when the cooperation with the MEAL started, preparation for the event was well underway. Although PAN RADO had a good plan in place, there were some areas where improvements could still be considered.
  - While not being formalized in a working group, bilateral cooperation between PAN RADO and all relevant actors seemed effective. The involvement of CAR RADO in the Games' preparation has been considered but not implemented at this stage.
- **Rules and Regulations**
  - CCS had developed anti-doping rules which were sent to the WADA Compliance Unit and declared in-line with the Code. However, CCS still needed to consider how the practical implementation of certain provisions would take place e.g., disciplinary panel and TUEC.

- PAN RADO also worked on two key documents:
  - An operational plan, describing the objectives and the functioning of the anti-doping team as well as material considerations e.g., DCS and kits.
  - An anti-doping guide to be shared with the relevant stakeholders.
- **Testing**
  - A general draft of the RA or TDP had been developed.
  - The number of trained and accredited SCP in El Salvador and Dominican Republic was very limited, with no practical experience in international events.
  - In terms of external stakeholder collaboration, PAN RADO was in contact with 18 ADOs in the region for the use of staff and DCOs to support the work of operations and SCP teams.
  - Agreements with the WADA-accredited laboratory in Havana, Cuba, for analysis of samples collected during the Games and with sample collection kits provider were either already signed or well advanced.
- **Results Management**
  - PAN RADO had the project to contact members of the CRMP of the Americas to compose the independent Results Management Panel.
  - CCS ADRs foreseen for CCS to conduct the entire Results Management responsibility. Still a need to nominate and to train the person responsible to conduct the initial review of potential ADRVs.
- **Therapeutic Use Exemptions**
  - A TUE application form had been developed and declared in-line with the Code and International Standard for Therapeutic Use Exemptions (ISTUE) by WADA. Information was not published on the website yet.
  - A Therapeutic Use Exemption Committee had not been composed to evaluate and decide on TUE applications, as outlined in the adopted Rules.
- **Education**
  - The PAN RADO produced an education plan providing a global description of the planning of activities.
  - Provisions have been made for the recruitment of international Education Officers to support the education and awareness program.
  - Contact had not yet been made with participating countries to ensure that pre-Games anti-doping education is provided to all participants.
  - Relevant material and courses for pre-games education had not been shared by CCS to participating delegations.
  - El Salvador did not have trained and accredited Education Officers that could participate in the Games' anti-doping education and awareness program.

## Methodology of intervention and activities

Following initial discussions, PAN RADO (on behalf of CCS) and COSSAN agreed on WADA suggestion to establish a Pre-Games Anti-Doping Coordination Committee to oversee the preparations, developments, and implementation of the program.

- **Coordination between stakeholders**
  - In March 2023, a Coordination Committee was therefore formed with representatives from CCS, PAN RADO, COSSAN, INDES, and WADA participating in an advisory capacity. In addition, the CAR RADO Executive Director, Sasha Sutherland, was also invited to participate with the objective of strengthening



the legacy for the Caribbean region and providing her with a Coordination Committee experience in preparation for the Commonwealth Youth Games to be held in Trinidad and Tobago from August 4 to 11, 2023.

- The Coordination Committee met every two weeks (between March and June 2023) and created regular channels of communication (e.g., WhatsApp group, ShareFile folder). The areas covered by the Coordination Committee were as follows:
    - Review of the testing program.
    - Selection, training, and management of the SCP.
    - Educational activities before and during the Games.
    - RM training, including the creation of a disciplinary panel for the Games.
    - Review of TUE procedures, including the creation of a TUEC for the Games.
    - Training on the use of ADAMS and DCO Central
  - After a few meetings, the Coordination Committee agreed to pursue the cooperation beyond the pre-games activities by hosting an advisory team during the Games.
- **Testing**
- Following exchanges in the Coordination Committee meetings, PAN RADO managed to develop a well-considered RA and TDP to guide the activities of the testing program. The initial version was shared with WADA Testing department, in April, for review. Suggestions were included in the final documents. The late reception of the final athletes' participation list led to a delay in finalizing both documents, but it remains a major guidance for the preparation of the event.
  - Training of SCP and Chaperones were conducted by PAN RADO, supported by NADO Mexico, with a combination of online courses, virtual sessions and a refresher prior to the Games. An anti-doping academy for Latin America and Caribe (Academia Antidopaje de Latinamérica y el Caribe) was developed for DCOs and educators to follow online course on anti-doping and received certification.
  - The SCP was composed of experienced IDCOs and newly trained local DCOs and Chaperones.



