MRC ASSESSMENT
NATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

International Centre™
FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN

Update of the Comparative Analysis of Multisectoral Response and Capacity Assessments (MRC) by ICMEC

May 2026

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

The global fight against the Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA) requires that the various actors involved have tools and models that allow them to understand, evaluate, and optimize the response capacities of countries and the articulation of these capacities at inter-sectoral, regional, and international levels.

This document aims to conduct a comparative analysis of the Multisectoral Response and Capacity Assessments (MRC) carried out by ICMEC's National Capacity Building program in 19 countries across 4 different regions of the world between December 2021 and May 2026.

Region	Africa	Latin America	Europe	Asia
Country	1. Kenya 2. Uganda 3. South Africa 4. Nigeria	5. Chile 6. Colombia 7. Costa Rica 8. Ecuador 9. El Salvador 10.Guatemala 11. Honduras 12. Peru 13. Dominican Republic 14. Trinidad and Tobago	15. Moldova 16. Romania 17. France	18. Indonesia 19. Nepal

Table 1. Countries and regions where ICMEC has conducted MRC assessments

Note: ICMEC developed an MRC assessment in Morocco, but it is not included in this comparative analysis.

This analysis seeks to identify patterns, gaps, prioritize recommendations, and suggest improvements that, in addition to strengthening global and regional strategies, optimize the support ICMEC provides to different countries for developing response capacities against OCSEA and strategically guide the actions of the National Capacity Building (NCB) team.

Model National Response (MNR)

This analysis seeks to identify patterns, gaps, prioritize recommendations, and suggest improvements that, in addition to strengthening global and regional strategies, optimize the support ICMEC provides to different countries for developing response capacities against OCSEA and strategically guide the actions of the National Capacity Building (NCB) team.

Additionally, the MNR uses a **Maturity Framework** that evaluates the capacities of countries, assigning **maturity levels (from 1 to 4)** based on the degree of development and effectiveness of the implemented protection measures to ensure the **comprehensive protection of children against online OCSEA.**

Multisectoral Response and Capacity Assessments (MRC)

Conducted by the **International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC)**, these are assessments aimed at **analyzing in detail the response capacity of countries against OCSEA.** The MRC studies use the **sector and capacity framework proposed by the MNR to identify gaps** and provide short, medium, and long-term recommendations that can be implemented by the various actors involved in each country to **improve national response capacities.**

Relevance in the Fight Against OCSEA

The relevance of the MRC studies lies in their ability to provide a comprehensive and evidence-based evaluation of the development level of response capacities in countries where ICMEC has some level of action or influence. These tools enable the National Capacity Building (NCB) team to:

- **Identify gaps:** Areas where countries need to strengthen their capacities, providing a roadmap for improvement.
- **Prioritize actions:** Guide countries on how to focus their resources and efforts on urgent areas or those where greater impact can be generated.
- **Promote collaboration:** Using the WeProtect MNR framework as a basis, it fosters collaboration among different social actors to develop integral and effective solutions.
- **Evaluate progress:** Allow the current state of capacity development to be known and serve as a starting point for measuring the progress of countries.
- **Raise awareness:** Sensitize stakeholders about the importance of protecting children from OCSEA, promoting greater commitment and action.

Evolution of Global Threats

Since the first edition of this comparative analysis, global trends in the issue of Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA) have evolved. For this reason, these advancements are taken into account for this update to adjust the recommendations so that each country can address these challenges.

New Challenges Related to Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Although OCSEA is a crime that does not strictly depend on the advancement and development of Information and Communication Technologies, it is important to note that the latter have deepened these issues. When discussing sexual abuse and exploitation, it is crucial to recognize that online and offline spheres are completely interdependent, and to see the repercussions of offline actions online as one on a continuum.

Specific Challenges

Challenge 1: Self-Generation of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM)

The self-generation of sexual abuse material (SG-CSAM) is one of the biggest challenges identified by authorities, international organizations, non-governmental entities, and other actors in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Importantly, the term "self-generated" is imperfectly used to designate situations where children themselves produce material, but this term by no means intends to assign responsibility to them for the abuse ensuing. On the contrary, the responsibility lies directly with third parties who, through manipulation and persuasion tactics or unscrupulous actions, turn this content into CSAM.

During adolescence, the sharing of intimate material can happen without it constituting abuse. However, such material can also be exploited by abusers either as part of a grooming process or to use within CSAM sharing platforms. The exploitation of SG-CSAM can have a financial incentive, mainly but not only in relation to male victims, or result in sexual extortion, mainly but not solely in relation to female victims: "Unlike financial transactions, which raise red flags, the exchange of content for social capital might go unnoticed by both adolescents and their caregivers. We need to talk to young people about how offers like followers and 'likes' online could be used to manipulate and exploit them." (Thorn, 2024).

According to the same study, SG-CSAM overwhelmingly involves peer-to-peer image exchange, which can lead children to believe that the risk of these interactions (often consensual) is much lower. However, according to this study, 42% of children who participated in transactional sexual exchanges online said that the "buyer" was another minor. This brings an additional challenge: the thin line between "consent" and manipulation, and avoiding the criminalisation of minors in judicial procedures.

Source: Thorn - Commodified Sexual Interactions: How money and clout are obscuring risk for youth online

Challenge 2: Live Streaming or Live Sessions

Live sessions of sexual abuse have been a recorded phenomenon since the 2010s with data from Europol's Operation Rescue and Sweetie in 2013. However, literature and data are scarce, preventing the development of thorough policies and prevention actions. This further complicates the iteration of investigative, judicial and protective systems. This is a problem even more so considering that:

Livestreaming sessions can exist without necessarily implying the commitment of a crime like sexual exploitation in travel or tourism (SECTT) contexts, which are more easily legally definable.

- Live sexual acts are more difficult for authorities to track, and often do not leave obvious evidence, unlike the sending, sale, purchase, or acquisition of CSAM. In addition, authorities do not have sufficient tools to investigate these behaviors. Although AI development has led to applications that allow their detection, the perfection of tactics in committing crimes makes them difficult to detect.
- Live sessions do not require sophisticated or expensive equipment. All that is needed is a camera, internet, and a place to carry them out. They can even be easily developed from home, so there is no need to transport the exploited children or adolescents anywhere.
- There is a mistaken perception of lower harm in all actions related to sexual abuse and exploitation in digital contexts. The fact that the child does not have direct contact with the abuser leads people to wrongfully believe that the harm to the victims of these crimes is much

less than what they actually experience.

Finally, these dynamics have led to the mass creation of webcam studios where, in principle, only people over 18 are allowed to participate. However, it has been evidenced that in these places, children are exploited. In a study conducted by Human Rights Watch in Colombia, adult interviewees reported that the studios allowed them to start on their platforms from an early age (even as minors). To achieve this, it was reported that studios violate the age restrictions of the platforms and reuse registered accounts of adult women, managing them for exploitation in the sexual exploitation of minors.

Source: Human Rights Watch - Colombia: Labor Violations, Sexual Exploitation in Webcam Studios

Challenge 3: Use of Artificial Intelligence for the Production of CSAM

Another major challenge faced by stakeholders in the child online protection system is related to the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to create child sexual abuse material (CSAM). The free and accessible nature of AI provides opportunities for users but is equally exploited by offenders to commit a variety of crimes. The challenge increases as the speed at which AI is advancing outpaces the development of tools to detect or investigate different types of cybercrimes.

