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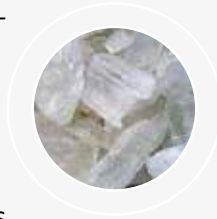
Special Segment

Methamphetamine manufacture:
Global Patterns and Regional Differences

2014

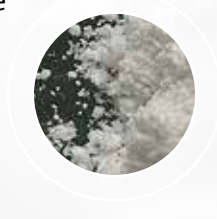
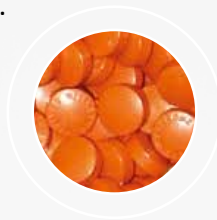
About the SMART Update

The threat of synthetic drugs is a significant drug problem worldwide. After cannabis, amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) are the second most widely used drugs in the world, exceeding the use of cocaine and heroin. Along with ATS, the continued growth of the market for *new psychoactive substances* (NPS) over the last years has become a policy challenge and of major international concern. A growing interplay between new drugs and illicit drug markets is being observed. By July 2014, the emergence of NPS had been reported in more than 90 countries and territories. Trends on the synthetic drug market evolve quickly each year.



The UNODC Global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends (SMART) Programme enhances the capacity of Member States in priority regions to generate, manage, analyse, report and use synthetic drug information to design effective policy and programme interventions. Launched in September 2008, Global SMART provides capacity building in East and South-East Asia, the Pacific, Latin America and Africa, and regularly reviews the global ATS situation. Other features of Global SMART include online data collection, situation reports and regional assessments. The first global situation assessment on NPS “*The challenge of new psychoactive substances*” was published in March 2013, pursuant to Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 55/1 (2012). The SMART Early Warning Advisory web-portal offers regularly updated information on NPS and related legislation (www.unodc.org/NPS).

The Global SMART Update is designed to provide regular brief reports on emerging patterns and trends of the global synthetic drug situation. Given the speed at which changes in the ATS and NPS markets occur, it is especially important to have a simple sustainable mechanism for frequent information sharing from different parts of the world. The Global SMART Update is published twice a year and is available in English and Spanish. Electronic copies of the SMART Updates and other publications are available at www.unodc.org/unodc/en/scientists/smart.html.



The Update reports on various synthetic drug information, such as significant or unusual drug or precursor seizures, new locations, methods and chemicals used for clandestine manufacture, new trafficking groups or routes, changes in legislation to address the problem of synthetic drugs, emerging drugs or user groups, and health implications related to their use.*

In this issue

Each issue of the Update contains a special coverage and thematic segments. Previous issues highlighted the increasing dimension of ATS trafficking from Africa to East and South-East Asia; the ATS situation in South Asia; *new psychoactive substances* and the changing faces of illicit ATS manufacture; the spread of NPS across the globe and the legal situation and responses to the challenge of *new psychoactive substances* and the road ahead and the changing nature of “ecstasy”.

The special segment of this current issue addresses the global patterns and regional differences in methamphetamine manufacture and use of precursors. The regional overviews provide a brief summary of illicit methamphetamine manufacture and precursor trends.

While data on ATS seizures is often not difficult to obtain, information relating to the demand for ATS remains scarce and anecdotal in nature. Nevertheless, the Update continues to make a determined effort to highlight information on ATS use. Various drug demand-related subjects are covered in this issue, including facts that have come to light on the nasal insufflation of methamphetamine powder by recreational drug users in Germany and the smoking of crystalline methamphetamine by injecting opioid users in selected countries. The Update also covers the latest developments in the illicit methamphetamine market, including the trafficking of liquid methamphetamine which is increasingly being used in different regions to mislead the authorities.

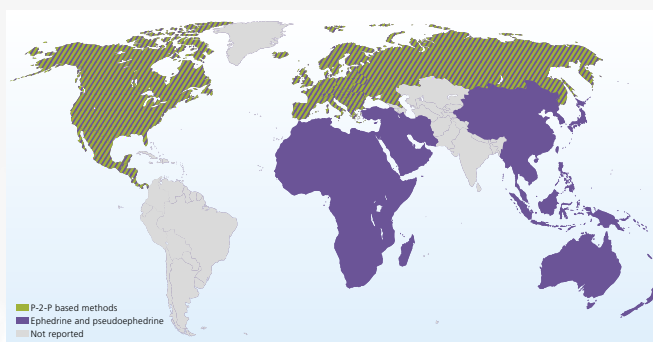
The information and data contained within this report are from official Government reports, press releases, scientific journals or incidents confirmed by UNODC Field Offices. Additional or updated information from previously reported incidents may also be included where appropriate. An asterisk () indicates that information is preliminary as it stems from ‘open sources’ where UNODC is waiting for official confirmation. This report has not been formally edited. The content of this publication does not reflect the views or policies of UNODC or contributory organizations and does not imply any endorsement. Suggested citation: UNODC, Global SMART Update Volume 12, September 2014.

Methamphetamine manufacture: Global Patterns and Regional Differences

The illicit manufacture of methamphetamine has traditionally been concentrated in North America (primarily in Mexico and the United States) and East and South-East Asia (China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand), close to major consumer markets. However, it has recently also spread to other countries such as Guatemala, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa.

