United Nations Toolkit on Synthetic Drugs
Forensics Module developed by UNODC

- Do I have the forensic capacity to detect and identify NPS?
- Is there access to equipment, training or human resources?
- How reliable are the results of my analysis?
- What are NPS?
- Have NPS emerged in my country?
- What substances are under international control?
- What are the Conventions?
To establish the identity of a controlled drug, NPS, precursor or chemical, whether in a seized drug sample or a biological matrix, the analytical approach must entail the determination of at least two uncorrelated parameters, one of which should provide information on the chemical structure of the analyte (e.g., infra-red spectroscopy, mass spectrometry).

“A reliable and scientifically supported identification of a drug or chemical depends on the use of an appropriate analytical scheme by competent analysts in a quality controlled process”.
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Presumptive or preliminary testing

UNODC drug and precursor test kits

These are kits containing necessary reagents, tools and easy step-by-step instructions to conduct approximately 200 rapid and simple colour tests for the preliminary field identification of drugs and precursors most commonly encountered in the illicit traffic. A range of presumptive test kits of this type is also available from commercial sources.


Information about how to access these kits is available at the following: https://bit.ly/2GVib7l

Information about experimental procedures for rapid testing of drugs of abuse can be found at: https://bit.ly/2V4hXhH
Handheld devices for presumptive testing

A practical guide to the use of Raman handheld devices for field identification of drugs, precursors, essential chemicals and cutting agents by front-line law enforcement officers and forensic drug analysts. The guidelines highlights its strength as a rapid and non-destructive device which enables samples to be analyzed directly through transparent or translucent containers. The limitations of the device along with safety precautions are also outlined. In addition, the guidelines specifically provides step-by-step instructions on the use of one type of Raman handheld device.

https://bit.ly/2ExDYin
Since the early 1980’s, UNODC has produced a series of manuals and guidelines dealing with the analysis and identification of various types of drugs under international control and NPS in seized materials and in biological fluids and tissues. The aim of these manuals is the harmonization and establishment of recommended methods of analysis for national drug analysis laboratories.

The manuals suggest approaches that may assist drug analysts in the selection of methods appropriate to the sample under examination, and the range of technologies and resources that might be available in their laboratories.
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Laboratory analysis

Synthetic drugs including NPS

UNODC manuals and guidelines for the analysis and identification of drugs in seized materials

https://bit.ly/2V8rSmK
Quality assurance and quality management are essential elements in the work of all drug-testing laboratories and the role they play in ensuring the quality of test results, in particular the identification of drugs cannot be underestimated. The quality and reliability of these results are a matter of safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms and ensuring public safety and effective law enforcement.

The UNODC International Quality Assurance Programme has been operating since 1995 and forms part of the Scientific and Forensic and Services provided to enhance quality assurance in forensic drug testing laboratories worldwide.
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Quality Assurance

Manuals for Laboratories

As part of the UNODC International Quality Assurance Programme and used in conjunction and in parallel with the manuals for the identification and analysis of drugs, the following manuals have been prepared to assist forensic laboratories in the development and implementation of quality management systems.

https://bit.ly/2SeODDw
Reference materials

Another essential tool in the work of forensic drug testing laboratories is access to and use of reference materials. These are used not only for reliable and accurate identification of drugs but can also be used to determine the purity of the drug in a sample. In recognition of the importance of reference standards in drug analysis, laboratories should dedicate financial resources annually to procure appropriate amounts of relevant substances.

These can be procured from a number of commercial companies, however, UNODC recognizes the financial commitment this can involve and reference samples of substances and precursors under international control and selected NPS are made available free of charge in small quantities (usually in the range of 20-50 mg) to national drug testing laboratories in countries with limited resources and actively participating in the UNODC ICE programme. Information regarding access to reference materials can be found at the following: https://bit.ly/2ttENDZ
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Quality Assurance

Analysis of real samples
Confidential, evaluation and reporting
Feedback, mentoring and expert advice

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
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