The generation of hyper-realistic content with the ability to tailor age, gender and scenarios is just a click away. This means that abuse is available to offenders without having to get in touch with a child and persuade them to share CSAM or any type of information. It hence removes part of the risk of getting caught by law enforcement or parents in doing so. AI allows them to generate thousands of images in seconds exactly as they request. The 2024 annual report by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) related to Cybertip line information showed a 1,325% increase in reports related to Generative AI, rising from 4,700 in 2023 to 67,000 in 2024.

The large number of images adds a component to the challenge that saturates systems, preventing authorities or industry from quickly detecting this material. According to a 2023 study by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) on AI generated CSAM, it was determined that during one month, 20,254 AI-generated images were published on a dark web forum. Of the total images, 54.8% were evaluated, and 2,978 of them were considered criminal according to British legislation. This analysis was repeated in 2024, finding that 90% of the evaluated images were realistic enough and even contained material categorized as Category A, the most severe, including with penetration, bestiality, and sadism. These analyses demonstrate the ease of generating materials through AI and how the use of these tools has allowed abusers to achieve sufficiently strong material.

This is further fueled by the low culture of care in data privacy. Often, people share images of their underage children on public accounts, which abusers and aggressors can access for free and easily use their faces to generate this type of material. Additionally, another finding revealed in IWF studies determined that there is evidence of shared use of AI models to generate images of specific children, including some who are famous or known to law enforcement.

Unfortunately, this generation of material is further facilitated by the fact that AI models do not automatically generate a hash with the content that is created if it is not added in the application. This makes tracking difficult and reduces the effectiveness and efficiency of international cooperation in this regard, causing authorities to incur extra time and economic resources in investigative processes. In addition, AI has facilitated the creation and dissemination of peer-support manuals for pedophiles that include tutorials and guides shared among members of abuser communities detailing how to generate CSAM through AI to achieve realistic images.

The situation becomes even more complex considering that the internal legislation of most countries

does not include the generation of child sexual abuse material mediated by AI as a crime. This represents a complex situation in terms of justice and restitution of rights, as even though there may not always be real victims behind these materials, their generation severely violates the rights to privacy and dignity of all children worldwide.

Sources:

- UNESCO (2023). "Tech-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence in an Era of Generative AI"
- IWF (2023). "How AI is being abused to create child sexual abuse imagery"

Challenge 4: Use of Metaverse Spaces to Commit Abuse

In recent years, the metaverse has emerged as a revolutionary digital environment where people can interact, play, work, and experience various immersive activities in different virtual settings. This digital space, shaped by technologies such as Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and Artificial Intelligence (AI), allows not only social and recreational experiences but also the creation of advanced applications for education, research, and security. However, while metaverse environments offer educational and training opportunities, even for investigations, they also open new possibilities for criminals.

With metaverse technologies, offenders can pay for the immersive streaming of sexual abuse of children, and even their avatars can be at risk of being inappropriately approached by avatars operated by adults (UCL, 2024) with greater anonymity. Similarly, content streamed live, whether in the metaverse or elsewhere, rarely leaves a trace, and potential electronic evidence of live streaming is not always admissible in courts. Key technologies that can be leveraged for harmful online behaviors are already available to consumers and include virtual and augmented reality devices, haptic suits (wearable devices capable of simulating physical sensations), and teledildonics (electronic devices that simulate sexual interaction).

Children use immersive 3D platforms to interact with strangers and peers online, which increases cases of Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA). A metaverse research project, VIRRAC, highlights that risks for children are common, although there are limitations in mapping the nature and prevalence of sexual crimes against them in the metaverse. It is crucial to understand the profiles of offenders and the factors that lead them to commit cybercrimes, as well as the strategies used.

In a 2024 policy report, University College London (UCL) estimated that the risks of an increase in the sexual abuse of children and their manipulation through metaverse environments are very high. This includes the risk of immersive paid streaming involving CSAM with offenders and victims in different locations. This could also be enhanced by AI-generated material offered within the metaverse.

General Challenges

Challenge 5: Lack of Information for Decision-Making

One of the biggest challenges faced by different countries around the world, especially those with underdeveloped data collection systems, is the inability to measure distinct phenomena, their scope, and impact on the population.

OCSEA is a transnational phenomenon that, due to its nature, often cannot be fully understood by authorities. Additionally, the reality of the crime and what it represents for victims and survivors is so severe that reported figures are lower than the actual abuse occurring.

In this regard, the transnational nature of the crime, the difficulty in investigation, the silence of victims or their environments due to lack of knowledge or fear, among other factors, mean that the true nature, severity, and real impact are unknown. For this reason, the lack of accurate information about these phenomena makes it difficult to direct public policies, actions, or necessary measures to address them.

Challenge 6: Inter-Institutional and Inter-Agency Disconnection

Inter-institutional coordination represents a challenge in most countries worldwide. Access to applications, databases, or technology at different levels varies for the units investigating these crimes, which creates differential perception of the crime cross-legislations, and prevents clear investigative processes.

Likewise, awareness of crimes differs at various levels of the criminal justice chain, which can make it difficult for actions at the victim support and investigation levels to be carried out in a coordinated manner. This has a negative impact on children and their families, who may face disjointed processes where they can suffer secondary victimization.

In this regard, it is important that police teams, prosecutors, and judges responsible for the different stages of investigation and administration of justice work in coordination with child protection authorities. This is to achieve efficient processes where necessary evidence is collected, to avoid revictimization, and to ensure victim-centered and trauma-informed investigation and care processes.

Added to this challenge is the imbalance between the capacity of human and financial resources and the amount of CSAM circulating on the web, especially now with content being produced through AI. Specialized units on these issues and the constant training they require mean that time, resources, and political will are needed to build truly robust bodies to investigate cases. However, this is not the only criminal phenomenon occurring today, so even the most capable units in the world require more resources and elements to cover the large number of cases that arise.

Finally, it is important that other entities responsible for strengthening educational, care, and recreational environments, as well as other actors in the digital and protection system, participate in coordination. In this sense, members of the technology industry, internet service providers, and civil society organizations should be coordinated with the different government entities to work as a single strengthened system capable of protecting the rights of children.

Challenge 7: Lack of Knowledge of Reporting and Reporting Channels

Two concurring challenges arise here: on the one hand, there is little dissemination about reporting channels to authorities or private entities, while on the other hand, there also is information saturation from the general public. Considering the nature, impact, and size of child sexual abuse crimes in both digital and non-digital contexts, countries have created different channels for reporting, reporting, or informing about their commission.

For this reason, there are help channels, reporting lines and portals, and various reporting channels to which one can go to inform authorities about cases. However, information about these channels is not usually provided to the public in a clear, age-appropriate, and digestible manner. As a result, in the face of cases, citizens often do not fully understand which institutions to turn to in order to achieve effective responses, which discourages reporting and reduces the likelihood that phenomena will be accounted for and measured in their real impact.

In this regard, it is very important that there is optimal interoperability between reporting lines (to

official authorities), CSAM reporting lines or portals, help lines, and other protection services for child victims/survivors. Any of the authorities must be able to take a report and coordinate with others to ensure that it reaches the competent entity, in order to achieve an effective process and the least revictimizing one for children and their families.

Challenge 8: Lack of Knowledge of Technological Tools Necessary for Cyber Investigations

While many technological innovations represent threats to the online safety of children, they also open new opportunities for investigation and data collection. However, police agencies and investigators rarely have sufficient capacities to use these tools, which prevents them from using the innovations that offenders are already using. With the rapid evolution of technology, constant training is needed for each professional handling online cases related to the sexual exploitation of children. The lack of financial resources and training delays investigative processes. Currently, some specialized units in crimes against children or cybercrimes have a good knowledge of technological tools. However, many times, they do not have the human, financial, or time resources to update these capacities as technology advances.

