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& ADMN



ASEAN DRUG MONITORING REPORT 2024



ASEAN-NARCO
ASEAN Narcotics Cooperation Center





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August 2025

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Foreword

The ASEAN Drug Monitoring Report (ADM report) 2024 marks the tenth publication of the ASEAN Drug Monitoring Network (ADMN) since the first formulation of the ASEAN Drug Monitoring Report 2015. The first ADM report 2015 launched on 25 August 2016 during the 37th ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD) meeting hosted by the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) in Bangkok, Thailand. This milestone signifies that the ADMN has been firmly established for a decade as a core programme under ASEAN-NARCO, serving as a regional mechanism for systematic data collection, information sharing, and early warning to support evidence-based drug control policies across ASEAN.

The ADM report is unique both in the collaborative nature of its formulation driven by the commitment of ASEAN Member States to share information openly among themselves and with the global community, and in the comprehensive scope of information provided. Data for the report are contributed by national focal points from ASEAN Member States, reflecting a spirit of open and transparent information sharing that strengthens regional understanding of drug trends and their impact on the global drug situation. As a result, the report reflects key aspects of the drug problem in the region, including drug use patterns, treatment admissions, seizure statistics, major drugs of concern, precursor and chemical trends, as well as updates on research, innovations, policies, and national drug control programmes.

The ADM Report 2024 presents the patterns of illicit drug abuse among ASEAN populations, focusing on eight major drugs of abuse in the ASEAN region, namely, Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS), opiates/opioids, cannabis, New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), cocaine, Central Nervous System (CNS) depressants, hallucinogens, and other substances. Additionally, the report identified and analyzed the types of precursors and chemicals seized in 2024, which had previously been grouped under other substances seized. The report also includes comparative data from 2017 to 2023, highlighting the trends in the drug situation across the ASEAN region in terms of both drug supply and demand.

In 2024, the total population of ASEAN Member States exceeded 683 million. The treatment rate for drug-related disorders across the region reached 103.7 per 100,000 population, 4.9% increase from 2023, indicating a continuing rise in treatment demand. Approximately, 708,550 persons received treatment for drug use disorders across ASEAN Member States. It was estimated that this number might be rising to nearly 800,000 by 2026, reflecting a growing need for treatment services. The drug treatment data of 2024 revealed that ATS remained the most prevalent drug of abuse, accounting for 59% of individuals who had undergone treatment. The total number of reported ATS users treated across ASEAN reached 297,366 persons. YABA, or methamphetamine tablets, remained the most abused

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drug, with 195,158 individuals receiving treatment. ICE, or crystalline methamphetamine, followed as the second most reported form of ATS, with 85,185 individuals receiving treatment, reflecting its increasing prevalence and signifying a notable shift in the regional drug market. Opiate/Opioid users were the second most treated, with 117,191 reported cases, while cannabis users were 15,428 individuals treated. ATS also dominated the illicit drug supply in ASEAN. Seizures of ATS increased dramatically from 49.7 metric tons in 2017 to 239 metric tons in 2024, representing a nearly fivefold rise. Projections indicate that ATS seizures could reach approximately 273 metric tons by 2026, highlighting the continuing growth of the ATS market in the region. Opiates/Opioids seizures totaled 11,473 kilograms. Heroin accounted for the largest share, with 6,093.6 kilograms, representing over 53% of the total opioid volume. Raw opium was the second most seized substance, amounting to 1,874.1 kilograms. For cannabis seizures, ASEAN Member States reported a total of approximately 163,936 kilograms in various forms. This significant volume highlights the region's ongoing involvement in the cultivation, trafficking, and processing of illicit cannabis products. In addition, the New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) became a more challenging problem, particularly kratom and ketamine. Total NPS seizures reached 125 metric tons, marking a notable escalation in drug law enforcement efforts compared to previous years. Kratom accounted for the vast majority of these seizures, totaling 117 metric tons (about 93.2% of all NPS seizures), while ketamine seizures amounted to 7,028 kilograms (5.6%). These trends underscore the urgent need to prioritize NPS for early warning systems and stronger legislative control.

In 2025, ASEAN Member States actively shared data, experiences, and insights during the ADMN meetings, fostering closer cooperation and making significant contributions to the formulation of the ADM Report 2024. The 18th ADMN meeting, hosted by the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) of the Philippines on April 7-8, 2025, in Manila, was the first meeting of the year. It focused on reviewing the drug situation in 2024 to support the preparation of the ADM Report 2024. Special appreciation is extended to the DDB for hosting this on-site meeting, which provided an excellent opportunity for ADMN Teams from ASEAN Member States to meet face-to-face and hold in-depth discussions in three working groups: Supply, Demand, and Data Management. The meeting produced valuable recommendations to improve the ADM Report System and its Manual, and included sharing sessions on national and regional drug situations in 2024, which greatly supported the effective drafting of the ADM Report 2024. The meeting also endorsed the ADMN Workplan for 2025-2026. The 19th ADMN was hosted by the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) of Thailand on 15-16 July 2025 as the second meeting of the year 2025 to share relevant data for a 6-month period of January to June 2025 and to consider the draft Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 of the draft ADM Report 2024. The meeting also followed up on the progress made on the matters raised from the previous meeting as well as the adjustments to the ADM Report System and its manual. Thailand offered to host the online training on the data key-in to the updated ADM Report System for the ADMN Team of ASEAN Member States. During the 19th ADMN Meeting, the

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ADMN Teams had the opportunity to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the ADMN, which demonstrated the long-term cooperation and solidarity of the ADMN. The ADM report 2024 was scheduled to be launched at the 46th ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Drug Matters hosted by the Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) of Singapore on 25-28 August 2025.

Thailand, as the coordinator for ASEAN-NARCO and the ADMN, extends its sincere appreciation to the ADMN Teams of ASEAN Member States, ASOD Leaders, ASEAN Ministers on Drug Control, the ASEAN Secretariat, and all stakeholders for their collaborative efforts and valuable contributions to the successful formulation of the ADM Report 2024, and for helping to maintain the momentum of the ADMN's ongoing work for the benefit of all ASEAN Member States. Special thanks also go to the Thailand Substance Abuse Academic Network, led by Associate Professor Prof. Manop Kanato, Ph.D and his team for data analysis and technical advice for the formulation of the ADM Report 2024 as well as the ONCB and the ASEAN-NARCO for the continuous support rendered to the improvement and adjustment of the ADM Report System for the efficient formulation of the ADM Report 2024.

It is worth saying that the ADMN is the flagship and pride project of ASOD and the national drug control focal points of the ASEAN Member States. A decade of achievements has demonstrated the firm establishment of the ADMN and its network, driven by the strong commitment of ASEAN Member States. The ADMN Team hopes that the ASEAN Member States will make full use of the ASEAN Drug Monitoring Report 2024 as a vital tool for monitoring and early warning on emerging drug threats across the ASEAN region and within their respective countries. The Team also looks forward to the continued strengthening of the ADMN through collaborative efforts and the enduring spirit of ASEAN partnership, working together toward the shared vision of a drug-free ASEAN.

“Securing ASEAN Communities against Illicit Drugs”

ASEAN Drug Monitoring Team

ASEAN-NARCO

August 2025

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CHAPTER 1

Overview of ASEAN Drug Trends and Patterns



1. BACKGROUND

Southeast Asia, located south of China, east of India, and northwest of Australia, is divided into two subregions: Mainland Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam) and Maritime Southeast Asia (Brunei, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea). The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), established in 1967, is a regional intergovernmental organization composed of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam (ASEAN, 2024). ASEAN aims to foster economic, political, and security cooperation among its member states. In 2015, ASEAN launched the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) to promote integration through economic liberalization, infrastructure development, and the free flow of goods, services, investment, capital, and labor. The AEC also includes a vision for a drug-free region.

To address drug abuse and trafficking, ASEAN established the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD). ASOD facilitates collaborative interventions across five pillars: law enforcement, preventive drug education, treatment and rehabilitation, research, and alternative development. ASOD also serves as a conduit for information exchange on drug syndicates and regional watch lists, strengthening drug forensic analysis, intelligence operations, and investigative practices with international support. The ASEAN Narcotics Cooperation Center (ASEAN-NARCO) provides a regional platform for both preventative and suppressive drug control measures.

In June 2015, ASEAN-NARCO, with technical and institutional support from Thailand's Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB), launched the ASEAN Drug Monitoring Network (ADMN). The ADMN collects, analyzes, and disseminates regional drug data, identifying emerging patterns and trends. Its findings are published annually in the ASEAN Drug Monitoring (ADM) Report, available in print and online on the ASEAN-NARCO website. This report integrates national perspectives and innovative monitoring practices to inform policy design and academic research.

The data collected by ADMN, primarily from national databases and archival sources, focuses on treatment and arrest records, offering insights into regional trends rather than population-based prevalence rates. Since its inception, the network has used a standardized questionnaire to compile data on drug demand and supply, establishing a shared regional database. This system supports the development of early warning mechanisms and geographical trend analysis, as initially presented in the ADM Report 2015 and subsequent editions.

The 2024 ASEAN Drug Monitoring Report provides a comprehensive overview of illicit drug challenges in the region. Chapter 1 describes the regional drug landscape. Chapter 2

discusses key substances of concern, including Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), opiates/opioids, Cannabis, New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), Cocaine, Central Nervous System (CNS) depressants, and Hallucinogens. Chapter 3 features national reports from ASEAN Member States, while Chapter 4 addresses ongoing research and innovations. Chapter 5 highlights exemplary practices in policy and implementation.

2. ASEAN POPULATION

As of 2024, the total population of ASEAN exceeds 683 million, making it one of the most densely populated regions in the world (World Bank, 2023). The region's aggregate annual population growth rate is approximately 1.1%, though this varies significantly among member states. Nations such as the Philippines and Indonesia exhibit relatively high growth rates due to their youthful demographic structures, while Thailand and Singapore experience slower growth, reflecting advanced stages of demographic transition (United Nations, 2023).

A notable demographic feature in several ASEAN member states is the youthful population. For instance, in the Philippines, individuals under 15 years old constitute over 30% of the population. This "youth bulge" offers potential for future economic growth but also poses challenges in providing adequate education, employment opportunities, and healthcare services (ASEAN Secretariat, 2022).

Urbanization is accelerating across ASEAN, with over half of the population now residing in urban areas. This trend is particularly pronounced in countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam, driven by rural-to-urban migration in search of improved employment and living conditions (World Bank, 2023). While urbanization can stimulate economic development, it also introduces challenges such as traffic congestion, environmental degradation, and the proliferation of informal settlements. Effective urban planning and sustainable development policies are crucial to ensure that urban growth enhances residents' quality of life (Asian Development Bank, 2023).

3. ASEAN DRUG SITUATION

The COVID-19 pandemic was declared a global health emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO) on January 30, 2020, and officially classified as a pandemic on March 11, 2020, formally concluded in 2022. However, its ramifications continue to influence drug control strategies and responses among ASEAN Member States. In the absence of comprehensive prevalence data, treatment statistics serve as a proxy for understanding drug use trends in the region (World Health Organization, 2020).

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By 2024, the treatment rate for drug-related disorders across ASEAN reached 103.7 per 100,000 population, a 4.9% increase from the previous year, indicating a sustained rise in treatment demand. Between 2015 and 2023, the number of individuals seeking treatment for drug use disorders surged by 180.9%, highlighting the growing public health burden of substance abuse.

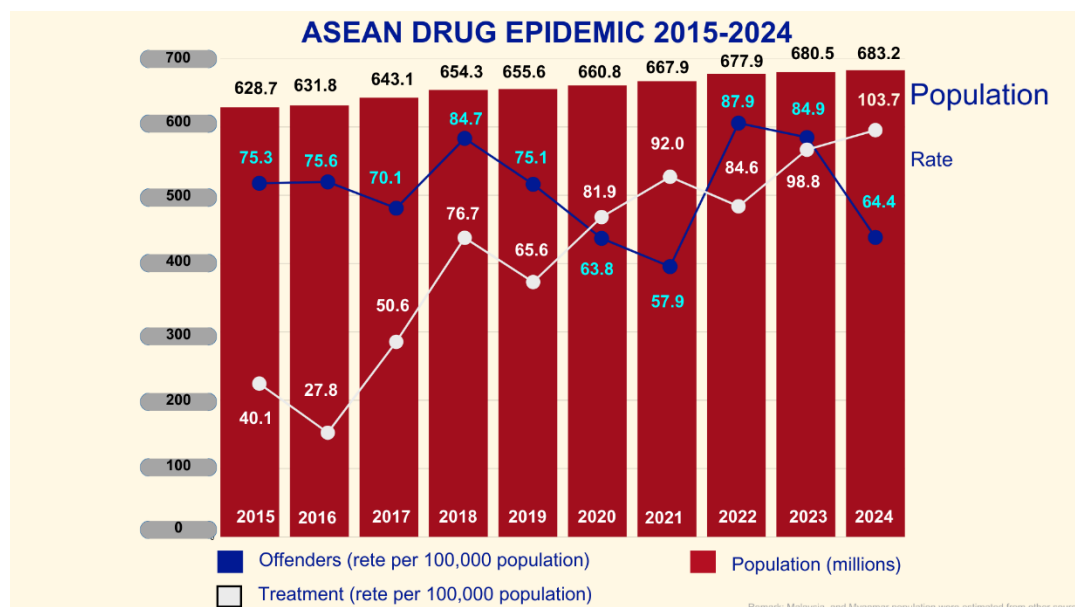


Figure 1: Population and Drug Epidemic in ASEAN

While treatment uptake generally showed an upward trajectory, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted this trend. Prior to the pandemic, the annual growth rate in treatment admissions averaged 17.6%. However, pandemic-related factors, including lockdowns, disruptions to the healthcare system, and resource reallocation, slowed this growth to an average of 10.6% annually during the crisis years. These developments underscore the critical need for ASEAN governments to prioritize resilient, accessible, and integrated drug treatment systems that can withstand future public health emergencies.

A closer examination of 2024 treatment data reveals that Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS) remain the most prevalent category of drug abuse, accounting for 59% of individuals undergoing treatment. The dominance of ATS presents significant regional challenges to public health and law enforcement, necessitating sustained intergovernmental cooperation and targeted intervention strategies. Opioid-related treatment remains a considerable concern, with opioids comprising 23% of reported cases. Despite global attention to the opioid epidemic and the documented presence of opium cultivation in the Golden Triangle, opioid abuse persists as a pressing issue in ASEAN, with associated risks

of overdose and long-term health complications. Cannabis, while representing a smaller proportion of cases (3%), continues to be a notable component of the treatment landscape, indicative of its widespread use and increasing social normalization across several ASEAN societies.

4. ASEAN DRUG DEMAND TRENDS

Drug abuse continues to be a significant public health concern, imposing extensive socio-economic and health-related burdens on individuals, communities, and national systems. Accurate monitoring and analysis of evolving substance use trends are crucial for informing evidence-based policy development and intervention strategies across the region.

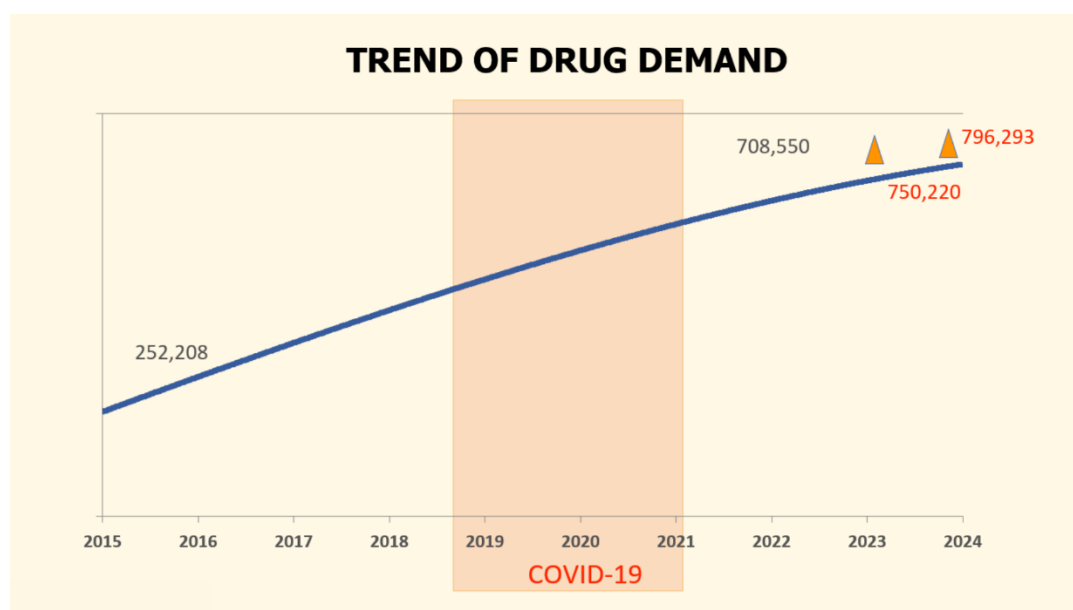
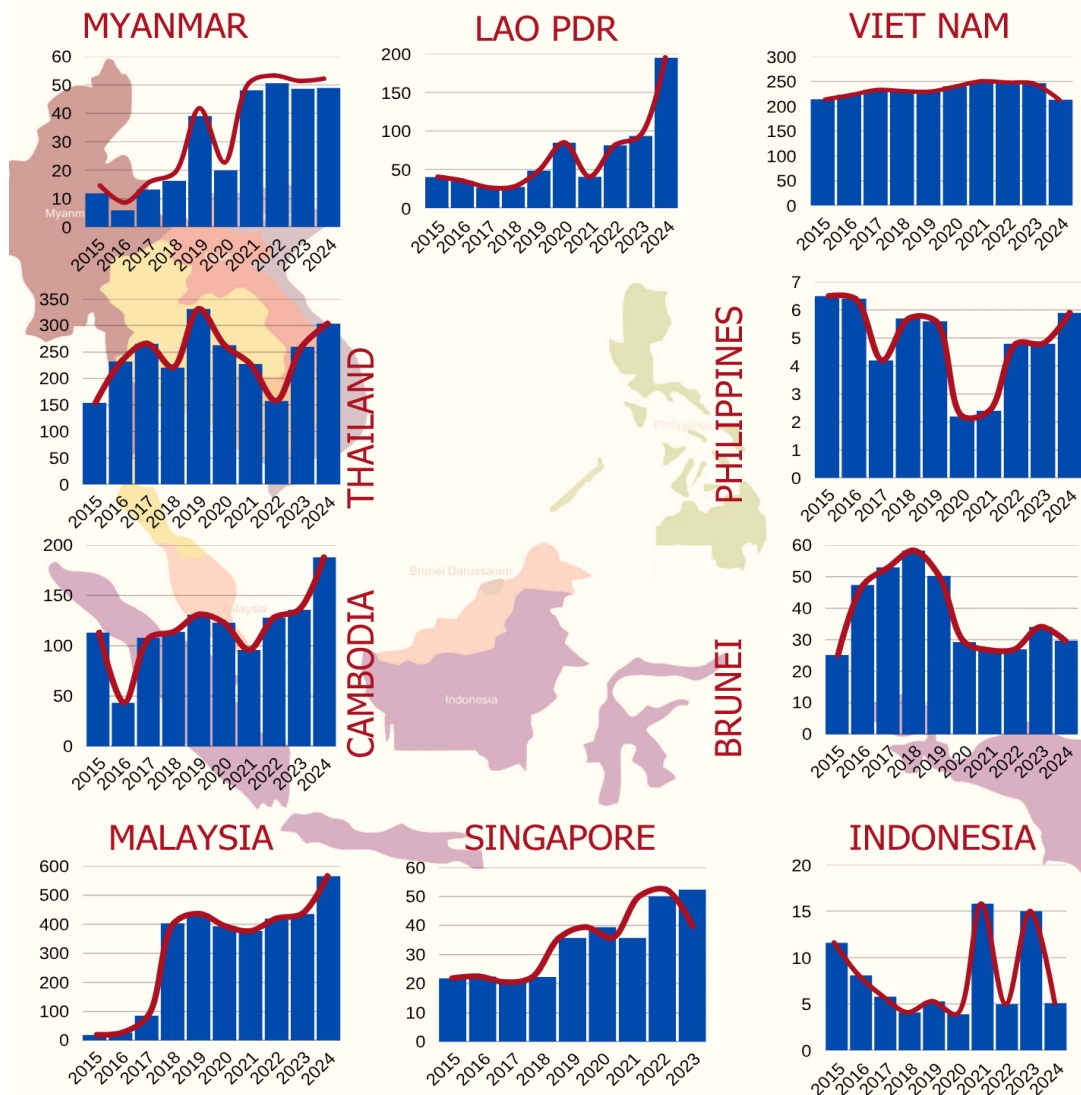


Figure 2: Trend of Drug Demand in ASEAN

In 2024, approximately 708,550 individuals received treatment for drug use disorders across ASEAN Member States. Projections suggest this number may rise to nearly 800,000 by 2026, reflecting a growing regional need for treatment services. While national treatment rates per 100,000 population vary significantly, the overall pattern indicates an upward trend in both drug dependence and engagement with treatment infrastructure. The majority of ASEAN countries reported increased treatment admissions compared to 2023, suggesting either a rising prevalence of substance use disorders or enhanced capacity and access to treatment services. This trend underscores the importance of sustained investment in scalable, evidence-based treatment frameworks, as well as strengthened cross-border collaboration to address the intensifying burden of drug-related health challenges.

Total Annual Demand for Drug Treatment

(Rate per 100,000 Population)



Drug users treated 2024 **708,550**

Figure 3: Total annual demand for drug treatment among drug users treated by ASEAN Member States

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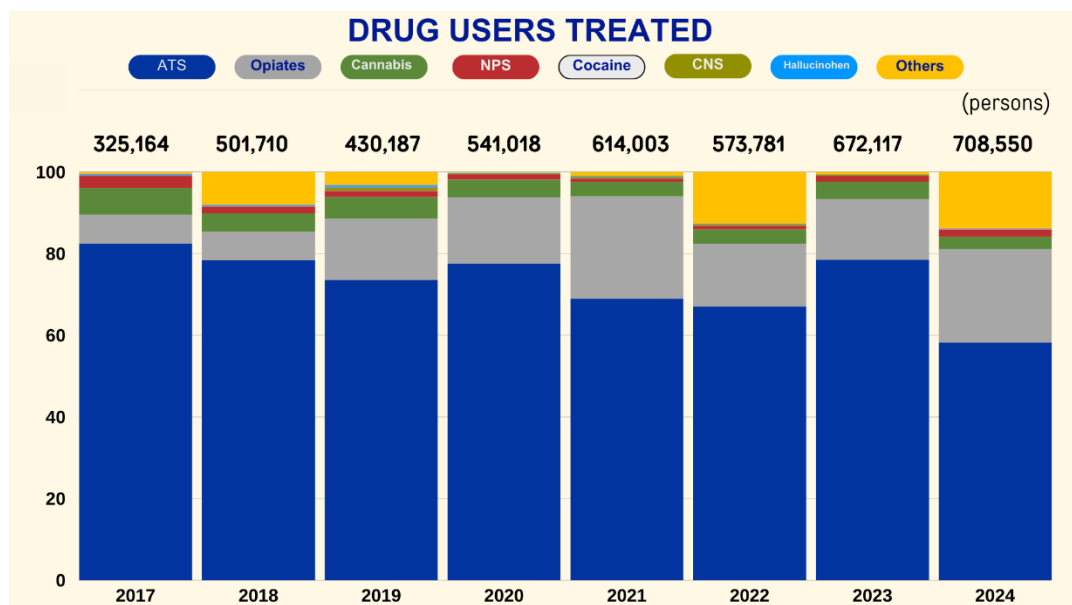


Figure 4: Proportion of Drug Users Treated by Drug Groups

Longitudinal data from 2017 to 2024, covering principal drug categories including Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), opiates/opioids, Cannabis, New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), Cocaine, Central Nervous System (CNS) depressants, Hallucinogens, and other substances—demonstrates a complex interplay of persistent use patterns and emergent shifts in consumption behaviors. These insights reveal key areas requiring ongoing policy attention and highlight the need for responsive and forward-looking strategies capable of adapting to the dynamic landscape of drug demand.

Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) remain the primary drug of abuse up to the present. Opiate and opioid usage trends, in particular, showed troubling increases during 2019 and 2021. These spikes may be attributed, in part, to the global spillover effects of the opioid crisis, particularly the widespread misuse of prescription opioids, heroin, and potent synthetic opioids such as fentanyl in countries like the United States. The 2019 surge likely reflects both heightened substance use and improvements in national monitoring and data collection systems. These developments reinforce the urgency of implementing robust public health measures, regulatory oversight, and international collaboration to counter the growing threat of opioid addiction and overdose.

In contrast, Cannabis use has exhibited relative stability over the same reporting period, with only marginal year-to-year variations. This steadiness may be associated with the gradual legalization and increasing social normalization of Cannabis in several jurisdictions, which could contribute to consistent usage rates. Nevertheless, Cannabis remains among the most widely used substances in ASEAN, necessitating ongoing public health engagement, regulatory consideration, and surveillance to mitigate potential health risks and address emergent policy challenges.

5. ASEAN DRUG SUPPLY TRENDS

Illicit drug trafficking remains a persistent and complex global threat with significant implications for public health, regional stability, and national security. Systematic monitoring of trafficking trends, including case counts, offender profiles, and seizure volumes, provides critical insights into the effectiveness of enforcement strategies, the adaptability of trafficking networks, and evolving patterns in drug production and distribution.

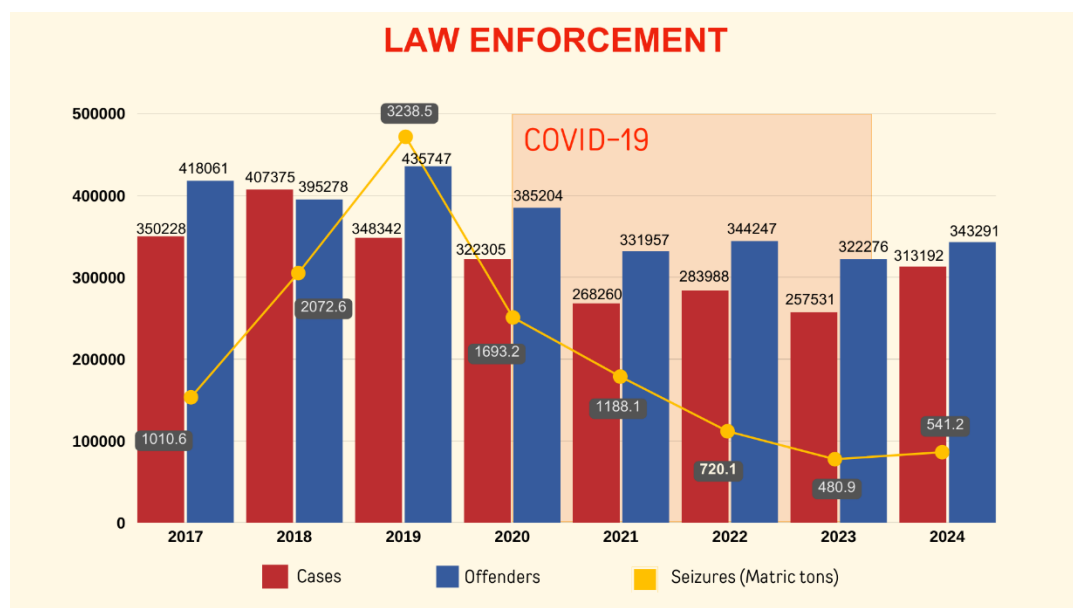


Figure 5: Drug Offenders in ASEAN

Quantitative data on drug seizures, typically measured in metric tons, reveal notable trends over the past decade. From 2017 to 2019, ASEAN witnessed a significant escalation in drug seizures, partly due to intensified law enforcement operations, enhanced intelligence-sharing, and expanded international collaboration targeting transnational drug networks. However, from 2020 to 2023, overall seizure volumes declined. This trend may reflect a temporary reduction in trafficking activity, successful disruption of supply chains, or shifts in smuggling tactics designed to evade detection. The modest increase recorded in 2024 may signal renewed vigor in enforcement, possibly resulting from improved surveillance capabilities and targeted operations against high-volume trafficking flows. These shifts underscore the necessity for adaptive, intelligence-led enforcement strategies and robust regional cooperation to counter the increasingly sophisticated methodologies employed by drug trafficking networks.

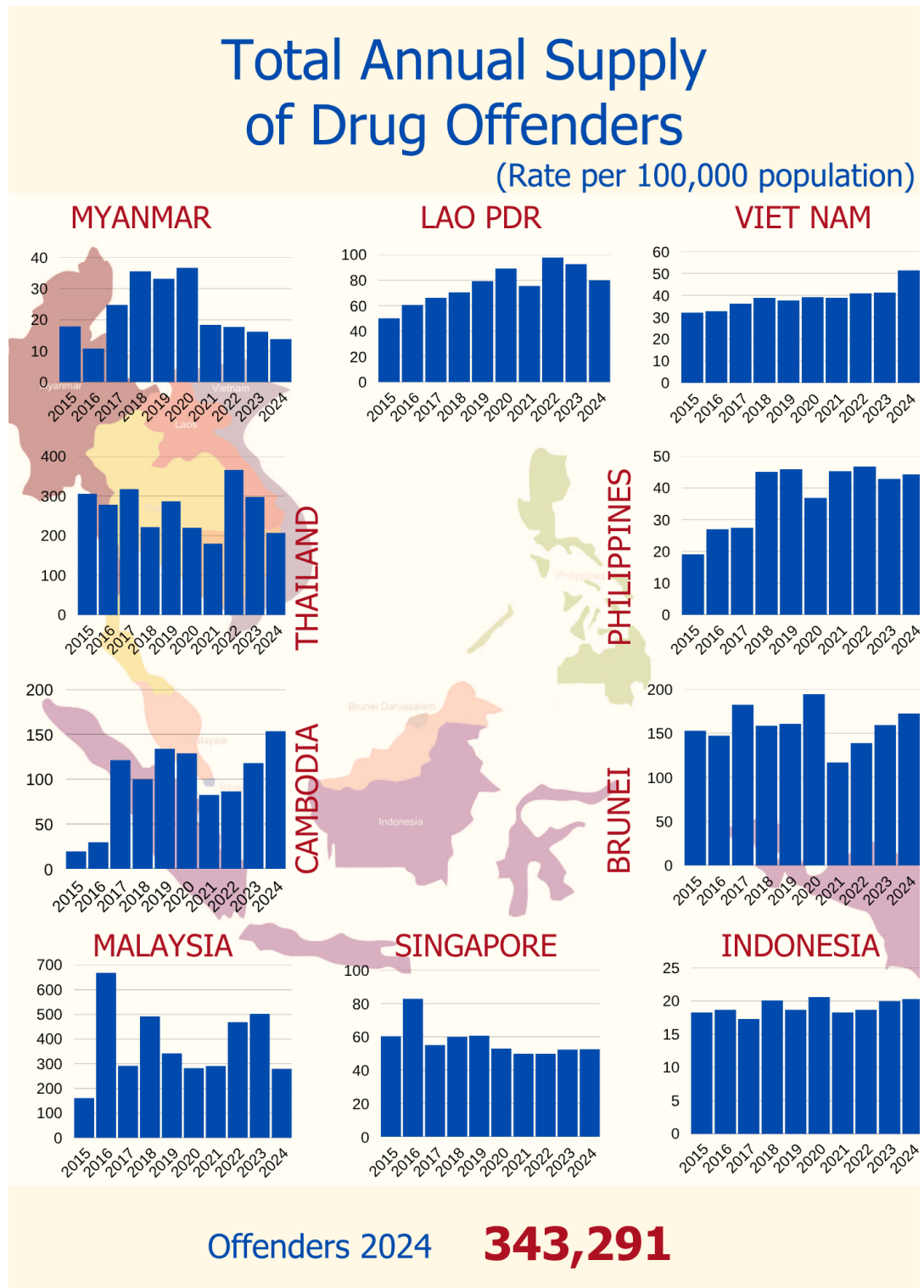


Figure 6: Total Annual Supply of Drug Offenders in ASEAN Member States

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A more detailed analysis of seizure data points to a striking and sustained rise in Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) intercepted across ASEAN. Seizures increased from 49.7 metric tons in 2017 to an unprecedented 239 metric tons in 2024, representing nearly a fivefold increase. Projections estimate that ATS seizures could rise to approximately 273 metric tons by 2026. This trajectory reflects a deepening ATS crisis, presenting considerable challenges to public health systems, law enforcement agencies, and regional governance structures. The data underscore the urgent need for cross-border collaboration, enhanced enforcement mechanisms, and integrated demand-reduction initiatives to curb the proliferation of ATS.

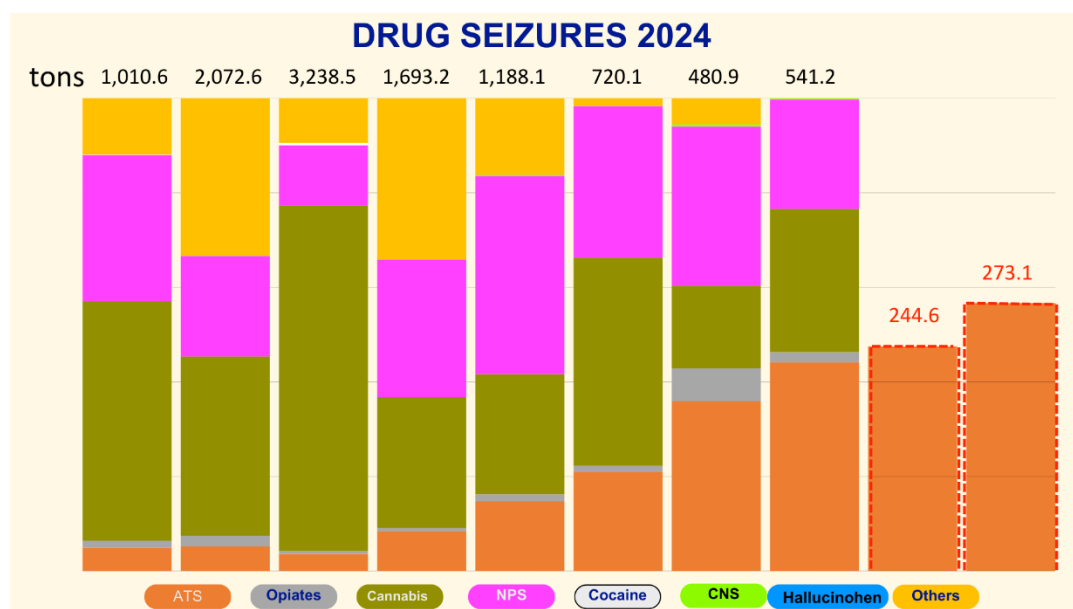


Figure 7: Proportion of Drug Seizures by Drug Groups

Between 2018 and 2021, reported drug trafficking cases across ASEAN exhibited a consistent decline, potentially reflecting a combination of reduced trafficking activity and the efficacy of targeted enforcement interventions. The year 2021 marked the lowest number of cases during this period, suggesting a peak in enforcement effectiveness. However, 2022 recorded a notable resurgence in trafficking cases, possibly driven by shifts in production zones, trafficking routes, or enforcement priorities. This resurgence was followed by a decline in 2023, suggesting that the 2022 spike may have been an anomalous occurrence rather than a sustained trend. A slight increase in cases projected for 2024 could be attributed to similar dynamics observed in 2022, including evolving trafficking strategies and reallocation of enforcement efforts.