Manufacturing methods of methamphetamine used throughout the world are rather diverse. Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine (pure or in the form of pharmaceutical preparations) are mostly used in East and South-East Asia and in some African countries, whereas 1-phenyl-2-propanone (P-2-P) and “pre-precursors” of P-2-P are primarily used in some parts of Europe, North America (primarily Mexico) and Central America (see Map 1).

Map 1: Main precursor chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine, by region



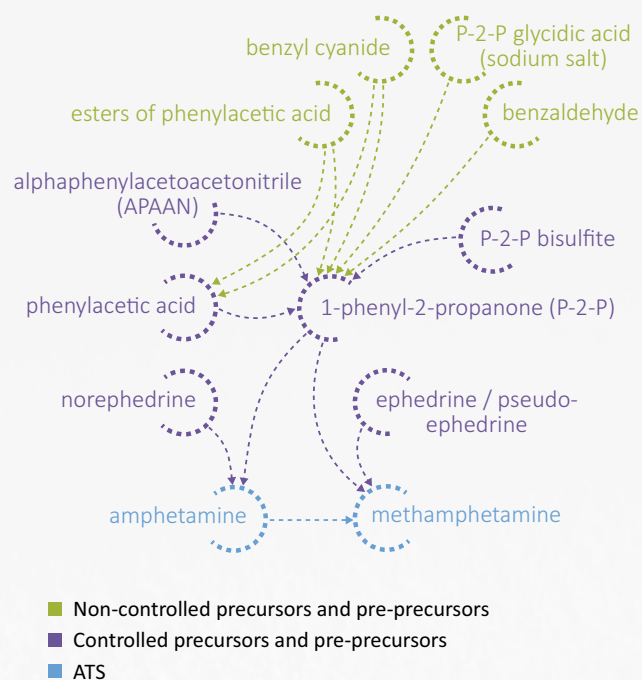
Methamphetamine and precursors used for manufacture

There are numerous methods for synthesizing methamphetamine, and a wide range of chemical precursors can be used, the most common being ephedrine, pseudoephedrine and P-2-P (also known as benzyl methyl ketone “BMK”). These precursors have a widespread licit use in the chemical and pharmaceutical industries: ephedrine and pseudoephedrine are often contained in over-the-counter decongestants, while the primary use of P-2-P is for the legitimate manufacture of amphetamine/methamphetamine. Due to the fact that large volumes of these substances are traded internationally, bulk ephedrine and pseudoephedrine are controlled under the 1988 UN Convention; however, these measures only apply to the raw material, not to pharmaceutical preparations containing these substances. Thus, ephedrine and pseudoephedrine continue to be extracted from pharmaceutical preparations for use in illicit manufacture, and diversion from licit trade is a primary source.

Once stricter regulations were put in place, that limited the availability of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, there have been reports of a shift from the use of these precursors to the use of P-2-P-based routes

involving precursors and derivatives of P-2-P, most notably phenylacetic acid and alphaphenylacetoneitrile (APAAN),¹ in North America and in some parts of Europe. Moreover, traffickers continue to exploit loopholes in international and national control regimes to obtain precursors for methamphetamine manufacture. For instance, the use of precursors of P-2-P, such as esters of phenylacetic acid (e.g. ethylphenylacetate), sodium salts of P-2-P glycidic acid, benzaldehyde and benzyl cyanide in the manufacture of P-2-P, has been reported (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Precursors for methamphetamine



Differences in methamphetamine manufacture: from *d*-methamphetamine to *dl*-methamphetamine

Methamphetamine is available in two isomeric forms: *d*-methamphetamine and the less potent *l*-methamphetamine. The use of pure ephedrine or pseudoephedrine as a starting material results in a more potent type of methamphetamine, as these precursors produce substantially more of the active isomer *d*-methamphetamine. In general, the product obtained from the use of P-2-P is a less potent racemic mixture (50-50) of the two *d*- and *l*-isomers resulting in *dl*-methamphetamine. However, an additional purification step can be used to increase the yield of the more potent *d*-methamphetamine. Analysis of these isomers can help in determining the manufacturing process of methamphetamine and the precursors used.

Europe – methamphetamine manufactured using both P-2-P and ephedrine/pseudoephedrine

Illicit methamphetamine manufacture in Europe used

¹ APAAN and its optical isomers were included in Table I of the 1988 UN Convention in March 2014 (fully effective on 9 October 2014).

to be concentrated in two regions: Central Europe, primarily the Czech Republic and neighbouring countries, including Germany and Slovakia, and the Baltic States, mostly in Lithuania. Small-scale manufacture has recently expanded to other European countries.² Methamphetamine found in the region is normally encountered as a mixture of both *d*- and *l*- isomers,³ indicating the use of P-2-P as a starting material. P-2-P use is characteristic for Lithuania, whereas the use of ephedrine/pseudoephedrine is mainly reported in Central Europe (the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland and Slovakia). The use of both methods has been identified in the Netherlands. Pre-precursors of methamphetamine are also being used to circumvent precursor controls: for instance, Serbia has recently reported manufacture of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine from L-PAC (L-phenylacetylcarbinol); glycidic-acid derivatives of P-2-P have been used to manufacture P-2-P in the United Kingdom, and seizures of benzaldehyde have been reported by Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Poland and the Russian Federation.⁴ Several European countries have also dismantled facilities which convert APAAN to P-2-P, but it is unclear whether the final product was intended to be methamphetamine and/or amphetamine.⁵