With the volume of abuse material circulating, they have to choose between solving a large number of cases or training in new technologies to maintain their level of understanding of risks and threats.

Faced with these new challenges, and in correlation with the recommendations iterated within the various MRC assessments, it is recommended that:

- Senior officials will take ownership of the importance of creating capacity-building scenarios in criminal investigation schools to keep teams and units in charge of investigations updated and trained.
- Awareness will be raised among criminal justice and civil society actors about new threats to integrate victim-centered perspectives, avoid revictimization, and integrate the fight against new forms of digital crimes.
- Constant monitoring of innovations will be carried out for prevention programs and offender management.
- Collaboration with industry actors will be promoted through proactive interventions by technology companies that allow the integration of perspectives from sector actors in building new future technologies.
- Transparency and accessibility of data will be facilitated for better academic research processes and a better understanding of new threats and technological innovations.

Challenge 9: Slow Adaptation of Legislation to Technological Innovations

The inherent characteristics of the legislative process pose an immense challenge related to advancements in the technological world. Technologies evolve and advance faster than the law, both in their issuance and application processes. There is little understanding among legislators of the ethical, legal, and human consequences of technological evolutions. This endangers the digital and non-digital rights of children while maintaining legal gaps that are used by offenders to innovate their practices in cyberspace.

Without laws that allow characterizing new technology-facilitated crimes, it is not possible to apply sanctions, carry out data collection processes to measure phenomena, or protect children, ensuring them a system that prevents and deters crime. For this reason, it is essential that legislation can

easily adapt to new technologies and that legislators incorporate into their agendas spaces for training and consultation with experts that allow them to stay up to date with updates and understand the opportunities and risks involved. In these processes, the inclusion of children is fundamental so that they can participate in decision-making that affects them and in environments that are for their use, utilization, and appropriation.

Challenge 10: Lack of Inclusion of Children in the Design of Public Policies

Another major challenge that complements the previous ones is the lack of inclusion of children in the design of public policies that concern them, including those related to their rights and their relationship with technology. While some technology companies have begun to include children in their consultation processes for developing new tools and applications, the inclusion of children in advisory committees for public policy decision-making, law creation, and even the defense of their rights in the digital world is not as broad as it should be.

This inclusion is key for several reasons:

1. Children are the primary users of digital platforms and learn to use them much faster than professionals.
2. They are confronted with abusers rapidly and can share their experiences about these dynamics.
3. Legislators, police, and professionals in general can learn from their advice.
4. Including them early in the consultative process helps raise awareness about threats and responsibilities, which serves as an effective prevention policy.
5. Only this way can victim-centered responses be ensured, placing children at the center.
6. Only by listening to these voices can trauma-informed perspectives be included.
7. Children can also be offenders, sometimes unknowingly. Giving them responsibility in the political process allows them to understand the impact of their actions and prevents them from continuing harmful behaviors for themselves and others.

Methodology

Instruments

The MRC documents from the 19 countries were analyzed using **4 criteria** and **2 instruments,** as presented in **Table 2.**

Source:

- **Maturity Framework of the Model National Response (WeProtect, 2023)**
- **NCB Team Component**

Component	Variable	Criteria
Capacities	**Maturity:** How developed is the capacity?	**Building (1):** Initial stage where basic capacities are being established. **Enhancement(2):** Development and strengthening of existing capacities. **Integration (3):** Capacities fully integrated into national practices. **Maturity (4):** Robust and effective systems for prevention, protection, and prosecution.
Gaps	**Priority Level:** What is the urgency level for resolving the gap?	**Good (1):** The gap is minimal, and the situation is good in relation to the safety of children. **Acceptable (2):** The gap is acceptable and does not require urgent attention. **Neutral (3):** The gap has a neutral impact and does not pose an immediate risk. Harmful (4): The gap is harmful and needs to be addressed as soon as possible. **Urgent (5):** The gap is extremely urgent and requires immediate attention to protect the safety of children.
Presence	**ICMEC Presence:** What is the level of ICMEC's presence in the country to address the gap?	**Absent (1):** ICMEC is absent and has no capacity to address the gap. **Weak (2):** ICMEC has a weak presence and limited capacity to address the gap. **Regular (3):** ICMEC has a regular presence and moderate capacity to address the gap. **Extensive (4):** ICMEC has a significant presence and strong capacity to address the gap.
Recommendations	**Realistic Change Level:** What is the realistic level of achievable change?	**None (1):** It is not realistic to achieve change in this area. **Low (2):** It is somewhat realistic to achieve change in this area. **Moderate (3):** It is moderately realistic to achieve change in this area. **High (4):** It is highly realistic to achieve change in this area. Very High (5): It is very highly realistic to achieve change in this area.

Table 2. Instruments, Categories, and Analysis Criteria

For the analysis of capacities, the **Maturity Framework of the Model National Response** developed by WeProtect (2023) was used. For the analysis of gaps and recommendations, an instrument was developed in collaboration with the Regional Program Officers of the NCB team. This instrument allowed NCB team members in each country to evaluate the different gaps and recommendations included in the MRCs based on standardized criteria, their level of experience, and knowledge of the country. The information collected through these instruments was systematized and coded for subsequent analysis.

Analysis and Comparison Methodology

Based on the coded information, different analyses were carried out to evaluate and compare the capacities, gaps, and recommendations of the countries:

1. **Calculation of Averages (M) and Standard Deviations (SD)** for each variable (Maturity, Priority Level, ICMEC Presence, and Realistic Change Level) by sector, region, and country. This was done to identify areas with the greatest variability and which sectors require the most attention.
2. **Correlation Analysis (r)** between variables to identify if there were significant relationships with the aim of understanding how the different capacities and gaps interact and how ICMEC's presence in countries influences the possibility of implementing changes.
3. **Data Visualization** through scatter plots and heat maps to visualize the relationships between variables and facilitate the interpretation of results.
4. **Data Collection:** Analysis of MRC Documents: The MRC reports from 19 countries were reviewed, evaluating capacities according to the Maturity Criteria of the WeProtect Model (WeProtect Global Alliance, 2022). In this analysis, the matrices and criteria of the WeProtect Maturity Model were used to categorize and systematize the data.
5. **Evaluation of Gaps and Recommendations:** The NCB team analyzed the gaps and recommendations included in the MRC assessments using the evaluation instrument developed specifically for this purpose. NCB members in each country evaluated the different gaps and recommendations based on their level of experience and knowledge of the local context.

Global Analysis

Maturity in Capacity Development

The analysis of this variable is based on the **Maturity Framework of the Model National Response** (WeProtect Global Alliance, 2022). This framework allows the classification of capacity maturity levels into four levels (see **Table 2): Building (1), Enhancement(2), Integration (3), and Maturity (4).**

The 2026 figures reflect the inclusion of **8 new countries** in the analysis, which expands geographic and sectoral representativeness. This may explain part of the decrease in maturity averages, as the new countries may have lower development levels compared to those initially evaluated. Additionally, greater geographic diversity also contributes to changes in variability (SD) between countries, depending on the specific capacities and contexts of each.