Chaperone education session for local volunteers prior to the event

- To increase the legacy for the region, the group decided to involve additional SCP from the Caribbean region. Following an assessment conducted by WADA Latin American Office, NADO/RADO department

and the CAR RADO, MEAL Program facilitated the presence of five individuals from Caribbean countries<sup>2</sup> with identified gaps to be trained and to gain experience during the event.

- Discussion took place in the Coordination Committee regarding the use of DCO central during the event. An online Q&A session was organized by WADA in June to finalize the details.
- CCS had an agreement in place with WADA's accredited Havana Laboratory, including specific provisions for the timeframe of analysis return.

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<sup>2</sup> Cayman Islands, Dominica, Guyana, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines.

### - **Results Management**

- After several discussions at the Coordination Committee meetings, CCS managed to compose an independent Results Management Panel to address potential Anti-Doping Rule Violations (ADRVs), as per the provisions of their approved and adopted anti-doping rules.
- Three members of the Americas CRMP and three members from the Caribbean region were included in the CCS RM Panel.
- Despite the delay in confirming their nominations, WADA managed to facilitate, in June, a Q&A session delivered by WADA Legal department to ensure that the members had the knowledge to review any potential ADRVs related to the Games.
- A CCS Medical Commission expert from Colombia was trained on the process of Initial Review and the role of the Results Management Authority (RMA).

### - **Therapeutic Use Exemptions**

- As per the provisions of their approved and adopted anti-doping rules, CCS managed to compose a TUEC to evaluate and decide on incoming applications.
- WADA facilitates the reception by CCS TUEC of training material and relevant information on the TUE process.
- All relevant information was published in the Games webpage, in May 2023 and a dedicated and secured mailbox was created.

### - **Education**

- To inform athletes and the entourage, a specific section on anti-doping was created on the Games website.
- On this section, CCS published relevant ADEL modules and courses as well as a simulator of a sample collection procedure and encouraged participants to complete them before the Games.
- PAN RADO organized in person and online education sessions with the delegations prior to the Games. In addition, relevant information was shared during the head of delegation seminar, in May.
- PAN RADO decided to set up an Athlete Engagement booth at the Athletes' Village with experienced international educators from the country and the region.

## Achievements and Legacy

### - Coordination between stakeholders

- While stronger representation of certain organizations could have reinforced the effectiveness of the group, the work of the Coordination Committee model was fruitful and appreciated by all stakeholders, allowing tangible cooperation, and streamlined communications between the different participants. The Committee managed to support the great work conducted by PAN RADO in preparing and implementing the program.
- The efficient cooperation continued during the Games with the presence of an advisory team consisting of representatives from WADA and CAR RADO. The key objective was twofold:
  - Observe and support the implementation of the anti-doping program during the Games.
  - Provide feedback to the operational team via daily meetings.
- Thanks to the support of the Games operational team and SCP, the advisory team members had full access to the Doping Control Command Center (DCCC) and all DCSs to observe the operations team in action, as well as sample collection. During their stay in San Salvador, the advisory team visited nine venues and observed the doping control process in most sports and disciplines. On-site suggestions for improvement were taken into account by the operations team and implemented throughout the duration of the Games.