In Lithuania dismantled methamphetamine laboratories are usually medium- to large-scale and the final product is reportedly manufactured on demand for further trafficking to Nordic countries and the United Kingdom.⁶ Conversely, dismantled methamphetamine laboratories in the Czech Republic are reported to be of small- to medium-scale, and the final product is primarily destined for the local market, as well as Austria and Germany.⁷

Africa – methamphetamine manufactured using ephedrine/pseudoephedrine

Overall, information on the synthetic routes used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine in this region is limited, but evidence suggests that methamphetamine is most likely manufactured using either ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, since both precursors are widely available in the region. In Nigeria, forensic analysis of seized methamphetamine in 2011 specified *d*-methamphetamine as the final product, a type of methamphetamine that is usually obtained from either ephedrine or pseudoephedrine as a starting material.⁸

For some time, the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine in Africa had only been reported from

South Africa, but, since 2010, laboratories have also been reported from other countries, including Egypt, Nigeria and Kenya. In 2011 and 2012, five methamphetamine laboratories were dismantled in Nigeria: the first large-scale facility was discovered in July 2011, but no precursors were seized; a second medium- to large-scale laboratory was discovered in February 2012 and 41 kg of ephedrine were seized. The other three laboratories were dismantled in 2012, but there is no specific information available on the amount of precursors and methamphetamine seized.⁹ In 2013, Kenya dismantled a methamphetamine laboratory for the first time, but there is no information on the scale of the laboratory and precursors seized.¹⁰

North and Central America – methamphetamine manufactured using both P-2-P and ephedrine/pseudoephedrine

Since 2010, the most notable trend in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine in North and Central America has been the shift from the use of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, to the use of P-2-P based methods (see Figure 1). This trend has been confirmed by regular forensic profiling of methamphetamine seized in the United States, which has shown that after 2010, the majority of samples tested (69 per cent) had been manufactured using P-2-P based methods. By mid-2013, this percentage was reported to have increased to more than 90 per cent.¹¹

Conversely, in Canada, most methamphetamine (85 per cent) is manufactured using pseudoephedrine as a starting material and most dismantled laboratories are of medium-scale. In almost half of all the laboratories dismantled in Canada in 2012, ephedrine and pseudoephedrine had been extracted from cold/flu medications and/or licit natural health products. The use of P-2-P and pre-precursors such as benzaldehyde, has recently been reported.

Controls for ephedrine and pseudoephedrine introduced in the United States in mid-2000, impacted domestic industrial-scale laboratories so that small-scale laboratories became increasingly common. In 2011 and 2012, North America¹² accounted for the largest share of methamphetamine laboratories dismantled worldwide (25,578 laboratories), the majority of which were reported by the United States (23,973 laboratories). In the United States most methamphetamine laboratories are reported to be kitchen/small-scale operations (14,624 laboratories in 2012) with industrial laboratories accounting only for 0.3 per cent of the total. It is estimated that 80 per cent of methamphetamine in the United States enters the country from Mexico.¹³

² Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Serbia and the United Kingdom. EMCDDA (2014), Exploring methamphetamine trends in Europe, EMCDDA Papers, Lisbon, January 2014

³ Ibid.

⁴ INCB, Precursors and chemicals frequently used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances 2013, New York, January 2014

⁵ Belgium, Germany, Netherlands and Poland. EMCDDA, Synthetic drug production in Europe, updated 16.05.2014

⁶ Op. cit. EMCDDA 2014

⁷ National Drug Headquarters, Annual Report, 2012, Czech Republic

⁸ UNODC, West Africa 2012 ATS Situation Report, June 2012

⁹ UNODC, Global SMART Update, Volume 9, segment 14, Vienna, 2013

¹⁰ Op. cit. INCB 2014

¹¹ INCB, Precursors and chemicals frequently used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances 2012, New York, March 2013 (INCB 2013) ; Op. cit. INCB 2014

¹² For the purpose of this Update, North America refers to Canada, Mexico and the United States

¹³ United States of America Department of Justice, National Drug Threat Assessment 2011 and National Drug Threat Assessment Summary 2013

In Mexico, stringent controls on ephedrine and pseudoephedrine were introduced in 2005, resulting in a significant decrease in ephedrine and pseudoephedrine imports to the country as well as a temporary disruption of the major chemical supply chains to illicit methamphetamine manufacturers. However, in the years that followed, the methamphetamine supply was restored after alternatives to ephedrine/pseudoephedrine were found, shifting to P-2-P based precursors. Despite the fact that there is no information on the size of methamphetamine laboratories dismantled in Mexico, the amount of methamphetamine seized there points to industrial-scale manufacture.

In Central America, large-scale methamphetamine manufacture has been reported in Guatemala and Nicaragua in 2012.¹⁴

East and South-East Asia and Oceania – methamphetamine manufactured using ephedrine/pseudoephedrine

The majority of methamphetamine precursors seized in the region are ephedrine based and over the last years seizures of other methamphetamine precursors have been rare, except for China, who reported 259 litres of P-2-P seizures in 2012.¹⁵ Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine in bulk account for most ephedrines seizures in East and South-East Asia.