Below are the key findings and comparisons based on the data obtained:

Maturity by Sector and Capacity

	GLOBAL 2024		GLOBAL 2026	
SECTOR	M	SD	M	SD
Policy, Legislation, and Governance	2,32	0,57	1,55	0,62
Criminal Justice	1,82	0,69	1,66	0,56
Victim Support	1,91	0,60	1,69	0,66
Society and Culture	1,87	0,67	1,56	0,46
Industry	1,73	0,63	1,47	0,62
Research and Data	2,14	0,83	1,46	0,61

MATURITY LEVEL PER REGION				
REGION	AFRICA	AMERICA	EUROPE	ASIA
Average	1,77	1,32	1,89	1,90
STDEVP	0,48	0,41	0,98	0,37

Table 3. Maturity Analysis by Sector - Global

In 2026, the sector with the **highest level of maturity is Victim Support (M=1.69)**, although with moderate variability (SD=0.66). This is followed by **Criminal Justice (M=1.66, SD=0.56)**, which now surpasses **Policy, Legislation, and Governance (M=1.55, SD=0.62)**, the sector that experienced the most pronounced drop since 2024. On the other hand, **Research and Data and Industry** are the sectors with the **lowest maturity levels (M=1.46 and M=1.47, respectively)**, although the former shows greater consistency among countries (SD=0.61) compared to 2024.

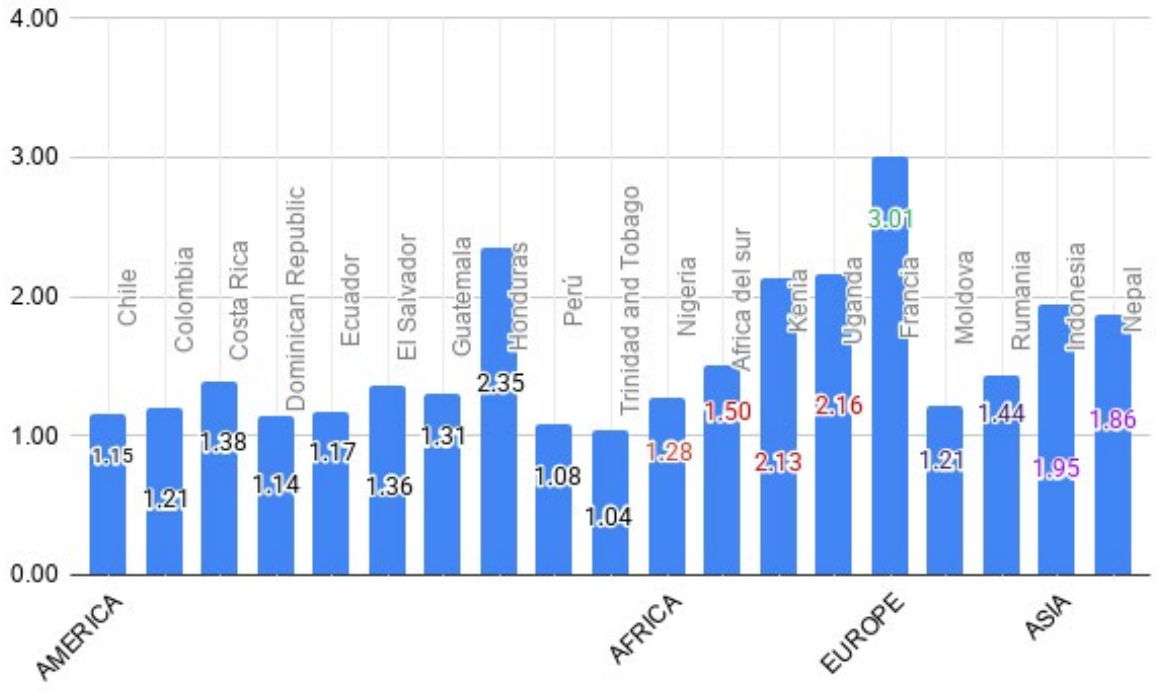
Key Changes:

- **Generalized Decline:** All sectors show a reduction in the maturity average, with R**esearch and Data** and **Policy, Legislation, and Governance** being the most affected.
- **Variable Consistency:** While **Society** and **Culture** and **Research and Data** are now more consistent (lower SD), **Policy, Legislation, and Governance** and **Victim Support** show greater dispersion among countries.
- **New Leaders and Laggers: Victim Support** emerges as the sector with the highest maturity in 2026, replacing **Policy**, **Legislation**, and **Governance**, which now ranks third.

The aforementioned changes may be due to multiple factors. However, based on the updated information from the countries included in this study, it can be highlighted that:

- There is **low adaptation in the legislative systems** of countries to update regulations. Issues such as **abuse and sexual exploitation of children in live streaming, the metaverse, or material generation through AI** require new regulations to be not only judicialized but also accounted for.
- Continuous efforts by institutions are required to achieve **robust public policy frameworks** that translate into **specialized care systems and targeted prevention campaigns** for these new phenomena.

Graph 1. Maturity Analysis by Country



As part of the global maturity analysis, the following aspects are highlighted based on the updated 2026 data:

1. **Highest Maturity Levels:** In 2026, the countries with the highest maturity averages are **France (M=3.01)**, **Honduras (M=2.35)**, and **Uganda (M=2.16)**. France emerges as the country with the highest level of maturity (M=3.01), surpassing Romania and Indonesia, which led in 2024. The integration of this new country with a high development level allows for a more contrasted view of each country's integration levels. Although these countries have strengths in multiple sectors, their averages still remain in the **Enhancement(2**) category, indicating that while they are advancing, there is still room to reach **Integration (3)** levels.

2. **Consistent Maturity:** The countries with moderate and consistent development in 2026 are **Costa Rica (M=1.38)**, **El Salvador (M=1.36)**, **Moldova (M=1.21)**, and **Nigeria (M=1.28)**. These countries show stable progress toward **Integration (3)** since 2024, although their averages are still closer to **Enhancement (2)**. Costa Rica and El Salvador stand out for having lower variability in their sectors, suggesting that their capacities are more balanced. Moldova has a similar average to 2024 but with less dispersion in some sectors, indicating greater homogeneity in its progress. Nigeria was added to the analysis in 2026.

3. **Greatest Challenges** in Capacity Development: The countries with the lowest averages in 2026 are **Trinidad and Tobago (M=1.04)**, **Peru (M=1.08)**, **Dominican Republic (M=1.14)**, and **Chile (M=1.15)**. These countries face significant challenges in developing their capacities, with averages placing them in the **Building (1)** category. Trinidad and Tobago is the country with the lowest maturity (M=1.04), suggesting an urgent need for support across all sectors. The low variability in these countries indicates that their capacities are consistently limited across multiple areas, with no sectors standing out significantly.

4. **Regional Variability:** Regional variability remains a challenge, but now more marked differences are observed between countries within the same region. In Latin America, the inclusion of new countries (e.g., Trinidad and Tobago) has increased the dispersion in maturity levels.

    - **Africa:** Countries like Uganda (M=2.16) and Nigeria (M=1.28) show high variability between sectors, suggesting that some capacities are more developed than others.

    - **Latin America:** Continues to show high variability, with countries like Trinidad and Tobago (M=1.04) and Honduras (M=2.35) showing more balanced progress compared to 2024.

    - **Europe:** France (M=3.01) increases the European average, with other countries still having lower maturity levels, such as Moldova (M=1.44).

    - **Asia:** With fewer countries in the analysis, Asia shows less variation, with Indonesia (M=1.95) and Nepal (M=1.86) showing progress toward **Enhancement(2).**

Priority Level, ICMEC Presence, and Realistic Change Level

The analysis of these variables is based on the instrument developed in collaboration with the NCB Team. This instrument allows the classification of gaps and recommendations included in the MRC assessments as follows (see Table 2):

- **Priority Level:** Allows classifying detected gaps into five priority levels: **Urgent (5), Harmful (4), Neutral (3), Acceptable (2), and Good (1).**
- **ICMEC Presence:** Indicates ICMEC's presence in the country in relation to addressing gaps according to the following categories: **Absent (1), Weak (2), Regular (3), and Extensive (4).**
- **Realistic Change Level:** Estimates the potential for change regarding recommendations at 5 levels: **None (1), Low (2), Moderate (3), High (4), and Very High (5).**

Below is the detailed interpretation of the global data for 2026, considering the inclusion of 8 new countries (Nepal, France, South Africa, Nigeria, Peru, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, and Chile), which expands geographic representativeness and may influence the averages and variabilities observed.