The number of individuals apprehended for drug trafficking offenses shows a more variable trajectory. After fluctuations between 2017 and 2019, a general decline was observed from 2019 to 2021, likely indicating success in dismantling major trafficking organizations. A modest rise in offender counts in 2022 may have been triggered by intensified enforcement or a temporary resurgence in trafficking activity. Subsequent reductions in 2023 and a slight uptick in 2024 indicate continued volatility, potentially influenced by shifting enforcement cycles and evolving trafficking tactics. These trends underscore the importance of sustained surveillance, intelligence-driven interventions, and regionally coordinated policy responses to anticipate and counter emerging threats. Long-term success will depend on continued investment in law enforcement capacity-building, integrated data systems, and comprehensive prevention frameworks to mitigate the evolving risks of the illicit drug trade in ASEAN.

6. FOREIGN TRAFFICKERS

Drug trafficking is a global phenomenon that transcends national boundaries, involving networks and individuals from various regions. Examining trends in foreign traffickers provides critical insights into the changing landscape of the illicit drug trade and the effectiveness of international law enforcement collaborations. Data from 2017 to 2024 across geographic regions—including Africa, ASEAN, Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania, and South America—reveal significant shifts in foreign trafficker activity.

Data concerning traffickers originating from Africa show a general downward trend from 2017 through 2023, followed by an increase in 2024. The initial sharp decline in 2018 and subsequent continued decreases suggest that intensified law enforcement and international cooperation have been successful in disrupting African trafficking networks. This downward movement may also reflect strategic rerouting by traffickers to avoid enhanced surveillance. Nevertheless, the resurgence in 2024 highlights the need for sustained enforcement efforts to consolidate these gains and counter adaptive trafficking strategies.

In the ASEAN region, the number of foreign traffickers peaked in 2020, likely due to increased drug production and trafficking activity exacerbated by socio-economic disruptions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. A sharp decline followed in 2021, suggesting temporary suppression of trafficking flows. The subsequent rise in 2022, drop in 2023, and sharp increase in 2024 point to an oscillating pattern likely influenced by enforcement crackdowns and the evolving dynamics of illicit trade. These fluctuations highlight the volatile nature of drug trafficking in ASEAN and reinforce the need for agile, regionally tailored strategies.

Traffickers from the broader Asian region exhibited a steady increase over the study period, with a peak in 2020, followed by a minor decrease in 2021 and successive increases from 2022 to 2024. This sustained upward trajectory suggests that Asia continues to be a significant nexus for drug manufacturing and exportation, particularly of synthetic substances. The 2020 peak likely corresponds to the expansion of production and trafficking infrastructure.

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While enforcement actions have led to some moderation, the persistent growth in the number of traffickers underscores the complexity of combating transnational operations in Asia, necessitating coordinated international responses.

The European region showed a declining trend in foreign traffickers, culminating in a marked drop in 2023, followed by an increase in 2024. These changes may be attributed to successful regional and inter-regional enforcement initiatives as well as shifts in trafficking routes. Although the temporary decline in activity points to progress, the resurgence in 2024 emphasizes the need for continued vigilance and adaptive strategies to address emergent trafficking tactics.

North America continues to report relatively low and stable numbers of foreign traffickers, with only minor fluctuations throughout the period. This consistency may reflect effective internal enforcement mechanisms and a strategic focus on controlling domestic distribution networks. However, the potential for transnational linkages necessitates continued monitoring to preempt any future escalation. Similarly, Oceania has demonstrated low and relatively stable trafficking figures, with minimal year-on-year variation. The region's geographic isolation and targeted enforcement actions likely contribute to this stability.

Nevertheless, maintaining current enforcement standards is essential to prevent future exploitation by transnational trafficking groups. South America reports minimal foreign trafficker activity, with a declining trend over the review period. This suggests success in efforts to dismantle high-profile trafficking networks, particularly those involved in cocaine production and distribution. However, continued international collaboration is vital to maintain momentum and prevent the resurgence of South American-based operations through new trafficking routes.

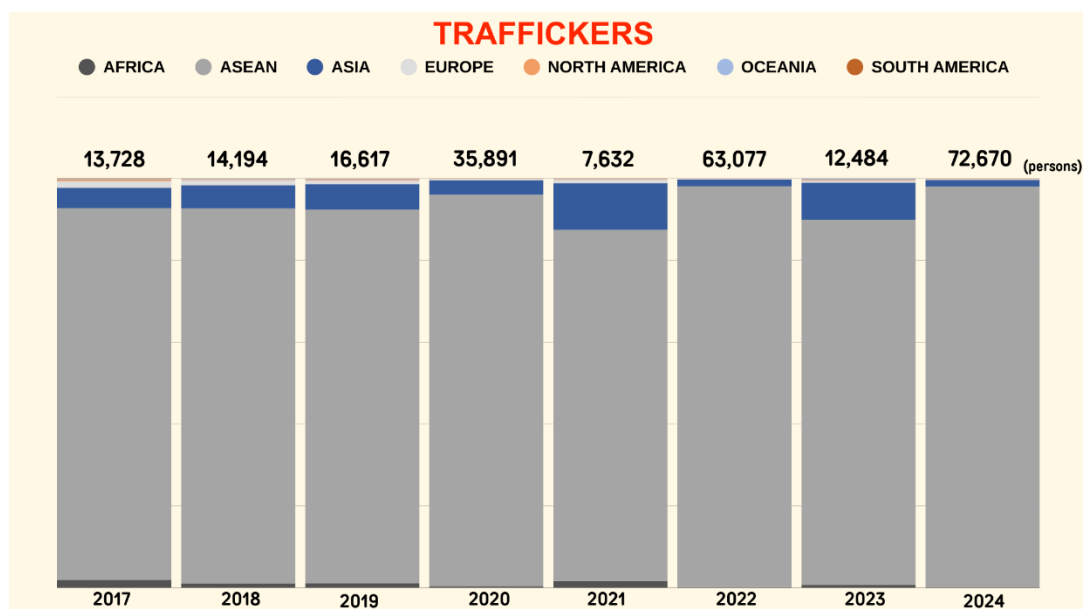


Figure 8: Proportion of Foreign Traffickers Arrested

A comprehensive review of foreign trafficker data reveals a significant spike in 2020, likely linked to increased global drug production and the destabilizing socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. This was followed by a marked decline in 2021, indicating either successful international enforcement interventions or a temporary disruption in cross-border operations. The trend reversed in 2022 with renewed increases in foreign trafficker activity, before declining again in 2023. Notably, 2024 saw a sharp resurgence, suggesting continued momentum in trafficking activity, the reorganization of trafficking networks, or enhanced enforcement resulting in more apprehensions. These dynamic shifts illustrate the evolving nature of transnational drug trafficking and reinforce the necessity of intelligence-led, flexible, and internationally coordinated responses. Addressing these challenges effectively requires sustained surveillance, adaptive policy frameworks, and the continuous development of transnational enforcement capacity.

7. REGIONAL COOPERATION

ASEAN Member States have consistently faced common challenges related to illicit drug activities, including opium poppy cultivation, heroin production, and methamphetamine manufacturing, particularly concentrated in the Golden Triangle region. Since 2013, Thailand, Myanmar, and the Lao PDR have cooperated with China under the framework of the "Safe Mekong Operation." This initiative, aimed at suppressing drug trafficking along the Mekong River and the surrounding Golden Triangle area, expanded in 2015 to include Vietnam and Cambodia.

The Safe Mekong Operation focuses on intelligence sharing, joint investigations, and coordinated operations to intercept precursor chemicals and other critical components used in the production of illicit drugs. This regional initiative has led to substantial increases in the seizure of potent drugs and their precursors, contributing to the short-term disruption of trafficking activities within the region. As a pivotal enforcement mechanism, the Safe Mekong Operation addresses the illicit drug trade in one of Southeast Asia's most significant drug production zones. This section analyzes enforcement trends between 2015 and 2024, including the number of cases, arrests of offenders, and seizures of YABA or methamphetamine tablets, methamphetamine crystals, and heroin, to evaluate the efficacy of enforcement, assess the adaptability of trafficking operations, and identify persistent challenges.

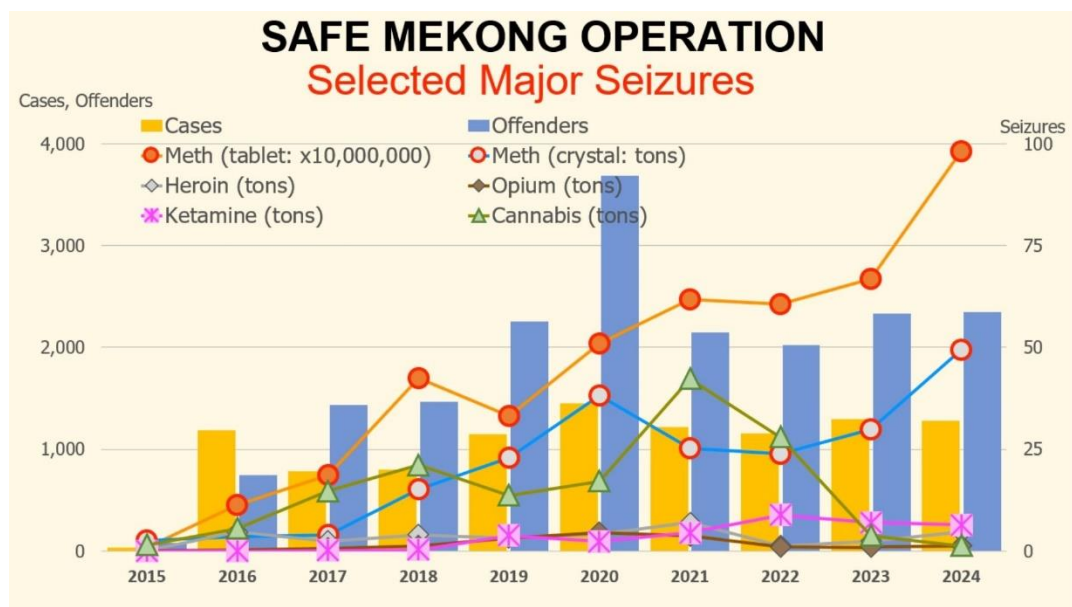


Figure 9: Selected Seizures by Safe Mekhong Operation

Data on the number of trafficking cases recorded under the Safe Mekong framework show notable fluctuations. A peak in 2016 likely corresponds to intensified operations supported by increased resources and enhanced international coordination. The subsequent decline may reflect a temporary reduction in trafficking activities or a strategic shift in enforcement priorities. However, the resurgence observed in 2019 suggests either renewed enforcement intensity or a revival in trafficking, underscoring the importance of sustained vigilance and adaptive policy responses.

Trends in offender apprehensions under the operation reveal a marked increase through 2020, peaking in that year. This rise suggests improved law enforcement coordination and operational success in dismantling trafficking cells. Although offender numbers declined after 2020, they remained elevated relative to earlier years, potentially indicating temporary network disruptions or tactical adaptations by traffickers. These figures underscore the continuing complexity of dismantling entrenched criminal networks and the necessity for ongoing, collaborative enforcement actions.

Seizure data for methamphetamine tablets (YABA) exhibit a dramatic increase over the monitoring period, culminating in an all-time high in 2024. Measured in tens of millions of tablets, these volumes reflect the exponential growth of methamphetamine production and trafficking in the region. While elevated seizure levels attest to operational improvements, they also illustrate the pervasive nature of the methamphetamine crisis. The magnitude of these seizures points to an urgent need for a comprehensive regional strategy that integrates

interdiction with public health approaches. Such strategies should prioritize demand reduction, expanded access to treatment, and sustained cross-border partnerships to address the issue effectively.

Seizures of methamphetamine crystal, reported in metric tons, also demonstrate a clear upward trajectory, with pronounced peaks in 2020 and again in 2024. These spikes likely correspond with intensified operations against production hubs and trafficking routes, reaffirming the expansion and industrialization of synthetic drug manufacturing in the Mekong region. To mitigate this threat, regional responses must extend beyond enforcement alone. Structural drivers, such as weak governance, economic disparities, and transnational organized crime, must be addressed through integrated interventions that involve law enforcement, development cooperation, and health sector engagement.

Heroin seizure trends, also measured in metric tons, present a more variable pattern. Significant peaks were observed in 2016 and 2021, reflecting successful enforcement actions against key heroin trafficking networks. A notable decline in 2022 may indicate a shift in trafficking patterns or temporary suppression of heroin-related activities, possibly due to enforcement focus being redirected toward synthetic drugs. These variations reinforce the need for flexible and adaptive strategies capable of responding to shifting priorities within the illicit drug market.

In sum, the Safe Mekong Operation exemplifies the importance of sustained regional collaboration in combating the illicit drug trade. However, enduring success will require multifaceted strategies that incorporate enforcement, socio-economic development, governance reform, and public health initiatives to address both the supply and demand dimensions of the regional drug economy.

8. CONCLUSION

The persistent and evolving nature of drug-related challenges in Southeast Asia necessitates comprehensive, adaptive, and collaboratively enforced policy responses. While ASEAN's existing frameworks provide a critical structural foundation, their effectiveness hinges on continued political will, intersectoral cooperation, and strategic investment in institutional and human capacities. Achieving the vision of a drug-free ASEAN is an attainable objective, contingent upon the implementation of inclusive, data-driven, and evidence-based approaches.

Policy Recommendations:

- **Expand Evidence-Based Treatment Infrastructure:** National governments should substantially increase investment in community-based and accessible drug treatment services. Treatment protocols should be standardized across the region and encompass integrated medical, psychological, and social care components. Systems must be fortified to withstand future public health crises, such as pandemics, ensuring continuity of care during emergencies.
- **Strengthen Cross-Border and Interagency Cooperation:** Intelligence-led operations should be enhanced through shared platforms, such as the ASEAN Drug Monitoring Network (ADMN) and ASEAN-NARCO. Effective coordination among customs authorities, law enforcement agencies, and public health sectors is crucial for addressing both the supply and demand dimensions of the drug problem. The successful "Safe Mekong Operation" model should be expanded to encompass other transnational trafficking hotspots within the ASEAN region.
- **Implement Preventive Education and Youth Engagement:** Culturally relevant, youth-centered prevention programs must be developed and scaled across Member States. Initiatives should incorporate vocational training, life skills development, and mental health support to reduce vulnerability to drug use and exploitation by trafficking networks.
- **Enhance Supply-Side Interdiction and Precursor Control:** Monitoring and control of chemical precursors should be intensified, supported by stringent penalties for their diversion into synthetic drug production. Emerging technologies—such as satellite surveillance and artificial intelligence-based risk profiling—should be leveraged to monitor trafficking patterns and improve interdiction efficiency.
- **Foster Socioeconomic Resilience in Vulnerable Regions:** Drug policy should be integrated into national development agendas, particularly targeting high-risk border regions. Governments should support alternative development projects in opium-cultivating areas and invest in rural employment and infrastructure development to reduce the economic incentives of drug production.
- **Monitor and Regulate Emerging Substances:** ASEAN should develop early warning systems and rapid response protocols for New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) and synthetic opioids. Member States must harmonize drug scheduling frameworks to close legal loopholes and ensure unified regulatory control across the region.

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CHAPTER 2

Major Drug Problems in ASEAN



1. OVERVIEW

The use of psychoactive substances in Southeast Asia is deeply embedded in the region's history, spanning millennia and significantly shaped by cultural practices, colonial legacies, and evolving geopolitical dynamics. Understanding this historical context is crucial for informing contemporary policy approaches to drug control and public health.

Archaeological evidence unequivocally demonstrates that betel nut (*Areca catechu*) consumption dates back to at least 2660 BC in Southeast Asia. Excavations at Duyong Cave in the Philippines have revealed human remains with the characteristic red dental staining associated with betel nut chewing within ancient burial sites. Similar findings at Nui Nap, a Bronze Age site in Vietnam, further corroborate the widespread prevalence of this practice between 2400 and 2000 BC (Guerra-Doce, 2021).

These discoveries highlight not only the antiquity of betel nut use but also its profound cultural embeddedness. The psychoactive properties of the nut, offering stimulant and euphoric effects, likely drove its early adoption. Beyond its physiological impact, betel nut historically served as a potent symbol of hospitality and a facilitator of social cohesion in many Southeast Asian cultures. The distinct dental staining was often perceived as a marker of beauty or social status, underscoring its multifaceted significance beyond mere consumption.

The broader historical trajectory of psychoactive substance use in Southeast Asia is intricately linked to colonial influence and transregional trade. Between 1750 and 1880, the opium trade exerted a profound impact on the Chinese diaspora and local economies across the region (Trocki, 2004). Colonial powers, particularly the British, systematically institutionalized opium distribution. This was not merely a revenue-generating enterprise but also a calculated mechanism of social control (Zhang, 2022).

Beyond the economic and political dimensions, psychoactive compounds held central roles in indigenous ritual and spiritual practices. Archaeological and anthropological evidence suggests these substances were used to mediate religious experiences and reinforce social hierarchies, with elite groups often enjoying privileged access (Cradic, 2019). This deep cultural entrenchment complicates modern narratives that solely frame drug use as a pathological phenomenon.

The period after 1950 witnessed a significant proliferation of illicit opium cultivation in the Golden Triangle, a development closely tied to ongoing geopolitical instability and the enduring resilience of narcotic economies (Medioxil, 2022). Despite numerous regulatory and punitive interventions implemented by various governments and international bodies, such efforts have frequently yielded limited success. In some instances, these interventions have inadvertently exacerbated the very issues they aimed to resolve (Smith, 2020).

Effectively addressing psychoactive substance use in Southeast Asia demands a historically grounded, culturally sensitive approach. From the ritual chewing of betel nuts in prehistoric times to the colonial commodification of opium and the contemporary crisis of synthetic drugs, psychoactive use in ASEAN reflects deeply rooted political, economic, and cultural dynamics. As such, policy responses must be multidimensional—grounded in historical context, responsive to social realities, and embedded within a comprehensive public health and development agenda.

Understanding the role of psychoactive substances in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region requires a nuanced and historically informed perspective. These substances are not merely vectors of addiction; they also serve as enduring cultural artifacts that reflect the intricate interplay of colonial legacies, indigenous practices, and societal adaptation. Recognizing this complexity is crucial for formulating drug policies that transcend punitive paradigms and adopt public health-oriented, socioeconomically responsive frameworks.

Substance abuse remains a critical public health issue across ASEAN. In 2024, approximately 297,366 individuals received treatment for Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), reaffirming ATS as the most commonly abused drug category in the region. This persistently high incidence highlights the urgent need for coordinated prevention and rehabilitation strategies that address not only individual vulnerabilities but also broader structural determinants of drug use.

Opiated and opioids were the second most prevalent substance category among those seeking treatment, with 117,191 reported cases. This trend parallels the global rise in opioid dependency and calls for comprehensive, multi-tiered responses that integrate harm reduction measures, equitable access to treatment services, and widespread community education. Cannabis, with 15,428 individuals treated, occupies a distinct space due to its historical dual function—as both a traditional medicinal agent and a recreational substance. Consequently, policy frameworks must carefully balance regulation with harm minimization, taking into account cultural context and evolving public attitudes.

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) posed a notable policy challenge, accounting for 9,052 treatment cases. The rapid innovation, chemical variability, and legal ambiguity of NPS necessitate robust surveillance systems and agile regulatory mechanisms to prevent proliferation and mitigate harm. Cocaine use, though less prevalent, involved 1,604 treatment cases, while Central Nervous System (CNS) depressants accounted for 297 treatments, potentially indicating a rising trend driven by increased accessibility and changing social norms. Hallucinogens, with 126 treatment cases, remain infrequent yet are essential due to

their potent psychoactive effects and associated health risks. An additional 60,758 users were polydrug users and others.

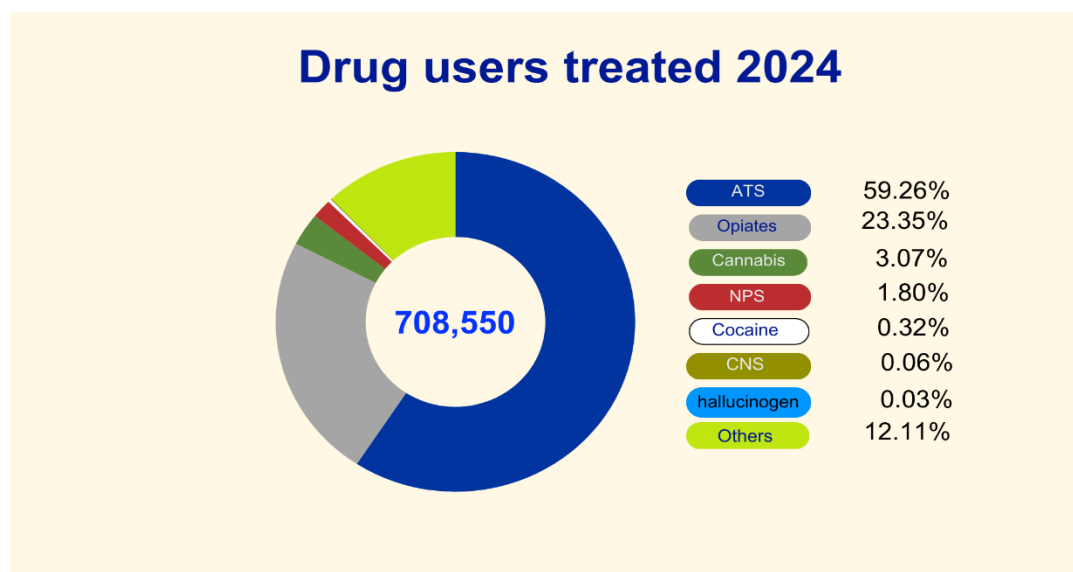


Figure 10: ASEAN drug users treated by drug types, 2024

Between 2017 and 2024, the ASEAN region experienced notable fluctuations in the number of individuals receiving treatment for drug-related disorders. In 2017, treatment admissions stood at 325,164, rising sharply to 501,710 in 2018 before declining to 430,187 in 2019. The number of treated users subsequently increased to 541,018 in 2020 and 614,003 in 2021. This upward trend continued through 2022, 2023, and 2024, with reported users at 567,609, 672,117, and 708,550, respectively.

Disaggregated by half-year intervals (January–June; July–December), data consistently show higher treatment rates in the first half of each year. In 2024, Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) and opiates/opioids remained the predominant substances of concern, accounting for the majority of treatment cases. Cannabis treatment admissions also showed a significant presence, while cases involving new psychoactive substances (NPS) and cocaine revealed a growing diversity in misused substances.

ASEAN DRUG MONITORING REPORT 2024

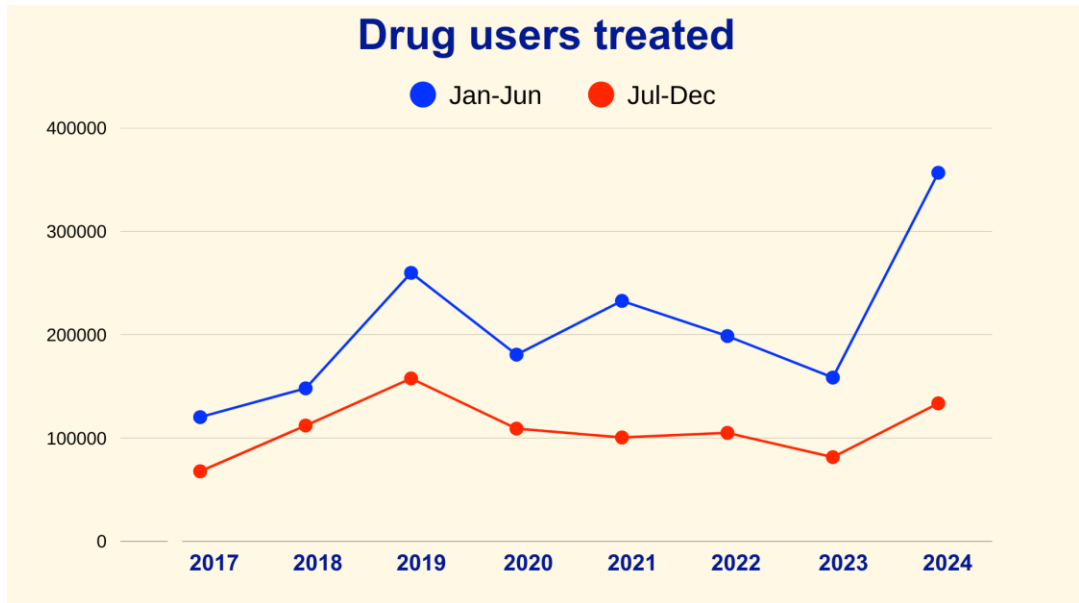


Figure 11: ASEAN drug users treated periodically

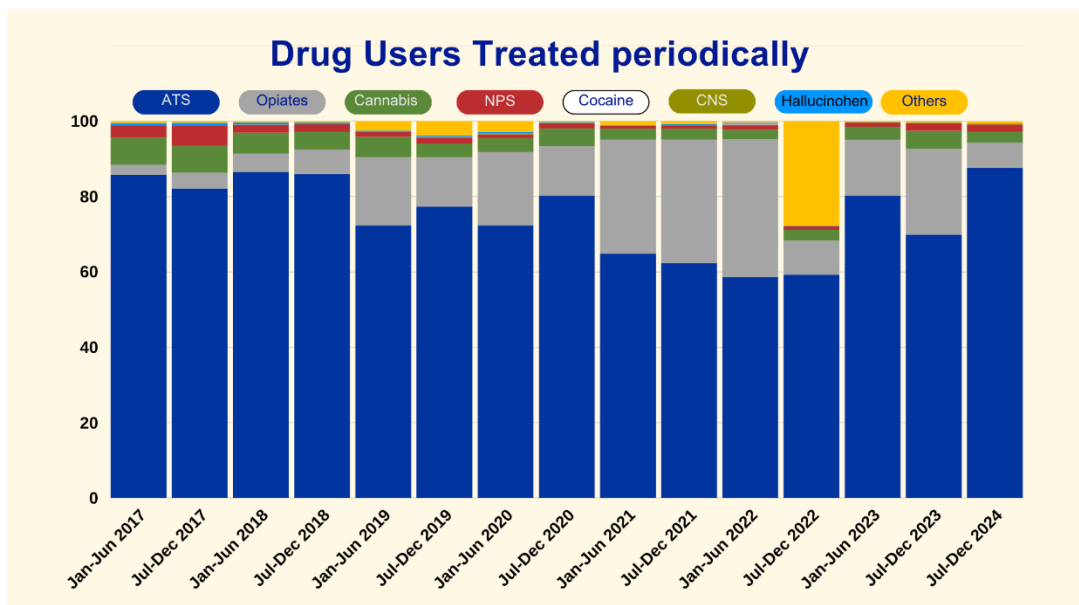


Figure 12: ASEAN drug users treated periodically by drug types

In 2024, ASEAN member states collectively seized 541,189 kilograms of illicit substances and precursor chemicals. Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) constituted the largest share of seizures at 239,074 kilograms, followed by Cannabis at 163,936 kilograms.

ASEAN DRUG MONITORING REPORT 2024

Seizures of NPS amounted to 125,248 kilograms. opiates and opioids accounted for 11,473 kilograms seized. Seizures of CNS depressants accounted for 913 kilograms, cocaine at 259 kilograms, and hallucinogens at 56 kilograms. An additional 230 kilograms of precursor chemicals were intercepted.

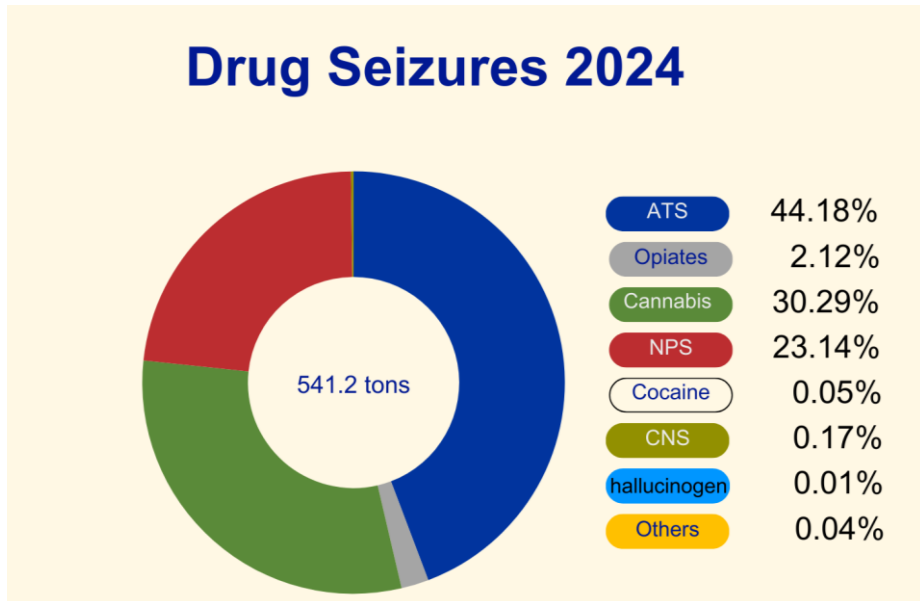


Figure 13: Illicit drugs seized by drug types, 2024

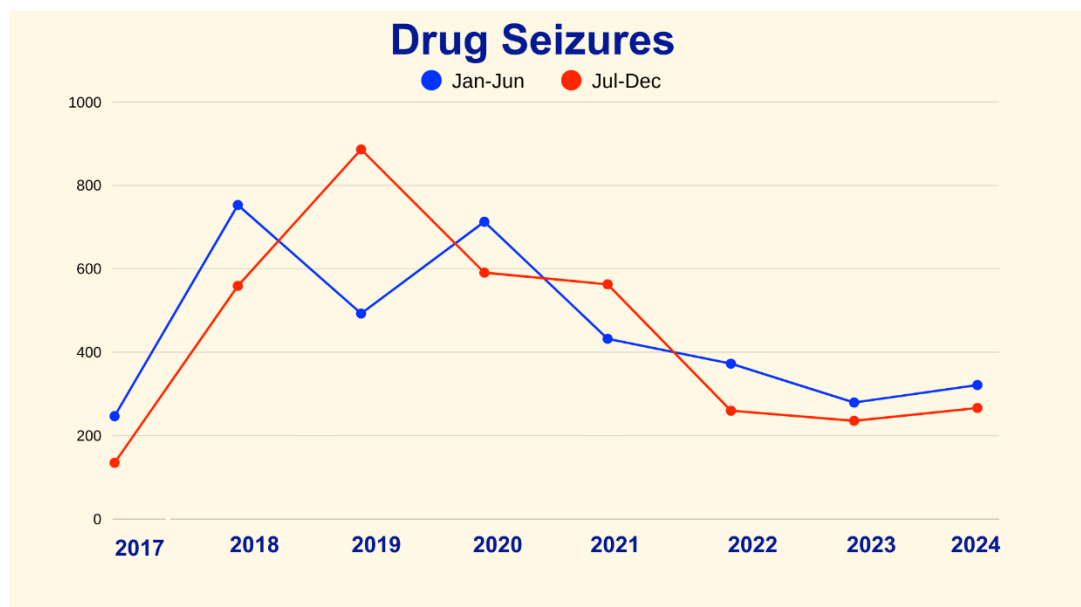


Figure 14: Illicit drugs seized periodically

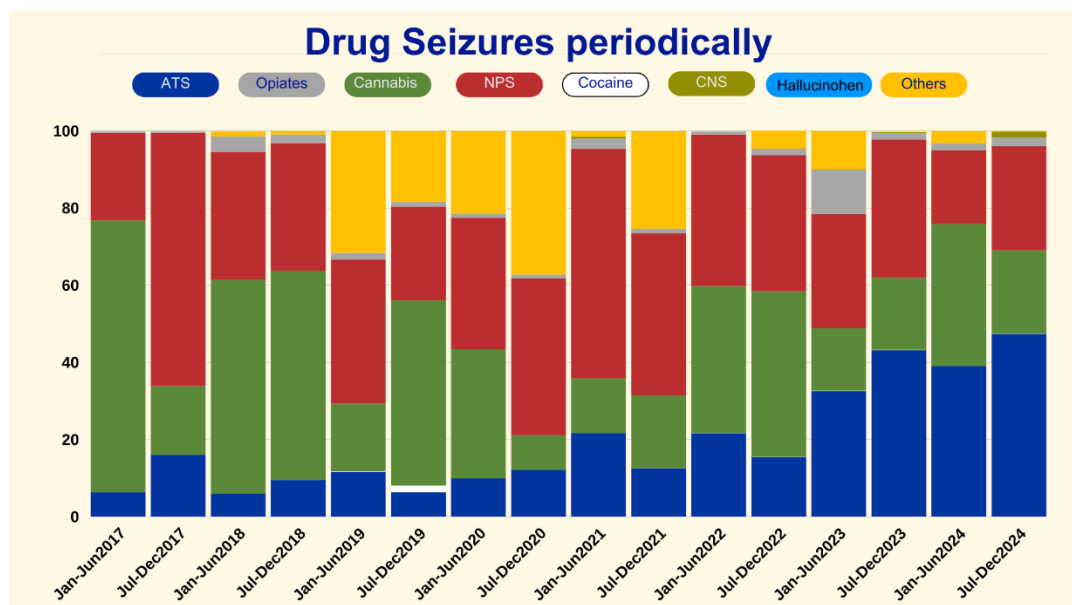


Figure 15: Illicit drug types seized periodically

Longitudinal analysis of treatment and seizure data from 2017 to 2024 illustrates the evolving landscape of drug abuse and control in ASEAN. The rise in treatment admissions and increasing seizure volumes point to a complex and expanding drug economy intertwined with socio-economic, cultural, and geopolitical dynamics. Effective policy responses must integrate multi-tiered strategies: (1) expanding access to evidence-based treatment and harm reduction services; (2) enhancing cross-border law enforcement cooperation; (3) improving data systems for real-time monitoring; and (4) adopting flexible legal and regulatory frameworks to address emerging substances. The ASEAN region's multifaceted drug challenge necessitates continuous surveillance, robust intergovernmental collaboration, and adaptable, health-centered policies. Addressing the root causes of drug misuse while disrupting supply chains requires a balanced approach—one that treats substance abuse not only as a criminal issue but as a critical public health and social development concern.

2. AMPHETAMINE-TYPE STIMULANTS

The history of Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) in ASEAN Member States reflects a complex interplay of socio-economic shifts, drug policies, and regional dynamics. While the region's illicit drug market was historically dominated by opium, stricter controls on cultivation paved the way for the emergence and widespread proliferation of meth-amphetamines. This

transition mirrors broader societal adaptations to new economic realities, particularly within marginalized communities.

