What are the International Collaborative Exercises (ICE)?

The ICE programme is an independent inter-laboratory exercise in drug analysis which allows for forensic drug and toxicology laboratories worldwide to continuously evaluate their own performance and assess the quality of their results.

Participation in such collaborative exercises or proficiency tests is one of the essential elements for the implementation of a laboratory quality management system and ultimately accreditation.

Who can join this programme?

Participation in the UNODC ICE programme is available to national drug testing and toxicology laboratories with options available in the analysis of drugs in Seized Materials (SM) and also in Biological Specimens (BS, specifically urine). Interested laboratories can register via email to: unodc-ice@un.org.

Why should a laboratory join ICE?

As a neutral partner, UNODC offers laboratories the possibility to identify areas where improvements of their work can be made. ICE supports laboratories to enhance their capacities in analysis and identification of controlled drugs and new psychoactive substances as well as in the generation of quality results. This leads to the strengthening of the criminal justice system and safeguards human rights.

The ICE programme is available free-of-charge for laboratories demonstrating financial constraints and offers provision of reference materials.
How does it work?

Test samples consisting of substances under international control, new psychoactive substances and related metabolites are sent to participating laboratories twice a year.

Participants are requested to identify these substances and are encouraged to report their purity. Upon submission of results, immediate and confidential evaluation is provided. Additional analytical reports offer comparison of laboratory performance on a global scale.

Are there any import formalities required?

Only participating laboratories in the seized materials group would need to obtain necessary import permits for substances under international control. Import permits should be issued by the national competent authority under the International Drug Control Treaties.

In addition to the ICE programme, how can UNODC support Member States to improve quality management in their laboratories?

UNODC provides: laboratory training in the analysis of drugs, including NPS, and quality assurance; publications on analytical methodologies and development of quality management systems; and reference standards of drugs, new psychoactive substances and related metabolites.

More detailed information is available online at:

http://www.unodc.org/lab
Registration in the UNODC ICE programme can be requested via email to unodc-ice@un.org.

If required, in-person training workshops can be arranged subject to the availability of funds.

Requests for UNODC training services on identification of drugs and precursors and development of quality assurance systems should be channelled through the office of UNODC’s Country/Regional Representative. In countries/regions where no such office exists, please contact UNODC Laboratory and Scientific Services at:

Laboratory and Scientific Services  
Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime  
P.O. Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria  
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