Sector	Priority Level (M)	Priority Level (SD)	ICMEC Presence (M)	ICMEC Presence (SD)	Realistic Change (M)	Realistic Change (SD)
Policy, Legislation, and Governance	3.88	0.68	1.92	0.84	2.75	0.82
Criminal Justice	3.83	0.52	2.01	0.81	2.77	0.58
Victim Support	4.01	0.55	1.65	0.64	2.87	0.66
Society and Culture	3.86	0.56	1.83	0.77	3.03	0.67
Industry	3.92	0.71	1.54	0.60	2.55	0.89
Research and Data	3.85	0.64	2.08	0.99	3.21	0.76

Table 3.2 Analysis of Gaps and Recommendations – Global 2026

Detailed Interpretation of Global Data for Each Sector

1. **Policy, Legislation, and Governance:** This sector remains a priority, but the limited presence of ICMEC and moderate realistic change indicate that coordinated efforts are needed to take advantage of its high priority level.
   - **Priority Level (M=3.88, SD=0.68):** Gaps in this sector are considered high priority (close to "Harmful"), a significant increase from 2024 (M=2.52). This suggests that countries now

perceive greater urgency in addressing gaps in policies and governance.

- **ICMEC Presence (M=1.92, SD=0.84):** Presence remains moderate-low, similar to 2024 (M=2.16), but with greater variability (SD=0.84 vs. 1.08 in 2024). This indicates that while ICMEC has a regular presence in some countries, there are significant inequalities between regions.
- **Realistic Change (M=2.75, SD=0.82):** The potential for change is moderate, slightly lower than in 2024 (M=3.09). This suggests that while there is a willingness to improve, the implementation of recommendations may face practical obstacles.

2. **Criminal Justice:** The high priority and moderate presence of ICMEC suggest that this sector is key for interventions, but the moderate realistic change indicates that specific strategies are required to overcome barriers.
   - **Priority Level (M=3.83, SD=0.52):** Gaps have a high priority (close to “Harmful”), a notable increase from 2024 (M=2.32). This reflects a greater awareness of the urgency to improve criminal justice in the fight against OCSEA.
   - **ICMEC Presence (M=2.01, SD=0.81):** Presence is moderate, slightly higher than in 2024 (M=1.87). This suggests progress in ICMEC’s expansion in this sector, although there is still room for improvement.
   - **Realistic Change (M=2.77, SD=0.58):** The potential for change is moderate, almost equal to 2024 (M=2.78). This indicates that while there are opportunities for improvement, implementation may be slow or uneven.

Regional Analysis (Africa, America, Eurasia)

The following is the updated analysis for 2026, considering the inclusion of Nigeria and South Africa in Africa, Chile, Peru, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic in America, France in Europe, and Nepal in Asia. These changes expand geographic representativeness and modify regional averages, variabilities, and priorities.

Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, South Africa)

Note: Nigeria and South Africa are the two new countries included in the comparative study for 2026.

General Analysis by Area (2026)			
Variable	M	SD	Change vs.2024
Priority Level	4.15	0.36	↓ -0.22
ICMEC Presence	1.34	0.46	↑ +0.30
Realistic Change	3.08	0.72	↓ -0.34
Maturity	1.77	0.48	↓ -0.37

- **Priority Level:** High priority, but lower than in 2024 (M=4.37) due to the inclusion of South Africa (M=4.00) and Nigeria (M=4.33), which have moderate to high priorities.
- **ICMEC Presence:** Increased perception of ICMEC presence since 2024 (M=1.03), although it remains low.
- **Realistic Change:** Decrease in potential for change since 2024 (M=3.42), possibly due to the low perception of change in Nigeria (M=2.44).
- **Maturity:** Decrease in maturity since 2024 (M=2.14), as Nigeria (M=1.28) and South Africa (M=1.50) have lower levels than Kenya/Uganda.

Key Sectors (2026)

- **Highest Priority:** Society and Culture (M=4.22)
- **Lowest Priority:** Victim Support (M=3.97)
- **Highest ICMEC Presence:** Criminal Justice (M=1.68)
- **Lowest ICMEC Presence:** Victim Support (M=1.04)
- **Highest Realistic Change:** Policy, Legislation, and Governance (M=3.18) and Victim Support (M=3.18)
- **Lowest Realistic Change:** Industry (M=2.77)
- **Highest Maturity:** Research and Data (M=1.92)
- **Lowest Maturity:** Industry (M=1.67)

Common Challenges

1. **Multisectoral Coordination:** Although Kenya and Uganda have national multisectoral committees, achieving effective coordination among different actors continues to be a challenge that can lead to fragmented and less effective responses.
2. **Limited Resources:** The lack of adequate financial, human, and technical resources limits the ability of both countries to effectively implement child protection programs and policies.
3. **Training and Awareness:** The need for continuous and specialized training for professionals working in child protection is a common challenge. The lack of adequate training significantly affects the quality of services provided and the response capacity of both countries.
4. **Cultural Norms and Public Awareness:** Cultural resistance and lack of public education about children's rights and the severity of OCSEA hinder the implementation of prevention and protection programs.
5. **Technological Infrastructure:** The lack of adequate technological infrastructure, such as robust data systems and access to advanced technologies for research and protection, limits the ability of both countries to effectively monitor and respond to OCSEA cases.

Success Stories and Best Practices

- **Creation of National Multisectoral Committees:** Both Kenya and Uganda have established committees to coordinate child and adolescent protection policies and programs, integrating representatives from various government agencies and civil society organizations.
- **Development of Comprehensive Victim Support Services:** Both countries have implemented services that include medical, psychological, and legal assistance, coordinated at the national level to ensure a timely and effective response to victims' needs. In Uganda, these are integrated and specialized services, accessible and sensitive to diverse needs. Within this component, the existence of helplines is highlighted as a crucial element for the identification and management of cases.

America (Guatemala, Colombia, Honduras, Trinidad and Tobago, El Salvador, Ecuador, Peru, Costa Rica, Chile, Dominican Republic)

Note: Chile, Costa Rica, Peru, and the Dominican Republic are the four new countries included in the comparative study for 2026.

General Analysis by Area (2026)			
Variable	M	SD	Change vs.2024
Priority Level	3.88	0.54	↑ +0.27
ICMEC Presence	2.01	0.67	↓ -0.16
Realistic Change	2.63	0.70	↑ +0.07
Maturity	1.32	0.41	↓ -0.65

- **Priority Level:** Increase in priority since 2024 (M=3.61), driven by Costa Rica (M=4.33), Dominican Republic (M=4.13), and Peru (M=4.10), which have high priorities.
- **ICMEC Presence:** Decrease in presence since 2024 (M=2.17). Costa Rica (M=1.00) has low presence, which directly impacts the regional average.
- **Realistic Change:** Slight increase since 2024 (M=2.56), thanks to Costa Rica (M=3.22), which perceives a higher potential for change.
- **Maturity:** Decrease in maturity since 2024 (M=1.97), as Peru (M=1.08) has low levels.