The rise of methamphetamines in ASEAN began around 1997, reaching a peak in 2000–2001. This surge was particularly pronounced in Thailand, where the drug became commonly known as "YABA" or "madness medicine" (Chouvy & Meissonnier, 2004; McKetin et al., 2008). This shift in consumption patterns was often driven by socio-economic changes, as exemplified by the Akha highlanders in Laos, who transitioned from opium to methamphetamines as they increasingly engaged with modern capitalist systems (Lyttleton, 2004). Significant production and trafficking of methamphetamines have been reported across the region, notably in Myanmar, Cambodia, and the Philippines. Bangladesh has also seen a marked increase in methamphetamine use, primarily attributed to cross-border dynamics (McKetin et al., 2008; Ramadhan, 2020). The drug's widespread accessibility and relatively low cost have contributed to its pervasive use across various societal sectors in Thailand and beyond (Chouvy & Meissonnier, 2004). However, policy responses have often been characterized by stringent, punitive measures rather than effective treatment, as seen in countries such as Vietnam (Tran et al., 2022). This rigid enforcement has inadvertently fostered social stigma and hindered access to support for users, pushing many to avoid seeking necessary help (Tran et al., 2022).

ATS are a diverse group of synthetic drugs that powerfully stimulate the central nervous system. While they enhance alertness, concentration, and energy and induce euphoria, these effects come at a significant cost. Their use can lead to increased heart rate, blood pressure, and body temperature, posing severe health risks and leading to addiction. Unlike natural stimulants, ATS are primarily produced in illicit laboratories, contributing to their widespread availability and high potential for abuse (UNODC, 2022).

Key types of ATS include:

- Amphetamine: A potent central nervous system stimulant, medically used for ADHD and narcolepsy, but often abused for its euphoric and performance-enhancing effects.
- Methamphetamine: A highly addictive stimulant, chemically similar to amphetamine but with more pronounced effects. Commonly found in crystalline or tablet forms, chronic use can lead to severe physical and mental health issues.
- MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine): Also known as ecstasy, MDMA is a synthetic drug that alters mood and perception, inducing feelings of energy, pleasure, and emotional warmth, often used recreationally in social settings.

ASEAN DRUG MONITORING REPORT 2024

- Ephedrine and Pseudoephedrine: Stimulant compounds found in over-the-counter medications for respiratory issues. They are regulated due to their potential for use as precursors in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine.
- Other ATS: This category includes substances like mephedrone, a synthetic cathinone, and fenethylamine, which has been widely used in the Middle East.

The proliferation of ATS in ASEAN has profound social, health, and economic implications. The region has become a significant hub for the production and trafficking of these drugs, fueled by high demand and the involvement of organized crime networks. Methamphetamine, in particular, remains the most prevalent ATS (UNODC, 2021). The health consequences of ATS abuse are severe, encompassing addiction, various mental health disorders, cardiovascular diseases, and an elevated risk of infectious diseases linked to needle sharing. Socially, the impact is devastating, contributing to drug-related crime, violence, and economic instability within families and communities. The financial burden on governments is substantial, requiring significant resources for healthcare, law enforcement, and rehabilitation programs (WHO, 2021).

Recent data from across ASEAN underscores a growing and persistent challenge: the escalating use of Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), which poses serious risks to public health, community safety, and regional stability. From 2017 to 2024, the ATS market in ASEAN has not only demonstrated resilience but has also expanded in scale and complexity, despite intermittent disruptions such as those associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Methamphetamine—both in tablet (YABA) and crystalline forms—continues to dominate, demanding urgent, coordinated, and evidence-based interventions across the region.

In 2024, the total number of reported ATS users treated across ASEAN reached 297,366. Methamphetamine tablets (YABA) remained the most commonly used substance, accounting for 195,158 users. This form's affordability, ease of production, and widespread distribution networks underpin its dominance. Crystalline methamphetamine followed, with 85,185 users, highlighting an alarming trend toward more potent and addictive variants of the drug. The growing prevalence of Crystalline methamphetamine reflects a significant evolution in the regional drug market. Its higher purity poses amplified health risks and underscores a shift that warrants immediate attention from both public health systems and enforcement agencies.

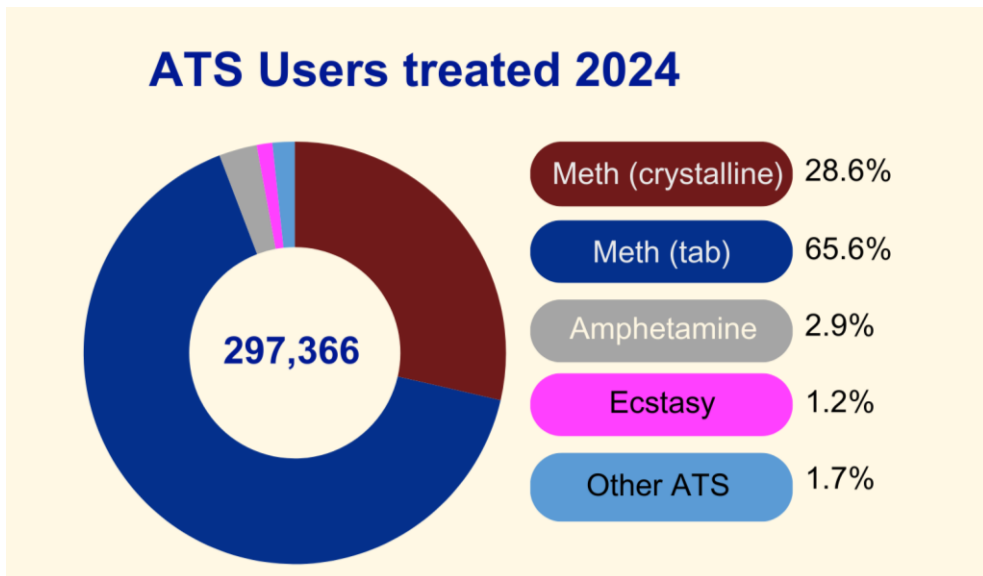


Figure 16: ATS users treated in 2024

Analysis of usage data over the eight years reveals a pronounced upward trajectory. In 2017, 186,983 users were recorded. By 2019, this figure had peaked at 303,439, signaling a near doubling of users in just two years. Although the pandemic triggered a temporary decline in 2020 (204,466 users), the market quickly rebounded, reaching 220,934 users in 2021 and surging back to 297,366 in 2024. This recovery highlights the persistence of demand and the limited long-term impact of supply chain disruptions.

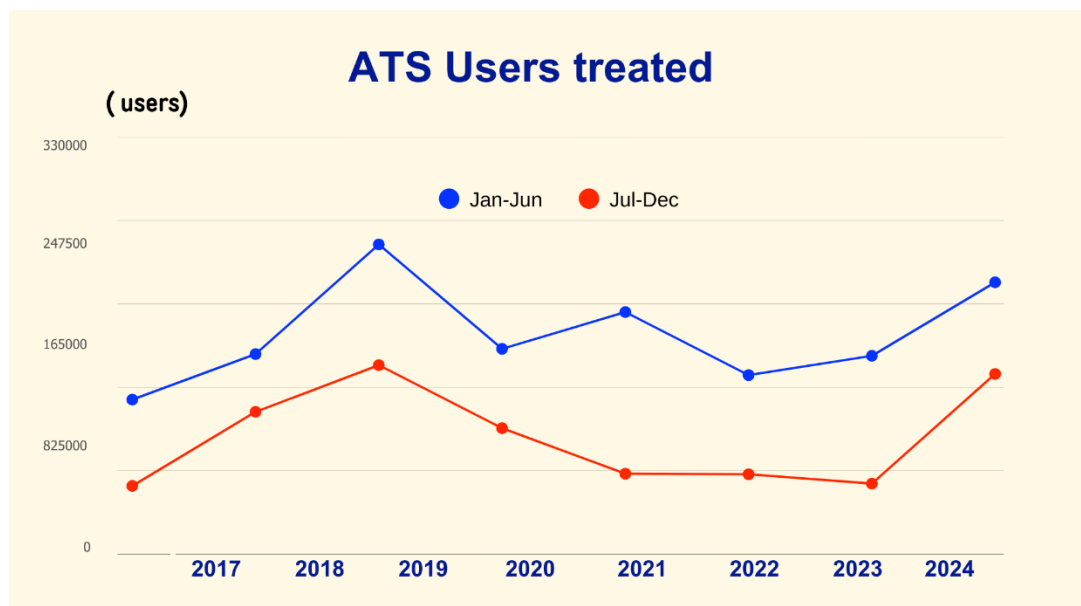


Figure 17: ATS users treated periodically

Another clear pattern is the recurring semi-annual fluctuation in user numbers. Across all observed years, the first half (January–June) consistently shows higher treatment and usage figures than the second half (July–December). The first half of 2019 saw a peak of 194,428 users, suggesting that seasonality, enforcement cycles, or administrative reporting practices may influence these variations.

The rising prevalence of ATS use has precipitated a growing public health crisis, especially among youth and young adults. Vulnerability in these demographics is driven by peer pressure, cultural normalization of recreational drug use, and misconceptions about the performance-enhancing effects of stimulants. Chronic ATS consumption is associated with severe mental health disorders, such as anxiety, depression, and psychosis, and physical health consequences, including cardiovascular damage and neurological impairment. The cumulative impact on healthcare systems is considerable, stretching mental health services and requiring long-term care provisions that many national systems are ill-equipped to sustain.

Data on treatment admissions from 2017 to 2019 corroborate the increasing prevalence of ATS. In the first half of 2017, 106,662 individuals were treated. This number climbed to 132,438 in early 2018 and reached a peak of 194,428 in the first half of 2019. YABA remained the most cited reason for treatment, accounting for 114,844 cases in the first half of 2019. Crystalline methamphetamine, however, also showed significant growth, with 76,919 individuals receiving treatment during the same period. By contrast, treatment cases for other ATS variants, such as ecstasy, remained consistently low, though their presence indicates a broadening of drug preferences.

Key Observations

- Methamphetamine, particularly in tablet form (YABA), remains the dominant ATS, but the shift toward crystalline methamphetamine signals heightened risks.
- The demand for ATS is persistent and resilient to short-term enforcement measures or supply disruptions.
- Seasonal trends in usage offer predictable windows for intervention and resource deployment.
- The medical and psychological consequences of ATS abuse increasingly burden healthcare systems.

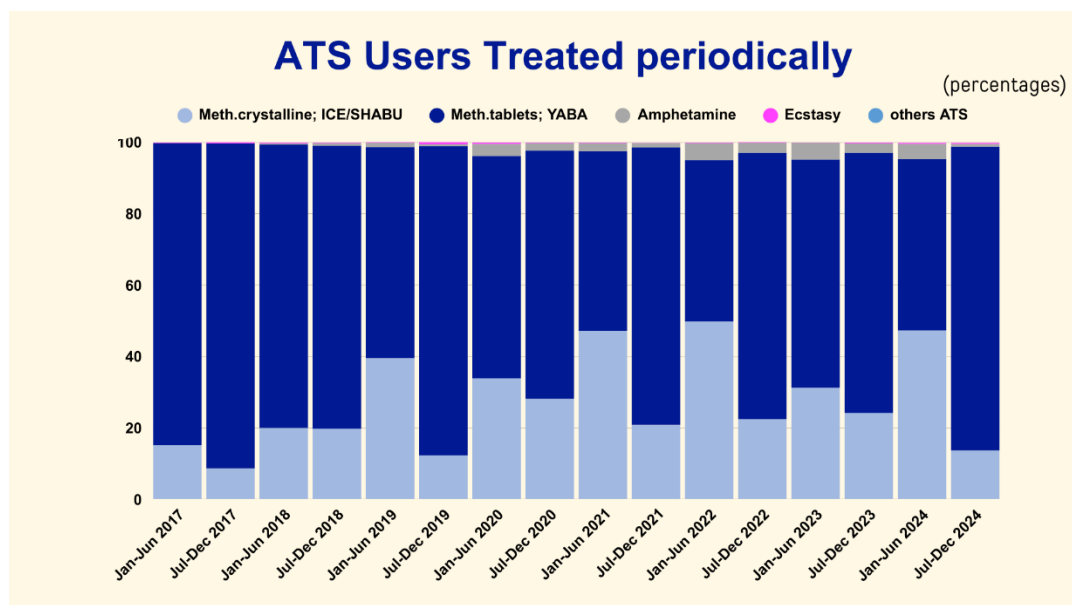


Figure 18: ATS users are treated by drug types

The persistence and evolution of ATS use in ASEAN—especially methamphetamine in both its tablet and crystalline forms—demands a multidimensional policy response. Enforcement alone has proven insufficient. A holistic approach that balances public health imperatives with transnational enforcement cooperation is essential to mitigate the profound and far-reaching consequences of ATS abuse. ASEAN nations must act decisively and in concert to confront this deepening crisis.

Law enforcement agencies across the ASEAN region are confronting an escalating challenge in the trafficking of Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS). Analysis of regional data from 2017 to 2024 reveals that while enforcement activities, measured by arrests and case numbers, have remained consistently high, the sheer volume of ATS seized has surged dramatically. In 2024 alone, authorities intercepted over 239 metric tons of these substances. The market is unequivocally dominated by methamphetamine, in both tablet and crystalline forms, which together constituted over 97% of all ATS seizures. This trend indicates that trafficking networks are not only resilient but are expanding in scale and capacity, presenting a severe and growing threat to public health and regional security that demands a more comprehensive strategic response beyond conventional enforcement.

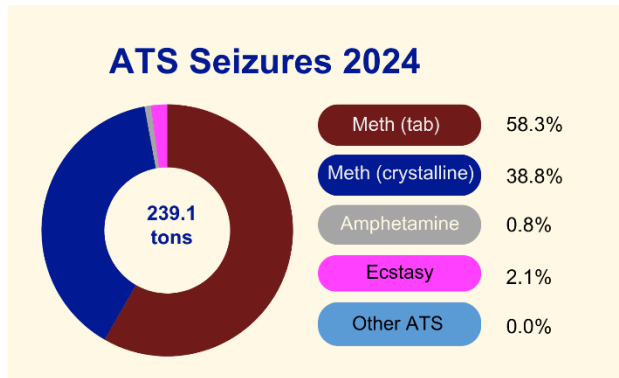


Figure 19: ATS seizures in 2024

Over the eight years from 2017 to 2024, law enforcement data from ASEAN reveals a concerning divergence between the scale of anti-narcotics operations and the expanding volume of ATS trafficking. Enforcement efforts across the ASEAN region have remained robust

and relatively stable, with the number of ATS-related arrests and cases consistently high. For example, in the first half of 2018, authorities recorded 149,933 ATS-related cases resulting in 156,184 arrests—a level of enforcement that continued through 2024, with 142,041 arrests reported in the first half of that year alone.

However, this stability in enforcement contrasts sharply with the exponential rise in the total quantity of ATS seized. In the first half of 2017, law enforcement agencies intercepted approximately 14,866 kilograms of ATS. By the first half of 2024, this figure had skyrocketed to 121,490 kilograms—an eightfold increase. This stark escalation in seizure volumes, occurring without a commensurate rise in arrests, suggests that regional trafficking networks are scaling up production and distribution at a pace that outstrips current interdiction capacities.

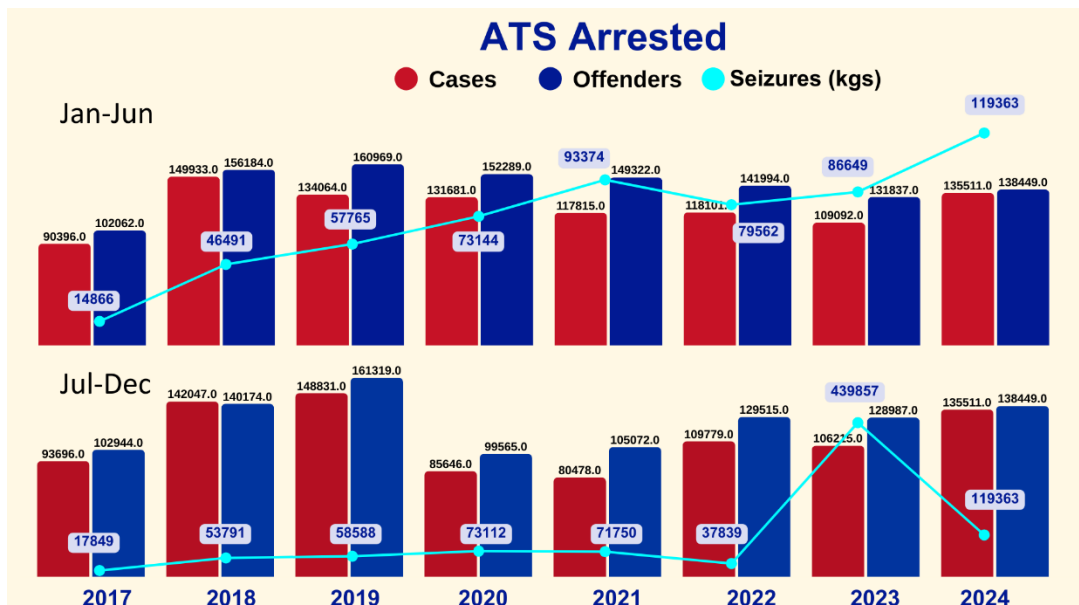


Figure 20: ATS arrested periodically

An analysis of the 239,073.85 kilograms of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) seized across ASEAN in 2024 provides a detailed overview of the region's drug market structure and substance preferences. Methamphetamine tablets (Yaba) constituted the majority of seizures, totaling 139,472.13 kilograms, or 58.3 percent of the total. The dominance of Yaba reflects the efficiency of low-cost, mass-production operations and the maturity of trafficking routes that ensure its widespread availability. Crystalline methamphetamine, while constituting a smaller share (92,797.98 kilograms or 38.8%), presents a more acute public health threat due to its higher purity and greater addictive potential. Its substantial volume underscores its deeply entrenched presence in the regional market. Ecstasy (MDMA) and other methamphetamine forms accounted for smaller proportions—4,942.08 kilograms (2.1 percent) and 1,861 kilograms (0.8 percent), respectively—yet their continued presence indicates a diversifying market catering to niche consumer segments. Precursor Chemicals, particularly ephedrine/pseudoephedrine, were scarcely seized in 2024 (0.64 kilograms). This contrasts with higher volumes intercepted in 2018–2019 and raises concerns about undetected precursor supply chains that continue to fuel regional methamphetamine production.

Critical Insights

- **Methamphetamine's market supremacy:** The combined share of YABA and crystalline methamphetamine (97.1%) unequivocally confirms that ASEAN's illicit drug economy is overwhelmingly centered on methamphetamine. This suggests the existence of highly organized and specialized production ecosystems, optimized for regional and potentially global distribution.
- **Endurance and Adaptability of Trafficking Networks:** The juxtaposition of consistently high arrest figures with soaring seizure volumes highlights the resilience of transnational drug networks. Law enforcement efforts—often targeting lower-tier operatives—appear insufficient to disrupt broader supply chains or deter large-scale operations.
- **An Impending Public Health Emergency:** Given that seizures likely capture only a fraction of total trafficked volumes, the accurate scale of consumption may be far greater. The implications for public health are dire, with rising addiction rates, increased psychiatric and psychological morbidity, and escalating demands on national healthcare systems.

The increasing volumes of methamphetamine seizures, despite sustained enforcement, illuminate the structural scale and resilience of ATS trafficking networks in ASEAN. The evolving dynamics of substance use, particularly the shift toward higher-potency crystalline methamphetamine, reinforce the urgency of integrating law enforcement with public health, regulatory, and regional cooperation strategies. Only through a multifaceted response that

addresses both supply and demand can ASEAN nations hope to stem the tide of ATS-related harm and safeguard public well-being across the region.

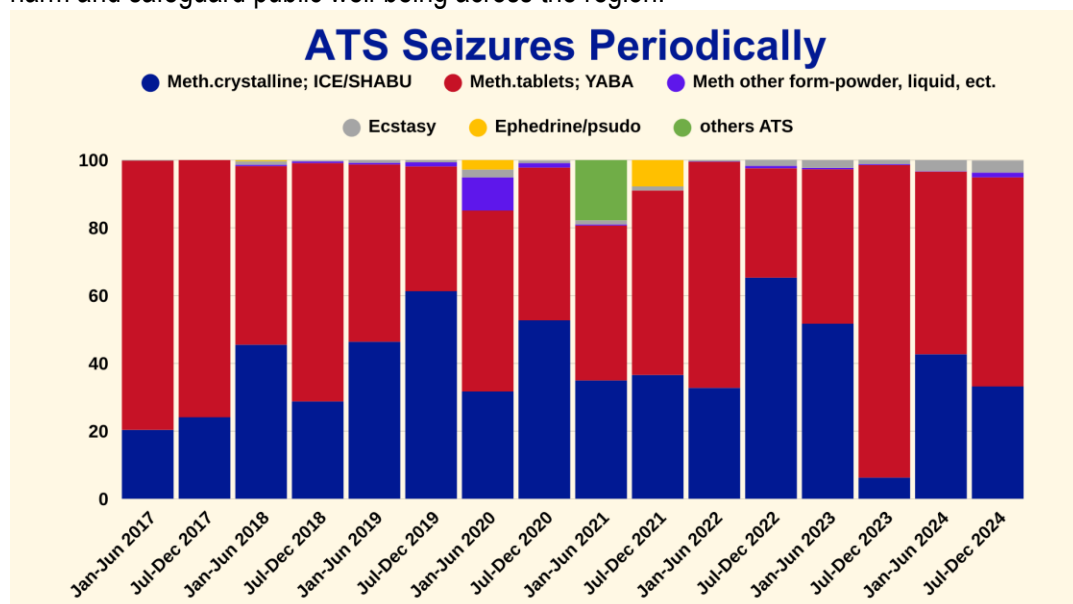


Figure 21: ATS seizures by drug types

The converging data on Amphetamine-Type Stimulant (ATS) consumption, arrests, and seizures across the ASEAN region present a clear and urgent message for policymakers. The current situation, characterized by resilient user demand and an exponentially growing supply, indicates that the scale of the crisis is outpacing existing strategies. A strategic pivot is necessary, shifting the primary focus from enforcement to a more comprehensive and balanced framework. The key policy implications derived from this analysis are as follows:

1. **The Imperative to Adopt a Balanced, Dual-Pronged Strategy.** The data unequivocally demonstrates that a law enforcement-centric approach is insufficient. While arrests and seizures are at record highs, these actions have not curtailed the availability or consumption of ATS. Trafficking networks have proven resilient, replacing seized products and arrested personnel with ease, while underlying user demand remains strong. Governments and regional bodies must formally adopt and fund a dual-pronged strategy that gives equal weight to supply reduction (enforcement and supply chain disruption) and demand reduction (public health, prevention, and treatment). Success should not be measured by seizure volume alone, but by a wider set of metrics including reduced prevalence, lower rates of drug-related harm, and increased access to treatment.

2. **Prioritization of a Comprehensive Public Health Response.** The immense volume of ATS in circulation, coupled with a large and established user base, constitutes a severe and ongoing public health crisis. The high prevalence of use among vulnerable populations, particularly youth, and the documented mental and physical health consequences necessitate

a robust public health intervention. Resources must be allocated to a multi-layered public health framework that includes:

- Prevention: Targeted, evidence-based campaigns aimed at young adults and adolescents, dispelling myths about ATS enhancing academic or professional performance.
- Treatment: Expanding access to affordable and effective addiction treatment and mental health services to manage conditions like anxiety, psychosis, and depression resulting from chronic ATS use.
- Harm reduction: Implementing programs designed to reduce the immediate harms associated with drug use, thereby lessening the burden on emergency healthcare and preventing the spread of disease.

3. Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Supply Chain Disruption. The transnational nature of ATS trafficking makes it impossible for any single nation to resolve. The dominance of methamphetamine and the historical evidence of precursor chemical seizures highlight the need for a coordinated strategy focused on disrupting the entire supply chain. ASEAN member states must deepen cooperation beyond information sharing to include:

- Joint operations: Coordinated cross-border efforts to dismantle trafficking networks.
- Precursor control: A unified regional strategy to monitor, track, and intercept the flow of precursor chemicals like ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, which are essential for methamphetamine production.
- Real-time intelligence sharing: Investing in technology and protocols for the immediate sharing of intelligence on trafficking routes, key actors, and emerging trends.

4. Leveraging Data for Strategic Resource Allocation .The analysis reveals predictable patterns, such as the semi-annual peak in ATS use during the first half of the year and the market dominance of specific substance forms (e.g., methamphetamine tablets). This data should be actively used to inform policy and operational planning. Establish a data-driven approach to resource deployment. For example, public health campaigns and law enforcement surge operations could be strategically timed to coincide with periods of anticipated peak use. Similarly, a documented shift towards more potent substances like crystalline methamphetamine should trigger a proportional response in public health warnings and treatment readiness.

In conclusion, the ATS crisis in ASEAN has reached a critical inflection point. A reactive, enforcement-led posture is proving inadequate. A strategic shift toward a proactive, balanced, and regionally coordinated framework that integrates public health and security is

essential to mitigate the profound and destructive impact of these substances on the region's societies.

3. OPIATES/OPIOIDS

Opiates and opioids constitute a class of substances primarily known for their potent analgesic (pain-relieving) effects. opiates refer to the naturally occurring alkaloids derived from the opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*), including morphine and codeine. opioids comprise a broader category that includes not only these natural compounds but also semi-synthetic and fully synthetic analogues that mimic the pharmacological effects of opiates.

These substances act primarily on the central nervous system by binding to opioid receptors, particularly the μ -opioid receptor, thereby reducing pain perception and inducing euphoria. While these effects underpin their therapeutic utility in clinical pain management, they also contribute significantly to their potential for abuse, dependence, and addiction.

Morphine remains one of the most commonly used opiates in medical settings, particularly for the treatment of severe acute or chronic pain. It is, however, associated with a high risk of tolerance and physical dependence. Codeine, a less potent opiate, is used for mild to moderate pain and as a cough suppressant. Despite its lower potency, codeine still presents a risk of misuse and dependence, particularly in unsupervised or non-medical contexts.

In the category of opioids, heroin (diacetylmorphine) is a semi-synthetic derivative of morphine with no accepted medical use in most jurisdictions. It is known for its high addictive potential and is frequently associated with overdose fatalities. Oxycodone, synthesized from thebaine (another opium poppy alkaloid), is widely prescribed for moderate to severe pain but is also commonly implicated in prescription drug misuse. Fentanyl, a fully synthetic opioid, is up to 100 times more potent than morphine and is used primarily in the management of cancer pain and during surgical procedures. Due to its extreme potency, fentanyl has become a leading cause of opioid overdose deaths in many countries, including parts of Southeast Asia.

The history of opiate use in Southeast Asia is deeply intertwined with colonial trade and imperial governance strategies dating back to the 16th century. European powers, including the Portuguese and Dutch, were instrumental in the introduction and commercialization of opium in the region. By the 17th century, opium smoking had become prevalent in parts of Java, with the Dutch East India Company establishing monopolies over its trade to fund colonial administration. These colonial strategies laid the foundations for opium's integration into both the formal economy and informal cultural practices across several Southeast Asian societies.

Opium use was further embedded in Southeast Asia through its intersection with Chinese diaspora communities, especially in port cities and mining zones. These communities played a central role in the distribution and consumption of opium, where it served not only as a recreational drug but also as a commodity integrated into labor systems and community economies. In the Philippines, the Spanish colonial administration institutionalized opium consumption through state-regulated opium dens and a licensing system that generated substantial fiscal revenue (Bamero, 2006). These colonial-era policies established structural conditions that continue to shape drug-use patterns and enforcement challenges in the present day.

In recent decades, the landscape of opioid use in ASEAN has undergone a significant transformation. While traditional opiates such as morphine and codeine continue to be used medically and remain under strict regulatory control, new challenges have emerged with the increasing prevalence of heroin and synthetic opioids.

Heroin, primarily produced in the Golden Triangle region spanning Myanmar, Lao PDR, and Thailand, remains a significant concern for ASEAN Member States. Trafficking and use of heroin contribute to high rates of addiction, pose severe public health risks, and fuel transnational crime networks. Efforts to address heroin-related issues require coordinated cross-border interventions and long-term development strategies in opium-cultivating areas.

More recently, the proliferation of synthetic opioids—especially fentanyl and its analogues—has presented an even greater public health threat. These substances are significantly more potent than heroin and are often trafficked in small quantities that are difficult to detect. Their high potency also means that even minimal dosing errors can result in fatal overdoses. Synthetic opioids have been increasingly detected in illicit drug markets across ASEAN, raising concerns among public health officials and law enforcement agencies regarding the adequacy of existing surveillance, treatment, and emergency response mechanisms.

In 2024, data from the ASEAN revealed a substantial and concerning presence of various opiates and opioids. Heroin and opium remained the most prevalent substances, with reported user figures indicating 112,189 and 4,785 users, respectively. Methadone, commonly utilized in opioid replacement therapy, also registered a significant user base of 194 individuals. Morphine and codeine, although less prevalent, still presented notable figures, with 15 and 8 users, respectively.

When analyzing the relative prevalence, heroin users constituted a staggering 95.7% of the total reported opiate/opioid-using population. Opium users accounted for approximately 4.1%, while methadone users represented about 0.2%. Morphine and codeine users

comprised a smaller fraction at 0.01% and 0.007%, respectively. These proportions unequivocally highlight the dominant role of heroin within the region's drug landscape.

The high prevalence of heroin and opium use poses significant public health challenges due to their severe health implications, including respiratory depression, infectious diseases (often linked to needle sharing), and a heightened risk of fatal overdose. The substantial number of users places considerable strain on public health systems, necessitating significant resource allocation for treatment, harm reduction, and prevention initiatives. While methadone's presence in the user base indicates ongoing efforts in opioid addiction management, it also underscores the need for more comprehensive rehabilitation programs to address treatment gaps.

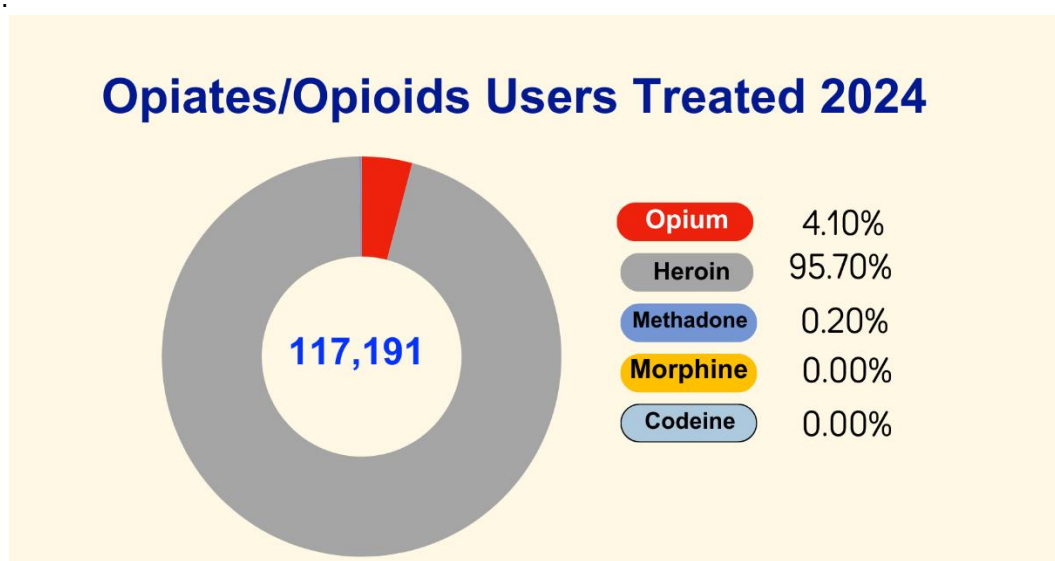


Figure 22: opiates/opioids users treated in 2024

Data on individuals treated for opiate and opioid use in ASEAN Member States, reported biannually from 2017 to 2024, provide crucial insights into service utilization and evolving treatment demands.

Initially, in 2017, the total number of treated users was relatively low, with 16,037 users reported for the entire year. A moderate increase was observed in 2018, with the total number of treated users reaching 22,526. A dramatic surge occurred in 2019, with the number of treated users rising significantly to 61,908. This increase may reflect enhanced identification efforts, improved access to treatment services, or a genuine escalation in opioid dependency.

The trend experienced a slight reversal in 2020, likely influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted access to health services across the region, resulting in 42,832

treated users. However, in 2021, treatment numbers rebounded sharply to a peak of over 80,015 users for the year. This was followed by a significant decline in 2022, particularly in the latter half, with 39,893 users treated, which may indicate shifts in treatment capacity or reporting mechanisms. In 2023, the number of treated users was 44,104. By 2024, the data showed another substantial rise in the first half (117,191 users), followed by a marked decline in the second half (9,285 users), illustrating continued volatility in treatment accessibility or service utilization.

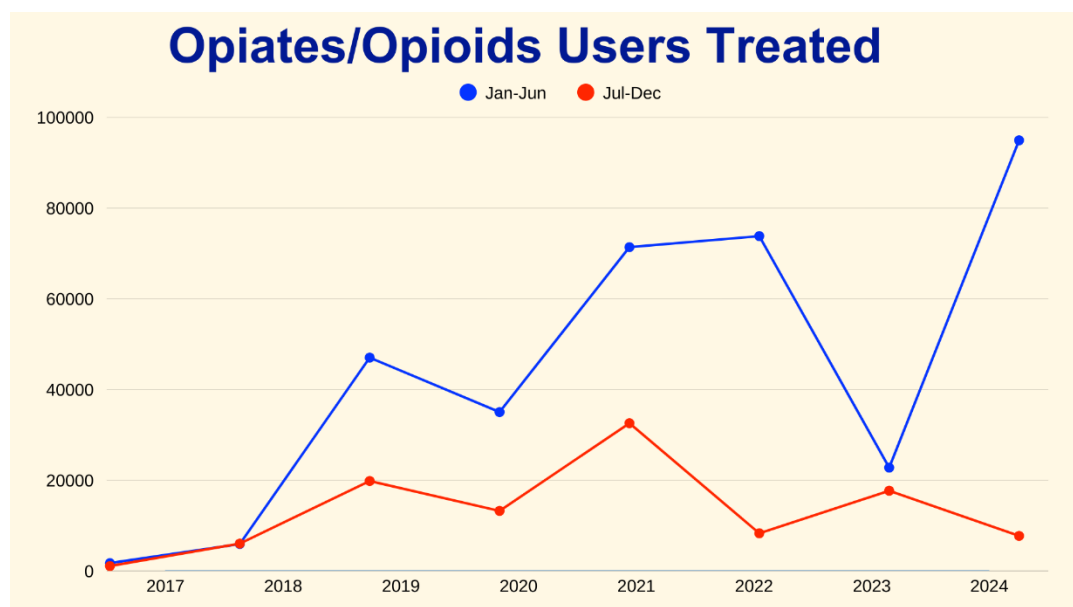


Figure 23: opiates/opioids users treated periodically

Across the observed period (2017–2024), heroin consistently accounted for the largest share of treatment users, underscoring its persistent dominance. For instance, in January–June 2019, 45,944 individuals were treated for heroin use, representing over 94% of the total opiate/opioid-related treatment users during that period. Similar patterns of dominance were observed throughout the reporting years.