### - Testing

- Once the final list of athletes was accessible, the RA and the TDP had a final review to guarantee the documents was aligned with the requirements of Major Event testing.
- While limited by the late reception of the participants' list, an intelligence-led approach was initiated by exchanges with the relevant IFs, WADA Testing and Intelligence & Investigation departments, the International Testing Agency (ITA), the Athlete Passport Management Unit (APMU) and some NADOs.
- A satisfactory testing program was conducted with 689 tests (489 in competition, 200 tests out-of-competition) including, for the first time, target testing based on recommendations, DBS (20 samples collected) and blood tests (28 samples collected).
- The event was created in ADAMS and the list of athletes entered in the system to facilitate the work onsite.
- The decision to involve NADOs' staff from both the Latin America and Caribbean regions in the operational team and in the SCP was a successful legacy, allowing staff from various ADOs to gain invaluable experience to be transferred to future national and regional anti-doping activities (e.g. staff from PAN RADO and CAR RADO were respectively involved in the Pan American Games to be held in Chile in October 2023 and Commonwealth Youth Games to be held in Trinidad and Tobago in August 2023).
- An onsite training to familiarize DCOs with DCO central was conducted by PAN RADO staff. 25 tests were conducted through DCO Central.
- Newly trained and accredited DCOs, Chaperones, Education Officers from both El Salvador and Dominican Republic gained experience and will now be able to support the respective national anti-doping programs in those countries.
- The five DCOs from priority countries<sup>3</sup> in the Caribbean initially attended the Games to receive training, observe and learn from the SCP. Nevertheless, they were quickly able to contribute to the work of the SCP efficiently with dedication, creativity, and commitment.

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<sup>3</sup> Cayman Islands, Dominica, Guyana, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines.



Caribbean RADO DCOs and staff and WADA representatives at the Games

#### - **Results Management**

- CCS disciplinary panel members were trained on the RM process during Major Events by WADA Legal department. The objective is to keep them operational for future events.
- Due to a misunderstanding in the scope of activities of the panel, WADA Legal Department supported the development of disciplinary panel specific rules for CCS just before the start of the event.
- All potential ADRVs that were reported were analytical cases<sup>4</sup>. The advisory team reviewed athlete's notification of the ADRVs and provided feedback for improvement, which was acted on and implemented.

#### - **Therapeutic Use Exemptions**

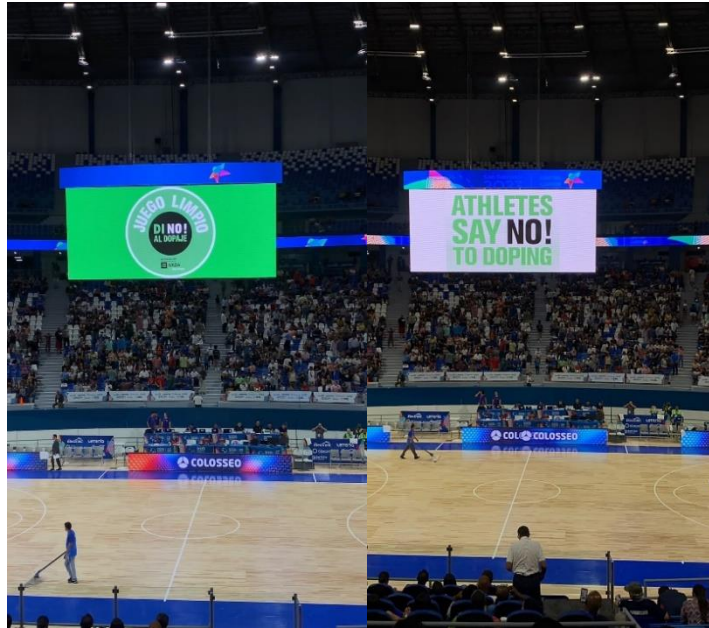
- All of the relevant information and forms regarding TUEs were published on the website in advance of the Games.
- The TUEC was operational during the Games and handled 14 TUEs of which four (4) were granted; one (1) was recognized; and nine (9) were rejected due to various types of reasons (incomplete submission, not needed, etc.)

