



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

The Global **SMART** Programme

A strategic response to
the synthetic drug problem

SYNTHETIC DRUG PROBLEM



The expansion of the global synthetic drugs market, including amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) and new psychoactive substances (NPS), is a recent phenomenon and is becoming of increasing concern worldwide. ATS are a group of substances including amphetamine, methamphetamine and ecstasy-type substances. After cannabis, ATS are the second most widely used drugs in the world, with use levels often exceeding those of heroin and/or cocaine. In recent years NPS, such as synthetic cannabinoids, synthetic cathinones, phenethylamines, and others, have established themselves on the drug market. The number of NPS continues to increase and already exceeds the total number of substances under international control. NPS have a wide geographical spread and pose a health risk to the public while awareness remains limited. The negative impact of synthetic drugs on society is profound and there is a need for an integrated and consistent response.

The synthetic drugs market presents a complex challenge because:

Starting materials and manufacturing processes are diverse

Manufacture is not geographically constrained

A wide array of substances can be manufactured

Trafficking routes and use patterns change rapidly

Most substances are not under international control

Identification and analysis of NPS may require advanced forensic capacity



For these reasons, monitoring, assessing and strategically responding to synthetic drugs is essential. The global expansion of the ATS market and the dynamic nature of the NPS market enhance the need for global monitoring and sharing of knowledge and experiences among Member States.

STRATEGIC RESPONSE

As a response to the synthetic drug problem, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) launched the Global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends (SMART) Programme in 2008. The programme enhances the capacity of targeted Member States in priority regions by providing technical support to laboratory personnel, law enforcement and research officers, to generate and use synthetic drug information for effective policy design and programme interventions. South-East Asia and Latin America were the first priority regions with other regions being included gradually in close collaboration with Member States and partner organizations. Since 2011, the Global SMART Programme has played a pioneering role in highlighting the emergence of NPS.

The Global SMART Programme delivers 3 outcomes:

Outcome 1: Capacity-building

Provide technical support to Member States to generate and manage information on synthetic drugs, e.g. by training law enforcement officers on how to detect synthetic drugs and supporting national drug monitoring systems.

Outcome 2: Increase the understanding of the synthetic drug problem

Make information and data on synthetic drugs available globally, e.g. through regional and global reports and the UNODC Early Warning Advisory on NPS.

Outcome 3: Support for evidence-based policies

Support Member States and international stakeholders in using information on synthetic drugs in drug policy development.

To learn more about the Global SMART Programme and access our publications, please visit our website at www.unodc.org/unodc/en/scientists/smart.html. For more information on NPS, see the UNODC Early Warning Advisory (EWA) on new psychoactive substances (www.unodc.org/NPS).





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The Global SMART Programme is managed by the Laboratory and Scientific Section of the Research and Trend Analysis Branch.

For further information on the Global SMART Programme please contact the UNODC SMART team at globalsmart@unodc.org and visit our websites:
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