There is an expansion of illicit methamphetamine manufacture in the region, mainly due to large increases in the number of methamphetamine laboratories in East and South-East Asia. In 2011 and 2012, eleven countries in the region¹⁶ reported methamphetamine laboratories, with China (46 per cent) and New Zealand (39 per cent) accounting for the largest share. In East and South-East Asia only Hong Kong, China, Indonesia, Myanmar and Thailand, have indicated that the majority of the methamphetamine laboratories found in their countries are small-scale or kitchen-type.¹⁷ However, due to the fact that Myanmar is one of the main destinations for trafficked preparations containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine in the region and that large amounts of methamphetamine are trafficked from Myanmar to neighbouring countries, it is most likely that industrial-scale methamphetamine manufacture is also occurring in the country.

In Oceania, illicit methamphetamine manufacture relies on smuggled ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, both in bulk and in form of pharmaceutical preparations, namely Contac NT[®] and flu tablets. Large seizures of ephedrines originating in East and South-East Asia have been reported by Australia and New Zea-

land. The size of methamphetamine laboratories dismantled in New Zealand is reported to be small-scale, whereas in the case of Australia there is no information available.

Near and Middle East/ Central and South-West Asia - methamphetamine manufactured using ephedrine/pseudoephedrine

In 2010, forensic analysis of methamphetamine seized by Iranian authorities was identified to contain some impurities.¹⁸ These impurities indicate that most methamphetamine samples seized in Iran (Islamic Republic of) had been synthesized from pseudoephedrine as a starting material.¹⁹ This is consistent with the high demand for ephedrine and pseudoephedrine in the Near and Middle East, and South West Asia and the rare seizures of other methamphetamine precursors.

Given that annual legitimate requirements for ephedrine and pseudoephedrine in the Near and Middle East and South-West Asia are increasing, there is a potential risk of these substances being diverted for illicit methamphetamine manufacture. As of June 2014, Pakistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq had the highest requirements for ephedrine and pseudoephedrine in these regions.²⁰ In 2011 and 2012, significant seizures of bulk ephedrine were reported by Iran (Islamic Republic of), and to a lesser extent, by Pakistan and Lebanon.

Methamphetamine manufacture in these regions has only been reported by Afghanistan, with 1 laboratory²¹ and Iran (Islamic Republic of), with 659 kitchen-type laboratories manufacturing illicit drugs (including methamphetamine) in 2012 and 2013.²² However, the exact number of methamphetamine laboratories is unknown.

Global Challenge

Methamphetamine manufacture in most regions continues to rely on the use of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, except for North America, where P-2-P based methods are mainly in use. In Europe, methamphetamine manufacture is spreading across the region, though at low levels. Moreover, some countries in Africa and the Middle East have recently emerged as important regions for methamphetamine supply. The illicit manufacture of methamphetamine is a major public health and safety threat and the continued use of non-scheduled precursors for manufacture remains a challenge for legal and policy interventions.

¹⁴ Op. cit. INCB 2013; UNODC Global SMART Update, Vol 9-10, 2013; World Drug Report 2013, New York, May 2013

¹⁵ Op. cit. INCB 2014

¹⁶ Australia, Cambodia, China and Hong Kong, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Philippines, Republic of Korea and Thailand. Op. cit. UNODC, DELTA

¹⁷ UNODC, Annual Report Questionnaire for Indonesia and for Hong Kong, China, 2012; Thailand country report, Office of the Narcotics Control Board of Thailand, Eighteenth Asia-Pacific Operational Drug Enforcement Conference, February 2013

¹⁸ 1,2-dimethyl-3-phenylaziridine was the most frequently found impurity, see Ali Reza Khajeamiri et. al., "Determination of impurities in illicit methamphetamine samples seized in Iran", *Forensic Science International*, Vol. 217, No. 1-3 (April 2013), pp. 204-206

