

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-19-201](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

The Caribbean region, which shares geographic proximity and common interests with the United States, faces high rates of crime and violence. In 2010, the United States and Caribbean countries formally launched CBSI, which aims to increase citizen safety. GAO was asked to examine U.S. assistance through CBSI. This report (1) discusses U.S. funding for CBSI activities, (2) examines the extent to which there is a planning and reporting process for CBSI, and (3) examines the extent to which State and USAID have established objectives and performance indicators to measure progress of their CBSI activities. GAO analyzed State and USAID data; assessed government strategies and performance reports; selected a non-generalizable sample of 25 CBSI activities and analyzed State and USAID documentation related to those activities; interviewed relevant officials; and conducted fieldwork in Barbados, Dominican Republic, and Jamaica, which are the countries generally receiving the most CBSI funding.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that State (1) create an initiative-wide planning and reporting mechanism for CBSI that includes the ability to monitor, evaluate, and report the results of collaborative efforts, and (2) ensure that INL develops and implements a data management system for centrally collecting reliable CBSI data. State agreed with the recommendations, noting that it plans to develop an updated Results Framework for initiative-wide planning and reporting and to improve centralized data collection through an enhanced data management system.

View [GAO-19-201](#). For more information, contact Jennifer Grover at (202) 512-7141 or groverj@gao.gov

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SECURITY ASSISTANCE

U.S. Agencies Should Establish a Mechanism to Assess Caribbean Basin Security Initiative Progress

What GAO Found

U.S. agencies have allocated more than \$560 million for the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) from fiscal years 2010 through 2018 for activities related to the three pillars of CBSI—reduce illicit trafficking (such as in narcotics and firearms), improve public safety and security, and promote social justice. For example, State Department's (State) Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) has ongoing activities such as advisory programs and equipment procurements, while the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has activities aimed at increasing economic opportunities for at-risk youth and improving the skills of prosecutors.

Caribbean Basin Security Initiative Funding Supported the Refurbishment of Aircraft (left) and the Purchase of Boats (right) to Reduce Illicit Trafficking



Source: GAO. | GAO-19-201

The U.S. government has undertaken some planning and reporting of CBSI activities, but State has not created an initiative-wide planning and reporting mechanism. Agencies individually set strategic goals and priorities with CBSI countries and plan and report on their CBSI activities on a country-specific basis. However, State has not created an initiative-wide planning and reporting mechanism that facilitates interagency coordination or establishes consistent performance indicators across agencies, countries, and activities—key elements for effectively aligning foreign assistance strategies. Without such a planning and reporting mechanism, overall progress of the initiative cannot be assessed.

State and USAID have established objectives and performance indicators for selected CBSI activities, and INL is taking steps to improve identified weaknesses in its program monitoring. State and USAID had established objectives and performance indicators for the 25 activities in our sample. However, INL cannot ensure the reliability of its program monitoring data because collection and maintenance of this data is conducted differently in each country and there is no centralized data storage system. INL recently contracted to improve and standardize its program monitoring data for Western Hemisphere activities, but according to INL officials, data challenges remain—in particular, how to collect standardized data from each of the embassies and how to build a data management system that is compatible with State requirements. Without reliable data, INL may continue to struggle with program monitoring of CBSI activities.