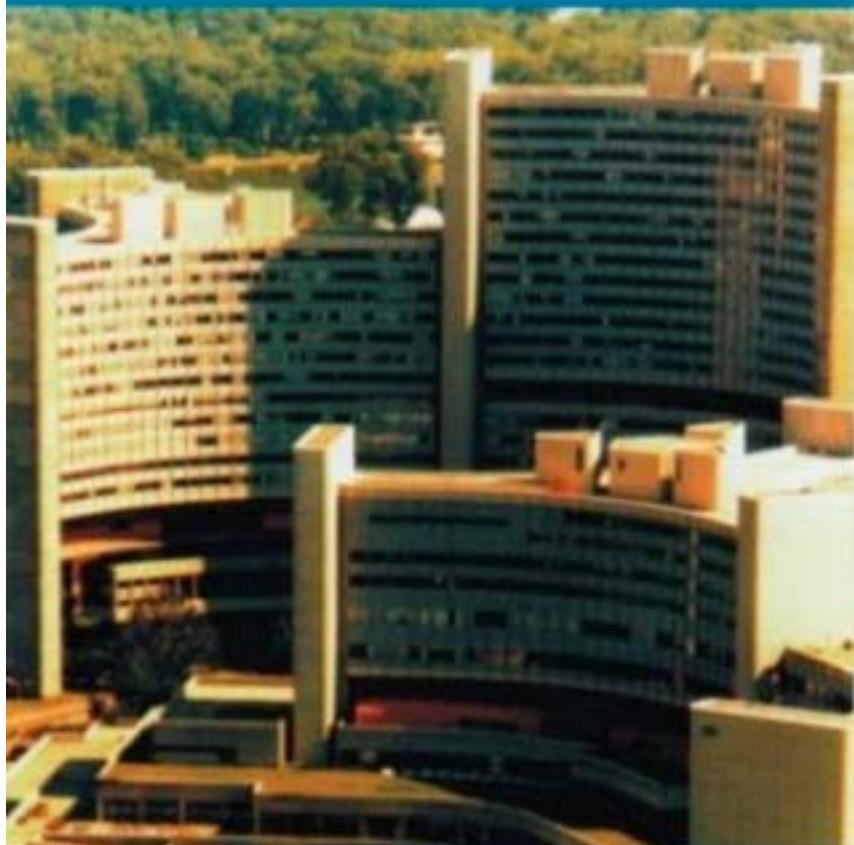




UNITED NATIONS
Office on Drugs and Crime

International Quality Assurance Programme





What is it?

- Quality assurance is about doing the right things in the right way to get the right results.
- Quality assurance is more than simply quality control, it extends to every aspect of the work of the laboratory.

Why have quality assurance?

- To provide reliable evidence for court proceedings: the lives or freedom of individuals may well be dependant on this.
- To provide information on drugs that is sufficiently consistent to be exchanged between laboratories for use by policy for intelligence purposes.
- To identify and monitor the levels of drugs in body fluids: to determine, for example, whether drug users are now abstaining; or if drivers are incapacitated; or if the health and safety of employees are at risk.

How is quality achieved?

- Using validated methods.
- Having the necessary equipment and materials and the appropriate accommodation.
- Employing competent and motivated people who continue their skills during their work.
- Participating in interlaboratory exercises that provide for an external mechanism of assessing the performance of a laboratory.



UNODC's International Quality Assurance Programme

Aims

The International Quality Assurance Programme (IQAP) forms part of the services provided by the Scientific Section (Laboratory) of UNODC and is intended to harmonize the quality of work produced by national laboratories in different countries.

ICE



The International Collaborative Exercises (ICE) component of IQAP provides laboratories with test samples to be analysed on a cost free basis for external quality control schemes and for proficiency-testing purposes.

Method validation



The Scientific Section of UNODC provides guidelines on methods of analysis of drugs and also on how to validate these methods, i.e. ensure that they are properly set up and used.

Assistance

UNODC can assist with information on drugs and the chemicals used in their manufacture; with training of laboratory staff and managers; with reference drug materials; and with the promotion of regional collaboration in drug control.



Table 1

Drug analysis laboratories

What are laboratories for?

- Law enforcement and the legal system must have reliable information on the identity and purity of drugs seized by police and customs, for intelligence networks and for assessing appropriate penalties in courts.
- Analysis of drugs in urine and blood are needed to monitor individuals in drug rehabilitation projects and to monitor drug offenders in different settings e.g. driving offences, prisons, drug trafficking, drug users, etc.

What are their requirements?

Forensic and toxicologic labs need competent staff who use methods that are properly validated, i.e. suitable for their purpose, and effective quality control procedures. UNODC will assist the forensic and toxicologic science laboratories in your country to meet these demands.

This brochure is concerned with UNODC's International Quality Assurance Programme. However, UNODC may be able to give assistance in other ways. For more information contact UNODC or UNDP field office in your area.



Cultivation of opium poppies



Laboratories analyse different types of abused drugs from plants to illicitly-produced drugs

Scientists provide vital data on the identity and purity of drugs as well as advising governments on drug-related problems. A new problem concerns chemical precursors used for clandestine drug manufacture



*Drug Rehabilitation Clinic, Thailand.
Laboratories analyse urine specimens from current drug users and those undergoing rehabilitation.*

Throughout the World, UNODC is actively engaged in helping law enforcement, national legal systems and the medical professions in dealing with the problems and consequences of drug abuse.



UNODC Laboratory, Vienna



UNODC, Vienna International Centre

How to proceed

UNODC requests all interested persons/laboratories to contact the Scientific Section at Vienna, either by using the [card attached](#) or by telephone, fax or e-mail.

Alternatively, UNODC or UNDP field offices in your area can assist in establishing contact with Vienna.

Participation

Once contact has been established, UNODC's Scientific Section will discuss with the interested laboratory how to obtain assistance in quality assurance matters.

Laboratories will be invited to participate in ICE exercises. Two rounds of the ICE programme are held each year for both seized materials and biological specimens.

Collaboration (networks)

Laboratories will be encouraged to work together in their local areas, to share method validation and other quality assurance matters.

Contact information:

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