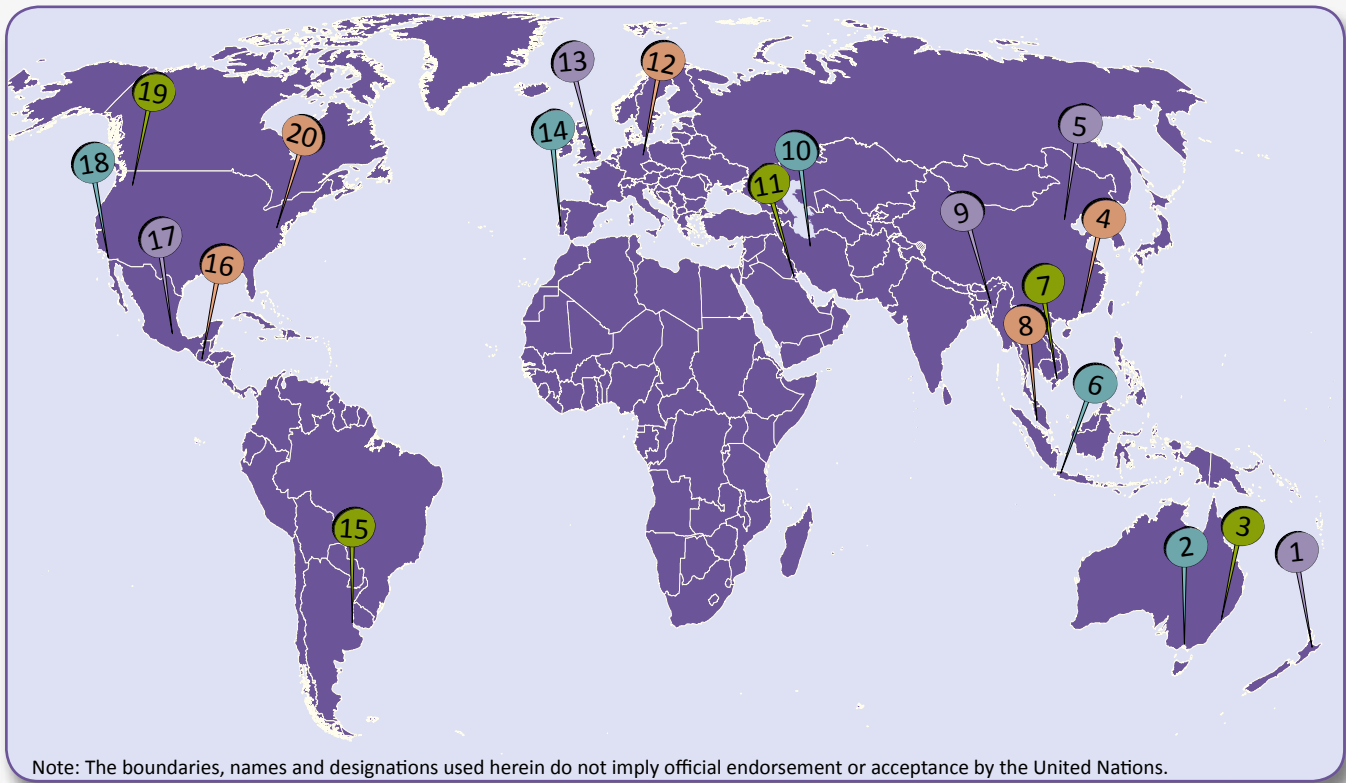
¹⁹ Op. cit. Ali Reza Khajeamiri et. al. 2013

²⁰ INCB, Annual legitimate requirements (ALR) as reported by Governments for imports of ephedrine, pseudoephedrine, 3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl-2-propanone, 1-phenyl-2-propanone and their preparations. Status: 1 June 2014

²¹ Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA) confirmed by the UNODC Office in Afghanistan

²² Islamic Republic of Iran, Drug Control in 2013, Drug Control Headquarters, Annual Report, March 2014

Regions covered in this issue



The segments presented were selected to illustrate the thematic focus of this Global SMART Update issue. The sequence of the segments follows roughly an East to West direction starting from Oceania, with one of the highest prevalence rates for ATS use in the world, continuing to East Asia with one of the largest markets for ATS in the world, leading across the Middle East and Europe on to the Americas. The numbered pins on the map above correspond with the index of segments below.

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New Zealand: seizure of 3.3 kg of methamphetamine concealed in shampoo bottles from Hong Kong

AUCKLAND, New Zealand – 21 March 2014. A joint operation between different New Zealand law enforcement authorities has resulted in the seizure of 3.3 kg of methamphetamine. The drugs, hidden in skincare and shampoo bottles, were part of a consignment that had been posted from Hong Kong to New Zealand. On 5 March 2014, Customs officers at the International Mail Centre in Auckland intercepted nine bottles of skincare product containing traces of methamphetamine. A surveillance operation code-named 'Operation Grit' was launched to track the intended path of the shipment. A second consignment, containing 1.9 kg of methamphetamine which was also hidden in shampoo bottles, was intercepted by Customs at the International Mail Centre. The total amount of 3.3 kg of methamphetamine recovered during this operation has an estimated street value of up to USD 2.89 million. Two Chinese citizens and a national from New Zealand were charged in connection with the operation.

Australia: liquid methamphetamine continues to be trafficked from China

MELBOURNE, Australia – 05 April 2014. Liquid methamphetamine continues to be trafficked from China. A joint operation between Australian law enforcement authorities resulted in the arrest of a Chinese national for importing 4.6 kg of liquid methamphetamine from China. The drugs, concealed in 11 shampoo bottles, have an estimated street value of USD 180,000. Last year Australian authorities thwarted several attempts to smuggle liquid methamphetamine from China into the country. In a single operation conducted in April 2013, 365 litres of liquid methamphetamine stored in 96 bottles of carpet stain cleaner were seized after inspecting a container which had arrived at the port of Melbourne from Hong Kong. It was estimated that the 365 litres of liquid methamphetamine would equate to 280 kg of pure methamphetamine with an estimated street value of USD 236 million.



Source: Australian Federal Police

Australia: container of kayaks from China found to contain 183 kg of crystalline methamphetamine

SYDNEY, Australia – 12 February 2014. A joint operation by Australian Federal Police (AFP) and Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (ACBPS) prevented the traffic of approximately 183 kg of methamphetamine into the country. The drugs, with an estimated street value of USD 170 million, were discovered after officers of the ACBPS at the Sidney Container Examination Facility selected a container from China for x-ray inspection. Analysis of the consignment of kayaks revealed that 19 of the 27 kayaks contained packages of a crystalline substance that tested positive for methamphetamine. A controlled delivery operation ensured the arrest of five suspects.