Treatment for opium use remained comparatively lower but exhibited relative stability, with a slight increase from 1,420 users in early 2017 to a peak of 2,439 in early 2019. However, post-2020, treatment numbers for opium began to decline, possibly signaling a shift in usage patterns or treatment priorities.

Methadone, primarily used in maintenance therapy, showed inconsistent treatment volumes. Notable spikes were recorded in late 2018 (143 users) and early 2024 (281 users), potentially indicating an expansion of medication-assisted treatment programs. In contrast,

treatments for morphine and codeine remained consistently minimal, rarely exceeding 20 individuals per half-year. Analgesic-related users, such as tramadol, and similar pharmaceutical opioids, were sporadic and often underreported, appearing primarily in 2019 and again in 2023–2024, which may suggest gaps in detection, reporting practices, or the categorization of pharmaceutical opioid misuse.

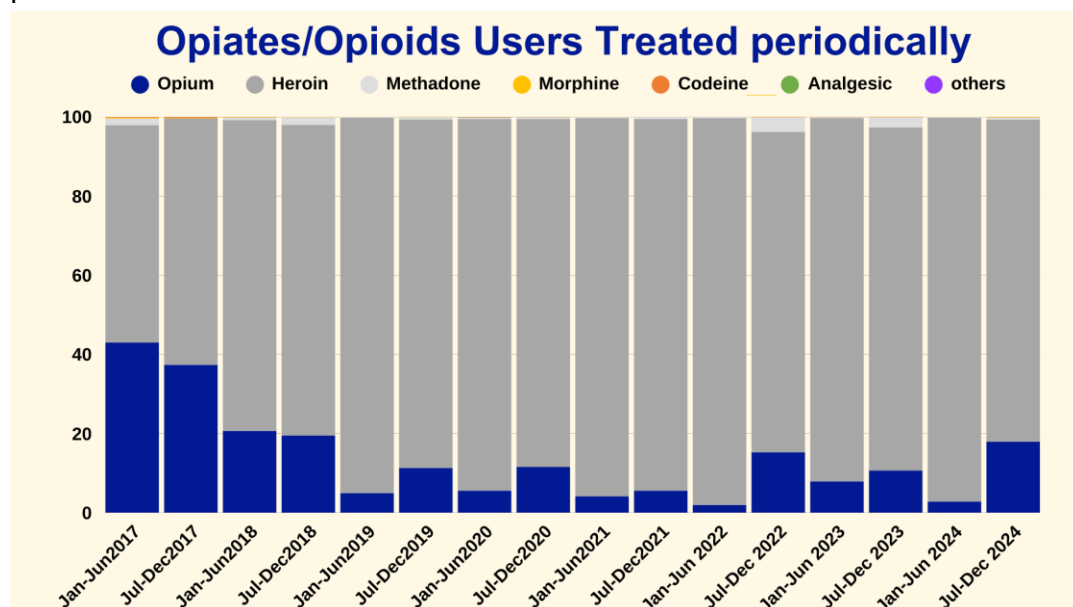


Figure 24: opiates/opioids users are treated periodically by drug types

The observed fluctuations in treatment trends highlight that opiate and opioid treatment services are susceptible to external factors, including policy shifts, resource allocation, and public health emergencies. The resurgence in treatment demand in 2021 and the first half of 2024 underscores the critical importance of sustained investment in treatment infrastructure, community outreach, and regional cooperation to address the ongoing opioid crisis.

These patterns emphasize the persistent dominance of heroin in the region's opioid landscape, alongside emerging attention to methadone therapy. The data strongly suggest a pressing need for expanded and diversified treatment services, particularly to address pharmaceutical opioid misuse and to strengthen opioid substitution therapy programs in high-burden countries.

Effective mitigation of the drug situation in ASEAN necessitates continued and enhanced efforts from governments, regional bodies, and international organizations. Collaborative strategies are crucial to address the root causes of drug use, provide

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comprehensive treatment and support, and implement robust law enforcement strategies to reduce the prevalence and impact of drugs in the region.

In 2024, ASEAN Member States reported substantial seizures of opiates and opioids, totaling approximately 11,473 kilograms. This figure encompasses both raw and processed substances, indicating a diverse and persistent presence of these illicit drugs in the region's markets.

Heroin constituted the most significant proportion of these seizures, accounting for 6,093.6 kilograms, or over 53% of the total seizures volume. This aligns with regional treatment data, which consistently identify heroin as the most commonly abused opioid, underscoring its central role in both consumption and trafficking networks.

Raw opium was the second most seized substance, with 1,874.1 kilograms intercepted, followed unexpectedly by codeine at 3,244.7 kilograms. This not only points to the continued cultivation and trafficking of traditional opiates but also highlights an emerging trend in pharmaceutical opioid diversion. Additionally, prepared opium accounted for 245.8 kilograms, potentially reflecting downstream processing activities within the region.

Seizures of synthetic and semi-synthetic opioids, such as methadone (0.36 kilograms) and morphine (0.63 kilograms), were minimal. Yet, their presence warrants continued monitoring due to their legitimate medical uses and potential for diversion. Similarly, a small but notable amount of analgesic opioids (13.7 kilograms) was seized, suggesting a degree of misuse or trafficking involving non-traditional pain management drugs.

These seizure data underscore the enduring dominance of heroin and traditional opiates while simultaneously signaling increasing complexity with the inclusion of pharmaceutical opioids in regional seizure profiles. These findings emphasize the urgent need for comprehensive drug monitoring systems, strengthened precursor and pharmaceutical control, and enhanced regional cooperation to curb trafficking and misuse.

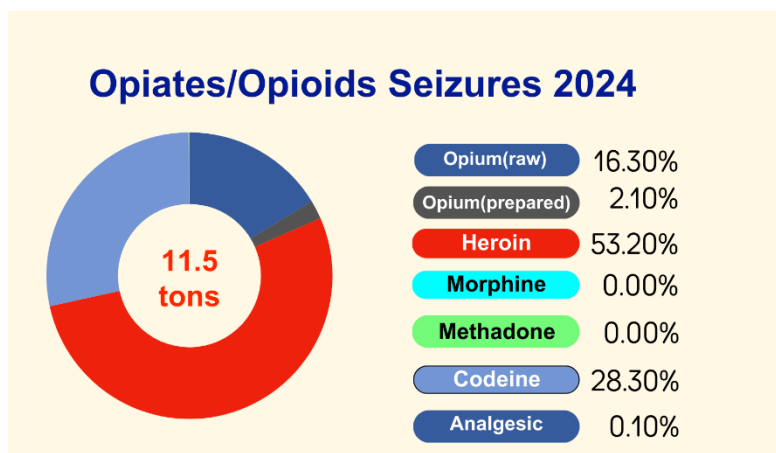


Figure 25: opiates/opioids seizures in 2024

Data from 2017 to 2024 reveal fluctuating trends in opiate/opioid-related arrests and seizure volumes across ASEAN Member States, offering insights into enforcement intensity and trafficking dynamics.

The number of cases and offenders peaked in early 2019, with 16,625 cases and 21,212 offenders recorded from January to June, potentially reflecting intensified law enforcement operations or a surge in trafficking activity. A subsequent decline was observed in 2020 and 2021, likely influenced by COVID-19 restrictions, with cases dropping to 12,873 (January–June 2020) and 11,635 (January–June 2021). Arrests rebounded slightly in 2022–2023, stabilizing at approximately 13,000–14,000 cases per half-year. In 2024, the second half saw 13,006 cases and 16,207 offenders, maintaining the enforcement trend observed since 2021.

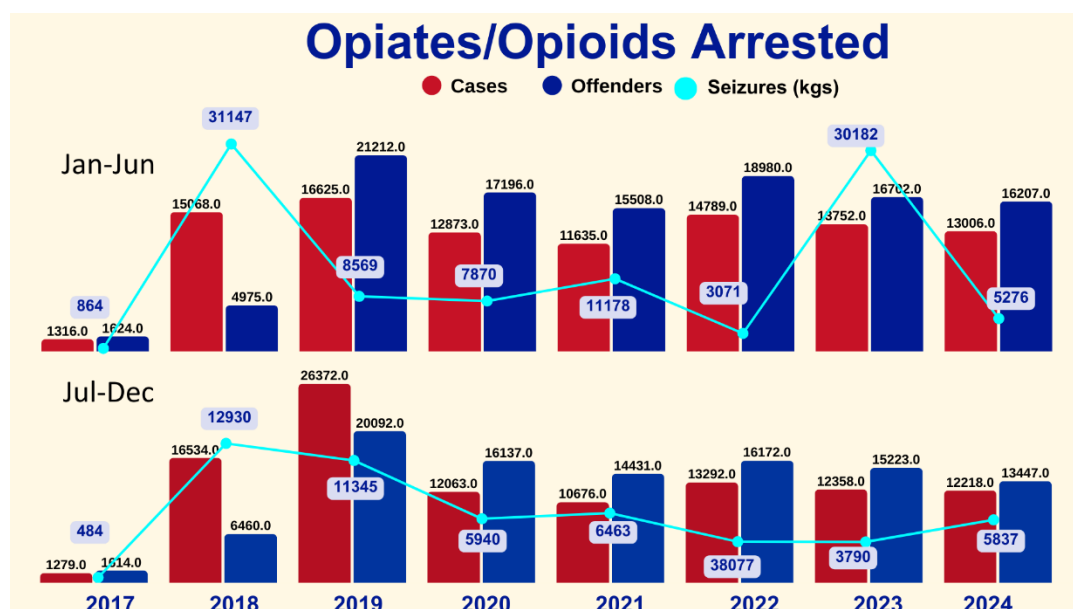


Figure 26: opiates/opioids arrested periodically

The total quantity of opiates/opioids seized reached its highest point in early 2018, with 31,147 kilograms interdicted, likely due to a large-scale operation. After 2018, seizure volumes became more variable, with another significant spike in late 2023 (30,182 kilograms) followed by a considerable decline to 5,276 kilograms in late 2024. Low seizure volumes between 2020 and 2022, notably 3,072 kilograms in late 2022, could suggest improved trafficking concealment or shifts in illicit drug routes.

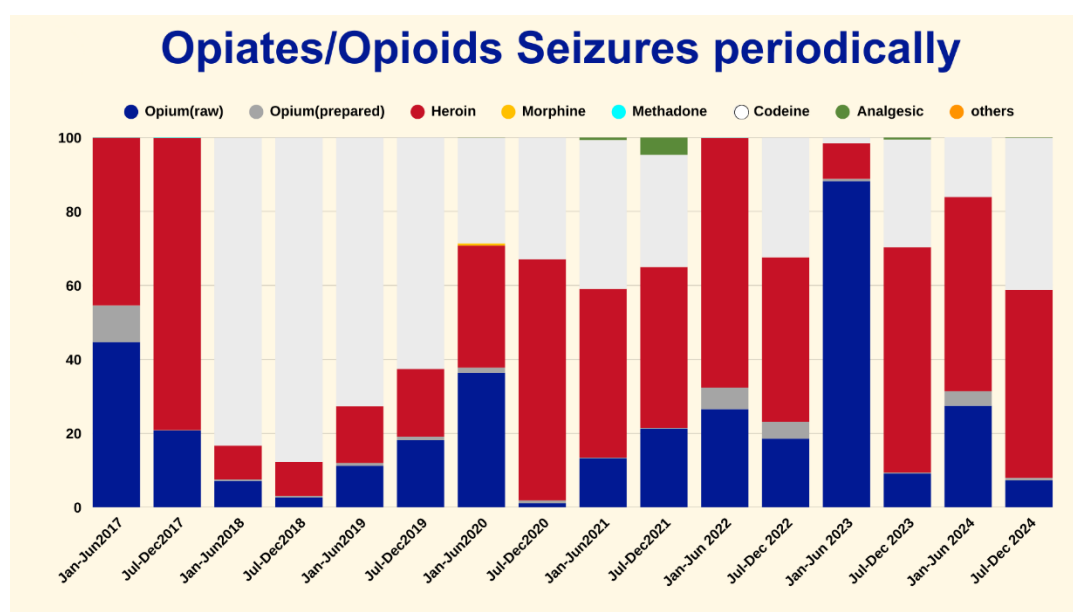


Figure 27: opiates/opioids seizures periodically by drug types

The number of offenders generally exceeds the number of cases, indicating that these are often multi-defendant cases or involve widespread operations. Periods with high seizure volumes usually coincide with increased arrest numbers, indicating coordinated interdiction and apprehension efforts. The resurgence in heroin and codeine seizures in 2023–2024 correlates with sustained enforcement actions across the region.

A closer examination of data from 2017 to 2019 highlights significant shifts in the volume and types of opiates and opioids seized. The total quantity of opiates/opioids seized surged dramatically in January–June 2018 to 31,147 kilograms, thirty-sixfold increase from 864 kilograms in January–June 2017. A second peak occurred from July to December 2018,

with 12,931 kilograms seized, predominantly driven by substantial codeine interceptions. By January–June 2019, the seizure volume had decreased to 8,570 kilograms, indicating fluctuations in enforcement success or changes in trafficking patterns.

Heroin seizures consistently remained high, exceeding 1,000 kilograms from 2018 onwards and peaking at 2,826 kilograms in early 2018. Raw opium seizures varied widely, with major hauls in 2018 (2,258 kilograms) compared to 386 kilograms in early 2017 and 344 kilograms in late 2018. Notably, codeine, a prescription opioid, was primarily responsible for the 2018 spike, with seizures exceeding 25,921 kilograms in early 2018 and 11,342 kilograms in late 2018. This points to widespread diversion or illicit trafficking of pharmaceutical opioids. Other opioids, such as methadone, morphine, and analgesics, were seized in minimal quantities (often less than 5 kilograms), indicating limited but persistent risks of diversion.

The data collectively indicate a dynamic and evolving opioid landscape in ASEAN. While heroin and opium remain dominant, the significant emergence of codeine as a primary seized substance underscores the growing challenge of pharmaceutical opioid trafficking. These trends underscore the urgent need for sustained regional cooperation, real-time data sharing, and enhanced controls over pharmaceutical supply chains.

The cyclical patterns observed in opioid enforcement, with periodic surges in arrests and seizures, often driven by intelligence-led operations or shifts in trafficking behavior, emphasize the importance of sustained enforcement efforts. However, the data also highlight the necessity of integrating interdiction strategies with robust public health interventions, particularly in periods of high impact, such as 2018, 2019, and 2023. Addressing this multifaceted challenge requires a comprehensive approach that combines robust law enforcement with preventative measures and accessible treatment services.

This comprehensive overview of the opioid situation in ASEAN, drawing on data from 2017 to 2024, reveals a complex and evolving landscape of prevalence, treatment trends, and seizure activities.

In 2024, the region reported a substantial presence of opiates and opioids, with heroin dominating both user statistics (112,189 users, 95.7% of total opioid users) and seizure volumes (6,093.6 kilograms, over 53% of total opioid seizures). Opium remains significant (4,785 users, 1,874.1 kilograms seized), while the substantial seizure of codeine (3,244.7 kilograms) signals an emerging trend in pharmaceutical opioid diversion. Methadone, morphine, and other analgesics show a more minor but notable presence, indicating potential for misuse. The high prevalence of heroin and opium poses significant public health challenges, including overdose fatalities and a burden on healthcare systems.

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The number of individuals treated for opioid use in ASEAN Member States exhibited significant fluctuations. Starting relatively low in 2017 (5,950 users), treatment numbers surged dramatically to a peak of over 106,000 in 2021 and over 96,000 in the first half of 2024. These peaks were punctuated by declines, notably in 2020 (likely due to COVID-19 disruptions) and 2022. Heroin consistently accounted for the vast majority of treatment cases (often over 90%), while methadone treatment showed intermittent increases, suggesting an expanding role for medication-assisted therapy.

Opioid-related arrests and seizures demonstrated dynamic patterns. Arrests peaked in early 2019 (16,625 cases, 21,212 offenders), followed by a decline during 2020–2021, and a rebound in 2022–2023. Total seizure volumes were highest in early 2018 (31,147 kilograms), driven by substantial heroin and particularly codeine interdictions (over 25,921 kilograms in early 2018). While heroin seizures remained consistently high, the surge in codeine seizures highlights a growing problem of pharmaceutical opioid trafficking—periods of high seizures generally correlated with increased arrests, indicating coordinated enforcement efforts.

The data collectively underscore a complex and evolving opioid landscape in ASEAN. The continued dominance of heroin and opium, coupled with the emerging threat of pharmaceutical opioid diversion (especially codeine), necessitates a multifaceted approach. Key policy recommendations include:

- **Sustained Investment in Treatment Infrastructure:** To address treatment demands and ensure accessibility for all opioid users.
- **Enhanced Monitoring and Control of Pharmaceutical opioids:** To curb diversion and illicit trafficking of prescription drugs like codeine.
- **Strengthened Regional Cooperation and Data Sharing:** To facilitate coordinated law enforcement efforts, disrupt trafficking networks, and share best practices in treatment and prevention.
- **Comprehensive Public Health Strategies:** To complement interdiction efforts by addressing the root causes of drug use, providing harm reduction services, and expanding access to diversified treatment options, including opioid substitution therapy.

These findings highlight the urgent need for integrated and adaptive strategies to mitigate the profound public health and security challenges posed by opioid use and trafficking in the region.

4. CANNABIS

Cannabis, a plant with a documented history spanning millennia, has been integrated into diverse cultures for medicinal, recreational, and industrial purposes. Dynamic shifts have profoundly influenced its global trajectory in legal frameworks, medical understanding, and societal perceptions. The antiquity of Cannabis use is well-established, with evidence tracing its presence to ancient civilizations. Approximately 4,700 years ago, around 2700 BCE, Cannabis was utilized medicinally in ancient China. Concurrently, in India, its religious and therapeutic properties were revered, finding mention in the Vedas, sacred Hindu texts (Li, 1973). Classical civilizations such as the ancient Greeks and Romans also acknowledged its medicinal efficacy, employing it to alleviate pain and inflammation (Russo, 2007).

In Southeast Asia, the introduction of Cannabis, specifically *Cannabis indica*, is estimated to have occurred around the sixteenth century (Martin & Gagneux, 2016). This introduction fostered a rich integration into local practices, evidenced by the adoption of its Sanskrit-derived vernacular name, "ganja." Initially, Cannabis was highly valued for its medicinal attributes, addressing various ailments and serving as a culinary ingredient. Historically, traditional applications in the region included treating conditions such as cholera, malaria, and asthma (Martin & Gagneux, 2016). Ancient pharmacopoeias, including Ayurvedic and Chinese texts, corroborate its medicinal use over millennia (Pisanti & Bifulco, 2019). Beyond its medicinal role, Cannabis held cultural significance, facilitating social interactions, offering respite during laborious tasks, and demonstrating versatility in applications such as textiles and as a food source (Historical Evolution of Cannabis sativa Transmogrifying Utilizations, 2023; Martin & Gagneux, 2016). Despite its deep historical roots, the perception of Cannabis underwent significant transformations, particularly during the colonial era, which introduced stigmatization and regulatory measures that continue to influence contemporary attitudes.

Presently, Cannabis is recognized as one of the most widely consumed psychoactive substances globally. Usage patterns exhibit considerable variability across geographical regions and demographic cohorts. The psychoactive effects of Cannabis are primarily attributable to tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). In 2018, an estimated 192 million individuals worldwide reported Cannabis use (UNODC, 2020).

The medical utility of Cannabis has garnered increasing acceptance, particularly in jurisdictions that have enacted legalization. Medical Cannabis is employed in the management of a spectrum of conditions, including chronic pain, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, and chemotherapy-induced nausea (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017). The therapeutic benefits are primarily ascribed to cannabinoids, notably THC and cannabidiol (CBD). Research indicates Cannabis's efficacy in reducing chronic pain, particularly neuropathic pain, which often proves refractory to conventional treatments

(Whiting et al., 2015). CBD, a non-psychoactive cannabinoid, has demonstrated efficacy in reducing the frequency of seizures in specific epilepsy syndromes such as Dravet syndrome and Lennox-Gastaut syndrome (Devinsky et al., 2017). Furthermore, Cannabis-based medicines have been shown to alleviate symptoms of muscle spasticity and pain in individuals with multiple sclerosis (Koppel et al., 2014) and to mitigate nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy, thereby enhancing patients' quality of life (Abrams & Guzman, 2015).

Beyond its medical and recreational applications, hemp, a Cannabis variety characterized by low THC content, is a valuable industrial commodity. It is utilized in the production of textiles, paper, biodegradable plastics, and construction materials. The industrial cultivation and use of hemp are legally sanctioned in numerous countries, lauded for its environmental advantages, including rapid growth and reduced reliance on pesticides.

While Cannabis offers potential therapeutic benefits, its use is not without risks, particularly in instances of long-term and heavy consumption. Regular Cannabis use, especially initiated during adolescence, has been linked to potential impairments in cognitive development and functioning (Volkow et al., 2014). Heavy Cannabis use is also associated with an elevated risk of mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and psychosis, particularly in individuals with pre-existing vulnerabilities (Hall & Degenhardt, 2009). Although lower compared to substances like alcohol and opioids, Cannabis use can lead to dependency and withdrawal symptoms in some users (Budney et al., 2008).

The legal status of Cannabis varies considerably across the globe, reflecting diverse cultural, political, and social perspectives. A growing number of countries and states have opted to legalize Cannabis for both medical and recreational purposes. For instance, Canada legalized recreational Cannabis in 2018, a trend mirrored by several U.S. states. These policy shifts often signify a reorientation towards viewing Cannabis use as a public health concern rather than solely a criminal matter. Conversely, many nations maintain stringent prohibitions on Cannabis, often imposing severe penalties, a common approach in regions with strict drug policies such as Southeast Asia and the Middle East. The legalization of Cannabis introduces complex regulatory challenges, necessitating robust frameworks to ensure product safety, prevent underage access, and manage potential public health ramifications. Effective regulation is paramount to optimizing the benefits and mitigating the harms associated with Cannabis use (Caulkins et al., 2015).

In Thailand, Cannabis has a centuries-long history of integration into traditional Thai medicine, where historical records document its use for ailments such as pain, insomnia, and digestive issues. However, the Narcotic Act B.E. 2522 (1979) classified Cannabis as a Category 5 narcotic, leading to strict prohibition and severe penalties. A significant policy shift began in the late 2010s, driven by an increasing recognition of Cannabis's medical benefits and economic potential. In December 2018, Thailand made a landmark decision by legalizing

medical Cannabis, becoming the first ASEAN nation to do so (The Nation Thailand, 2018). This involved amendments to the Narcotic Act, permitting Cannabis use for medical and research purposes. The legalization process necessitated the establishment of a comprehensive regulatory framework to ensure controlled cultivation, production, and distribution of Cannabis. Licensed hospitals, clinics, and research institutions were authorized to prescribe and dispense Cannabis products, and farmers were permitted to form cooperatives for cultivation under strict regulations (Bangkok Post, 2019). A further step was taken in June 2022, when Thailand decriminalized Cannabis, removing it from the Category 5 narcotics list. This policy aimed to stimulate the medical Cannabis industry and promote its use for health and wellness. However, the regulatory framework continues to evolve to address public health concerns and mitigate misuse (Reuters, 2022).

The legalization of Cannabis has opened up substantial economic opportunities for Thailand. The nation aims to position itself as a regional hub for medical Cannabis, attracting investment and bolstering its agricultural sector. Government projections estimate the Cannabis market could generate up to \$661 million annually by 2024 (Asia Times, 2020). This has stimulated the growth of Cannabis-related businesses, encompassing cultivation, processing, and retail. Furthermore, the tourism sector is poised to benefit, with the potential to attract medical tourists seeking Cannabis-based treatments and wellness products, thereby enhancing Thailand's reputation as a premier destination for health and wellness tourism.

Cannabis legalization has instigated considerable changes in societal attitudes and cultural practices within Thailand. There is a discernible increase in the acceptance of Cannabis for medical and wellness applications, although recreational use remains a subject of ongoing debate. Public health guidelines emphasize responsible use and the critical importance of preventing Cannabis use among minors and vulnerable populations. This legalization movement has also revitalized interest in traditional Thai medicine, where Cannabis has historically played an integral role, aligning with global trends towards holistic and alternative healthcare approaches.

Analysis of the ADMN data on Cannabis use and treatment provides critical insights into evolving consumption patterns and associated public health responses between 2017 and 2024. This period is marked by significant fluctuations, influenced by a confluence of policy changes, global health crises, and shifting societal attitudes towards Cannabis.

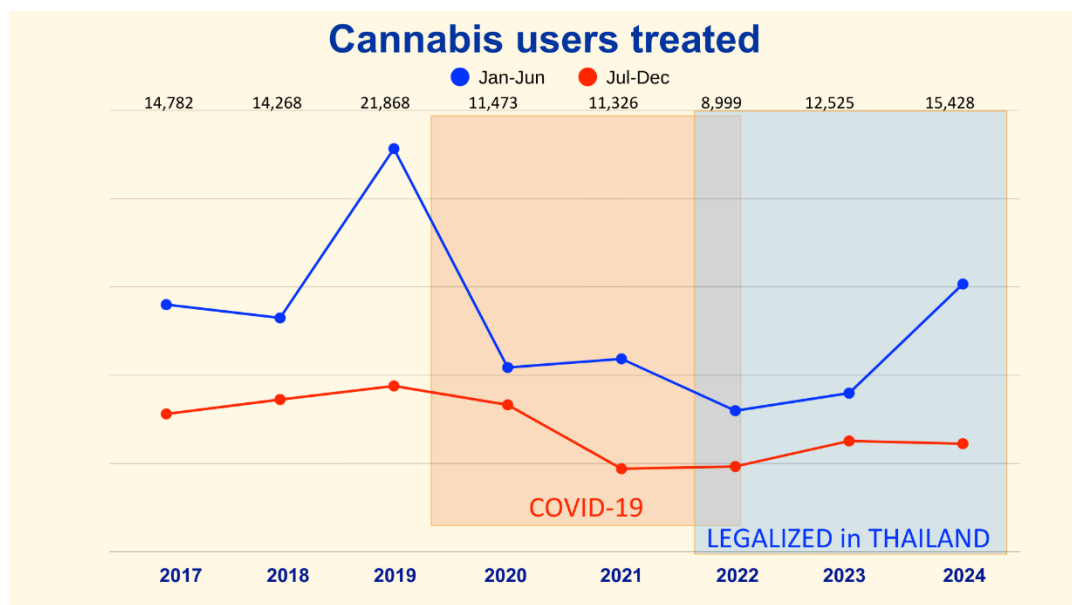


Figure 28: Cannabis users treated in 2017-2024

Figure 28 illustrates the temporal dynamics of Cannabis use over seven years, segmented into two half-year periods (January to June and July to December), alongside annual totals. A notable observation from this data is the peak in Cannabis usage recorded in 2019. This heightened usage could potentially be attributed to increasing social acceptance or enhanced availability of Cannabis during that specific period.

Conversely, a sharp decline in Cannabis use was observed in 2020 and 2021. This reduction is likely correlated with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which imposed widespread lockdowns and significantly curtailed social interactions, thereby impacting various drug usage patterns. By 2023, the data indicate a slight increase in Cannabis consumption, suggesting a potential "rebound effect" as pandemic-related restrictions eased and social activities resumed.

Beyond these immediate correlations, several broader factors can influence such trends. These include changes in drug policies and legal frameworks, variations in law enforcement intensity, and the impact of public health awareness campaigns and interventions. Furthermore, socioeconomic factors such as economic downturns, unemployment rates, and broader social stressors can either amplify or diminish drug use, depending on the specific context and the availability of support systems. Finally, evolving societal attitudes towards Cannabis, driven by global trends and media representation, play a crucial role in shaping consumption patterns.

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The data on Cannabis users receiving treatment annually from 2017 to 2024 offer a clear view of shifts in demand for care, which are intricately linked to evolving policy frameworks, public health priorities, and the social perception of Cannabis use.

Treatment admissions for Cannabis-related disorders peaked in 2019, with 21,868 individuals receiving care. This surge occurred immediately before widespread debates and reform efforts concerning Cannabis legalization in parts of the ASEAN region. A subsequent significant decline was observed in 2020 and 2021, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic. Treatment numbers dropped to 11,473 in 2020 and remained relatively low at 11,326 in 2021, likely due to reduced access to healthcare services and a shift in overall healthcare priorities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2022, the number of treatment figures reached a low point, with 8,999 users. Cannabis decriminalization efforts might have influenced this particular decline in some countries, notably Thailand, where policy changes in enforcement and referral mechanisms could have affected the uptake of treatment services. However, from 2023 onward, a notable rebound in treatment demand was observed, reaching 12,525 users in 2023 and rising further to 15,428 users in 2024, marking the highest figures since 2019. This rebound suggests a potential realignment of public health strategies, increased awareness, or improvements in data reporting mechanisms following policy changes.

The biannual treatment data for Cannabis users across ASEAN Member States from 2017 to 2024 corroborate these trends, revealing distinct fluctuations. The peak in treated users in 2019 (over 14,000 in January–June and over 6,000 in July–December) aligns with a period of intensified national attention on Cannabis before regional liberalization efforts. The sharp decline in 2020 coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, causing disruptions to treatment access. While treatment numbers showed moderate recovery in 2021, they dropped again in 2022, potentially linked to regulatory changes, particularly Thailand's mid-year decriminalization. By 2024, treatment figures surged again, reaching 9,706 in the first half, the highest since 2019, indicating a renewed public health focus or increased detection in the post-policy liberalization environment.

These data underscore that Cannabis treatment trends are highly responsive to both policy shifts and external disruptions. The initial increase in treatment demand (2017–2019) suggests heightened enforcement or growing public concern regarding Cannabis use. The subsequent decline is consistent with pandemic-related limitations and, later, policy liberalization. The recent rebound implies a growing emphasis on harm reduction, mental health support, and early intervention, even within increasingly permissive legal frameworks.

The annual and biannual treatment trends for Cannabis use in ASEAN reflect a dynamic interplay between legal policy, healthcare system capacity, and evolving social norms. As more countries in the region contemplate and implement regulatory reforms

concerning Cannabis, it is imperative to maintain robust treatment and monitoring systems to ensure a balanced approach that addresses both public health considerations and evolving legislative contexts.

Analysis of Cannabis seizure data from ASEAN Member States between 2017 and 2024 provides a comprehensive overview of the region's illicit Cannabis market, revealing ongoing cultivation, trafficking, and evolving product diversification despite shifting legal frameworks. This period is characterized by dynamic enforcement patterns, influenced by both persistent illicit activity and the impact of regulatory changes across the region.

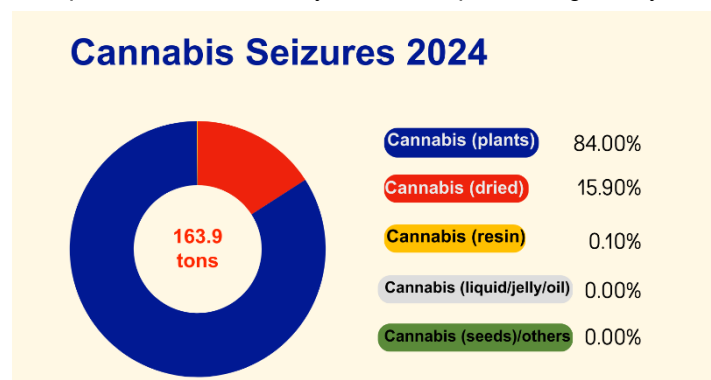


Figure 29:
Cannabis seizures 2024

In 2024, ASEAN Member States collectively reported the seizure of approximately 163,936 kilograms of Cannabis in various forms. This substantial volume underscores the region's continued involvement in the cultivation, trafficking, and processing of illicit Cannabis products. A significant proportion of these seizures, over 137,703 kilograms (more than 84% of the total), comprised Cannabis plants. This high volume strongly suggests the continued presence of large-scale outdoor or indoor cultivation operations within the region. Dried Cannabis, commonly associated with direct use or regional trafficking, accounted for 26,011 kilograms, confirming its prominence in the illicit market.

While less common in ASEAN markets, Cannabis resin (e.g., hashish) was also intercepted, totaling 204.86 kilograms, indicating a diversification in Cannabis product types. Extracts and derivatives (e.g., oil, jelly, or liquid THC), though a relatively small quantity at 17.13 kilograms, are indicative of emerging processing capabilities and consumer trends, potentially influenced by legalization or commercialization in some jurisdictions. Finally, Cannabis seeds and other parts contributed minimally (0.55 kilograms), yet their inclusion reflects improved reporting precision and regulatory attention to precursor materials.

Despite partial legalization or decriminalization in certain ASEAN countries, the 2024 seizure data demonstrates a substantial volume of illicit Cannabis activity, particularly related to cultivation and trafficking. The high volume of plant seizures suggests a continued need for agricultural monitoring. At the same time, the emergence of processed and extracted forms indicates the rise of more sophisticated production and market dynamics. This underscores

the coexistence of traditional cultivation and modern processing within illicit Cannabis markets in Southeast Asia.

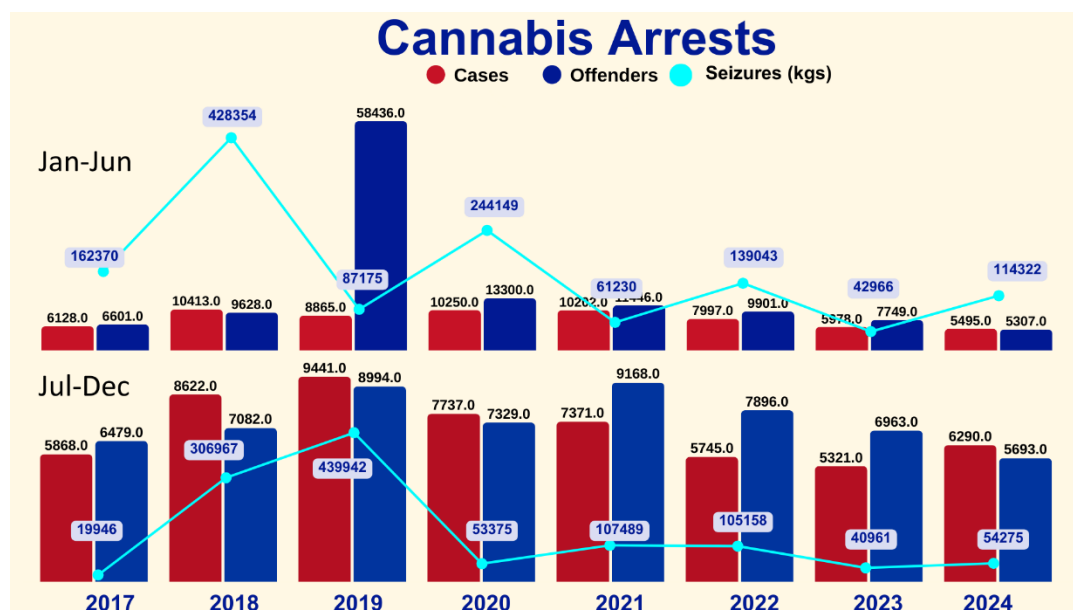


Figure 30: Cannabis arrested periodically

The dataset on biannual trends in Cannabis-related law enforcement activity covers three key indicators: cases, offenders, and seizure volumes (in kilograms). The period from 2017 to 2024 reveals dynamic enforcement patterns that reflect both the continued illicit Cannabis market and the impact of regulatory changes.