Key Sectors (2026)

- **Highest Priority:** Victim Support (M=4.08)
- **Lowest Priority:** Criminal Justice (M=3.55)
- **Highest ICMEC Presence:** Society and Culture (M=2.26)
- **Lowest ICMEC Presence:** Industry (M=1.61)
- **Highest Realistic Change:** Research and Data (M=3.07)
- **Lowest Realistic Change:** Industry (M=2.19)
- **Highest Maturity:** Criminal Justice (M=1.47)
- **Lowest Maturity:** Industry (M=1.16)

Common Challenges

1. **Insufficient Inter-Institutional Coordination:** In general, countries in the region have deficient inter-institutional coordination. The lack of an integrated approach and effective communication between different sectors and levels of government hinder the implementation of policies and programs for the protection of children.
2. **Limited Resources and Training:** Most countries face limitations in terms of human and financial resources. This includes the lack of trained personnel to handle OCSEA cases and insufficient funds for continuous and specialized training programs.
3. **Inadequate or Unimplemented Legal Framework:** Although there are laws to combat OCSEA, in many cases, these laws are not effectively implemented or aligned with international

standards.

4. **Low ICMEC Presence:** The presence of ICMEC in many countries in the region is perceived as low. While there are enormous efforts to collaborate with countries to help close identified gaps, the region lacks sufficient resources to achieve sustained capacity-building in all sectors that require intervention.
5. **Lack of Evidence-Based Policies:** This is a significant challenge in many countries in the region where the lack of robust data collection and analysis systems hinders the formulation of effective policies and programs.
6. **Inadequate Victim Support Systems:** Victim support services for OCSEA are often insufficient, fragmented, or inaccessible at the national level.
7. **Challenges in Public Awareness and Education:** Public awareness and education about OCSEA remain insufficient. The lack of systematic educational programs and awareness campaigns limits prevention and reporting of cases.
8. **Limited Child Participation:** The participation of children in the formulation and evaluation of policies and programs is limited. The lack of formal and meaningful mechanisms to include the voices of minors in decisions that affect their safety and well-being is a recurring challenge in the region.

Success Stories and Best Practices

- **Inter-Institutional Coordination and International Collaboration:** Although inter-institutional coordination remains a challenge both regionally and globally, there are some good practices that aim to improve this work. In Colombia, the Special Unit for the Investigation of Crimes Against children was created. Having this unit allows for more expeditious and specialized coordination between the National Police and the Prosecutor's Office, which is reflected in case resolution.
- **Continuous and Specialized Training:** The implementation of continuous training programs for professionals is another notable practice in the region. Countries like El Salvador, Ecuador, and Chile have established permanent training for health professionals, educators, and frontline workers, focusing on the protection of children against online OCSEA.
- **Continuous Improvement Based on Evidence-Based Policies:** Although the lack of evidence-based policies is a common challenge in the region, some countries have managed to implement successful practices in this area. Colombia signed the National Digital Care Consensus in 2025, a union of 18 actors including government authorities and national and international organizations that seek to address OCSEA from different perspectives and establish principles and responsibilities for the implementation of Law 2849 of 2025 on healthy and safe digital environments in the country.
- **Victim Support Services:** In the region, countries like Honduras and Ecuador have implemented support services that include safe shelter, specialized medical and psychological care, as well as rehabilitation and resocialization services. Similarly, others like Costa Rica include in their penal code and laws that minors who have been victims of OCSEA must receive economic compensation, including psychological costs and treatments derived from the emotional or physical damage suffered.
- **Industry Participation and Corporate Social Responsibility:** Although the industry sector is one of the least mature in the region, there are examples of how the industry can play a key role. For example, various parental control guides have been developed by ICMEC with TikTok in countries in the region such as Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Panama. Similarly, in Colombia, awareness campaigns on digital care are implemented in agreement with the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare and TikTok as a technology industry.

Eurasia (Moldova, Romania, Indonesia, France, Nepal)

Note: France and Nepal are the two new countries included in the comparative study for 2026.

General Analysis by Area (2026)			
Variable	M	SD	Change vs.2024
Priority Level	3.59	0.77	↓ -0.56
ICMEC Presence	2.29	0.31	↑ +0.60
Realistic Change	3.53	0.70	↑ +0.39
Maturity	1.89	0.67	↓ -0.37

- **Priority Level:** High priority, but lower than in 2024 (M=4.15) and with high variability (SD=0.77) due to the inclusion of France with lower priority (M=2.72) and countries with higher priorities.
- **ICMEC Presence:** Increase in the perception of ICMEC presence since 2024 (M=1.68). Indonesia has high presence (M=3.11), and the 3 European countries have low presence (M=1.21).
- **Realistic Change:** Moderate to high potential for change, higher than in 2024 (M=3.14). High potential in Indonesia (M=3.95) and France (M=3.49).
- **Maturity:** Moderate maturity, but lower than in 2024 (M=2.26) due to Nepal's low maturity (M=1.86).

Key Sectors (2026)

Based on the averages of Moldova, Romania, Indonesia, France, and Nepal:

- Highest Priority: Victim Support (M=3.90)
- Lowest Priority: Society and Culture (M=3.36)
- Highest ICMEC Presence: Research and Data (M=2.58)
- Lowest ICMEC Presence: Society and Culture (M=1.52)
- Highest Realistic Change: Research and Data (M=3.61)
- Lowest Realistic Change: Society and Culture (M=3.08)
- Highest Maturity: Victim Support (M=2.30)
- Lowest Maturity: Research and Data (M=1.49)

Although the realities of each region make it not very compatible to include the two Asian countries with the three European countries in a single analysis, the regional sample is not representative enough to carry out separate analyses. However, there is a commitment from ICMEC to conduct new studies in these regions, which to date are still incipient.

Common Challenges

1. **Lack of Coordination and Inadequate Legal Frameworks:** Although countries have made efforts to improve coordination among different actors, the lack of an integrated approach and effective communication mechanisms remains a significant challenge.
2. **Limited Training and Resources:** Despite some initiatives to improve the training of personnel involved in child protection, the lack of specialized training for authorities, the judicial system,

and victim support professionals remains a problem.

3. **Insufficient Victim Support and Protection Systems:** Victim support services are fragmented and lack adequate integration. There are no specialized services at the national level that comprehensively address the needs of OCSEA victims.
4. **Lack of Technological Infrastructure and Data Systems:** Despite some technological advancements, the infrastructure and technical support to address online OCSEA crimes are limited. The lack of coordinated national data systems and limited access to international databases, such as Interpol's ICSE database, hinder effective investigation and response.

Success Stories and Best Practices

- **Comprehensive Victim Support:** The implementation of the Barnahus model in Moldova has helped provide a friendly and safe environment for child and adolescent victims and witnesses of violence. This model brings together relevant services in one place to offer a coordinated and effective response, avoiding revictimization during investigations and judicial proceedings.
- **Adoption of Hotlines (INHOPE):** Moldova's case shows how its link to INHOPE facilitated the availability of a national hotline managed by local organizations. Through this channel, information on the online safety of children is provided, and a reliable channel for reporting OCSEA incidents is established.
- **National Strategies Aligned with International Frameworks:** The "Protected Children, Safe Romania" 2022-2027 strategy seeks to align the digital safety of minors with the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child and other framework documents adopted at the European and national levels.
- **Cooperation Between Industry and Civil Society:** Companies like Telekom Romania, Orange Romania, and Digi/RCS-RDS have implemented corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs focused on the online protection of children. Initiatives such as the "Telefonul Copilului" helpline and the "Ora de Net" program demonstrate that collaboration between the private sector and civil society organizations dedicated to child protection is possible and contributes to improving the safety of children in the digital environment.
- **National Articulation with a Multisectoral Approach:** In Indonesia, the strengthening of child protection capacities is carried out through the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KPPPA), which provides the necessary structure and leadership for national coordination and the implementation of protection policies. The ID-COP initiative promotes intersectoral collaboration to protect children online.