#### - **Education**

- A central booth was installed in the athletes' village and animated by educators from eight (8) NADOs supervised by PAN RADO staff.
- Images were posted at doping control stations and Play True messages were broadcast in the stadiums to the public.
- The program managed to reach 252 athletes from 23 different delegations, who were informed of their rights and responsibilities as part of the anti-doping program. Different tools, such as the WADA Play True Quiz, were used to convey the message in a smooth and direct way.
- A research on doping prevalence, "Encuesta de actitudes hacia el dopaje" ("Survey of attitudes towards doping") was conducted at the Games with 1669 answers from athletes and the entourage.

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<sup>4</sup> Baseball, Swimming Middle Distance 200-400, Powerlifting, Surf and Badminton.



Play True messages broadcasted in basketball venue.

- **Political meetings**

- Meetings were held between representatives of WADA, the Dominican Republic's NADO and public authorities to discuss and work on the compliance issues faced by the Dominican Republic's NADO.<sup>5</sup>
- Meetings were also held with El Salvador public authorities to discuss the status of establishment of a NADO in El Salvador<sup>6</sup>.

## Recommendations for future editions

- The advisory group had a positive experience at the CACG in San Salvador. Like all major events, the CACG faced a number of challenges in relation to anti-doping activities, most of which were resolved through the active engagement of COSSAN, PAN RADO and other key stakeholders.
- **Coordination between stakeholders**
  - Maintain the Coordination Committee model and the involvement of diverse ADOs in the SCP for future edition due to its proven effectiveness.
  - Ensure adequate and sufficient representation from the MEO, LOC, NADO, as well as other key regional stakeholders (e.g., RADOs) to avoid overburdening responsibilities.
- **Rules and Regulations**
  - Make sure that the provisions of the anti-doping rules can be applied in practice prior to their adoption, in particular those relating to the disciplinary panel and TUEC.
- **Testing**

<sup>5</sup> Note that all critical corrective actions had been signed off at the time this report was completed.

<sup>6</sup> The appropriateness of developing a Law to establish the NADO was discussed. At the time of writing this report, drafts were being discussed between WADA and El Salvador. In addition, building on the momentum of the Games, and pending the presentation of the Law, El Salvador created a temporary but independent NADO, with a secure budget until the end of 2024.

- Develop a strategy to access whereabouts information (e.g., athletes RTP in ADAMS, room list, or an early request to gather the information through head of delegation).
  - Establish a documented process to collect, evaluate, and process intelligence and information received during the Games.
  - In cooperation with the respective IFs and NADOs, develop and adopt a sample retention strategy in accordance with WADA International Standard for Testing and Investigations.
  - Organize a pre-Games testing event to identify outstanding challenges.
  - Ensure that the operations team is on-site prior to the start of the Games to coordinate logistics and verify that all doping control stations (DCSs) are fully equipped with furniture, sample collection equipment and necessary signage by the time the village opens.
  - Confirm that all SCP sign confidentiality agreements.
  - Make sure that the SCP is familiarized with the DCS and the competition and training venues prior to the start of the Games.
  - Extend the use of paperless system for sample collection by anticipating the training of the SCP and guarantee a satisfactory report mechanism for the CCS Medical Commission.
  - Ensure that detailed information on sport specificities and testing requirements is included in mission orders and communicated to the SCP to ensure a consistent approach across all sports.
- **Therapeutic Use Exemptions and Results Management**
- Appoint experts to the disciplinary panel and TUEC well in advance of the start of the Games to confirm that they are properly briefed on their responsibilities and are aware of what is expected of them.
  - Ensure that the anti-doping section of the Games website is available well in advance of the start of the event to facilitate TUE applications by athletes and to inform athletes and athlete support personnel of the anti-doping rules that will apply at the Games.
  - Ensure that all relevant information regarding the composition of its Results Management Panel and TUEC is published on the MEO's website.
- **Education**
- Ensure pre-Games Education is implemented and mandatory for participation.