The number of cases and offenders peaked in early 2019, with 8,865 cases and an unprecedented 58,436 offenders. This spike may indicate intensified suppression efforts or changes in classification and reporting before decriminalization initiatives. From 2020 to 2022, the number of arrests declined gradually, with cases dropping to 7,997 in early 2022 and to 5,495 by the end of 2024. Concurrently, the number of offenders fell from over 13,000 in early 2020 to 5,307 in late 2024, suggesting possible shifts in enforcement priorities or the influence of partial legalization. Despite declining arrests, enforcement remained consistent, with over 5,000 Cannabis-related cases still reported per half-year even in 2024.

Seizure volumes fluctuated significantly, with a prominent peak in early 2018 of 428 metric tons, reflecting likely large-scale interdictions. Other periods of high seizures include early 2020 (~244 metric tons) and early 2024 (114 metric tons). The lowest volume was observed in late 2023, with 43 metric tons, potentially reflecting seasonal trends or more targeted enforcement strategies. It is notable that large spikes in seizures, such as in 2020 and 2024, did not always correspond with increases in arrests. This suggests effective interdiction at the supply level, such as dismantling large grow sites or intercepting significant

shipments. Conversely, the dramatic drop in offender counts post-2019, particularly from 2022 to 2024, aligns with liberalization measures (e.g., Thailand's 2022 Cannabis policy shift) and may reflect a realignment of legal frameworks and police discretion.

The seizure data from 2017 to 2019 highlight the evolving dynamics of illicit Cannabis cultivation and trafficking in the ASEAN region during that period. This timeframe saw wide fluctuations in the total quantities and types of Cannabis products intercepted, revealing both enforcement priorities and underlying production trends.

Peak activity occurred in early 2018, with seizures reaching a record 428 metric tons, primarily attributed to massive interdictions of Cannabis plants (403 metric tons). Another significant spike followed in late 2018, totaling 307 metric tons in seized Cannabis products. In contrast, total seizures dropped significantly to 87 metric tons in early 2019, marking the apparent conclusion of this intensive enforcement cycle.

During this period, Cannabis plants consistently constituted the bulk of seized material, particularly in the first half of 2018 and 2017, suggesting the active dismantling of large-scale cultivation sites. Dried Cannabis, the primary form for consumption, remained relatively stable (approximately 18–26 metric tons per half-year), indicating ongoing trafficking and retail distribution. Cannabis resin appeared in small but increasing volumes, notably in early 2019 (326 kilograms), hinting at either importation from outside ASEAN or nascent local processing activities. Cannabis extracts and seeds were rarely intercepted, with only minor traces detected in 2018 and 2019, likely reflecting the emergence of commercial formulations or seed trafficking for cultivation purposes.

The 2017–2018 period likely reflects a phase of intensive eradication campaigns and cross-border suppression, particularly targeting cultivation hubs. The sharp drop in 2019 suggests either a temporary disruption in large-scale supply chains or a strategic shift in enforcement focus.

The collective Cannabis arrest and seizure data from 2017–2024 suggest that while formal enforcement actions (arrests) have, in some instances, declined, the overall scale of Cannabis-related trafficking and production in the region remains significant. This indicates a shift in regional law enforcement strategies from high-volume arrests to more targeted seizures.

As Cannabis policy continues to evolve across ASEAN, governments must strengthen efforts to differentiate between legal, medical, and illicit flows. Enhancing cross-border cooperation and regulatory oversight of new Cannabis products is crucial for effective management. Continued regional cooperation is also necessary to monitor changing cultivation patterns and to effectively intercept higher-value Cannabis derivatives. These

measures are essential for striking a balance between regulatory reform and sustained vigilance against illicit production and transnational trafficking networks.

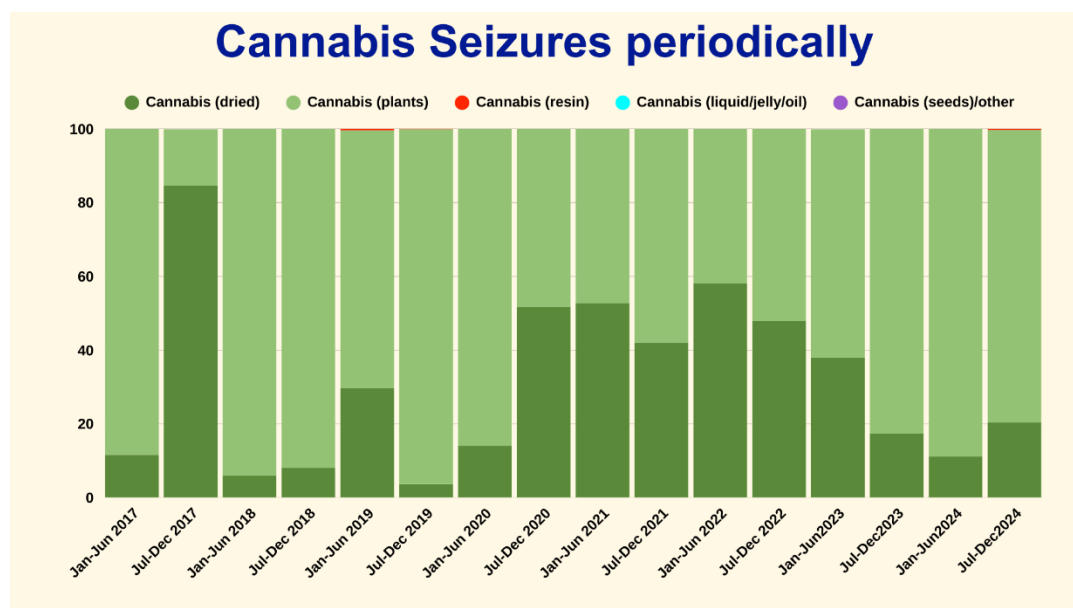


Figure 31: Cannabis seizures periodically by product types

Between 2017 and 2024, the landscape of Cannabis use, cultivation, enforcement, and regulation across the ASEAN region underwent significant transformations. This period was characterized by substantial shifts driven by evolving national policies, changes in enforcement strategies, and dynamic sociocultural influences. Key trends include fluctuating demand for Cannabis treatment services, prominent high-volume seizures of illicit Cannabis products, and a marked decline in Cannabis-related arrests.

The number of Cannabis users receiving treatment services peaked in 2019, with 21,868 individuals undergoing care. This surge suggests a period of heightened concern or increased access to treatment services before significant policy reforms. A subsequent sharp decline was observed from 2020 to 2022, attributable primarily to the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on health service accessibility. During this time, healthcare priorities shifted, and disruptions to routine services likely limited individuals' ability to seek or receive care. Additionally, evolving enforcement and legal priorities in some member states may have influenced referral patterns. However, a notable rebound in treatment admissions occurred in 2024, with 15,428 individuals being treated. This resurgence suggests a renewed interest in service uptake, reflecting increased public health awareness, improved data reporting mechanisms, or a rise in referrals following post-policy reform adjustments.

Cannabis seizures across the ASEAN region demonstrated significant fluctuations throughout this period. Seizure volumes were highest in 2018, exceeding 428 metric tons,

primarily resulting from large-scale eradication efforts targeting Cannabis plants. While total seizures temporarily dropped to 87 metric tons in 2019, they surged again to 164 metric tons in 2024. Notably, in 2024, Cannabis plants alone accounted for over 84% of the total volume seized, indicating the persistent prevalence of cultivation sites and suggesting that illicit supply chains remain resilient despite ongoing enforcement efforts. This trend underscores the persistent presence of large-scale outdoor and indoor cultivation operations within the region.

In contrast to seizure volumes, Cannabis-related arrests followed a distinct and often inverse trend. In early 2019, over 58,000 offenders were recorded, marking a period of intensified enforcement or potentially broader interpretations of Cannabis-related offenses. However, by late 2024, that figure had fallen dramatically to just over 5,300. Concurrently, the number of Cannabis-related cases also declined steadily, from over 10,000 per half-year in 2018–2020 to just 5,495 in the second half of 2024. This substantial drop in arrests and cases may reflect several factors, including shifts in law enforcement priorities, the implementation of decriminalization initiatives (e.g., in Thailand in 2022), or increased prosecutorial discretion under evolving legal norms regarding Cannabis. The data suggests a strategic pivot by law enforcement, potentially focusing on larger interdictions of supply rather than criminalizing individual users.

While raw materials, specifically Cannabis plants and dried Cannabis, consistently dominated seizure volumes, recent years have witnessed the emergence of processed and derivative forms. These include Cannabis resin (e.g., hashish), extracts (e.g., oil, jelly, or liquid THC), and seeds. Although these forms remained relatively low in absolute volume (e.g., resin at approximately 325 kilograms in 2019; extracts at around 17 kilograms in 2024), their increasing appearance in seizure data points to a broadening illicit market and the potential entry of higher-value Cannabis products into illegal trade. This signals a growing sophistication in production and consumer trends, likely influenced by the commercialization and legalization trends seen in other jurisdictions.

The Cannabis situation in ASEAN reflects a complex and mixed trajectory, characterized by persistent illicit activity even amidst regional moves toward legalization or decriminalization. Enforcement efforts appear to be increasingly focused on disrupting large-scale cultivation and supply chains rather than primarily criminalizing individual users. Simultaneously, public health systems are adapting to new patterns of Cannabis use, including the challenges and opportunities presented by evolving legal frameworks.

As the Cannabis situation in ASEAN continues its transition from a predominant focus on criminal suppression to a more health-oriented and regulated approach, particularly in the wake of decriminalization trends, ASEAN Member States must adopt a coordinated, evidence-based strategy. This approach must effectively balance public health objectives, robust regulatory oversight, and continued cross-border enforcement efforts to address the

ongoing presence of Cannabis in both legal and illicit forms. The region's response will necessitate integrated strategies that combine regulatory control, scaling up of treatment services, and intelligence-led policing to manage this evolving landscape effectively.

5. NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES (NPS)

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) are compounds of abuse, available in pure or prepared forms, that are not regulated by the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs or the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, yet pose a substantial public health threat. These substances are frequently marketed as legal alternatives to controlled drugs and are found in diverse forms such as powders, pills, and liquids.

The classification of NPS is primarily based on their chemical structure and pharmacological effects. Major categories encompass:

- Synthetic Cannabinoids: Often sold as "spice" or "K2," these substances mimic the effects of Δ^9 -tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the active compound in Cannabis, by interacting with cannabinoid receptors. However, their potency and unpredictable effects can be significantly greater.
- Synthetic Cathinones: Commonly known as "bath salts," these stimulants produce effects similar to amphetamines and cocaine.
- Ketamine: A dissociative anesthetic with hallucinogenic properties.
- Phenethylamines: A broad class of compounds including stimulants, hallucinogens, and entactogens.
- Piperazines: Substances with stimulant and hallucinogenic effects.
- Tryptamines: Compounds structurally related to serotonin, often producing psychedelic effects.
- Plant-Based Substances: This category includes naturally occurring psychoactive plants not traditionally controlled, such as kratom, khat, etc..

Each class interacts distinctly with the brain and body, leading to a broad spectrum of psychoactive effects.

The historical trajectory of kratom (*Mitragyna speciosa*) and other New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) in Southeast Asia illustrates a complex progression from traditional applications to contemporary recreational consumption. Kratom, initially valued for its stimulant properties in alleviating fatigue and enhancing agricultural productivity, has subsequently garnered attention in Western nations, often erroneously promoted as a safe substitute for opioids (Cinosi et al., 2015; O'Malley, 2018).

Kratom has been an integral part of Southeast Asian cultures for centuries, particularly in Thailand and Malaysia, where its use was deeply rooted in traditional medicinal practices. Historically, kratom was employed for pain alleviation and as a stimulant, serving as a vital component of local healthcare systems.

The earliest documented use of kratom for treating opium addiction dates back to 1836, underscoring its long-standing role in traditional medicine (O'Malley, 2018). In recent years, kratom has experienced a surge in popularity in Western countries. It is often marketed as a legal psychoactive substance, despite growing concerns regarding its potential for abuse (Eastlack et al., 2020; Warner et al., 2016).

The principal active alkaloids in kratom, mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine, exhibit both stimulant and sedative properties. This dual pharmacological action complicates its classification and raises significant concerns regarding its potential for dependence (Eastlack et al., 2020; Warner et al., 2016).

Despite its historical roots and traditional applications, the contemporary perception of kratom as a benign alternative to opioids is increasingly being challenged by empirical evidence demonstrating its abuse potential and associated health risks. This has prompted calls for enhanced regulation and further scientific inquiry (Eastlack et al., 2020; O'Malley, 2018).

Historically, kratom was utilized in Thailand for various purposes, including traditional medicine for pain relief, a stimulant to enhance productivity, and a remedy for opioid withdrawal symptoms. Despite its widespread conventional use, kratom was legally prohibited in Thailand in 1943 under the Kratom Act. This prohibition was primarily driven by concerns that kratom cultivation and trade could undermine the government's substantial revenue derived from the opium trade. For several decades, kratom remained an illegal substance, with its possession, sale, and use subject to legal penalties. However, enforcement of these laws was often inconsistent, and kratom continued to be consumed clandestinely, particularly in rural areas where it maintained significant cultural importance.

In a significant policy shift, Thailand officially decriminalized kratom in August 2021. The Thai Cabinet approved amendments to the Narcotic Act, effectively removing kratom from the list of controlled substances. This legislative action legalized the cultivation, sale, and use of this substance. This decision was influenced by several factors, including:

- Recognition of lower harm potential, acknowledgment of kratom's relatively lower harm potential compared to other controlled substances.
- Traditional use, respect for its long-standing conventional and cultural significance.

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- Economic benefits, the potential for economic advantages through its cultivation and export.

The prevalence of NPS use exhibits global variability, with certain regions experiencing elevated rates of consumption and the emergence of novel substances. Europe, in particular, has been identified as a substantial market for NPS. The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) reported the detection of over 900 distinct NPS in the region as of 2022. The rapid development and introduction of new substances into the market present considerable challenges for effective monitoring and the establishment of robust regulatory frameworks.

A discernible trend in NPS use is the transition from purely recreational engagement to more problematic consumption patterns. This includes the injection of synthetic cathinones and the use of synthetic cannabinoids among vulnerable populations, such as individuals experiencing homelessness and incarcerated individuals. These evolving patterns are correlated with severe health risks, encompassing acute toxicity, the development of dependence, and an elevated propensity for engaging in high-risk behaviors.

The health impact of NPS is profound and multifaceted. Acute health effects can range from mild symptoms, such as nausea and dizziness, to severe outcomes, including psychosis, seizures, and fatalities. Chronic use of specific NPS has been linked to long-term health consequences, including cognitive impairment, cardiovascular damage, and various mental health disorders.

Emergency departments and poison control centers have documented a rise in NPS-related incidents. These cases are frequently complicated by the inherent difficulty in identifying the specific substance involved, a challenge exacerbated by the continuously evolving chemical compositions of these drugs. This unpredictability complicates clinical management and elevates the risk of adverse patient outcomes.

In response to the escalating NPS phenomenon, diverse legal and policy measures have been implemented globally. Traditional drug control paradigms, which rely on the legislative listing of specific substances as controlled, have proven inadequate given the rapid emergence of new compounds. Consequently, numerous countries have adopted more flexible regulatory frameworks.

In 2024, 9,052 individuals across ASEAN Member States received treatment for the use of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), specifically ketamine and kratom. This figure highlights a growing public health concern.

Ketamine accounted for 5,925 (65%) of all NPS-related admissions, indicating its continued prevalence, particularly in urban nightlife environments. Kratom use led to 3,127

(35%) treatment cases, suggesting a shift from its traditional use to problematic consumption, especially in areas with weak or inconsistent regulation.

These statistics underscore the urgent need for targeted health services and early intervention strategies for NPS users, especially given the psychiatric and behavioral complications associated with ketamine and the evolving patterns of kratom misuse. The often under-regulated nature of these substances, compared to traditional illicit drugs, emphasizes the necessity of strengthening monitoring, outreach, and clinical training.

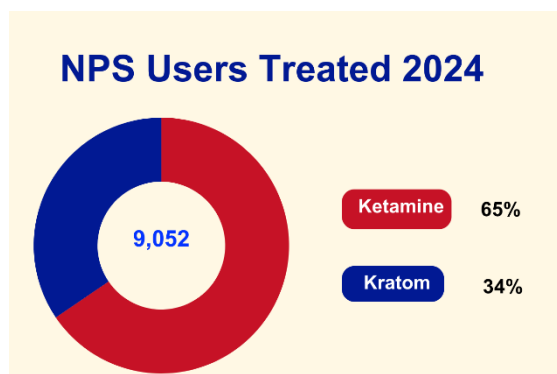


Figure 32: NPS users treated in 2024

An analysis of treatment data for NPS, including ketamine, kratom, and other emerging substances, reveals dynamic shifts in usage and treatment demand across the ASEAN region over eight years.

A significant surge in treatment demand was recorded in 2024, with the majority of users receiving treatment in the first half and fewer in the second half. This represents the highest annual figure observed during the entire reporting period. In contrast, previous annual totals were consistently lower, typically averaging between 5,000 and 6,000 cases per year. For example, 2017 saw 6,684 total cases, but numbers steadily declined until the sharp rebound in 2024.

A marked decline in treatment admissions occurred between 2019 and 2022, reaching its lowest levels in 2021 (1,687 cases from January–June; 937 from July–December). This downturn likely reflects a combination of COVID-19-related disruptions to healthcare access and lower detection and reporting, rather than an actual reduction in substance use.

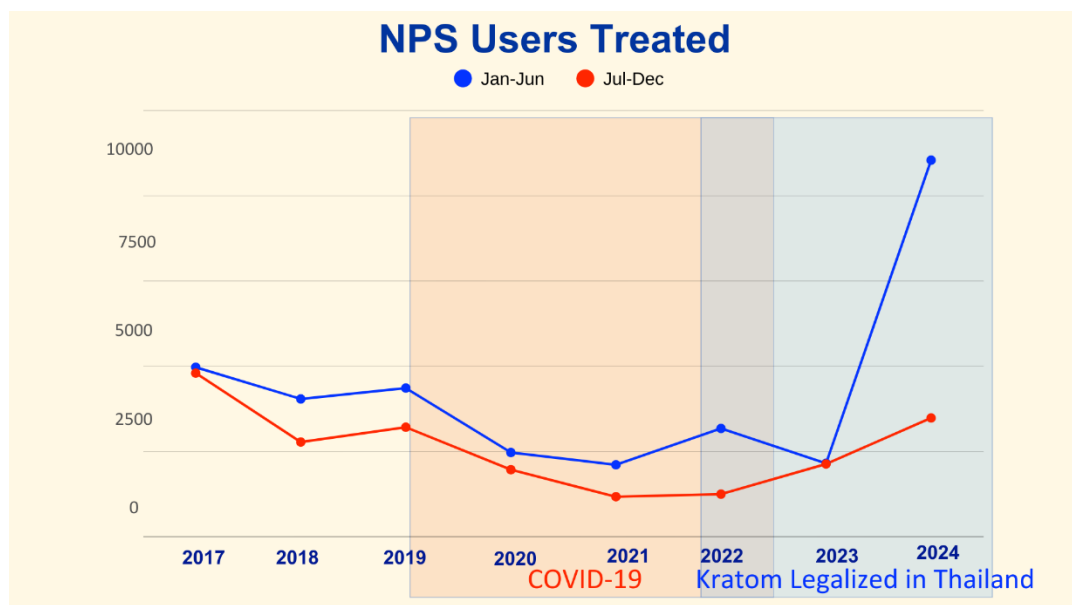


Figure 33: NPS users treated periodically

A modest recovery in 2023 was followed by a dramatic increase in 2024, particularly in the first half of the year, where cases more than tripled compared to the previous half-year. This pattern suggests either a surge in NPS use, improved service access, expanded detection efforts, or an increased public health concern over substances such as ketamine, kratom, or synthetic cannabinoids. The significant 2024 increase may also indicate latent treatment demand previously suppressed by social or structural barriers, now emerging due to improved service capacity or heightened policy attention.

The 2024 spike in NPS treatment admissions suggests several contributing factors: improved screening and referral systems, possible increased use of NPS substances among youth and urban populations, and enhanced recognition of health harms related to substances like ketamine, kratom, and synthetic cathinones. The gradual recovery from 2021 to 2023, followed by a dramatic rise in 2024, underscores a renewed public health response to the harms posed by NPS.

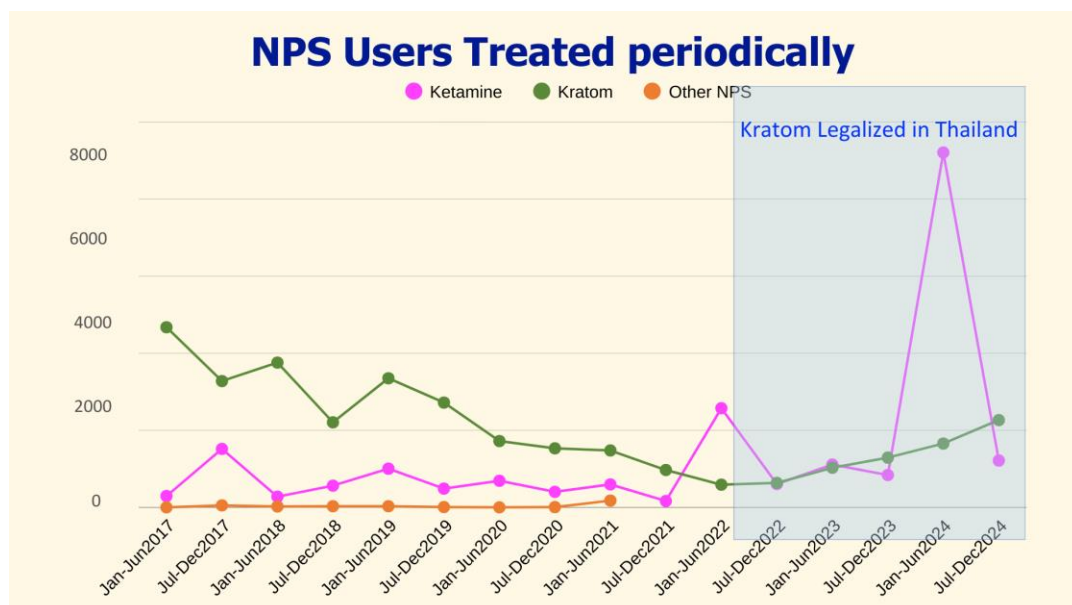


Figure 34: NPS users are treated periodically by drug types

In 2024, ASEAN Member States reported the seizure of a total of 125 metric tons of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS). This substantial volume suggests either a significant escalation in enforcement actions compared to previous years.

The distribution of seized NPS in 2024 indicates distinct patterns of prevalence. Kratom constituted the overwhelming majority of seizures, totaling 117 metric tons, approximately 93.2% of all NPS seizures. This reinforces kratom's status as the most prevalent NPS by volume, likely due to its widespread cultivation and traditional use, which often transitions into illicit trade depending on national legal frameworks.

Ketamine seizures amounted to 7,028 kilograms, representing 5.6% of the total. This figure highlights persistent concerns regarding its diversion from legitimate medical sources and its continued popularity in urban recreational settings.

Other NPS, including synthetic cannabinoids, cathinones, and designer opioids, were seized in a volume of 1,445 kilograms, accounting for 1.2%. This suggests a growing, though still relatively limited, trafficking of emerging synthetic compounds.

The dominance of kratom seizures underscores the urgent need for harmonized regulation across the region, as diverging national controls continue to facilitate cross-border smuggling. The presence of over seven metric tons of ketamine highlights both its psychoactive popularity and associated trafficking risks, particularly within nightlife and youth

markets. Although smaller in quantity, the emergence of other synthetic NPS signals a broader risk landscape, potentially necessitating real-time surveillance and upgraded laboratory capacity.

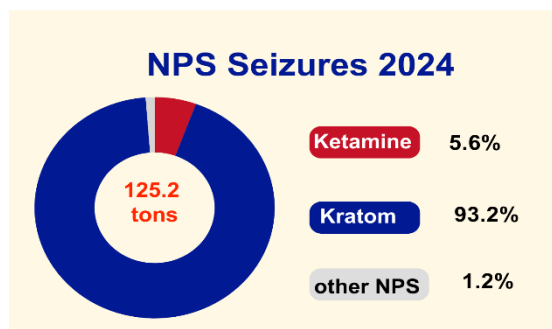


Figure 35: NPS seizures 2024

An analysis of enforcement data from 2017 to 2024 reveals fluctuating trends in NPS-related cases, offender arrests, and total seizure volumes across ASEAN Member States. These data reflect both the scale of trafficking activity and shifts in law enforcement strategy.

may

reporting constraints during the COVID-19 pandemic. The declining trend in both offender numbers and case reports from 2021 onwards suggest temporary enforcement success or decreasing seizure volumes post-2021, despite slight rises in cases and arrests in 2023–2024, highlight a possible shift in trafficking methods or synthetic drug potency (UNODC, 2023). ASEAN Member States should enhance real-time data sharing, surveillance on synthetic drug manufacturing, and cross-border precursor monitoring to address evolving NPS trafficking routes.

An examination of biannual enforcement trends, disaggregating annual data into two periods (January–June and July–December), provides further insights. Throughout this period, the number of cases and offenders reported across both halves of each year remained remarkably balanced, suggesting consistent enforcement operations without apparent seasonal variation.

The period from 2018 to 2021 stands out as a phase of intensified enforcement, with average half-yearly seizures exceeding 120 metric tons and offender arrests reaching up to 13,500 per half-year. Specifically, 2020 and 2021 recorded nearly 14,000 cases per half-year, with seizures consistently above 127 metric tons per half-year. These peaks indicate either large coordinated interdictions, possibly targeting kratom plantations and ketamine smuggling routes, or improved detection methods.

From 2022 onward, all three indicators began to decline sharply. By 2024, the average number of half-yearly cases had dropped to 2,733, with offender counts falling below 4,000 per half-year. Seizure volumes also decreased dramatically to about 27 metric tons per half-year, marking a 77% decrease compared to peak years. This consistent reduction may reflect a combination of factors: strategic reallocation of enforcement resources, legal reforms related to substances like kratom, or traffickers adapting to less detectable methods, such as online distribution or concealed micro-trafficking. While case numbers and arrests declined,

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seizures per case increased in several periods, particularly in 2021, suggesting a shift from broad, small-scale policing to more targeted, high-volume interdictions, focusing on upstream supply chains rather than low-level users or couriers.

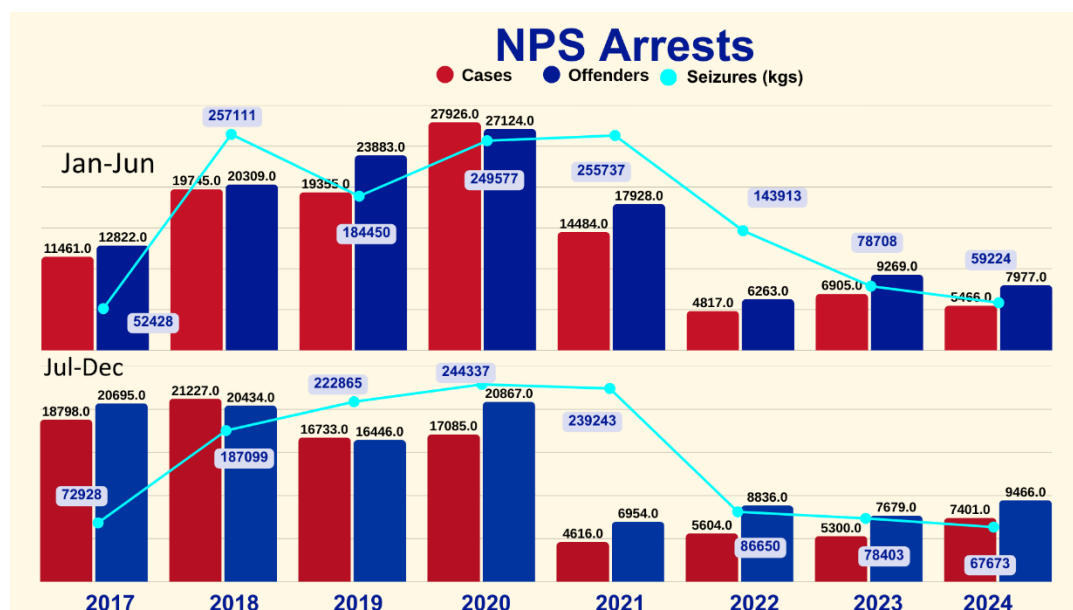


Figure 36: NPS arrested periodically

These biannual seizure volumes of various NPS, encompassing both traditional plant-based and synthetic drugs, are reported by ASEAN Member States.

Seizures increased significantly between early 2017 and mid-2018, peaking in January–June 2018 at 257 metric tons. Following this peak, seizure volumes began to decline, although they remained high, with 184 metric tons seized between January and June 2019.

Kratom (leaves and liquid) consistently represented the vast majority of all seizures throughout the period. For instance, 177 metric tons of kratom liquid were seized in early 2018, marking the highest single-period figure. Kratom leaves ranged from 48 to 108 metric tons per half-year, underscoring its continued prevalence in the regional market. Kratom's total share often exceeded 90% of total NPS seized, reflecting both its widespread availability and varying legal status across ASEAN nations.

Ketamine seizures increased over time, peaking at 2,851 kilograms in January–June 2018. This trend reflects growing misuse in urban and recreational contexts, as well as intensified enforcement targeting ketamine trafficking routes. Synthetic cannabinoids and cathinones appeared in smaller quantities; for example, 149 kilograms of cannabinoids and 164 kilograms of cathinones were reported in January–June 2018. These figures, although modest, signal the emergence of synthetic designer drugs in ASEAN markets. "Other NPS"

(unspecified) showed considerable variation, with a notable seizure of 5,737 kilograms in January–June 2018, suggesting either a bulk confiscation or misclassified substances requiring further identification.

The 2018 spike likely reflects enhanced surveillance and interdiction operations through coordinated regional actions or changes in the legal status of kratom. The post-2018 decline may represent an improvement in border control effectiveness, a temporary disruption in trafficking networks, or traffickers adapting to less visible methods of operation.

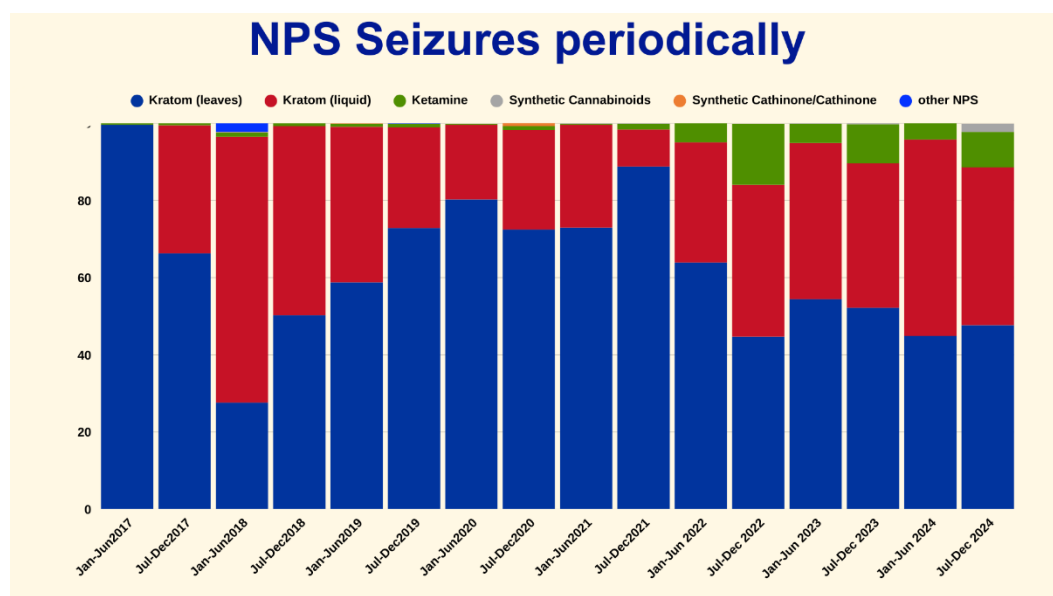


Figure 37: NPS seizures periodically by drug types

This comprehensive overview of the evolving threat posed by New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) within ASEAN Member States consolidates data on seizures, arrests of offenders, and treatment cases.

Total NPS seizures experienced a sharp increase from 125 metric tons in 2017 to 495 metric tons in 2021. This substantial rise was predominantly driven by kratom. The increase in kratom seizures reflects its persistent misuse in nightlife settings and ongoing diversion from legitimate medical sources. Seizures of other synthetic NPS, such as synthetic cannabinoids and cathinones, remained relatively low but exhibited occasional spikes. For instance, 1,902 kilograms of cathinones were seized in 2020, indicating intermittent but significant appearances of emerging synthetic compounds.

The number of NPS-related cases peaked in 2020 at 27,926, subsequently declining to 14,484 in 2021. Offender arrests mirrored this pattern, rising from 12,822 in 2017 to 27,124 in 2020, followed by a decline. The simultaneous increase in seizure volumes and a decrease

in the number of cases and arrests suggest a strategic shift towards more targeted, high-volume interdictions by law enforcement agencies.

The number of users reported in treatment programs generally aligns with law enforcement data, indicating effective data coordination and the successful engagement of NPS users through both judicial and healthcare channels. However, the persistently high seizure volumes, particularly for kratom, suggest the presence of a large, potentially under-treated user population, especially in rural and border areas where access to healthcare services may be limited.

To effectively mitigate the evolving NPS threat, ASEAN Member States should consider implementing the following policy recommendations. Given that kratom constitutes over 85% of total NPS seizures, the divergent legal statuses across countries create significant enforcement loopholes. A regional agreement on cultivation, trade, and medicinal use of kratom, drawing parallels with international Cannabis frameworks, is urgently needed to create a coherent regulatory environment.

- **Strengthen Surveillance of Emerging NPS:** While synthetic cannabinoids and cathinones currently represent a minority in seizures, their periodic surges serve as early indicators of synthetic drug diffusion. ASEAN should invest in robust early warning systems (EWS) and enhance laboratory capacity to rapidly detect and respond to new synthetic compounds as they emerge.
- **Transition to Intelligence-Led Policing:** The observed shift from a high number of offenders to larger but fewer seizures indicates a more strategic approach by law enforcement. This momentum should be supported by developing regional intelligence platforms, including capabilities for postal interception, cyber investigations, and precursor chemical tracking, to counter evolving NPS trafficking routes proactively.
- **Scale Up Treatment Provisions:** Expanding the treatment system in parallel with enforcement efforts is crucial. This expansion should prioritize:
 - Border provinces, where the confluence of trafficking and traditional use may result in higher unmet treatment needs.
 - Populations with a history of medical or traditional kratom use may be vulnerable to problematic consumption patterns.
 - Urban centers are significantly affected by ketamine and other synthetic NPS, which often present complex psychiatric and behavioral complications.