Summary of Key Changes by Region (2024 vs. 2026)

Region	Priority	ICMEC Presence	Realistic Change	Maturity
Africa	↓ (4.37 → 4.15)	↑ (1.03 → 1.34)	↓ (3.42 → 3.08)	↓ (2.14 → 1.77)
America	↑ (3.61 → 3.88)	↓ (2.17 → 2.01)	↑ (2.56 → 2.63)	↓ (1.97 → 1.32)
Eurasia	↓ (4.15 → 3.59)	↑ (1.68 → 2.29)	↑ (3.14 → 3.53)	↓ (2.26 → 1.89)

General Observations (2026)

Global Priority

- **Africa** continues to have the highest priorities (M=4.15), but America (M=3.88) has increased its urgency due to the inclusion of countries with critical gaps.

- **ICMEC Presence:**
  - **America** has the highest variability (SD=0.67).
  - **Africa** shows an increase in presence (M=1.34), but it remains the region with the lowest perceived ICMEC support.

- **Realistic Change:**
  - **Eurasia** (M=3.53) and Africa (M=3.08) have the highest potential for change (or at least, perception of potential for change).
  - **America** (M=2.63) progresses more slowly due to the issue of available resources in the region, as well as constant political changes that prevent responses against OCSEA from consolidating as state policies.

- **Maturity:**
  - **Eurasia** (M=1.89) leads in maturity, driven by France (M=3.01), but with greater variability (SD=0.98).
  - **Africa** (M=1.77) and America (M=1.32) have the lowest levels, partly due to the incorporation of countries with lower development in different sectors.

Impact of New Countries

- **France (Eurasia):** Raises maturity in its region but reduces the regional average due to low ICMEC presence.
- **Nepal:** Lowers maturity and increases priority.
- **Nigeria** and **South Africa (Africa):** Increase variability in priority and ICMEC presence.
- **Peru, Dominican Republic, and Chile (America):** Lower maturity, but Costa Rica improves realistic change.

Conclusions

Policy, Legislation, and Governance Sector

The MRC assessments have identified the main gaps and needs for updating national legislation to prevent and mitigate OCSEA. These generally relate to:

- **Africa:** While Kenya needs to update its legislation to include protection in the digital environment and improve coordination between existing laws, Uganda requires a greater focus on the effective implementation of its laws and the development of specific legislation to address online OCSEA.
- **America:** In this region, the lack of robust systems for data collection and analysis is a common challenge that mainly affects the ability to formulate evidence-based policies and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- **Eurasia:** Moldova and Romania need greater alignment of their laws with international standards, particularly regarding the protection of children online. Indonesia needs to focus on and strengthen its legislation to address online OCSEA, including clearly defining offenses, establishing specific laws, implementing preventive and protective measures, developing international cooperation mechanisms, and ensuring adequate sanctions for perpetrators along with support programs for victims.

Some strategies that ICMEC could continue or start implementing to address these needs include:

- Making specific recommendations or offering technical assistance to legislators for drafting or modifying laws, ensuring they are aligned with international standards.
- Advancing in the development of models, guides, or operational protocols so that child and adolescent protection laws can be effectively implemented at the national and local levels.
- Training those responsible for implementing laws and policies at the national and local levels to ensure they fully understand the new legislative frameworks and their obligations under these frameworks.
- Promoting the creation of national intersectoral committees or actively linking to previously existing initiatives in countries.
- Developing specific digital platforms or supporting the delivery of existing digital platforms to countries, aimed at collaborating and exchanging information among the different actors involved.
- Systematizing MRC assessments as monitoring and evaluation systems to measure the effectiveness of ICMEC's support to different countries and assess the progress or regression of protection policies and programs against OCSEA.
- Publishing periodic reports on the state of implementation of policies and laws, identifying areas for improvement and best practices.

Criminal Justice Sector

- **Africa:** Challenges in this region include lack of adequate training, insufficient resources for investigation, and lack of inter-institutional coordination.
- **America:** Common gaps and needs in the Criminal Justice sector include lack of inter-institutional coordination, insufficiency of resources and specialized personnel, and deficiencies in data collection and analysis.
- **Eurasia:** Moldova has insufficient training, limited resources, and lack of inter-institutional collaboration. Romania needs to update its legislation, improve technological infrastructure, and strengthen victim protection. Indonesia faces challenges in clarifying legal definitions, the need for specialized training, and international cooperation.

Some strategies that ICMEC could continue or start implementing to address these needs include:

- Providing technical assistance and specialized equipment for the collection and analysis of evidence in OCSEA cases.
- Advising and supporting countries in the creation and strengthening of specialized units within the police and prosecution, as well as providing specialized knowledge for judges.
- Developing and adopting clear and standardized protocols for the investigation and prosecution of OCSEA cases.
- Implementing protection measures for victims and witnesses throughout the judicial process.

Victim Support Sector

- **Africa:** Kenya needs to improve access to and coordination of comprehensive victim support services, as well as better train professionals. Uganda requires investments in infrastructure for care, increased awareness and accessibility, and expansion of psychological support services.
- **America:** The main challenges in this sector include the lack of comprehensive services, insufficient resources, lack of sustainable programs, infrastructure limitations, and deficiencies in inter-institutional coordination.
- **Eurasia:** Moldova lacks integrated services, training for victim support personnel, and limited financial resources. Romania faces limitations in access to specialized services, victim protection and security, and coordination between protection agencies. Indonesia needs to improve service availability, develop effective rehabilitation programs, and increase awareness and education about available support services.

Some strategies that ICMEC could continue or start implementing to address these needs include:

- Creating or strengthening comprehensive support centers that provide medical, psychological, and legal services for victims in one place.
- Encouraging the creation of psychological support programs and telepsychology services to reach victims in remote areas.
- Promoting the development of educational programs and awareness campaigns so that the community and professionals can recognize signs of OCSEA and the importance of early

intervention.

- Advising protection authorities on best practices for implementing protection measures throughout the judicial and rehabilitation process.
- Developing effective rehabilitation programs that address the physical, emotional, and social needs of victims, facilitating their reintegration into society.

Society and Culture Sector

- **Africa:** The main challenge in this sector is concentrated on social norms that validate violence against children, such as child marriages, initiation practices, gender inequalities, resistance to change, and social acceptance of violence.
- **America:** The main gaps in this sector include the lack of awareness programs or campaigns, limited community participation, limited integration of the issue in the media (Trinidad and Tobago), and insufficient involvement of civil society organizations in countries like El Salvador.
- **Eurasia:** The main challenges of this sector in the region include social norms that validate violence against children, lack of education and public awareness, limited community involvement, limited media participation (Romania), and access to information and strengthening of family and community support (Indonesia).

Some strategies that ICMEC could continue or start implementing to address these needs include:

- Developing and promoting awareness campaigns at the national and regional levels to increase awareness of OCSEA.
- Implementing educational programs and workshops in schools to teach children about their rights and how to recognize and report OCSEA situations.
- Collaborating with media outlets to disseminate ethical and informed messages about OCSEA prevention.
- Offering training to health, education, and social service professionals on how to identify and respond to OCSEA cases.
- Promoting the creation of community support networks that involve local leaders, community organizations, and parent groups to promote a safe environment for children.

Industry Sector

In this sector, the different regions share the same challenges, which include:

- Lack of specific regulations and adequate compliance with them by the industry.
- Limited technical capacity to develop technologies for the protection of children.
- Insufficient collaboration between the industry and other involved actors.
- Many companies have not adopted effective corporate social responsibility policies and lack awareness and training programs on OCSEA.
- It is also crucial to invest in technological infrastructure for the detection and prevention of these crimes.

