United Nations Toolkit on Synthetic Drugs

Precursors Control Section

Secretariat of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)

CND Intersessional Meeting
18 October 2019
Precursors Module
International Precursor Control

Overview of this Module
The international precursors control system
Chemicals used in illicit drug manufacture
Licit trade monitoring
Trends in precursors and precursor control
Operational aspects (precursor investigations)
Other useful resources

- What constitutes the international precursors control system?
- What is the procedure for placing additional chemical(s) under international control?
- Which chemicals are under international control?
- Which other chemicals are used in illicit drug manufacture?
- How is international legitimate trade in precursors monitored?
- What is the concept of voluntary cooperation with industry?
- What are the latest trends in global precursors trade and trafficking?
- What is the role of law enforcement in preventing the diversion of chemicals?
- Which tools are available?
Public web versus Secure site for Competent National Authorities (CNA)

Precursors

Most trafficking is carried out in secrecy and is divorced from legal commerce. However, precursors trafficking often intersects with legitimate commerce or customs controls, e.g. in order to source materials or transport shipments.

These cross over points provide an opportunity to stop incidents of trafficking by using regulatory and interdiction tools. Monitoring the procurement of and trade in the chemicals necessary to manufacture and process drugs is such a tool.

Legislation and Control Measures

The concerted and united efforts of Governments determined to establish measures to prevent the diversion of precursor and essential chemicals into the illicit manufacture of drugs led to the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 (1988 Convention), and today the Convention enjoys near universal adherence. The 1988 Convention contains detailed provisions and requirements relating to the control of precursors. The general requirements are summarized in paragraph 1 of article 12:

"The parties shall take the measures they deem appropriate to prevent diversion of substances in Table I and Table II used for the purpose of illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances, and shall co-operate with one another to this end."

Under the treaty, the International Narcotics Control Board has a special responsibility to monitor Governments' control over precursors and other chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs, and to assist them in preventing the diversion of those chemicals into the illicit traffic. Every year, the Board publishes a report on the implementation of article 12 of the 1988 Convention (see the Precursors Annual Reports).

In addition to the 1988 Convention, Government initiatives in the field of precursors control have been further supported through resolutions from the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Affairs Council as well as the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, and have led to the creation of flexible control mechanisms.
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INCB Precursors Control Section

Scheduling process under the 1988 Convention

- APAAN (2014)
- NPP & ANPP (2017)
- APAA, 3,4-MDP-2-P methyl glycidic acid derivatives (2019)
- MAPA (being assessed)

... often designer precursors

Govt’s are encouraged to carefully consider the scope of control when proposing a chemical for scheduling, e.g., esters or other related substances which can be easily converted into the same controlled drug or precursor.
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Precursors under international control

Non-scheduled chemicals

Non-scheduled precursor chemicals rarely have unique HS codes. Nevertheless, if traded legitimately, the applicable HS codes should be used, or else a shipment could be considered misdeclared. The attached table provides the applicable HS classifications of selected non-scheduled precursor chemicals. Most of these codes are not unique, i.e., they are “group” codes that comprise a group of chemicals with similar chemical structure or properties. (The unique HS codes of chemicals under international control, i.e., chemicals listed in Table I and Table II of the 1988 Convention, are available in the red list. INCB would like to acknowledge the cooperation with WCO in this important matter and intends to update the table with more chemicals, as required.)
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Preventing chemicals from reaching clandestine laboratories

Licitation trade monitoring

What is PEN Online?
Legitimate needs for chemicals
Other useful resources
Voluntary cooperation with industry

Mostly: Secure web
Preventing chemicals from reaching clandestine laboratories

Operational aspects (precursor investigations)

- What is the role of law enforcement in preventing the diversion of chemicals?
- Which role does the internet play in the diversion of chemicals?

Suspicious shipments
(Attempted) diversions

Investigations

Point of diversion

Investigations

Seizures
Other resources

**Thematic chapters**

2014: Making precursor control fit for 2019 and beyond (a contribution to UNGASS 2016)

2015: Public-private partnerships: their merits and potential in preventing the diversion of chemicals

2016: Prevention of chemical diversion beyond regulatory controls: the role of law enforcement

2017: Internet-facilitated trade in precursors

2018: Options to address the proliferation of non-scheduled “designer” precursors at the international level
Thank you for your attention!

Barbara Remberg
Senior Technical Advisor
Precursors Control Section
Secretariat of the International Narcotics Control Board
E-mail: barbara.remberg@un.org
incb.precursors@un.org