6. COCAINE

Cocaine is a powerful stimulant drug derived from the leaves of the coca plant, native to South America. Known for its potent effects on the central nervous system, cocaine has played a significant role in both medical and recreational contexts throughout history. Cocaine

has a long history dating back thousands of years, with evidence of coca leaf chewing among ancient civilizations in South America, such as the Incas, to combat fatigue and enhance physical performance. The isolation of cocaine from coca leaves was first achieved by German chemists in 1860, marking the beginning of its use in Western medicine. By the late 19th century, cocaine was widely used as a local anesthetic and was even included in various over-the-counter products, including the original formulation of Coca-Cola.

The historical context of cocaine in Southeast Asia reveals a complex interplay of trade, colonialism, and evolving societal attitudes towards the drug. Initially, cocaine was introduced as a medical substance, but its use transformed significantly over time, particularly during the early twentieth century when it became a commodity in illicit markets. This evolution can be understood through several key aspects.

Cocaine was initially recognized for its medicinal properties, used in various treatments and as a stimulant. The coca leaf, from which cocaine is derived, has been utilized for centuries, particularly in Andean cultures, before spreading to other regions, including Southeast Asia (H, 1965).

The early 1900s saw a surge in the cocaine trade, particularly through colonial ports controlled by Fujianese smugglers who capitalized on the demand in Southeast Asia and India (Thilly, 2018). Colonial governments attempted to regulate and prohibit cocaine, but these efforts often led to increased smuggling and market expansion, highlighting the resilience of consumer demand (Mills, 2018).

Over time, cocaine transitioned from a medical marvel to a stigmatized substance, reflecting broader societal changes and the impact of colonial drug policies (Gootenberg, 2002). The rise of Japan and its imperial ambitions also influenced the cocaine trade, as it became a hub for distribution across Asia, further complicating the drug's historical narrative (Thilly, 2018). Conversely, while cocaine's illicit trade flourished, the broader context of drug prohibition in Southeast Asia, particularly regarding opium, suggests a complex relationship between state control and consumer agency, indicating that the dynamics of drug use and regulation are multifaceted and often contradictory (Model, 2022).

Cocaine exerts its effects primarily by blocking the reuptake of dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with pleasure and reward, thereby increasing dopamine levels in the brain. This leads to intense euphoria, heightened alertness, and increased energy. However, these effects are short-lived, often leading to repeated use and the development of addiction. Chronic use of cocaine can result in severe cardiovascular issues, neurological damage, and psychological disorders such as paranoia and anxiety.

In the medical field, cocaine's anesthetic properties were groundbreaking. Its use in eye, nose, and throat surgeries, due to its vasoconstrictive properties, helped reduce bleeding

and numb tissues. However, the addictive potential of cocaine soon became apparent, leading to widespread misuse and the eventual regulation of its distribution and use.

Today, cocaine remains a significant public health challenge. Despite efforts to reduce its availability and use, cocaine continues to be widely abused. Modern approaches to addressing cocaine addiction include a combination of behavioral therapies and pharmacological interventions, though effective treatments remain limited. Ongoing research aims to develop better strategies for prevention and treatment, as well as to understand the underlying mechanisms of cocaine addiction.

Historically, cocaine has been less prevalent in Southeast Asia compared to other regions, primarily due to the dominance of synthetic drugs like methamphetamine and opioids in the local drug markets. However, recent years have seen an uptick in cocaine trafficking and consumption in the region. This rise can be attributed to several factors, including increased affluence, changing social attitudes toward drug use, and the region's strategic location as a transit point for international drug trafficking.

The ASEAN region's role in the global cocaine trade is multifaceted. Countries such as Thailand and Malaysia have reported significant seizures of cocaine, indicating their use as transit points for cocaine shipments destined for other parts of Asia and the Pacific. The involvement of organized crime syndicates, including Latin American cartels, has been noted in facilitating the transshipment of cocaine through ASEAN countries. These syndicates exploit the region's porous borders and extensive maritime routes to smuggle cocaine.

Between 2017 and 2024, the number of individuals receiving treatment for cocaine use in ASEAN exhibited notable fluctuations. In the early years, the number of treated users remained low, with 49 users in 2017 and 51 in 2018. However, 2019 marked a sharp increase, with 355 individuals undergoing treatment—nearly a sevenfold rise compared to the previous year. This peak was followed by a steep decline in 2020 to 31 cases, potentially reflecting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on healthcare access and the delivery of treatment services. The trend saw a modest rebound in 2021 with 107 treated cases, but decreased again in 2022 to 39 cases, suggesting inconsistency in treatment demand or service accessibility. In 2023, the number increased slightly to 89 cases.

A significant and unprecedented surge was recorded in 2024, where 1,604 individuals received treatment for cocaine use, more than 18 times the number in the previous year. This sharp increase may reflect a combination of factors, including heightened cocaine availability, improved screening and referral mechanisms, intensified law enforcement activities, or broader systemic changes in treatment access and reporting.

These trends underscore the need for a responsive and adaptable treatment infrastructure, enhanced surveillance systems, and interagency collaboration to understand and address the drivers behind the sharp increase in treatment admissions.

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The number of individuals receiving treatment for cocaine use shows considerable variation across both periods. In the initial years, treatment numbers remained relatively low and balanced across both halves of the year.

These fluctuations point to irregular patterns in cocaine use treatment over time. They may reflect changes in cocaine availability, user behavior, treatment access, or law enforcement efforts. The extreme disparities between semesters in some years highlight the need for more consistent monitoring and surveillance, timely public health responses, evaluation of service capacity across the year, and investigation into seasonal or policy-driven fluctuations.

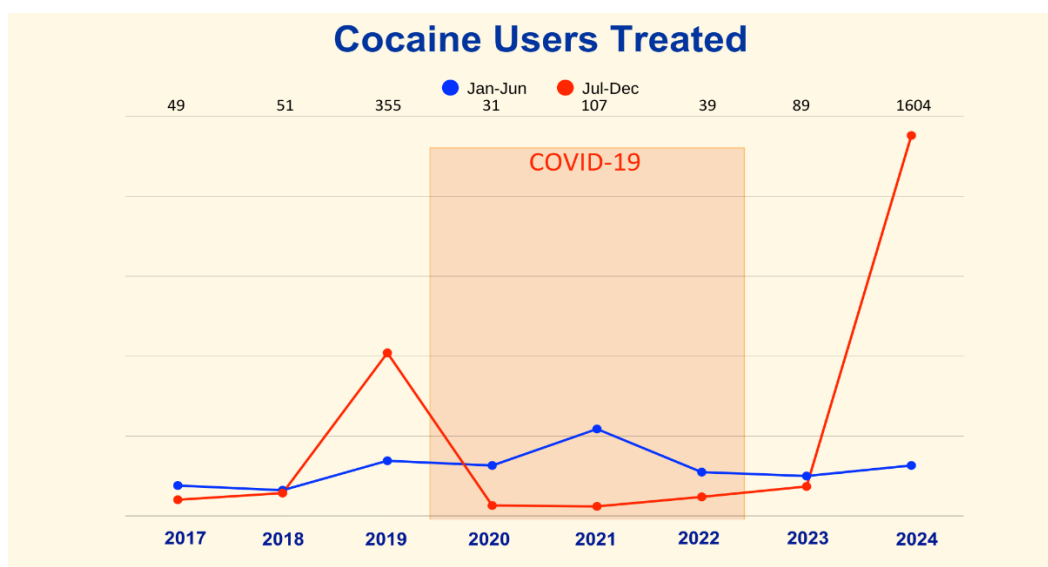


Figure 38: Cocaine users treated periodically

The volume of cocaine seized between 2017 and 2024 reflects significant year-to-year variability, suggesting shifting dynamics in trafficking patterns, enforcement operations, and supply routes. In 2017, authorities seized 535.6 kilograms of cocaine, which declined to 324.3 kilograms in 2018.

A dramatic escalation occurred in 2019, with a record-breaking seizure of 15,941.6 kilograms—nearly 30 times the amount recorded in 2018. This spike may be attributed to large-scale interdiction operations, major trafficking busts, or increased smuggling activity via air or maritime routes.

Seizure volumes plummeted in 2020 to 48.3 kilograms, likely due to global disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, including reduced transportation, fewer international flights, and shifts in smuggling patterns.

From 2021 to 2023, seizures gradually increased again, reaching 52.9 kilograms in 2021, 149.3 kilograms in 2022, and 380.5 kilograms in 2023, indicating a recovery in

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smuggling activities and an enhanced detection capacity. In 2024, the total seizure slightly declined to 258.8 kilograms, but remained significantly higher than the levels in 2020 and 2021, indicating persistent trafficking flows.

These fluctuations suggest that the cocaine supply chain in the region is dynamic and highly sensitive to law enforcement pressure, policy changes, and global events. The 2019 spike, in particular, warrants further investigation to identify the sources, trafficking routes, and organized crime networks involved.

The data on cocaine-related arrests from 2017 to 2024, disaggregated into the first half (January–June) and the second half (July–December) of each year, reveal both stable and volatile periods across three indicators: the number of cases, the number of offenders, and the quantity of cocaine seized.

The annual number of arrest cases varied considerably, ranging from 58 to 186. Looking at the January–June period, 2018 recorded the highest number of cases at 69. More recently, there's been a consistent increase, with cases rising from 60 in 2023 to 83 in 2024. The number of offenders apprehended mirrors this trend in arrests. 2024 saw a peak of 99 individuals arrested, a notable jump from 91 in 2023, and more than double the 37 arrests made in 2021. The July–December period exhibited a similar pattern. Throughout the year, arrest figures were generally consistent between the two halves, with occasional differences that may have indicated changes in enforcement strategies or operational periods.

Annual cocaine seizures have fluctuated dramatically. A significant spike occurred in 2019, marking the highest amount seized, likely due to a substantial interdiction event or a change in trafficking patterns. This surge was followed by a sharp drop in 2020, reflecting the global pandemic's disruptive impact. 2022 again saw significant seizures, suggesting a resurgence in trafficking activity or an increase in detection capabilities. Although seizures in 2023 and 2024 remained higher than in the early years, they were considerably lower than in the peak periods.

The data underscores a fluctuating cocaine trafficking landscape, with periodic spikes in arrests and seizures that may reflect shifts in trafficking routes, law enforcement strategies, or regional supply dynamics. The increase in both arrest cases and offenders in 2023–2024 suggests a potential resurgence of trafficking or improved operational targeting. Biannual tracking is beneficial for detecting seasonal or strategic smuggling patterns, which should inform the timing of interdiction campaigns and resource allocation.

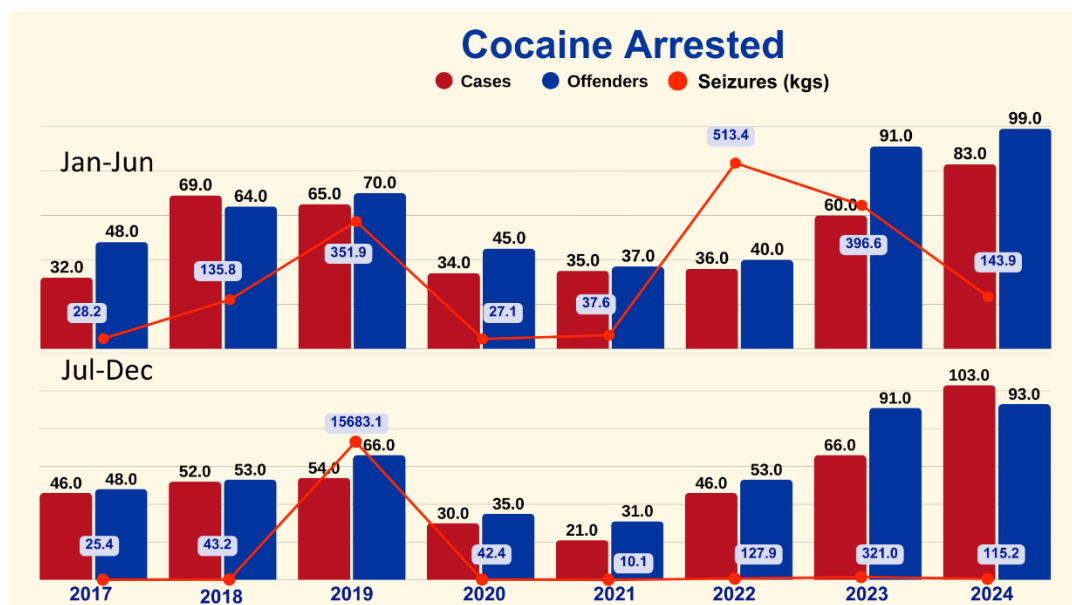


Figure 39: Cocaine arrested periodically

The ASEAN region, while traditionally more affected by Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), is witnessing emerging patterns of cocaine trafficking, use, and treatment demand. Multi-year data suggest:

1. **Rising Public Health Concern:** While cocaine treatment admissions were relatively low and stable before 2019, data show spikes in 2019 and 2024, with over 1,600 people treated in 2024 alone. The sharp rise in treatment demand—particularly in the second half of 2024—signals increased use and availability of cocaine in some ASEAN Member States (AMS), possibly among higher-income or tourist populations.
2. **Fluctuating Trafficking and Enforcement Outcomes:** Cocaine seizures peaked in 2019 and remained elevated through 2023 in several AMS, including significant seizures in 2022 and 2023. Arrests related to cocaine offenses have steadily increased, with cases and offenders both rising significantly in 2023–2024, suggesting either greater market activity or improved law enforcement effectiveness.
3. **Transnational Trafficking Concerns:** Major seizure events and coordinated arrest trends point to large-volume cocaine transshipment through Southeast Asia, possibly en route to other regions. There is growing evidence that ASEAN is being exploited as a transit hub for cocaine originating from Latin America, with some leakage into local markets.

To address these emerging challenges, ASEAN Member States should consider the following policy recommendations:

- **Develop a Regional Cocaine Threat Assessment:** Include cocaine in national and regional drug threat assessments, even where prevalence is currently low. Expand the ASEAN

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Drug Monitoring Report to disaggregate cocaine data by type (e.g., crack vs. powder), trafficking route, and seizure location.

- **Strengthen Regional Intelligence and Maritime Cooperation:** Increase joint maritime patrols, particularly in known cocaine transshipment routes, such as the Straits of Malacca, the Mekong River, and the South China Sea. Strengthen real-time intelligence exchange through ASEAN-NARCO and the ASEAN Airport Interdiction Task Force (AAITF).
- **Expand Forensic and Analytical Capacity:** Invest in forensic drug profiling and origin tracing (e.g., through UNODC SMART Lab collaboration) to identify source countries and supply chains. Encourage AMS to report not only seizure volume but also purity and chemical composition, to track shifts in trafficking methods.
- **Scale Up Treatment and Early Warning Systems:** Prepare national drug treatment systems for a possible rise in cocaine dependence, especially in major cities and tourist destinations. Establish early warning systems to detect emerging trends in recreational cocaine use among youth and nightlife populations.
- **Engage in Targeted Public Awareness and Risk Communication:** Implement culturally tailored prevention campaigns focused on the harms of cocaine, particularly among high-risk populations such as youth, professionals, and international travelers. Include cocaine and other non-traditional drugs in school-based and workplace drug education modules.
- **Enhance Legal Frameworks and Judicial Training:** Ensure that all AMS are equipped with legal instruments to handle complex trafficking cases involving cocaine, including digital trafficking and containerized shipping. Train judiciary and customs officials to recognize new trafficking typologies, including cocaine hidden in air cargo, personal luggage, or multi-modal containers.

These recommendations aim to ensure that ASEAN Member States are not only reactive to emerging cocaine threats but also proactive and coordinated in preventing the region from becoming a target market or persistent transit zone.

7. CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM (CNS) DEPRESSANTS

Central nervous system (CNS) depressants, including benzodiazepines, barbiturates, and sedative-hypnotics such as zolpidem, play a vital role in clinical medicine. These substances are widely used for the treatment of anxiety disorders, insomnia, and seizure-related conditions due to their ability to enhance the inhibitory effects of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), a neurotransmitter that reduces neuronal excitability in the brain (National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2021). Benzodiazepines, such as diazepam and alprazolam, act by binding to GABA-A receptors, leading to anxiolytic, sedative, and muscle relaxant

effects. Although barbiturates were once more commonly prescribed, they have largely been replaced due to their narrow therapeutic index and higher risk of overdose (SAMHSA, 2020).

Despite their therapeutic benefits, CNS depressants carry significant risks for abuse, dependency, and overdose, particularly when used outside medical supervision. The misuse of these substances has been a growing global health concern, often exacerbated by their widespread availability and the ongoing opioid crisis. In the United States, for example, an estimated 4.8 million people reported misusing prescription benzodiazepines in 2020 (SAMHSA, 2020). Similar trends have been observed in Europe, where non-medical benzodiazepine use—especially among adolescents and opioid users—has become increasingly prevalent (EMCDDA, 2021).

The pharmacological properties of CNS depressants make them prone to misuse. Their rapid onset of action and calming effects can lead to psychological reinforcement, while repeated use results in tolerance, physical dependence, and the risk of severe withdrawal symptoms (NIDA, 2021). Acute toxicity, particularly when CNS depressants are combined with other depressants such as alcohol or opioids, can lead to respiratory depression and death (UNODC, 2023).

In Southeast Asia, the history of CNS depressant use is closely linked to the region's colonial legacy and evolving pharmaceutical landscape. Opium, once embedded in traditional medicine and ritual practices, was transformed into a central economic commodity during colonial times. Its widespread use contributed to severe socio-economic disruption, exemplified by the 19th-century Opium Wars (Trocki, 2004). Indigenous plant-based substances such as kratom (*Mitragyna speciosa*) were traditionally used to manage fatigue and treat withdrawal symptoms, reflecting a more pragmatic approach to substance use (Saingam et al., 2016). However, with the introduction of synthetic depressants in the 20th century, Southeast Asia began facing new challenges associated with dependency and the emergence of illicit pharmaceutical markets.

The misuse of modern CNS depressants—particularly benzodiazepines—has become increasingly visible across several ASEAN countries. In Malaysia, studies have identified a rising trend of benzodiazepine misuse among young adults, with many obtaining these drugs without a prescription through pharmacies or online sources (Yahya et al., 2022). In Indonesia, the misuse of sleeping pills and anti-anxiety medications is a growing concern, especially in urban populations where self-medication is common (UNODC, 2023). The Philippines faces similar challenges, compounded by the limited availability of mental health services and the accessibility of prescription medications through informal channels (Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, 2023).

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Several factors contribute to the increasing misuse of CNS depressants in the ASEAN region. These include the easy availability of medications, limited public awareness of the associated risks, gaps in regulatory oversight, and social perceptions that such substances are safer than illicit drugs (Kanato, 2021). In addition, economic stress, rapid urbanization, and the psychological impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have intensified the demand for medications that relieve anxiety and insomnia.

The consequences of misuse are severe. Chronic use of CNS depressants can lead to physical dependence, cognitive decline, and increased risk of injury, particularly among the elderly. Furthermore, poly-drug use involving benzodiazepines and opioids substantially increases the risk of overdose fatalities (NIDA, 2021; UNODC, 2023). From a policy perspective, this has placed added pressure on healthcare systems, legal institutions, and social welfare programs.

The socio-political ramifications in Southeast Asia are equally significant. Historical and contemporary drug policies have often criminalized indigenous and low-income populations while failing to address the root causes of drug use. Punitive models, such as the “War on Drugs” in the Philippines and Indonesia, have been associated with human rights violations and have done little to reduce drug-related harm (Human Rights Watch, 2017). In contrast, Thailand’s approach—centered around alternative development and public health—has shown more sustainable outcomes (UNODC, 2022).

Given the multifaceted nature of CNS depressant misuse in Southeast Asia, policy responses must be both holistic and evidence-based. Key strategies include strengthening pharmaceutical regulations, expanding access to mental health services, promoting public education, and fostering regional cooperation to curb the illegal pharmaceutical trade. Importantly, drug control efforts must be aligned with human rights principles, ensuring that vulnerable populations are not further marginalized.

A 2023 report from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) emphasized that the improper use of CNS depressants in ASEAN countries often results in severe health issues, including respiratory depression, memory problems, and a heightened risk of accidents. Moreover, the combination of CNS depressants with other substances, such as alcohol or opioids, compounds these risks, leading to a higher incidence of fatalities.

The data for the year 2024 reveals a notable prevalence of CNS depressant use across ASEAN member states, categorized into three primary groups: benzodiazepines, barbiturates, and other central nervous system (CNS) depressants.

Benzodiazepine users, a relatively smaller subset, with 21 reported users, accounting for around 7% of total users. No data reported for barbiturates in 2024, which may reflect

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either extremely low prevalence, underreporting, or limited diagnostic classification in surveillance systems. Other CNS Depressants represent the majority of reported cases, with 276 individuals, accounting for approximately 93% of total CNS users. This category likely includes sedative-hypnotics such as Z-drugs (e.g., zolpidem) or other prescription depressants not explicitly identified.

The dominance of "Other CNS" use suggests potential gaps in drug classification and highlights the need for more granular data to distinguish specific substances being misused. The relatively low number of benzodiazepine cases reported may underestimate actual usage, given global and regional patterns of increasing misuse, particularly among youth and individuals with limited access to mental health care. The absence of barbiturate data likely reflects their declining clinical use due to safety concerns and the substitution of newer agents. However, the possibility of non-detection or underreporting cannot be ruled out.

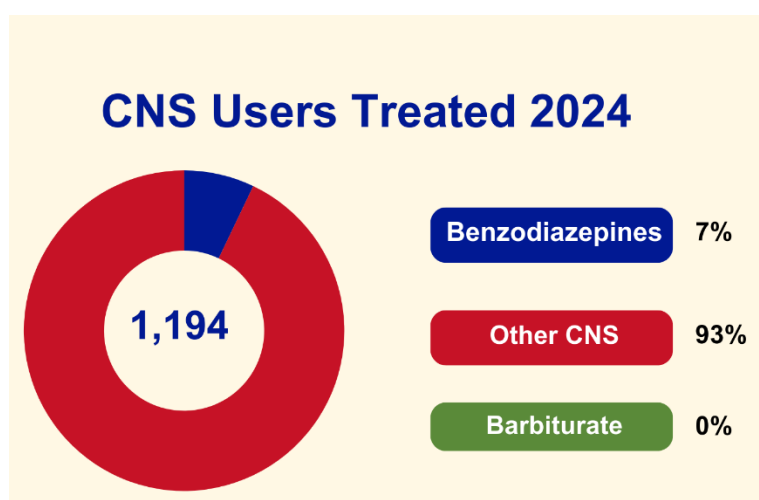


Figure 40: CNS users treated in 2024

An analysis of biannual treatment data for central nervous system (CNS) depressant users in ASEAN from 2017 to 2024 reveals a clear and concerning upward trajectory. The number of individuals receiving treatment has grown substantially over the past eight years, highlighting the increasing public health burden associated with the misuse of CNS depressants such as benzodiazepines, barbiturates, and other sedative-hypnotic substances.

In 2017, only 55 individuals were reported as having received treatment for CNS depressant use across both halves of the year. By 2024, the number had increased dramatically to 1,194 cases, representing a more than 20-fold increase. The most significant growth occurred from 2022 onward, with the number of treated users rising from 882 in 2022 to 997 in 2023, and then surging to 1,194 in 2024. This steep rise may reflect improved

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detection and reporting, increased availability of treatment services, or a genuine surge in problematic substance use in the region.

A closer look at the biannual data shows that the first half of each year typically records more treatment cases than the second half. For example, in 2024, 809 individuals were treated between January and June, accounting for 67.8% of that year's total, while 385 were treated between July and December (32.2%). This biannual variation could suggest seasonal factors affecting drug use patterns or treatment access, although further investigation is needed to confirm these trends. The year 2020 marked the beginning of a notable shift, with treatment users nearly doubling from the previous year. This sharp increase may correlate with the mental health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted social, economic, and healthcare systems across the region.

From 2021 to 2024, the upward trend continued, albeit with some fluctuations. While treatment numbers rebounded in 2022 and 2023, before experiencing a marked escalation in 2024, the data from 2024 alone account for over one-third of all cases recorded during the entire eight-year period.

These findings underscore a growing need for targeted interventions to address CNS depressant misuse in ASEAN. The rising treatment figures suggest not only increased substance use but also possible improvements in service availability and public health outreach. However, the current trajectory calls for urgent expansion of treatment infrastructure, enhanced surveillance and data collection, and the integration of mental health services into primary care systems. Furthermore, the lack of disaggregated data by country, age group, gender, or substance type limits the ability to develop precise, evidence-informed policies. Addressing these data gaps will be essential for effective public health planning and regional cooperation in controlling the spread and harm of CNS depressant misuse.

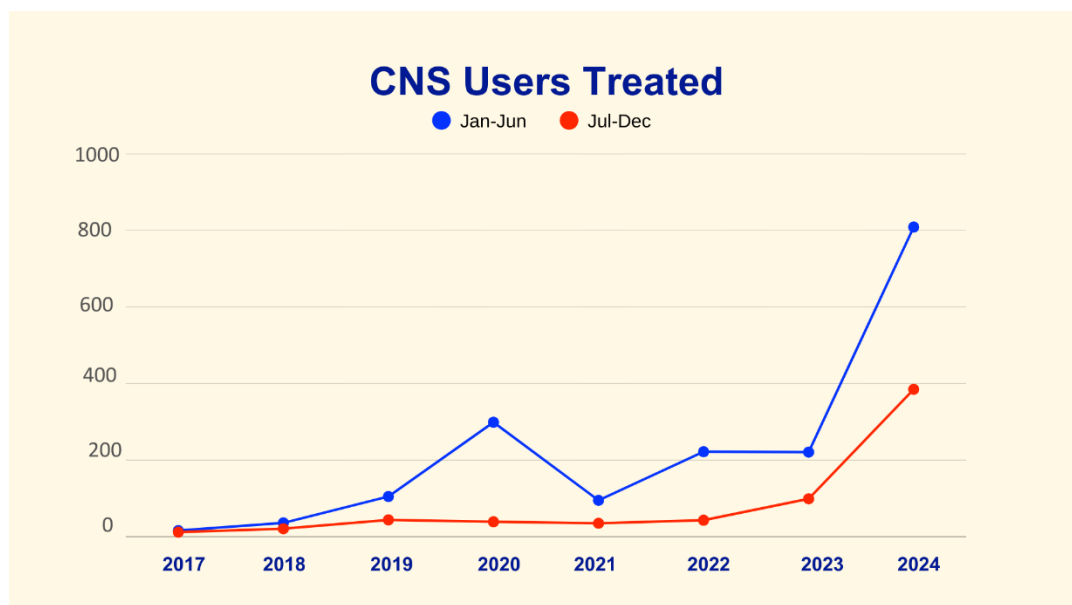


Figure 41: CNS users treated periodically

The longitudinal dataset of CNS depressant treatment in ASEAN from 2017 through 2024 reveals a clear upward trajectory in the number of individuals treated. This trend spans several substance categories, including benzodiazepines, barbiturates, and other CNS depressants, although the completeness of substance-specific data varies over time.

From a starting point of 55 total treated users in 2017, the number of reported cases increased year over year, culminating in 1,194 treated individuals by 2024. This reflects a more than 2,000% increase over the eight years. The increase has been particularly pronounced since 2020, likely reflecting both increased substance use and improved identification and reporting mechanisms.

Benzodiazepines are consistently available across the time series. Benzodiazepine-related treatment cases increased from 16 in the first half of 2017 to 309 in the second half of 2024. These drugs continue to be the most frequently reported among CNS depressants. Barbiturates, reporting for barbiturate-related treatment, only appear sporadically from 2022 onwards. The low and inconsistent reporting likely reflects their declining clinical use and possible underdiagnosis in treatment data. Other CNS Depressants, likely including sedative-hypnotics, Z-drugs (e.g., zolpidem), and other non-benzodiazepine agents, show a sharp rise in 2023 and 2024. For instance, in the first half of 2024, 493 cases were recorded in this category alone.

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In 2019–2020, a pivotal increase occurred. This period aligns with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, suggesting a potential link to heightened psychological stress and sedative misuse. In 2023–2024, the most dramatic increases were observed in these years. In 2024, the first half alone accounted for 809 cases across all CNS categories, followed by 385 in the second half. The surge may be due to a combination of factors, including the growing prevalence of substance use, increased access to treatment, enhanced public health reporting, and higher substance availability.

The consistent upward trend in CNS depressant treatment cases signals a widening public health concern in ASEAN. Benzodiazepines remain the most commonly implicated substances, although “Other CNS” drugs have shown significant recent growth. Barbiturates appear infrequently, consistent with global prescribing patterns.

This rise may reflect an increasing reliance on pharmacological solutions for managing anxiety, sleep disorders, and psychological distress, especially post-pandemic. The lack of early disaggregated data highlights gaps in surveillance and points to the need for standardization in reporting substance categories across member states.

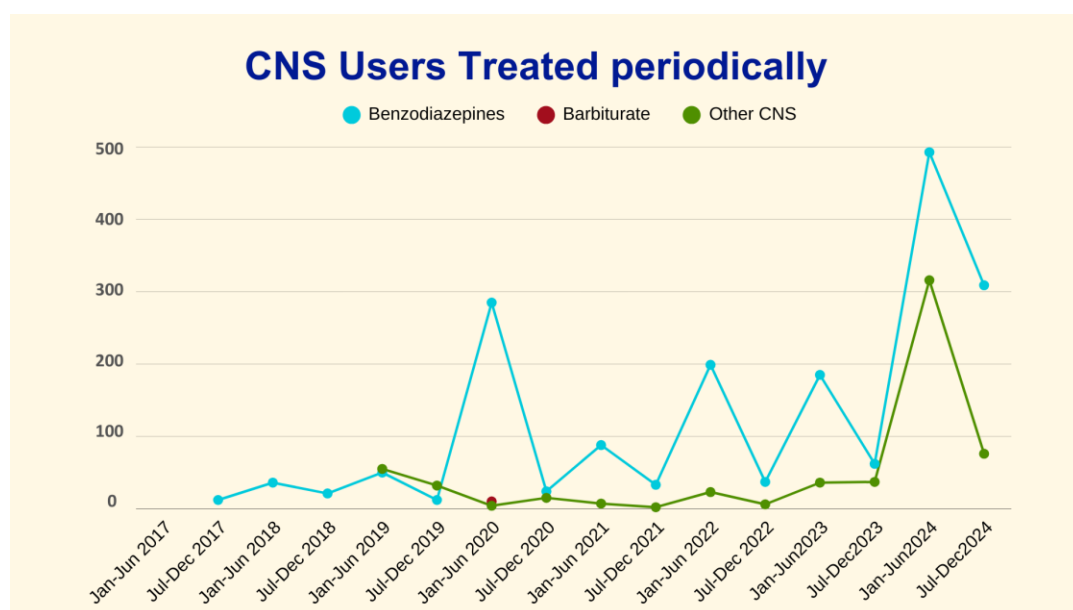


Figure 42: CNS users are treated periodically by drug types

The seizure data from ASEAN for the year 2024 provides essential insights into the regional patterns of trafficking and enforcement related to central nervous system (CNS) depressants. The data includes total quantities (in kilograms) seized for several categories:

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benzodiazepines, barbiturates, gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB), analgesics, and other CNS depressants.

Benzodiazepines, a total of 549.36 kg of benzodiazepines were seized in 2024, representing the most significant volume among all CNS depressant categories. This confirms the substance's dominant presence in both illicit and diverted pharmaceutical markets within the region.

Analgesics, with seizures amounting to 339.85 kg, form the second-largest group. Although not traditionally classified as CNS depressants, certain prescription analgesics with sedative or dependency-producing properties may contribute to misuse patterns and warrant regulatory attention.

Other CNS Depressants, a relatively small volume of 23.83 kg, was recorded in this miscellaneous category. This could include sedative-hypnotics (e.g., Z-drugs), sleep aids, or less commonly regulated substances.

No seizures were reported for barbiturates or GHB in 2024, which could reflect low levels of use and trafficking, successful regulation, or gaps in detection and reporting. Despite their historically recognized risk profiles, these substances appear to be less prevalent in the current ASEAN seizure landscape.

The predominance of benzodiazepine seizures highlights their continued misuse and trafficking risk, particularly as these substances are widely prescribed for legitimate medical use but frequently diverted for non-medical purposes. The significant quantity of seized analgesics suggests an overlapping issue with opioid-like drugs or medications with sedative potential.

The presence of “Other CNS” depressants, though smaller in volume, signals the emergence of diverse substances beyond traditional drug control frameworks. The absence of GHB and barbiturates may not necessarily indicate nonexistence but rather underreporting or lack of analytical prioritization in forensic laboratories.

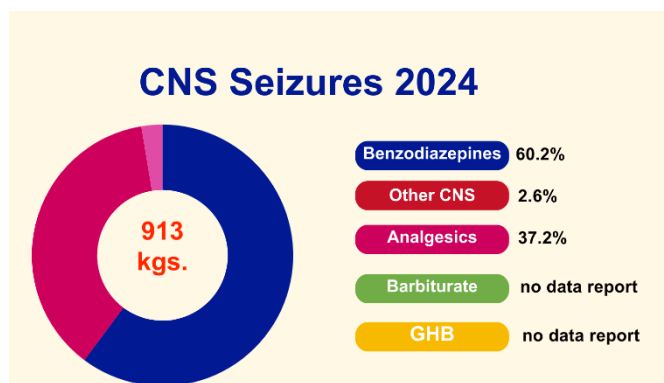


Figure 43: CNS seizures 2024

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This biannual data, from 2017 to 2024, relates to arrests involving central nervous system (CNS) depressants in ASEAN Member States, covering three key indicators: cases, offenders, and seizure quantities (in kilograms). The data highlights fluctuations in enforcement intensity, substance availability, and law enforcement responses over the eight years.

The number of reported CNS-related cases showed significant variation over time. In the first half of 2017, only 292 cases were recorded. This rose sharply in 2018 to 1,776 cases and remained over 1,000 cases annually through 2024. The highest recorded year for cases was 2023, with 1,346 incidents. In 2024, there were 1,280 reported cases in the first half, suggesting relatively stable enforcement levels.

The number of individuals arrested shows a somewhat parallel but more volatile trend. Starting from 180 arrests in the first half of 2017, the number peaked at 4,024 offenders in the first half of 2021, indicating an intensive crackdown period. Post-2021, arrests declined but remained high, stabilizing at 1,873 offenders in the first half of 2024. The discrepancy between the number of cases and the number of offenders in 2021 (e.g., 1,131 cases but 4,024 offenders) suggests the presence of multi-offender incidents, potentially involving organized groups.

Seizure quantities show considerable year-to-year fluctuation. A modest 2.88 kg of CNS substances were seized in early 2017. This figure grew steadily, reaching 91.6 kg in early 2019, before spiking to 1,989.17 kilograms in the first half of 2021—the highest seizure volume in the dataset. Following the 2021 peak, seizure volumes declined sharply but rebounded somewhat in 2023 (641.02 kg) before decreasing again in 2024 (174.40 kg).