Some strategies that ICMEC could continue or start implementing to address these needs include:

- Developing and updating specific regulations that address the protection of children in the digital and industry spheres.
- Offering technical training programs to companies to develop and improve their child and adolescent protection technologies.
- Promoting the implementation of corporate social responsibility policies that include specific measures for the protection of minors.
- Creating digital platforms to facilitate collaboration and information exchange between the industry, governments, NGOs, and other actors involved in the protection of children.
- Encouraging investment in technological infrastructure for the detection and prevention of crimes against children.

Research and Data Sector

In this sector, the lack of robust and coordinated systems for data collection and analysis, the need for standardized indicators and evaluation and monitoring methods, and insufficient inter-institutional collaboration and data integration are recurring needs across different countries and regions. Additional and more specific needs by region include:

- **Africa:** In this region, the lack of adequate technological infrastructure and trained personnel limits the ability to conduct thorough investigations and effectively monitor the online OCSEA situation.
- **America:** There is a lack of continuous and coordinated research that produces an updated and reliable vision of threats and responses. This translates into the absence of solid evidence-based policies and programs and the lack of regular monitoring and evaluation of implemented strategies.
- **Eurasia:** Countries face challenges in accessing international databases and integrating their own national data systems, which hinders an effective and evidence-based response. Additionally, there is a lack of financial and technical resources to develop and maintain advanced monitoring and tracking technologies.

Some strategies that ICMEC could continue or start implementing to address these needs include:

- Developing and implementing data management systems that allow for the collection, storage, and analysis of data related to OCSEA.
- Facilitating agreements that allow countries to access relevant international databases and improve evidence-based response capacity.
- Assisting countries in integrating their national data systems to ensure a more coordinated and effective response.
- Encouraging collaborative research projects involving multiple countries and regions to obtain a global and coordinated vision of threats and responses related to OCSEA.
- Conducting research and analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of monitoring systems and implemented policies, providing evidence-based recommendations to improve strategies for the protection of children.

- Promoting the creation of national and regional databases that facilitate access to and integration of data from different sources, ensuring a comprehensive and updated view of the situation.

General Recommendations

While the recommendations made so far are specific to each sector, the following recommendations could impact multiple sectors when implemented:

Continuous and Specialized Training Programs

- **Applicable to:** Criminal Justice, Victim Support, Research and Data sectors.
- **Description:** Offer continuous and specialized training programs to authorities, professionals working with victims, and personnel responsible for investigation and monitoring.

Development and Strengthening of Digital Platforms

- **Applicable to:** Victim Support, Industry, Research and Data sectors.
- **Description:** Develop or improve digital platforms to facilitate inter-institutional coordination and information exchange. These platforms should be secure and allow collaboration between the industry, governments, NGOs, and other relevant actors.

Investment in Technological Infrastructure

- **Applicable to:** Criminal Justice, Industry, Research and Data sectors.
- **Description:** Promote collaboration with governments and international organizations to invest in the technological infrastructure (software and equipment) necessary for the incorporation and use of advanced case management systems, data analysis, and child and adolescent protection technologies.

Creation of Collaboration Networks

- **Applicable to:** Victim Support, Society and Culture, Research and Data sectors.
- **Description:** Promote the creation of collaboration networks among governmental, non-governmental, and private sector organizations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of support services and research. These networks should facilitate coordination, the exchange of best practices, the production of new knowledge in the field, and the development of technological research and monitoring tools.

Development of Standardized Indicators and Evaluation Methods

- **Applicable to:** Criminal Justice, Research and Data sectors.
- **Description:** Collaborate with experts and international organizations to develop standardized performance indicators and evaluation methods that allow for the effective monitoring of implemented strategies and policies for the prevention and mitigation of OCSEA.

Publication of Periodic Reports and Studies

- **Applicable to:** Criminal Justice, Research and Data sectors.
- **Description:** Publish periodic reports and studies that present the main findings of research, providing a solid basis for the formulation of effective policies and programs.

Facilitation of International Cooperation Agreements

- **Applicable to:** Criminal Justice, Research and Data sectors.
- **Description:** Facilitate the establishment and strengthening of international cooperation agreements for the investigation and prosecution of transnational crimes related to OCSEA.

Appendices

List of Acronyms

OCSEA: Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
ICMEC: International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children
INHOPE: International Association of Internet Hotlines
KPPPA: Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (Indonesia)
MNR: Model National Response
MRC: Multisectoral Response and Capacity Studies
NCB: National Capacity Building
NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility
EU: European Union

Glossary of Terms

Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA): Any form of sexual abuse and exploitation of minors, including the production and distribution of child sexual abuse material.

National Capacity Building (NCB): ICMEC team in charge of implementing efforts and strategies aimed at strengthening countries' capacities in responding to the Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

Child Helpline: Service that provides assistance and support to children who are victims of abuse and exploitation.

Hotline for Reporting Child Sexual Abuse Material: Service that allows reporting and receiving support on cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse.

Maturity Framework of the Model National Response (WeProtect): Tool that evaluates countries' capacities in responding to OCSEA, assigning maturity levels according to the degree of development and effectiveness of protection measures.

Model National Response (MNR): Framework developed by the WeProtect Global Alliance to support countries in the prevention and mitigation of online OCSEA.

Realistic Change Level: Measure developed by the ICMEC NCB Team to evaluate the possibility of implementing effective changes in the response to OCSEA.

Participation of children: Inclusion of the voices and opinions of children in the formulation and evaluation of policies and programs.

ICMEC Presence: Measure developed by the ICMEC NCB Team to evaluate the level of activity and support of ICMEC in a given country.

MRC Reports Analyzed

1. Kenya's MRC Assessment for Preventing and Combating Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
2. Uganda's MRC Assessment for the Prevention, Investigation and Assistance to Victims of Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
3. Guatemala's MRC Assessment for the prevention, investigation, and assistance to victims of Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

4. Colombia's MRC Assessment for the prevention, investigation, and assistance to victims of Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
5. Honduras' MRC Assessment for the prevention, investigation, and assistance to victims of Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
6. Trinidad & Tobago's MRC Assessment for the Prevention, Investigation, and Care of Victims of Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse on the Internet
7. El Salvador's MRC Assessment for the prevention, investigation and assistance to victims of Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
8. Ecuador's MRC Assessment for the prevention, investigation and assistance to victims of Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
9. Moldova's MRC Assessment for the Prevention, Investigation, and Assistance to Victims of Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
10. Romania's MRC Assessment for the Prevention, Investigation, and Assistance to Victims of Online Child Sexual Exploitation
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12. Indonesia's MRC Assessment for the Prevention, Investigation, and Assistance to Victims of Online Child Sexual Exploitation
13. France's MRC Assessment for the Prevention, Investigation, and Assistance to Victims of Online Child Sexual Exploitation
14. South Africa's MRC Assessment for the Prevention, Investigation, and Assistance to Victims of Online Child Sexual Exploitation
15. Nigeria's MRC Assessment for the Prevention, Investigation, and Assistance to Victims of Online Child Sexual Exploitation
16. Peru's MRC Assessment for the Prevention, Investigation, and Assistance to Victims of Online Child Sexual Exploitation
17. Costa Rica's MRC Assessment for the Prevention, Investigation, and Assistance to Victims of Online Child Sexual Exploitation
18. Dominican Republic's MRC Assessment for the Prevention, Investigation, and Assistance to Victims of Online Child Sexual Exploitation
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