China: methamphetamine and its precursors trafficked to New Zealand through Hong Kong

HONG KONG, China – June 2014. Hong Kong's Secretary for Security, Lai Tung-kwok, returned to the country following a visit to Australia and New Zealand amid growing concern in the two countries over the role of southern China in the illegal drugs trade, namely of methamphetamine going from Guangdong through Hong Kong. In March 2014, 7.2 kg of methamphetamine were recovered at Hong Kong's international airport from passengers before departing to Auckland, New Zealand. In the same month, a consignment of 3.3 kg of methamphetamine, hidden in skincare and shampoo bottles trafficked from Hong Kong to New Zealand was recovered by New Zealand authorities. Guangdong is considered a meth-manufacturing powerhouse with an abundance of precursor chemicals used to manufacture methamphetamine illicitly. In December 2013, the largest-ever haul of ContactNT (330kg) was seized in New Zealand. ContactNT is legally sold as a cold medicine in mainland China, but it is classified as a Class B drug in New Zealand, as its main ingredient is pseudoephedrine.*



Source: www.news.cn

China: illicit manufacture of methamphetamine continues in Guangdong

BEIJING, China – 29 April 2014. Following a tip-off, Chinese authorities have dismantled a large illicit drug laboratory located in a residence in Luoding, Guangdong province. As a result of the operation, 6.8 kg of crystalline methamphetamine, 249.8 kg of undisclosed drugs, 12.65 kg of Jointfir (ephedra) and equipment to manufacture illicit drugs were seized. It is unclear if the drugs were intended for local use or for trafficking to other countries.* In early January 2014, Guangdong Police announced the seizure of nearly 3 tons of crystalline methamphetamine during raids in Boshe Village, in the city of Lufeng (South China's Guangdong Province). In the course of this operation, 77 drug laboratories were dismantled and more than 100 tons of drug precursors, including ephedrine and intermediate precursors were seized.

Indonesia: Iranian citizens attempted to smuggle drugs into Indonesia

JAKARTA, Indonesia – 27 February 2014. Following a lead from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the Indonesian National Narcotic Agency arrested two Iranian nationals in West Java (western part of the Island of Java), for attempting to smuggle 70 kg of high-quality crystalline methamphetamine – estimated to value USD 6.7 million – into Indonesia. The suspects were arrested whilst trying to unearth the methamphetamine that was buried at a sanctuary in the village of Jayanti. Indonesian authorities believe that the methamphetamine was imported by ship from Iran (Islamic Republic of) through Pelabuhan Ratu (West Java) by a drug trafficking network.*



Source: news.co.au

Viet Nam: trafficking of pseudoephedrine from Viet Nam to Australia

HO CHI MINH, Viet Nam – 20 April 2014. Customs officials in Ho Chi Minh City have seized 1 kg of pseudoephedrine from a private package sent from Ca Mau Province (southern Viet Nam) and bound for Australia. The substance was hidden among dried food products and disguised as instant tea powder. In December 2013, Viet Namese Custom authorities also found 2 kg of pseudoephedrine hidden in shampoo and hair dye bottles in a consignment bound for Australia. The package had been sent from a person residing in the province of Kien Giang, in the Mekong Delta. According to Customs authorities, more than 45 kg of drug precursors contained in ten gift consignments destined to other countries have been recovered.*

Malaysia: methamphetamine laboratory led by an Iranian national dismantled

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia – 11 February 2014. The Special Tactical Intelligence Narcotics Group of Malaysia has arrested seven Iranian nationals who were part of an international drug ring. According to authorities, the leader of the group, an Iranian national, is an expert in manufacturing homemade methamphetamine and has a knowledge of precursor chemicals. Following the arrests, authorities searched a house in Kuala Lumpur where a methamphetamine laboratory was found. From the illicit laboratory crystalline methamphetamine (9.7 kg), liquid methamphetamine (11.6 kg), ephedrine (4.6 kg) and other unidentified precursor chemicals (7.9 kg) were seized.*

India: third largest methamphetamine seizure in Mizoram raises alert of increased trafficking across the Myanmar border

AIZAWL, India – 07 May 2014. The third largest seizure of methamphetamine in the State of Mizoram – a state located in North-East India near the Myanmar border – has alarmed the authorities regarding increasing trafficking and availability of the drug in the country. On 30 April 2014, Customs officials reported having seized 10,000 reddish-orange methamphetamine pills from a village in Mizoram. On 05 March 2014, another 15,000 methamphetamine pills smuggled from Myanmar were seized in Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram. In January of this year, 120,000 methamphetamine pills were seized in Aizawl in what was reported to be the largest-ever methamphetamine seizure in Mizoram. In April 2014, 190 kg of pseudoephedrine preparations were seized in Aizawl on route to Myanmar. Illicit methamphetamine manufacturing facilities are reportedly supplied with pseudoephedrine trafficked from India, primarily through the North-East.*