The 2021 peak in both offenders and seizures may reflect intensified enforcement efforts or expanded surveillance capacity, possibly aligned with regional or national anti-drug campaigns. The high offender-to-case ratio suggests that CNS depressant trafficking and misuse may increasingly involve group-based operations rather than isolated individual actors. Seizure data trends indicate a volatile and evolving illicit market, potentially influenced by shifts in trafficking routes, legal regulations, or supply chains. The post-2021 decline in seizures and offenders may be due to policy fatigue, adaptation by traffickers, or resource limitations among law enforcement agencies.

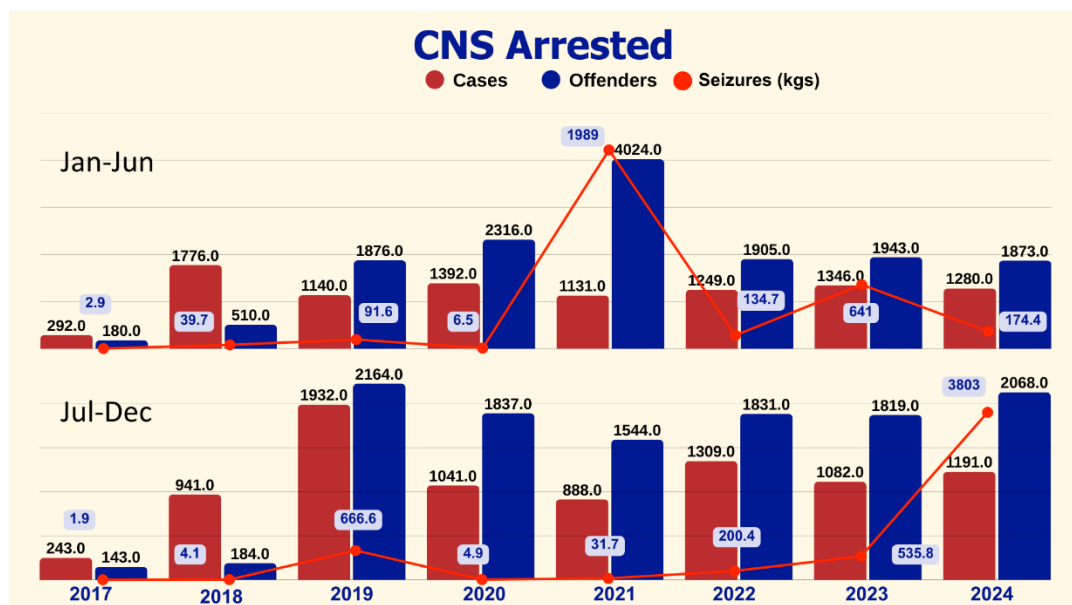


Figure 44: CNS arrested periodically

The CNS seizure trend data from ASEAN, reported biannually from 2017 through 2024, offers a longitudinal view of law enforcement outcomes and illicit drug market dynamics for substances such as benzodiazepines, barbiturates, GHB, analgesics, and other psychotropic substances. The seizure amounts are presented in kilograms.

1. Benzodiazepines

Seizures of benzodiazepines showed dramatic growth over the reporting period. From just 2.73 kg in 2017, the volume escalated sharply, reaching 65.42 kg in the first half of 2019, and continued to surge in later years (peaking above 500 kilograms by 2024 based on previous datasets). This increase suggests both a rise in regional misuse and intensified interdiction efforts targeting diverted or illicit benzodiazepines, particularly alprazolam, diazepam, and clonazepam.

2. Barbiturates

Although low in prevalence, barbiturates were detected in measurable quantities starting in 2018, with a seizure of 5.95 kg in the first half of 2018 and a peak of 23.16 kg in the first half of 2019. The intermittent pattern of barbiturate seizures and subsequent declines likely reflects their limited therapeutic use today and focused, possibly declining, black-market demand.

3. GHB (Gamma-Hydroxybutyrate)

GHB was not detected in any of the reported years. This absence could signify low regional circulation or limitations in field testing and forensic identification of the substance.

4. Analgesics (e.g., sedative-painkillers)

Analgesic-related seizures began appearing in 2019, with 1.39 kg seized in the first half of that year. Although volumes remained modest, their presence indicates emerging concerns regarding the misuse of certain prescription painkillers with sedative effects. These drugs may be misclassified or underreported in earlier datasets due to mixed classification as either opioids or CNS depressants.

5. Other Psychotropic Substances

“Other psychotropic” seizures—likely representing Z-drugs (e.g., zolpidem) or unclassified sedatives—first appeared in 2018 with minimal volume (0.25 kg), gradually increasing to 1.64 kg in the first half of 2019. These figures suggest a growing diversity of sedative-hypnotic substances in regional illicit markets, though detection remains relatively limited.

Seizure volumes, particularly for benzodiazepines, increased sharply after 2018, possibly due to enhanced forensic capacity, heightened regional trafficking, or spillovers from the opioid crisis. The strong growth in benzodiazepine seizures suggests targeted operations against diversion from legal markets, including pharmacy theft, doctor shopping, and online sales. The appearance of seizure data for analgesics and other psychotropic agents points to diversification in sedative use and misuse, raising concerns over the convergence of sedative and opioid-type substances in street markets. The consistent lack of GHB seizures suggests either low regional availability or under-detection, which may require updated training and testing methodologies among enforcement agencies.

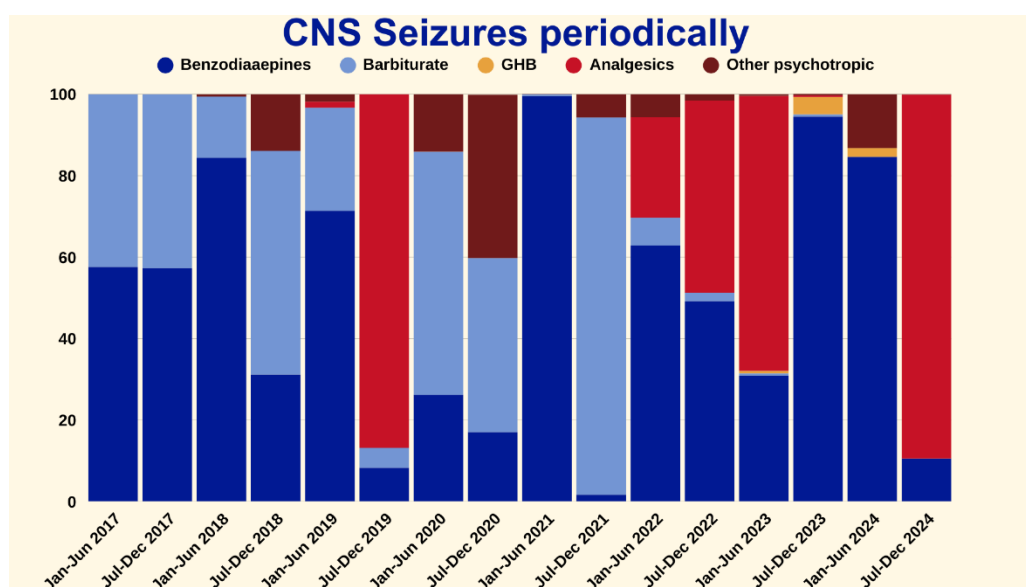


Figure 45: CNS seizures periodically by drug types

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The abuse, trafficking, and treatment of central nervous system (CNS) depressants including benzodiazepines, barbiturates, GHB, sedative analgesics, and other psychotropic substances have become increasingly prominent within the ASEAN region. An integrated analysis of treatment admissions, arrests, seizures, and drug trends from 2017 to 2024 reveals a clear and escalating regional challenge, with multidimensional implications for public health, law enforcement, and regional cooperation.

CNS-related treatment admissions have grown significantly over the past eight years. In 2017, only 55 individuals received treatment for CNS depressant misuse across ASEAN, but by 2024, this number had surged to 1,194 individuals—a 20-fold increase. The most substantial growth occurred between 2022 and 2024, particularly during the first half of 2024, when 809 cases were recorded. This trend suggests not only a real increase in use but also expanded access to treatment services, improved surveillance, or heightened awareness.

Seizure data show that benzodiazepines dominate the regional CNS drug landscape. By 2024, enforcement agencies had seized over 549 kg of benzodiazepines, a dramatic rise from approximately 2.7 kg in 2017. Smaller but concerning volumes of analgesics (339.85 kg) and other CNS depressants (23.83 kg) were also intercepted. Although barbiturates and GHB were rarely detected, their intermittent appearances suggest either successful control or underreporting due to limited forensic capacity. Trend data also show an increase in seizures from 2018 onward, with huge volumes confiscated in 2021 and 2023, reflecting enhanced interdiction efforts or changes in trafficking routes. Analgesics and "other psychotropics" have also begun to emerge more frequently in seizures, signaling diversification in the sedative market.

The number of arrest cases and offenders linked to CNS depressants rose in parallel with treatment and seizure trends. From 180 offenders in the first half of 2017, the number peaked at 4,024 in 2021, before gradually declining to 1,873 in early 2024. These figures suggest periods of intensified enforcement and indicate the involvement of organized networks, as multiple individuals were often arrested per case. CNS-related arrests closely mirrored seizure patterns, with higher offender counts during periods of large-volume drug seizures. However, inconsistencies in offender trends suggest shifts in enforcement focus, resource allocation, or adaptation by trafficking networks.

Benzodiazepines continue to account for the majority of reported use and seizures. However, treatment and seizure data from 2022–2024 show increasing involvement of non-benzodiazepine CNS depressants, including Z-drugs, sedative analgesics, and other prescription psychotropics. These emerging substances may not be consistently classified or monitored, raising concerns about gaps in regulatory coverage and forensic detection.

Based on the integrated analysis of CNS-related data from 2017 to 2024, the following policy directions are recommended:

1. Strengthen Pharmaceutical Regulation and Supply Chain Monitoring Implement electronic prescription tracking systems to prevent over-prescribing and diversion of sedative medications. Regulate online and cross-border sales of pharmaceutical CNS depressants, especially benzodiazepines and tramadol.

2. Expand Treatment Access and Diversify Care Models Scale up outpatient and community-based treatment programs that incorporate both medical and psychosocial interventions. Integrate CNS-specific treatment modules into existing drug rehabilitation systems to respond to rising demand.

3. Enhance Forensic and Laboratory Capabilities Invest in regional forensic science networks to enhance the detection and classification of emerging central nervous system (CNS) depressants. Standardize testing protocols for less commonly identified substances such as GHB, Z-drugs, and synthetic barbiturates.

4. Improve Data Collection and Disaggregation Encourage Member States to disaggregate data by substance type, age, gender, and nationality to identify at-risk populations better and inform targeted prevention efforts.

5. Foster ASEAN-Wide Cooperation on Control and Prevention Strengthen inter-agency collaboration and cross-border intelligence sharing to address trafficking routes and pharmaceutical diversion. Coordinate public health campaigns to raise awareness about the dangers of CNS depressant misuse, particularly in youth and vulnerable populations.

6. Rebalance Enforcement with Health-Centered Approaches Move toward harm reduction and treatment-based alternatives to incarceration, in line with Thailand's alternative development model and UN drug policy commitments.

The sharp rise in CNS depressant misuse, treatment admissions, and seizures across ASEAN underscores an urgent need for coordinated, multi-sectoral responses. While enforcement remains critical, sustainable control will depend on balanced approaches that integrate regulation, treatment, public education, and regional collaboration. Proactive strategies are essential to prevent further escalation and to ensure that public health and human rights are safeguarded in the response to this emerging drug challenge.

8. Hallucinogen

Hallucinogens, known for their profound effects on perception, mood, and thought, have been used by humans for centuries, both in cultural rituals and for recreational purposes. However, their abuse presents significant risks and challenges. This explores the nature of hallucinogens, the reasons behind their abuse, the effects on individuals and society, and the potential approaches to mitigating the associated harms.

Hallucinogens are a diverse group of drugs that can be classified into two main categories: classic hallucinogens and dissociative drugs. Classic hallucinogens, such as LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide), psilocybin (found in certain mushrooms), and mescaline (from the peyote cactus), primarily alter perception and cognition. Dissociative drugs, including PCP (phencyclidine), ketamine, and dextromethorphan (DXM), can induce feelings of detachment from the environment and self. Both types of hallucinogens can profoundly impact the user's sensory experiences, leading to visual and auditory hallucinations, altered sense of time and space, and significant mood changes.

Individuals may abuse hallucinogens for various reasons, including the pursuit of novel and intense sensory experiences, spiritual exploration, peer pressure, and escapism from personal or psychological issues. The allure of altered consciousness and the promise of profound insights or emotional release can be particularly appealing, especially to young adults and adolescents seeking to explore their identities and boundaries.

The abuse of hallucinogens can lead to a wide array of acute and long-term effects. Acutely, users may experience intense sensory distortions, euphoria, and altered thought processes. However, these experiences can also include adverse outcomes such as anxiety, paranoia, and panic attacks. The unpredictability of a hallucinogenic experience can be dangerous, potentially leading to accidents, injuries, or risky behaviors due to impaired judgment and coordination.

Long-term effects of hallucinogen abuse may include persistent psychosis, flashbacks (also known as Hallucinogen Persisting Perception Disorder, or HPPD), and lasting cognitive impairments. Chronic use of dissociative drugs can also result in memory loss, speech difficulties, and severe mood disturbances. These long-term consequences can profoundly impact an individual's personal and professional life, leading to social isolation, relationship breakdowns, and reduced quality of life.

The societal impact of hallucinogen abuse is multifaceted, affecting healthcare systems, legal frameworks, and community well-being. Increased incidences of hallucinogen-related emergencies place a burden on medical services, requiring specialized care for overdose management and psychological support. Law enforcement agencies also face challenges in addressing the illegal distribution and use of hallucinogens, often exacerbated by the online sale of these substances through the dark web.

Furthermore, the social stigma associated with drug abuse can hinder individuals from seeking help, perpetuating a cycle of abuse and marginalization. Communities may experience heightened tensions and safety concerns, particularly in areas with high prevalence rates of drug misuse.

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In ASEAN, both natural and synthetic hallucinogens are abused. Natural hallucinogens, such as psilocybin mushrooms, have traditional and cultural uses in some ASEAN countries, while synthetic hallucinogens, like LSD and MDMA, are more prevalent in urban settings.

Several factors contribute to the rising abuse of hallucinogens in ASEAN.

1. Cultural and Traditional Practices: In some ASEAN countries, the traditional use of natural hallucinogens is a part of cultural and spiritual rituals. This traditional acceptance can sometimes blur the lines between cultural use and abuse.

2. Tourism and Nightlife: Popular tourist destinations in countries like Thailand and Indonesia often see a higher incidence of hallucinogen abuse, driven by a vibrant nightlife and the availability of these substances.

3. Economic Disparities: Economic challenges and social disparities can lead to substance abuse as a form of escapism, particularly among the youth in urban slums.

4. Globalization and Connectivity: Increased connectivity through the internet and social media facilitates the spread of information about hallucinogens, making them more accessible and appealing to young people.

The abuse of hallucinogens in ASEAN has profound implications for individuals and society:

1. Health Consequences: Acute effects of hallucinogen use include hallucinations, anxiety, paranoia, and risky behavior. Long-term abuse can lead to persistent psychological issues, such as Hallucinogen Persisting Perception Disorder (HPPD), depression, and cognitive impairments.

2. Social Impact: Hallucinogen abuse can strain familial relationships, lead to social isolation, and increase the risk of engaging in criminal activities. The stigma associated with drug abuse further complicates social integration and recovery.

3. Economic Burden: The healthcare costs associated with treating hallucinogen-related health issues, alongside law enforcement expenses, impose a significant economic burden on ASEAN countries.

4. Tourism Sector: While tourism can drive hallucinogen abuse, the negative consequences of drug misuse can tarnish a country's reputation as a safe and desirable destination, impacting the tourism industry.

In 2024, ASEAN Member States reported a modest but notable presence of hallucinogen use, primarily in three categories:

Inhalants were the most commonly reported substance, with 107 users receiving treatment or being identified through surveillance systems. Inhalants continue to pose a significant risk, particularly among marginalized youth and in urban informal settlements, due to their accessibility and low cost.

LSD (Lysergic acid diethylamide) accounted for 15 users, indicating a niche but persistent presence of classical hallucinogens in the region, often associated with nightlife or high-income recreational use.

Magic mushrooms (psilocybin-containing fungi) were reported by four users, suggesting limited but emerging use, possibly linked to increasing global attention around psychedelic substances.

Interpretation and Implications

Although the total number of users remains low compared to other drug types (e.g., ATS or Cannabis), these figures point to: a need for enhanced monitoring of emerging drug trends, particularly among younger demographics; the possibility that hallucinogens are underreported due to stigma, lack of awareness, or misclassification in treatment systems; and a growing global trend in psychedelics that may influence use patterns in ASEAN through digital markets, tourism, or underground networks.

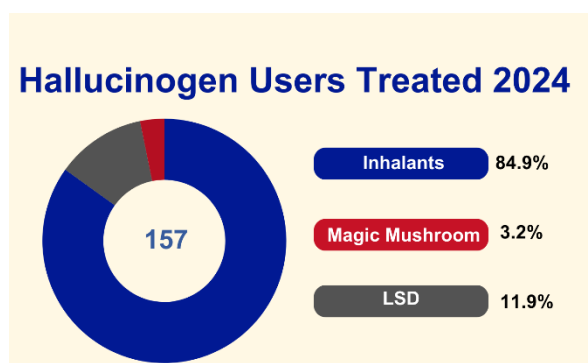


Figure 46: Hallucinogen users treated in 2024

Between 2017 and 2024, ASEAN Member States recorded significant fluctuations in the number of hallucinogen users treated or identified through public health and enforcement systems. The biannual data provides insight into both annual totals and semester-specific patterns.

The high annual totals were recorded between 2018 and 2020.

After 2020, a gradual decline is observed. The lowest total was 157 users in 2024. In the early years (2017–2019), the first half consistently accounted for a larger share of users, suggesting seasonal or operational influences. In 2020, hallucinogen users dropped notably in the second half, possibly reflecting COVID-related service disruptions. From 2022 onwards, the numbers in both halves remained low but relatively stable, indicating a plateau at lower prevalence levels.

These patterns highlight a possible shift in hallucinogen consumption, the initial high usage (2017–2020) may reflect increased experimentation or access via informal or online channels; the post-pandemic period shows consistently reduced numbers, possibly due to enforcement suppression, diminished availability, or lower demand; and the slight rebound in 2024 (157 users) may signal re-emerging use, especially among niche populations or in nightlife settings.

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It is recommended to sustain monitoring systems to detect emerging or resurging trends in hallucinogen use, particularly LSD and psilocybin-containing substances. Prevention messaging should prioritize targeting youth, festival, and nightlife subcultures. Reporting accuracy should be enhanced, as hallucinogen use may be under-detected or misclassified, especially when combined with poly-drug use. Regional cooperation is essential to track supply channels, particularly through online and darknet marketplaces that cater to hallucinogen users.

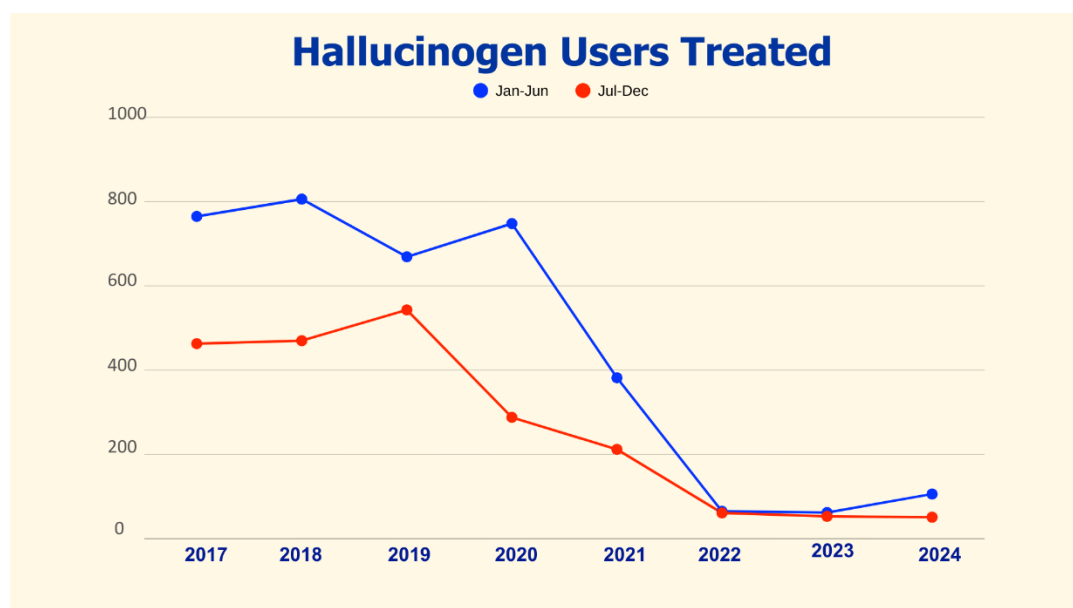


Figure 47: Hallucinogen users treated periodically

The analysis of biannual and annual treatment data for hallucinogen users from 2017 to 2024 reveals notable trends in substance preference and shifts in usage over time within the ASEAN region.

Inhalants: Have consistently been the most prevalent hallucinogenic substance, with peak numbers in 2018 (1,262 users) and 2017 (1,227 users).

LSD (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide): Usage remained very low from 2017 to 2019, but saw a significant surge in 2020 with 291 users, making it the dominant hallucinogen in that year aside from inhalants.

Magic Mushroom (Psilocybin): Use was reported in 2018 (2 users), but not consistently observed in other years, suggesting rare or underreported use.

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Total hallucinogen users peaked in 2019, followed closely by 2018 and 2017. A significant decline occurred in 2021, with a corresponding drop in user counts. The spike in LSD cases in 2020 could reflect changes in drug market dynamics, increased recreational use during lockdowns, or better detection/reporting.

These findings suggest that while inhalants remain the dominant hallucinogenic substance, there are emerging signals of LSD use in the region. The decline after 2020 may be attributed to pandemic-related disruptions, shifts in drug supply, or tighter enforcement.

It is advised to maintain active monitoring of hallucinogen trends, particularly among youth, as experimentation with LSD and psilocybin may rise with global psychedelic trends. Inhalant-specific prevention should be integrated into school and community outreach programs, particularly in low-income urban areas where these substances are more readily accessible. Further investigation into the sharp rise in LSD cases in 2020 through forensic profiling and user surveys is needed to determine whether this was an anomaly or signals a broader trend.

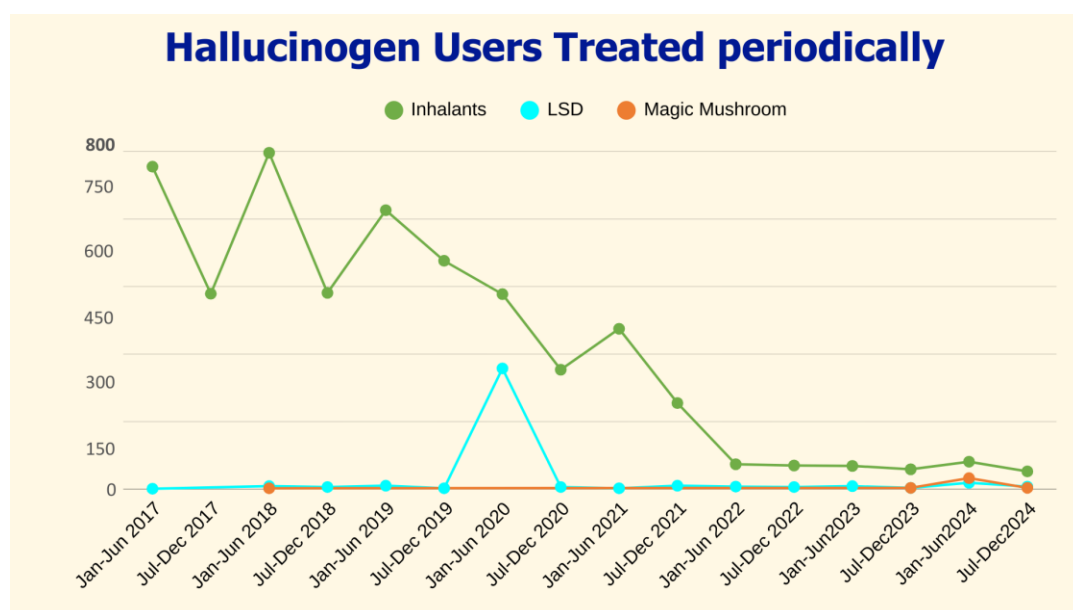


Figure 48: Hallucinogen users are treated periodically by drug types

In 2024, ASEAN Member States recorded the seizure of several types of hallucinogenic substances, though in relatively small volumes when compared to other major drug classes. The total quantities seized (measured in kilograms) across the region are as follows:

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Magic Mushrooms (psilocybin-containing fungi) represented the most significant volume, with 46.48 kg seized. This suggests a growing trend of naturally derived psychedelics being cultivated or trafficked in parts of the region.

LSD (Lysergic acid diethylamide) seizures totaled 8.39 kg, which is a substantial amount considering the drug's high potency and typically low dose per unit. This volume suggests a high likelihood of high-volume trafficking or manufacturing, potentially associated with international darknet markets or micro-laboratory operations.

Inhalants accounted for 0.63 kg, a comparatively lower seizure volume, possibly due to the nature of these substances (typically in aerosol or volatile solvent form) and their widespread legal availability for industrial use.

Other hallucinogens, including synthetic or less common types, were seized in tiny amounts (0.011 kg), but their presence underscores the importance of monitoring emerging psychoactive substances.

The relatively high seizure volume of magic mushrooms may reflect increased local cultivation or trafficking within recreational or festival settings. Member States should monitor rural cultivation zones and online promotion of psilocybin products. The significant LSD seizures signal a potential increase in regional demand, organized smuggling, or distribution from online sources, which may warrant enhanced border screening and forensic analysis. Inhalant seizure data remain limited; however, continued surveillance is necessary due to the prevalence of inhalant use among youth and street populations. The seizure of "Other" hallucinogens, albeit small, calls for vigilance in identifying novel psychoactive substances (NPS) that may enter the region through global supply chains.

It is recommended to expand forensic capacity to detect and profile LSD and psilocybin products, particularly in countries experiencing youth drug experimentation or tourism-related demand. Seizure reporting systems should be improved to include unit counts, packaging, and estimated street value, not just weight, especially for high-potency drugs like LSD. Regulatory frameworks surrounding precursor chemicals and equipment used in the synthesis or cultivation of hallucinogens should be strengthened. Public awareness campaigns on the risks of hallucinogens, especially where perception of "natural" or "safe" use may drive demand (e.g., magic mushrooms), should be promoted. Finally, integrating hallucinogen threats into the ASEAN regional strategy is crucial, ensuring coordination under existing platforms such as the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs.

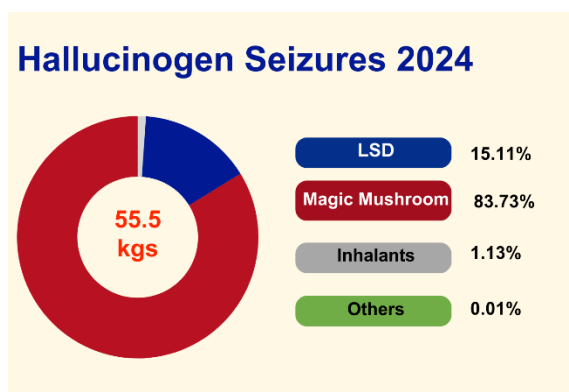


Figure 49: Hallucinogen seizures 2024

The highest number of hallucinogen-related cases was recorded in 2017 (764 cases) and 2018 (697 cases), each with an almost equal distribution between January to June and July to December. A declining trend followed in subsequent years. However, arrest activity began to recover in 2023 (12 cases) and increased sharply in 2024 to 85 cases, reflecting a possible resurgence in hallucinogen circulation or improved detection. In terms of

individuals arrested, the number of offenders closely mirrored case trends. From a high of 758–687 offenders in 2017–2018, the count declined to 172 in 2021, then 86 in 2024.

Seizure volumes were modest but consistent throughout the period: 2017–2018 saw moderate seizure totals (~28kg). In 2021, the seizure volume rose slightly, despite a lower number of arrests, suggesting possibly larger-scale or higher-purity seizures. In 2024, 55.5 kilograms of hallucinogens were seized, reflecting a considerable increase.

In most years, first-half and second-half data showed balanced patterns. In 2024, however, the majority of arrests and seizures occurred from July to December, indicating a seasonal or enforcement-driven uptick in the latter part of the year.

The significant drop in hallucinogen-related arrests from 2019 to 2022 may reflect lower availability, shifting priorities toward ATS, or the impact of COVID-19 on law enforcement operations. The rise in 2023–2024 suggests either renewed market interest in hallucinogens (e.g., LSD, magic mushrooms) or improved targeting and interdiction by authorities. Continued seizure volumes despite reduced case numbers indicate that trafficking operations may be more consolidated or better concealed.

It is suggested to enhance intelligence-sharing to track the supply chains of LSD and psilocybin products, especially as interest in psychedelics grows globally. Monitoring seasonal and situational fluctuations in arrests will help inform resource allocation (e.g., increasing surveillance during H2 when spikes occur). Training for law enforcement and border officials on identifying emerging and synthetic hallucinogens, which may be trafficked in small, concealed quantities, should be strengthened. Finally, legal and regulatory frameworks should be updated to include newer hallucinogens and analogs that may not be explicitly scheduled but are gaining popularity through the darknet or social media.

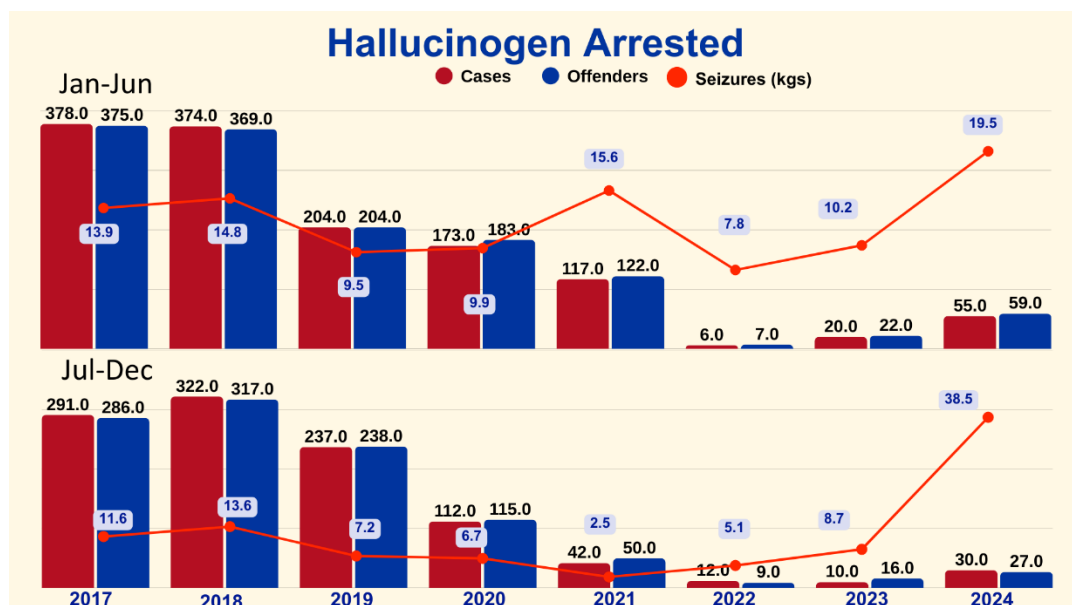


Figure 50: Hallucinogen arrested periodically

Hallucinogen seizure data from ASEAN Member States between 2017 and 2021 reveal diverse patterns in the types and quantities of substances intercepted. While overall seizure volumes are relatively modest compared to ATS or Cannabis, the data points to increased diversity in hallucinogenic substances and signs of evolving trafficking trends.

From 2017, total seizures occurred in 2018, slightly increased, with 28.58 kilograms of hallucinogens intercepted. Seizures then declined sharply in 2019 (18.07 kg), 2020 (16.72 kg), and 2021 (11.68 kg), likely reflecting operational disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic. A modest rebound occurred in 2022, with 12.85 kg seized, suggesting renewed trafficking or improved interdiction capacity.

Inhalants consistently represent the largest share of hallucinogen seizures. Seizure volumes were highest in 2018 (24.05 kg) and declined each year to 6.99 kg in 2021.

Magic Mushrooms (Psilocybin): Were seized in varying amounts, peaking in 2021 (3.35 kg)—indicating possible increases in cultivation, trafficking, or recreational use.

LSD: Seizures fluctuated modestly, with a notable surge in 2021 (6.60 kg)—the highest single-year LSD seizure during the reporting period. This may reflect improved detection or increased trafficking of synthetic hallucinogens.

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Other Hallucinogens (including synthetic or novel substances) were detected in small but meaningful amounts in 2019 (0.2 kg), 2020 (1.5 kg), and 2021 (1.2 kg), suggesting that new psychoactive substances (NPS) may be emerging in the region.

The presence of multiple hallucinogen types (inhalants, psilocybin, LSD, and others) indicates growing diversity in the hallucinogenic drug market in Southeast Asia. The rise in LSD seizures in 2021 may point to increased demand or supply chain expansion, possibly through online platforms or international networks. Seizures of "other" hallucinogens highlight the need for robust early warning systems and forensic profiling to detect NPS and analogs not yet classified under national laws.

It is recommended to enhance forensic capacity to analyze seized substances and distinguish between traditional and emerging hallucinogens. Hallucinogens should be integrated into national drug surveillance systems, even where they are not currently prioritized. Intelligence-sharing on synthetic hallucinogen trafficking, especially LSD and NPS, should be improved through ASEAN-NARCO and regional enforcement platforms. Public awareness about the risks of psychedelics, particularly among youth and festival-goers who may view them as "natural" or "safe" alternatives, should be raised.

