The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of white icons on a dark green background. The icons include cannabis leaves, hearts, globes, thumbs up, magnifying glasses, and various symbols representing health, law, and community. The text is centered in the middle of the page, framed by two horizontal white bars.

20 PRINCIPLES FOR THE RESPONSIBLE LEGAL REGULATION OF CANNABIS

SUMMARY BOOKLET

Introduction

In recent years, discussions on the legal regulation of drugs – and in particular of cannabis – have moved in from the margins of drug policy debates. As of today, over 50 countries have adopted regulatory frameworks for medical cannabis, while a growing number of jurisdictions have regulated adult non-medical use, with many more poised to follow. As these legal frameworks are put in place, it is essential that they are designed to advance social justice, inclusion and human rights.

The legal regulation of a scheduled drug is not a silver bullet that solves all the harmful outcomes of prohibition. Legal regulation has the potential to become a powerful tool to redress decades of criminalisation, economic exclusion, and lack of access to appropriate health care. However, legal markets can also be captured by corporate interests, fail to include comprehensive measures to redress the harms brought by the ‘war on drugs’, and further criminalise people that remain in the illegal spaces inevitably persisting outside any regulated market.

The 198 members of the IDPC network operate in a wide variety of legal, political, and cultural contexts around the world. As befits this diversity, some IDPC members do actively advocate for legal regulation, while others focus on different public health and social justice measures, such as harm reduction and decriminalisation. But the legal regulation of cannabis, either for medical or adult non-medical use, is fast becoming an unescapable debate.

To address this challenge, IDPC has produced **Principles for the responsible legal regulation of cannabis**, which proposes 20 principles that should inform any regulatory framework for cannabis markets, whether for medical or for adult non-medical use.

This booklet provides an infographic summary of the advocacy note, which you can find at www.idpc.net

Principles for the responsible legal regulation of cannabis - Summary Booklet

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Health and human rights of people who use drugs

Legal markets should protect the health and human rights of people who use drugs, providing them with comprehensive access to health services, and with the full range of rights and protections ordinarily granted to consumers in legal markets.

1. PROTECT RIGHTS

Unlike informal markets, a legally regulated market enables consumer protection and health regulations to uphold the rights of people who use drugs, while labor laws protect cannabis workers from exploitation and extortion.

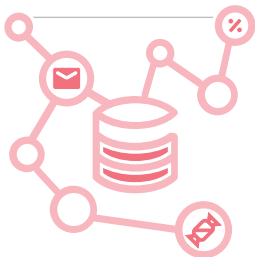


2. PUBLIC HEALTH & HARM REDUCTION

Legal regulation can be a powerful harm reduction tool, reducing stigma against people who use drugs, enabling access to health services, and guaranteeing a safe supply of drugs.

3. AUTONOMY, LIBERTY & PRIVACY

Regulations should seek a fair balance between individual rights to autonomy and privacy, and the protection of public health. All restrictions in the exercise of rights must be based on evidence.



4. ACCESSIBLE & NEEDS-BASED

To become a viable alternative to the informal supply, regulated markets need to be accessible, and respond to the needs of people who use drugs, including users of cannabis-based medical products.

Social justice

To address the structural inequalities resulting from decades of prohibition, legal regulations must prioritise the participation of communities involved in the informal economy, include comprehensive reparation measures, and preserve traditional uses.

5. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Legal systems should be informed by the wealth of knowledge accumulated by people involved in currently illegal markets, from cultivators to people who transport, sell and use cannabis.



6. TRANSIT TO LEGALITY

Legal markets need to actively support the participation of people and communities involved in informal drug economies by removing existing legal, financial, technical, and bureaucratic barriers.

7. SMALL-SCALE GROWERS

To guarantee an adequate and sustainable livelihood for traditional cannabis farmers, legal regulations should prioritise their participation in supply, and ensure that they are not displaced by new private actors.



8. REPARATION, SATISFACTION & NON-REPETITION

Legal frameworks should include comprehensive reparations for the people and communities who suffered prohibition, redressing prior rights violations, and allocating resources to support those who were unjustly targeted.

9. TRADITIONAL USES

Legal regulations must recognise the value of cannabis' rich history of traditional, cultural, religious and medical uses, and establish the conditions for their preservation and flourishing.

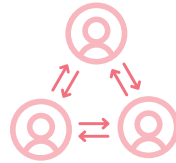


Inclusive and equitable trade

The creation of a new legal market is an opportunity to enable alternative business models and trade policies that distribute power across the supply chain, and promote fair labour practices and environmental protections.

10. INCLUSIVE BUSINESS MODELS

Legal markets should seek to distribute power and value across the supply chain by enabling alternative business models that empower communities, from agricultural cooperatives to cannabis social clubs.



11. WORKERS RIGHTS

In a legal system, workers are entitled to labour rights and protections, which can be enforced through formal oversight mechanisms. Certification schemes can contribute to expanding these labour practices throughout the supply chain.

12. MAXIMISE VALUE

Regulators should work with producers and users to develop innovative certification schemes that bolster the value and competitiveness of small and medium-sized producers, and promote fair and sustainable business models.



13. CHALLENGES TO INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Regulators should reflect on how to remove the legal barriers that impede the transnational trade of non-medical cannabis, while protecting traditional growers from the inflow of foreign capital.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

To address potential environmental harms, legal frameworks must include strong regulations, as well as ecolabeling schemes, to promote sustainable practices throughout the supply chain.



Legal responses to activities outside of the legal market

Some activities are likely to remain outside the law. Responses must be strictly proportionate, and must include the decriminalisation of all drug use.

15. DECRIMINALISE DRUG USE & ANCILLARY ACTIVITIES

A socially just legal framework is not compatible with any form of criminal or administrative punishment for the personal use of any drug.



16. PROPORTIONALITY

Where retained, criminal justice responses to drug-related activities, such as drug trafficking, must be strictly proportionate, consider personal circumstances, and be accompanied by comprehensive support.

Gender sensitive approach

To ensure women have equal access to labour rights, health services, and economic power, regulations must explicitly address their specific needs and current situation.

17. WOMEN & CULTIVATION

To address the history of discrimination and harassment against women who cultivate cannabis, legal regulations should establish gender-sensitive protections against exploitation and abuse.



18. ACCESS TO SERVICES

Legal regulations must promote gender-sensitive drug treatment and harm reduction services that respond to the specific needs of women.

19. EQUALITY

Regulators must take immediate action to address structural gender inequalities and power imbalances in legal cannabis markets.



Monitoring & learning

20. DATA COLLECTION & COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Regulation is an iterative process. Legal frameworks must be constantly reviewed in light of objective data, lessons learnt, the evolution of the market, and feedback provided by affected communities and civil society.