Source: Fars News Agency

ported by the Islamic Republic of Iran.*

Islamic Republic of Iran: 3 tons of crystalline methamphetamine seized in 2013

TEHRAN, Islamic Republic of Iran – 18 March 2014. Three tons of crystalline methamphetamine were reported to have been seized during the last Iranian year (ended March 20), according to the Commander of the anti-narcotics squad of Iran's Law Enforcement Police General Ali Moayyedi. The amount seized represents a 35 per cent increase from the previous year. In recent years, seizures of amphetamine-type-stimulants in Western and Central Asia have rapidly increased, primarily due to significant increases in methamphetamine seizures reported by the Islamic Republic of Iran.*

Kuwait: 0.5 kg of methamphetamine seized from an Asian trafficker

KUWAIT CITY, Kuwait – 14 May 2014. Following a lead, and surveillance of a drug trafficker operating in Salwa, a suburb of Kuwait City, officers from the Drug Control General Department seized 0.5 kg of methamphetamine, known also as "shabu", 2 kg of heroin, and 16,000 pills of an unidentified drug from an Asian trafficker, who allegedly attempted to smuggle the drugs into the country. The drugs were concealed in cans used for preserving meat and fish products and were recovered after a search warrant was issued for the suspect's house.*



Source: Kuwait Times



Source: Süddeutsche Zeitung

Germany: the number of first-time crystalline methamphetamine users have risen to 2,746 in 2013

BERLIN, Germany – 17 April 2014. The number of first-time users of crystalline methamphetamine is reported to have risen to 2,746 in 2013, an increase of almost 7 per cent from the previous year (2,556 in 2012), according to a report of the Federal Criminal Police Office in Germany. Likewise, seizure cases of crystalline methamphetamine registered by the police increased to 3,847 cases in 2013, which represents an increase of almost 10 per cent, compared to 2012 (3,512 cases). Last year, methamphetamine seizures in Germany reached a record level of 77 kg, an increase of almost 3 per cent compared with 2012.



Source: The Independent

United Kingdom: methamphetamine laboratory found in West London

LONDON, United Kingdom – 21 February 2014. London Police have discovered a suspected methamphetamine laboratory in a residential area of West London. Responding to reports of a dispute between the owner and a tenant, police searched the premises and discovered equipment they believe was used to manufacture methamphetamine. So far, clandestine methamphetamine laboratories in the United Kingdom have not yet been officially reported to UNODC.*

EMCDDA: “new and diverse patterns of methamphetamine use in the region” presented in the European Drug Report 2014

LISBON, Portugal – 27 May 2014. The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) has released its *European Drug Report 2014: Trends and developments*, providing a state-of-the-art review of key trends of the European drug situation. The highlights of the report include increasing concerns about new and diverse patterns of methamphetamine use in the region. According to the report, methamphetamine use is no longer confined to the Czech Republic and Slovakia, but new pockets and patterns of use are now emerging elsewhere in the region and in diverse populations. Examples include the nasal insufflation of methamphetamine powder by recreational users in Germany; the smoking of crystalline methamphetamine by injecting opioid users in Greece, Cyprus and Turkey, and the injection of methamphetamine along with other substances among homosexual men.



Source: EMCDDA



Source: Policia de Seguridad Aeroportuaria (PSA)

Argentina: methamphetamine and amphetamine found in 6,000 pills sold as ‘ecstasy’

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina – 21 April 2014. Following an investigation ordered by a judge and conducted by the Airport Security Police, a drug trafficking ring selling ‘ecstasy’ pills was dismantled. During the operation, 11,000 pills sold as ‘ecstasy’, along with nearly USD 500,000 in gold bars and currency from a number of countries, were recovered. The pills were found not to contain MDMA, the original component of ecstasy, but amphetamine (5,000 pills) and methamphetamine (6,000 pills). Nearly 23 kg of ephedrine, 21 kg of amphetamine and 19 kg of methamphetamine were reportedly seized.*

Guatemala: second largest clandestine methamphetamine laboratory dismantled in the country

PUEBLO NUEVO VIÑAS, Guatemala – 08 May 2014. Guatemalan authorities have dismantled what is reported to be the second largest clandestine methamphetamine laboratory in the country. The laboratory was found in the municipality of Pueblo Nuevo Viñas (South-West Guatemala). The equipment used to manufacture the amphetamine and methamphetamine was distributed across four rooms from which 1 ton of amphetamine and over 350 kg of methamphetamine were recovered. Precursor chemicals, whose labels indicated of being Chinese and Bangladeshi in origin, were also seized during the operation. Based on the drugs and precursors seized, authorities estimate that the laboratory manufactured nearly 3 tons of drugs per month and believe that they were being sent on to Mexico.*



Source: Diario de Centro America (official journal Government)

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Mexico: two large-scale methamphetamine laboratories dismantled in the State of Mexico

XALOSTOC, Mexico – 15 February 2014. Following investigations conducted in the State of Mexico, Federal Police dismantled two laboratories manufacturing illicit synthetic drugs. Both facilities were located in the State of Mexico, in the municipality of Xalostoc. As a result of the operation, 39 containers filled with synthetic drugs, apparently containing methamphetamine weighing approximately 39 kg, were seized. A metal cooking pot allegedly containing methamphetamine with a weight of 84 kg was also seized, along with 130 capsules with white powder – probably cocaine – as well as equipment used to manufacture these drugs.



Source: SEGOB

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Source: Fox5, San Diego

United States: liquid and crystalline methamphetamine continues to be trafficked across the U.S. – Mexican Border

SAN DIEGO, United States – May 2014. U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers at the San Ysidro port of entry (in the south-western United States) disrupted two attempts to traffic 132 kg of liquid and crystalline methamphetamine into the United States. In both incidents the methamphetamine was hidden in the gas tank of pickup trucks. In a separate incident, which occurred on 21 May 2014, U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers at the Laredo Port of Entry (the largest inland port along the United States-Mexican border) seized 76 kg of crystalline methamphetamine with an estimated value of USD 2.4 million. (For more information on methamphetamine trafficked from Mexico to the United States see Global SMART Update Volume 10, seg. 32).

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United States: police unveils a conversion methamphetamine laboratory in Washington State (North-West coast)

WASHINGTON, United States – 25 February 2014. A laboratory for the conversion of liquid methamphetamine to crystalline methamphetamine was uncovered in Spanaway (Washington, North-West United States) as a result of a lengthy wire-tap investigation of a drug trafficking ring that was allegedly distributing significant quantities of methamphetamine and heroin through western Washington state. As a result of the operation, 22.6 kg of crystalline methamphetamine, along with two gallons of liquid methamphetamine that was in the process of being converted into crystalline methamphetamine, were seized. Over the course of the investigation, law enforcement authorities reported having seized 30 kg of crystalline methamphetamine, 1 kg of heroin and USD 310,000.

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United States: Colombian drug trafficking organization attempts to import methamphetamine into Australia

WASHINGTON D.C., United States – 10 February 2014. A joint operation between U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and the Australian Federal Police (AFP), prevented 60 kg of "black ice" methamphetamine from entering Australia. The investigation started in January 2014, when two consignments containing the drugs concealed inside water filters and tainted black to give the appearance of charcoal were seized in the United States. The consignment, that apparently originated in Mexico, was destined for Australia where the wholesale value was estimated to be USD 12 million. HSI agents and AFP reconstructed the consignments used in the controlled operation. At the beginning of February 2014, the AFP executed search warrants and arrested five Colombian nationals.

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Global SMART accomplishments for 2014

Since 2008, the Global SMART (Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends) Programme has been working towards improving the capacity of targeted Member States to generate, manage, analyse, report and use information on illicit synthetic drugs. In 2014, the Global SMART Programme:

Published and launched

- The Global Synthetic Drugs Assessment: Amphetamine-type stimulants and new psychoactive substances, 2014;
- The regional report Amphetamine-Type Stimulants in Latin America, 2014; (in English and Spanish)
- The Global SMART Update Volume 11 (in English and Spanish);

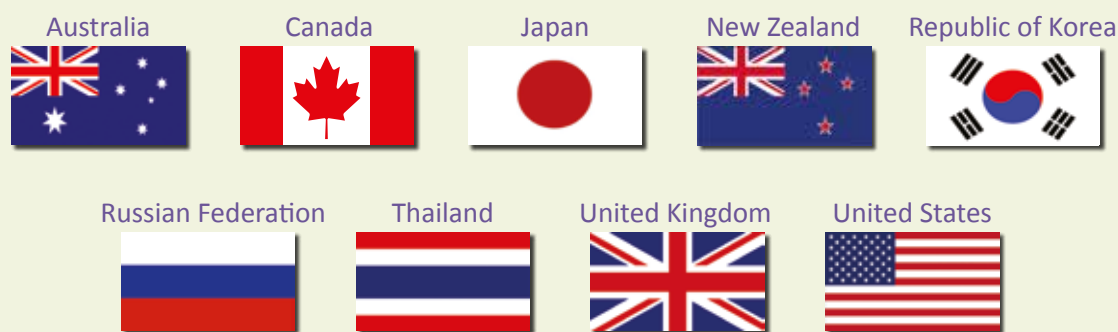
Organised

- A side event on “methamphetamine on the rise” at the 57th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs;
- A briefing for its stakeholders during the SMART Advisory Group Meeting in Vienna;
- The sixth SMART annual regional workshop on synthetic drugs in East and South-East Asia;

Contributed to

- The 2014 World Drug Report;
- The 36th Meeting of the WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence (June 2014);
- The 55th regular session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD);
- A side event on “new psychoactive substances: a global challenge, a global response” at the 57th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs;
- The dissemination of information related to the synthetic drug situation at targeted conferences and events, e.g. the regional workshop of the Inter-American Observatories on Drugs (July 2014), the 14th Annual meeting of the EMCDDA Reitox Early Warning System Network (June 2014), the Greater Mekong Subregion MOU Senior Officials Meeting (May 2014), the Fourth World Forum Against Drugs (May 2014) and the Third International Conference on Novel Psychoactive Substances (May 2014).

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If you have comments on this report, or would like to contribute information that should be considered for future reports, please contact the Global SMART Programme at globalsmart@unodc.org. Information on the Global SMART Programme can be found via the internet at www.unodc.org and www.apaic.org or by contacting UNODC at the Vienna International Centre, P.O. Box 500, A-1400, Vienna, Austria.