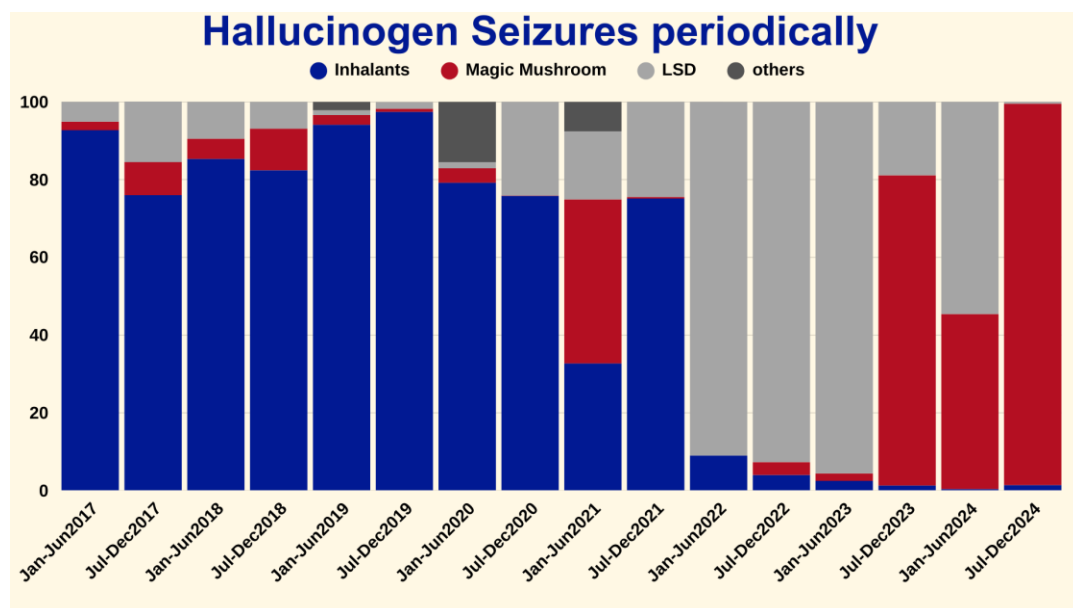


Figure 51: Hallucinogen seizures periodically by drug types

Between 2017 and 2019, ASEAN Member States recorded consistently high numbers of hallucinogen users treated, over 1,000 cases annually, driven primarily by inhalant abuse. After a noticeable decline during the pandemic, the number of users began to rebound,

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reaching 157 treated users in 2024. While inhalants dominate the profile, LSD and magic mushroom cases were sporadically reported, with a notable LSD spike in 2020 (291 users).

2017–2018 saw the highest arrest numbers (700+ offenders per year). These declined sharply through 2022 and began climbing again, reaching 86 offenders in 2024. Offender counts closely paralleled the number of cases and remained consistent across biannual periods, indicating stable enforcement patterns.

Total hallucinogen seizures peaked in 2018 and remained moderate through 2021. The largest seizures involved inhalants, with notable seizure volumes of ~28 kilograms in 2018 and gradual declines thereafter. Magic mushrooms and LSD were seized in small but increasing quantities, with LSD rising in 2021. Emerging "other" hallucinogens were detected from 2019 onward, reflecting a broadening substance profile.

Inhalants remain the most commonly used and seized hallucinogens in the ASEAN region, particularly among vulnerable youth populations. LSD and psilocybin (magic mushrooms) are emerging, possibly linked to recreational experimentation, international tourism, or darknet markets. Arrest and seizure patterns declined during COVID-19 but are now showing signs of resurgence.

Seizure of small but consistent amounts of "other" hallucinogens indicates the possible infiltration of new substances.

Policy Recommendations for ASEAN Member States (AMS)

1. Strengthen Surveillance and Early Warning Systems
 - Expand national drug monitoring to include hallucinogens and inhalants.
 - Establish or enhance Early Warning Systems (EWS) to detect new hallucinogenic substances and NPS.
 - Promote standardization of reporting mechanisms across AMS to ensure accurate regional trend analysis.
2. Improve Enforcement and Forensic Capacity
 - Equip law enforcement with forensic profiling tools to detect and classify LSD, psilocybin, and synthetic analogs.
 - Develop a regional drug profiling database through ASEAN-NARCO to link seizures with trafficking routes and sources.
 - Enhance cooperation on digital drug markets and cross-border hallucinogen trafficking.
3. Target Prevention Among High-Risk Groups
 - Implement school and youth-focused prevention programs, primarily targeting inhalant abuse in urban and rural disadvantaged areas.

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- Address the misconception of safety around psychedelics (e.g., "natural" magic mushrooms) through public health campaigns.
 - Introduce community-level interventions in tourism zones, nightlife areas, and border regions vulnerable to LSD and mushroom use.
4. Update Legal Frameworks
- Review and revise national drug schedules to include emerging hallucinogens and analogs.
 - Ensure that legal penalties for trafficking and possession are proportionate and support public health approaches.
5. Integrate Hallucinogens into ASEAN Drug Strategies
- Incorporate hallucinogen-specific data and responses in the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs (2026 and beyond).

Support joint training, intelligence-sharing, and cross-border operations to tackle synthetic hallucinogens and inhalant smuggling.

9. OTHER SUBSTANCES

The 2024 ASEAN dataset on substance users reveals significant figures in two often-overlooked categories: polydrug users and unclassified drug users. These two groups represent complex challenges for both clinical treatment and policy response.

Polydrug Users: A total of 24,457 individuals were reported as using multiple substances concurrently. Polydrug use—defined as the use of two or more substances either simultaneously or sequentially—is associated with higher health risks, greater likelihood of overdose, and poorer treatment outcomes. This figure highlights the growing complexity of substance use behaviors in the region, where individuals may combine central nervous system (CNS) depressants with stimulants, opioids, or hallucinogens.

Unclassified Drug Users: An even larger number, 45,301 individuals, were categorized under "unclassified" substance use. This broad category likely includes emerging psychoactive substances (EPS), poorly documented drugs, herbal or synthetic compounds, and cases with incomplete diagnostic information. The high number suggests substantial gaps in drug identification, surveillance, or reporting systems across ASEAN member states.

The large number of polydrug users indicates a shift from traditional, single-substance use toward more diverse and dangerous patterns of consumption. This trend complicates both medical treatment protocols and law enforcement strategies, as users may present with mixed intoxication symptoms and require more comprehensive care. The prevalence of unclassified users points to challenges in drug monitoring infrastructure, including limitations in field

testing, inconsistencies in reporting, or the emergence of novel substances that evade standard categorization. It also underscores the urgency of updating diagnostic tools, enhancing laboratory capacity, and training frontline professionals to recognize non-traditional drugs.

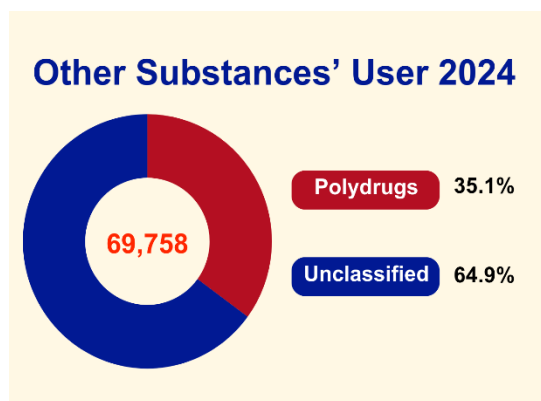


Figure 52: Other substances/Poly drug users treated in 2024

The 2024 seizure data from ASEAN Member States provides insight into emerging patterns in illicit drug production and trafficking, with a focus on precursor chemicals, multi-substance formulations, and novel combinations. Although traditional precursors are not identified in this dataset, the presence of composite and unclassified substances reflects the evolving complexity of the regional drug landscape.

"Happy Water": The largest seizure volume in 2024 was attributed to "Happy Water," with 216.44 kilograms confiscated. This term typically refers to a mixture of party drugs, including MDMA, ketamine, methamphetamine, and benzodiazepines, often dissolved in liquid form. Its rising presence reflects a dangerous trend toward designer cocktails that are hard to trace and even harder to regulate.

Multiple Drug Formulations: Seizures involving multi-drug combinations totaled 13.64 kilograms. These substances may include polydrug tablets, mixed powders, or liquids intended to enhance or prolong psychoactive effects. Their presence highlights the increasing popularity of synthetic mixtures over traditional single-substance drugs.

Unclassified Substances: A total of 10.46 kilograms of unclassified or undetermined substances were seized. These may represent emerging new psychoactive substances (NPS), misidentified drugs, or undeclared additives—their detection points to growing forensic and regulatory challenges in identifying novel compounds in the region.

Caffeine as an Adulterant: While not always considered a drug of abuse on its own, caffeine is frequently used as an adulterant in stimulant formulations. Although the quantity is not specified in this dataset, its mention suggests that forensic agencies are aware of its recurring role in counterfeit substances, such as counterfeit tablets.

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Others: A small volume (0.003 kg) was labeled under “others,” likely denoting unclassified residues or trace substances that did not fall into recognized categories.

The notable presence of synthetic cocktails, such as Happy Water, and multi-drug formulations illustrates a shift in manufacturing and consumption patterns, favoring low-cost, high-potency mixtures. These drugs are often marketed toward young and urban populations in club or party settings, complicating both detection and enforcement. The relatively high seizure volumes of unclassified and mixed substances further emphasize the limitations of current drug classification systems, laboratory capacities, and scheduling regulations. Without a clear understanding of chemical content and psychoactive potential, law enforcement and public health systems may struggle to assess risk or respond effectively.



Figure 53: Other Substances/Precursor Chemicals Seizures



Figure 54: Precursor Chemicals Seizures 2024

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In 2024, chemical precursor seizures across ASEAN provide essential insight into the operational scale and synthetic methods used in the illicit production of methamphetamine, particularly in its two most common forms: YABA (methamphetamine tablets) and ICE (crystal methamphetamine).

Seized substances such as benzyl cyanide (32,800 kilograms) and thionyl chloride (13,100 kilograms) indicate a marked expansion of industrial-scale methamphetamine synthesis, particularly through phenyl-2-propanone (P2P) pathways commonly associated with high-purity ICE production. These chemicals are essential for the synthesis of intermediate compounds. They are rarely found outside industrial operations, suggesting the presence of sophisticated laboratories, likely in regions such as Shan State (Myanmar), where enforcement remains limited.

The seizure of ephedrine (43.2 kilograms), a well-established direct precursor for methamphetamine, and caffeine (217.3 kilograms)—a common adulterant in YABA—supports the ongoing prevalence of tablet-based production targeting mass regional consumption. These substances align with traditional synthesis routes still widely used in Thailand and Laos, where methamphetamine tablets are frequently manufactured for local and sub-regional distribution.

Additionally, acids such as hydrochloric acid (560.6 kilograms) and sulfuric acid (27,847 kilograms) were also recovered in large volumes. These reagents are critical in the final stages of synthesis, particularly for pH adjustment, neutralization, and the conversion of base methamphetamine to its hydrochloride salt form, suitable for either crystal (ICE) or compressed tablet (YABA) production.

The seizure of ethyl acetate (19,230 kilograms) and methyl ethyl ketone (MEK) further points to the use of solvents in refining and purifying both forms of methamphetamine. Their presence reflects the increasing technical capabilities of regional clandestine operations.

Taken together, these seizures confirm that ASEAN continues to experience dual-track methamphetamine production:

- YABA remains dominant in rural and low-income populations, produced via ephedrine-based methods and blended with caffeine for tablet formulation.
- ICE is expanding rapidly in scale and sophistication, often synthesized using indirect P2P routes with export-oriented purity levels.

This pattern is consistent with regional trends reported by national drug enforcement agencies, which note rising methamphetamine availability, diversification of trafficking routes

(particularly maritime), and increasing chemical imports through transshipment hubs in Malaysia and the Philippines.

In summary, chemical seizure data from 2024 underscore the ongoing challenges in curbing methamphetamine production in ASEAN. While YABA production remains entrenched, the rise of P2P-based ICE synthesis reflects a concerning shift toward higher-potency products and transnational distribution networks.

10. IMPLICATIONS

Deep historical roots and evolving socio-economic conditions shape the drug landscape in Southeast Asia. Archaeological and anthropological evidence indicates that psychoactive substance use, such as betel nut (*Areca catechu*), has been socially and spiritually embedded in the region for over 4,000 years. Colonial regimes further institutionalized opium distribution for economic and social control, creating legacies that continue to influence current drug use patterns and enforcement challenges in ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations).

Recent trends show a significant shift towards Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) as the most prevalent substances of abuse. In 2024, ATS accounted for over 297,000 treatment cases across ASEAN, followed by more than 117,000 for opioids and approximately 29,700 for central nervous system (CNS) depressants. This highlights an increasing demand for treatment services and diversification of drug types in the region. Concurrently, law enforcement efforts have resulted in surging seizures of illicit substances. In 2024, ATS seizures totaled 239 metric tons, Cannabis 164 metric tons, and opioids over 11 metric tons, out of over 541,000 kilograms of drugs and precursors intercepted. These figures indicate both robust enforcement and the persistent expansion of regional and transnational drug supply chains.

Effective drug policy in ASEAN necessitates a nuanced understanding of the historical and socio-cultural context of psychoactive substances. Policy responses in the region have varied widely, from institutionalized commodification under colonial opium monopolies to the more recent decriminalization of kratom in Thailand. Psychoactive substances in Southeast Asia are not merely vectors of addiction; they are also deeply embedded cultural artifacts and instruments of historical continuity.

Policy Implication: Drug strategies must be informed by historical context and be culturally sensitive to ensure effective implementation. Public health and enforcement measures should integrate anthropological insights, particularly in communities with traditional or ritualistic use of psychoactive substances.

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Treatment data from 2017 to 2024 reveal an overall upward trajectory in service utilization across all drug categories. ATS remains the dominant cause for treatment, followed by opioids, Cannabis, and new psychoactive substances (NPS). The consistent rise in treated cases—708,550 in 2024 alone—signals an urgent need for expanded treatment infrastructure, diversified service models, and the mainstreaming of harm reduction.

Policy Implication: ASEAN member states should scale up investment in evidence-based treatment systems, including outpatient care, medication-assisted treatment (MAT), and community-based rehabilitation. Semi-annual treatment peaks highlight the need for flexible service provision tailored to cyclical and contextual demand.

Between 2017 and 2024, drug seizure volumes have fluctuated, but overall quantities have trended upward. ATS seizures grew nearly fivefold during this period. Cannabis seizures remained high, while opioids displayed volatility influenced by heroin and codeine interdictions. The seizure of precursor chemicals—though quantitatively smaller—emphasizes the sophistication of synthetic drug manufacturing networks.

Policy Implication: Strengthen regional precursor control mechanisms by adopting harmonized precursor monitoring systems, expanding tracking of licit precursor transactions, and enforcing targeted precursor interdiction strategies. Enhance forensic and analytical capacities to intercept and analyze synthetic drug components. Real-time data sharing across borders is critical to disrupting production and distribution.

Substances

Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS)

Methamphetamine, particularly in tablet and crystalline forms, dominates the regional drug market. While enforcement remains high, rising seizure volumes indicate the insufficiency of interdiction alone. Crystalline methamphetamine, with its greater purity and addictive potential, poses an escalating threat.

Policy Recommendation: Develop a dual-track strategy prioritizing both enforcement and demand reduction, with targeted interventions for youth, harm reduction, and investment in treatment.

Opioids

Heroin continues to dominate opioid use, accounting for over 95% of opioid-related treatment in 2024. Pharmaceutical opioid misuse, particularly codeine, is emerging as a parallel concern.

Policy Recommendation: Expand opioid substitution therapy and enhance prescription drug monitoring programs. Cross-border coordination is essential for managing both traditional and synthetic opioid flows.

Cannabis

Cannabis use trends reflect policy liberalization and shifting social attitudes. While seizures remain high, arrests have declined significantly since 2020. Treatment demand rebounded in 2024.

Policy Recommendation: Develop integrated regulatory frameworks that distinguish between medical, industrial, and illicit Cannabis markets. Scale up public health messaging on risk minimization.

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)

New Psychoactive Substances pose significant regulatory challenges due to their rapid evolution and chemical diversity. Seizures and treatment data point to increasing prevalence and risk.

Policy Recommendation: Implement flexible legislative controls (e.g., generic scheduling), invest in toxicological capacity, and prioritize early warning systems.

Strategic Policy Recommendations

The ASEAN region stands at a critical juncture in its response to psychoactive substance use and drug trafficking. The convergence of rising treatment demand, evolving substance patterns, and resilient supply networks underscores the urgency of a balanced, data-informed, and culturally grounded approach.

Core Recommendations:

- **Balance Enforcement with Public Health:** Realign national drug strategies to prioritize health and enforcement equally. Expand coverage of treatment, prevention, and harm reduction programs.
- **Enhance Regional Cooperation:** Institutionalize intelligence-sharing mechanisms, standardize reporting systems, and conduct joint operations targeting trafficking and precursor networks. ASEAN's efforts are underpinned by frameworks such as the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs (2016–2025), which provides strategic direction across prevention, enforcement, and rehabilitation pillars.
- **Invest in Data and Innovation:** Leverage technology for real-time surveillance, predictive analytics, and targeted outreach. Support research into emerging trends and treatment innovations. ASEAN-NARCO and the ASEAN Drug Monitoring Network (ADMN) offer platforms for integrated regional data sharing and analysis.
- **Strengthen Precursor Chemical Regulation:** Adopt region-wide licensing, registration, and monitoring systems for precursor chemicals in line with the ASEAN Guidelines on Control of Precursors and Essential Chemicals (2002). Engage public-private partnerships with the chemical and pharmaceutical sectors to prevent diversion.

Regional mechanisms, such as ACCORD (ASEAN and China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs) and the Safe Mekong initiative, offer blueprints for precursor interdiction and intelligence-led cross-border cooperation.

- Support Legal and Regulatory Reform: Align national drug laws with contemporary health standards and international human rights frameworks, ensuring proportionality and treatment over punishment.

By adopting a multi-pronged and regionally harmonized policy architecture, ASEAN can address the complex and evolving drug landscape with resilience, equity, and effectiveness.

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CHAPTER 3

ASEAN Country Report 2024





Brunei Darussalam

Drug Arrests

Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), as the leading law enforcement agency in combating illicit drug related crimes in Brunei Darussalam, had made **777** drug arrests in 2024 for various offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act, Chapter 27 which constitute to 0.17 % of the population of Brunei Darussalam¹. Out of the total arrests, 641 were males and 136 were females. Majority of the arrests were locals and of Malay ethnicity.

Drug abusers in the age group of 30-49 years make up the largest group of arrestees as tabulated below:

Age group	No. of Arrest
14 years and below	2
15 – 19 years	13
20 – 29 years	168
30 – 39 years	261
40 - 49 years	243
50 – 59 years	79
60 years and above	11

The following are the different types of drug offences committed under the Misuse of Drug Act (MDA), Chapter 27 in the year 2024:

Misuse of Drug Act (MDA) Chapter 27	Offence	No. of Arrests
Section 3A	Possession of controlled drug for the purpose of trafficking	49
Section 5	Import and export of controlled drug	40
Section 6(a)	Possession of controlled drugs	174
Section 6(b)	Consumption of controlled drugs	751
Section 7	Possession of pipes and utensils	261

Note: One arrestee may be arrested for multiple offences under Misuse of Drug Act, Chapter 27.

¹ Population of Brunei Darussalam in 2024 was 455,500 persons.

Drug Seizures

Methylamphetamine remains the most commonly abused drugs in Brunei Darussalam, followed by Cannabis. Drug seizures made in 2024 are tabulated below:

Type of Drugs	Gross weight
Methylamphetamine	3,602.70 gram
Cannabis	2,603.28 gram 07 boxes of cannabis oil 1.22 gram of cannabis seeds 39 edible gummies
Ketamine	4.64 gram
Erimin 5 (Nimetazepam)	58.5 tablets
Ecstasy	108 tablets 9.88 gram
Mitragyna speciose (Ketum)	2,000 ml
Others	32 unknown pills 96 bottles of vape liquid

In addition to the seizures tabulated above, **36,728.38 gm** of Methylamphetamine (36.73 kg) was also seized in Operation Blockade. Through this operation, the Bureau detected an attempt by an international drug syndicate using Brunei Darussalam as a drug transit hub by utilising virtual office services in the nation. In collaboration with other law enforcement agencies and courier services, eight (08) parcels containing Methylamphetamine smuggled into Brunei Darussalam via air freight consignment were found and seized amounting to 36, 728.38 gm of Methylamphetamine (36.73 kg). Upon investigation, the parcels were reassigned to be shipped to other destination abroad.

Major Operations

16 major operations were conducted in 2024 targeting drug trafficking syndicates in Brunei Darussalam resulting to a total of **211 arrest** and the following drug seizures:

- 2,206.20 gm Cannabis
- 3,172.88 Methylamphetamine
- 32 unknown pills
- 01 ecstasy pill

Drug Cases at the Borders

In its effort to intercept the trafficking of drugs into Brunei Darussalam through the border, the Bureau work closely with other law enforcement agencies, forming an inter-agency approach, to monitor the security across the border. NCB officers are stationed at six border control posts in Brunei Darussalam namely at Brunei International Airport, Kuala Lurah Control Post, Ujong Jalan Control Post, Labu Control Post, Sungai Tujoh Control Post and Serasa Ferry Terminal.

In 2024, 57 were arrested at various border control posts for drug related offences. Out of the total arrests, 30 were Bruneians, 02 permanent resident and 25 foreigners. The following drugs were seized at various border control checkpoints.

Type of Drugs	Gross weight
Methylamphetamine	527.26 gram
Cannabis	2,013.78 gram 1.22 gram of cannabis seeds
Ketamine	1.93 gram
Erimin 5 (Nimetazepam)	03 pills
Ecstasy	108 pills
Mitragyna speciose (Ketum)	2000 ml
Others	32 unknown pills 03 bottles of vape liquid



Cambodia

A. Overview of Drug Situation

In 2024, the 7th term of the National Assembly and the Royal Government of Cambodia (RoGC) began with a strong commitment to addressing the growing issue of drug abuse and trafficking. The government introduced the **Pentagon Strategy, Phase 1**, which emphasizes the fight against drugs as a top priority within its political agenda. Under the leadership of Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei **HUN MANET**, Prime Minister of Cambodia enacted several powerful anti-drug policies, including:

- Reform of the National Authority for Combating Drugs (NACD): Significant restructuring and strengthening of the NACD to improve drug enforcement and prevention efforts.
- The 9th Anti-Illegal Drugs Campaign Plan: A comprehensive framework for combating drugrelated issues.
- Creation of Anti-Illegal Drugs Campaign Command: To oversee and direct anti-drug initiatives.
- Establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Working Group: A collaborative body aimed at enhancing control over narcotics and chemical compounds.
- Order No. 01 of the RoGC: Enforced strict measures against illicit drugs in government ministries, institutions, and sub-national administrations.

Despite these efforts, the global drug situation remains complex and troubling. Geopolitical conflicts, such as the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, as well as instability in regions like Myanmar, have provided opportunities for drug traffickers to expand their activities. The production of illicit drugs, particularly in areas like Central America, the Golden Crescent, and the Golden Triangle, continues to feed the international drug market.

Key Challenges:

- Cambodia is particularly vulnerable to drug smuggling, especially from the Golden Triangle region. The increase in law enforcement crackdowns has not significantly reduced drug related crimes.

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- Compared to 2023, Cambodia experienced a 31.84% increase in drug cases and a 399% increase in the volume of drugs seized.
- The majority of drugs trafficked through Cambodia's land borders originate from the Golden Triangle (synthetic drugs and heroin), while cocaine comes from South and Central America, and ketamine and ecstasy are sourced from Europe.

The Cambodian government has adopted the principle of **“Cleaning Our House”** as a broader approach to national reform, with a focused anti-drug strategy under the principle of **“Cleaning the Lake”**. This initiative aims to tackle the drug issue at its roots, striving for a cleaner, drug-free environment for the Cambodian people, as **Strategic Response**.

In conclusion, Cambodia's anti-drug efforts in 2024 reflect a determined stance against drug related threats, with significant policy advancements and strategic frameworks in place to combat the rising drug trafficking and use, while continuing to address the challenges posed by global drug production and smuggling networks.

B. Prevention and Education

In Cambodia, prevention and education have been identified as a priority strategy in the fight against drugs. The National Authority for Combating Drugs (NACD) has emphasized the importance of public awareness campaigns, particularly in light of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited face-to-face activities. To adapt to these conditions, hybrid platforms became more prominent, and the NACD took advantage of online platforms to disseminate messages about the harms of drugs. One such initiative was the launch of the "NoDrug" mobile application, designed to provide educational information, treatment services, and a platform for individuals to submit confidential feedback and complaints.

The NACD and various government institutions in Cambodia have significantly intensified efforts to raise awareness, educate the public, and promote prevention and suppression of drug use through multiple channels and initiatives in 2023 and 2024.

1. Educational Campaigns:

- Public awareness efforts included media campaigns, interviews on radio and television, and educational messages on product labels. For example, in 2023, the NACD website received over 1.6 million visits, while drug prevention messages were sent over 218 million times to mobile phone users.
- Educational messages on drug dangers were added to 1,576 product labels, marking a 26% increase from the previous year.

2. Community Outreach and Education:

- Over 3 million civil servants, authorities, teachers, and citizens received education on drug issues during the 2024 Universal Electoral Conference.
- Ministries and institutions conducted over 32,000 training sessions, reaching more than 15 million people, representing a dramatic increase in outreach.

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- Provincial and municipal committees enhanced their drug education efforts by 44%, reaching 5.8 million people in 2023.

3. International Day Against Drug Abuse:

- On June 22-26, 2024, Cambodia celebrated the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking with events, including exhibitions, concerts, and a large-scale ceremony attended by 14,400 participants.
- The celebration was part of a nationwide effort, with 25,422 people engaged in local events across 24 provinces.

4. Additional Outreach Activities:

- The NACD organized a charity football match to raise awareness on drug abuse, attracting 50,000 participants.



The NACD, along with ministries, institutions, the Narcotics Control Committee, and other relevant bodies, has significantly increased its efforts in public education and awareness campaigns. In 2024, a total of 24,301,046 people received anti-drug messages, a 54% increase from 2023, which saw 15,798,914 people reached. This expanded outreach is attributed to partnerships with popular private institutions, including the Khmer Arts Association, Hangmeas HD TVs, Galaxy Entertainment, the Cambodian Electronic Sport Federation, and the Kun Khmer Boxing Association, through signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs). To further ensure the safety of communities, Cambodia has also finalized the drafting of the National Policy on Drug-Free Villages.

As part of Cambodia's commitment to raising awareness, the country observed the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on June 26, 2024. During the celebration, 7,814.31 kilograms of drugs and chemicals were destroyed according to technical specifications, with an additional 3,254 kilograms of other chemicals slated for neutralization at a later date.



C. Effectives Law Enforcement

The National Authority for Combating Drugs (NACD) has actively engaged in both national and international collaborations to enhance the efficiency of law enforcement against drug-related crimes. This has included strengthening partnerships through bilateral and multilateral frameworks with various organizations, especially with neighboring countries. The results of these efforts are significant.

Drug Smuggling Routes

The majority of drug smuggling cases, approximately 84%, utilized land routes across the Lao PDR and Thailand borders, primarily sourcing from the Golden Triangle; synthetic drugs and heroin.

Additional origins include:

- Cocaine: Flown in from South and Central America via air routes. ▯ ecstasy (MDMA): Sent from Europe through parcel services.

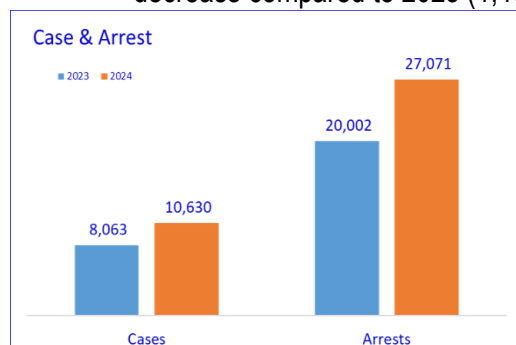
In 2024, notable interceptions included:

- 3 cases of attempted sea route smuggling resulting in a volume of 6,555.12 Kgs.
- 5 cases of attempted air smuggling leading to the seizure of 16.98 Kgs of drugs.

Drug Seizures and Types

In 2024, a total number 14,909.35 Kgs of drugs were seized, marking a remarkable 398.83% increase compared to 2023. The main types of drugs seized included:

- Ketamine: Seized amounting to 3,177.44 Kgs, a 205.43% increase from 2023 (1,040.30 Kgs).
- MDMA (ecstasy): Seizures reached 1,923.54 Kgs, a tenfold increase from 2023 (324.25 Kgs).
- Methamphetamine (Crystal ICE): Seized 1,436.76 Kgs, representing a 562.23% increase compared to previous levels.
- Heroin: Seized 153.42 Kgs, showing a slight decrease from 2023 (166.60 Kgs).
- Chemical Substances: Seizures just only 354 Kgs, accounted as 75.90% decrease compared to 2023 (1,469.00 Kgs).



Drug Types	Unit	Year		
		2023	2024	%
ICE	Kgs	1,436.76	9,514.70	562.23
WY	Kgs	5.33	136.69	2,464.54
Ketamine	Kgs	1,040.30	3,177.44	205.43
MDMA	Kgs	324.25	1,923.54	493.23
Heroin	Kgs	166.60	153.42	(7.91)
Cocaine	Kgs	8.74	1.35	(84.55)
NimetaZepam	Kgs	6.90	2.21	(67.97)
TOTAL		2,988.88	14,909.35	398.83
Chemical	Kgs	1,469.00	354.00	(75.90)
Cannabis	Kgs	45.15	142.27	215.11
Marijuana	Plants	37,535	17,785	(52.62)

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Drug Cases and Arrest of Suspects

In 2024, 27,071 suspects were apprehended in 10,630 related cases, including 2,081 females, marking a 35.53% increase from 2023 (20,002 total arrests). The breakdown of arrests includes:

- 1,339 trafficking cases with 3,424 arrests (434 females).
- 4,871 cases related to transportation, possession, and storage leading to 9,190 arrests (752 females).
- 13 processing cases with 54 arrests (4 females).
- 10 cultivation cases with 9 arrests (3 females).
- 4,397 consumption cases resulting in 14,394 arrests (888 females).

Suspects included 26,026 Cambodians and 1,045 foreigners across 16 different nationalities, with notable representations from Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, Chinese and various other countries.

Currently, marijuana is the only illicit plant categorized as such in Cambodia, found mostly in remote agricultural areas and mountains where hard-to-access. In efforts to combat this, 17,785 narcotic plants (marijuana) were destroyed, with 142.27 Kgs of dried cannabis seized, representing a 215.11% increase from the previous year.



Narcotics Profiling and Trends

Packaging often mimicked tea bags with Chinese language signatures, indicating a trend in narcotic profiling. The NACD has established Standard Operating Procedures for Monitoring and Management of Narcotics and Chemical substances to prevent the diversion of legal chemicals into illicit markets.

D. Treatment and Rehabilitation Services

In Cambodia, drug treatment is carried out under two main systems: in public health facilities through Community-Based Treatment (CBTx) and in specialized rehabilitation centers. The National Anti-Drug Committee, the Committee in Charge of Treatment and Rehabilitation of Drug Addicts, and provincial drug control committees have made significant strides in improving the treatment, rehabilitation, and integration of drug addicts in various services and initiatives.

1. Harm Reduction Programs:

- The government continued the implementation of harm reduction strategies, including providing methadone replacement therapy at Khmer-Soviet Friendship Hospital and Chbar Ampov Referral Hospital in Phnom Penh. A

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needle/syringe program for injecting drug users was also implemented in collaboration with partner organizations.

2. Treatment and Rehabilitation:

- In 2024, 33,178 drug addicts and users received treatment, marking a 44% increase from the previous year (23,046). These individuals included:
 - 15,180 integrated into communities after treatment.
 - 8,623 individuals continuing rehabilitation in centers.
 - 7,277 registered in community-based treatments.
 - 2,098 individuals sent to court for legal action.
- The provincial and municipal drug control committees were urged to enhance coordination for easier access to treatment services in local communities.

3. Mental Health and Addiction Services:

- A network of 458 locations nationwide provided mental health and drug addiction services, including national hospitals, provincial hospitals, referral hospitals, and health centers. Signs were installed at 345 locations (82%) to guide individuals seeking services.

4. Strengthening Treatment and Rehabilitation Capacity:

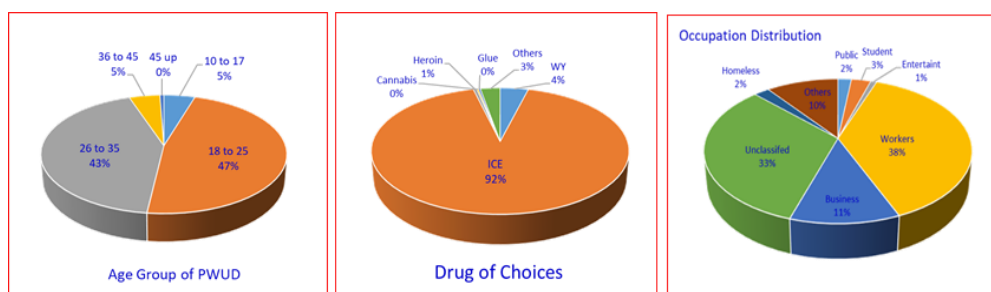
- The NACD conducted monitoring visits to evaluate temporary treatment centers and rehabilitation facilities in Phnom Penh and Preah Sihanouk Province.
- Continued vocational and life skills training at the National Center for Drug Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation.
- Ongoing training for health facility staff on mental health and drug abuse treatment.
- Strengthened the management and coordination of programs aimed at reducing the harm caused by drug use across the country.

5. Standardization and Training:

- The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the National Center for Drug Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation was developed to streamline services.
- Data on drug users and addicts in communities were further consolidated to improve service delivery.
- Relevant officials attended annual training on drug addiction treatment in Vietnam to improve local practices.

As of 2024, 33,178 people who used drugs (PWUD) accessed treatment services and rehabilitation centers, with methamphetamine (ICE) being the most prevalent drug used, accounting for 92.96% of PWUD. The majority of PWUD were aged between 18 to 25 years (47.20%), followed by those aged 26 to 35 years (42.87%). In terms of occupation, the most common occupations were workers (38.10%) and unclassified jobs (32.60%). Together, these two categories accounted for 70.70% of the PWUD population.

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Through these efforts, Cambodia has made notable progress in expanding the availability and quality of treatment and rehabilitation services for drug addicts, reinforcing its commitment to supporting recovery and reintegration into society. The government has acknowledged the spread of drug use from urban to rural and remote areas, and in response, it has encouraged local authorities to establish rehabilitation centers in areas where treatment and rehabilitation services are not readily accessible.

E. International Cooperation

Recognizing that no single country can effectively combat drug-related crimes alone, Cambodia has actively engaged in international cooperation to fight drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. Concerning the complexity and scale of drug-related crimes, Cambodia has taken a proactive stance in international cooperation to address the issue of drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. Acknowledging that no single nation can tackle these challenges alone, Cambodia has strengthened its collaboration with both regional and international partners, participating in various multi-country frameworks focused on sharing information, resources, and best practices to combat drug syndicates and trafficking routes.

Cambodia has made significant strides in strengthening its international cooperation with neighboring countries and regional partners to combat drug trafficking and promote drug-free initiatives along its borders. Key efforts and results of these collaborations are outlined below:

1. **Information Sharing on Drug Trafficking:** Timely and accurate exchange of information has become a cornerstone of Cambodia's international efforts to disrupt drug trafficking networks. By sharing intelligence on drug syndicates, trafficking routes, and the movement of illicit substances, Cambodia is playing a vital role in monitoring and intercepting illegal drug operations. This approach helps identify and dismantle organized criminal networks that operate beyond borders.
2. **Regional Drug Control Mechanisms:** Cambodia actively participates in various regional drug control mechanisms, such as those under the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) framework and Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) cooperation. Through these platforms, Cambodia collaborates with neighboring countries to share intelligence, harmonize drug control policies, and ensure a united front against the growing threat of illicit drugs.

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3. **Cross-Border Collaboration with Neighboring Countries:** Cambodia has worked closely with its bordering countries, such as Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and China, to address the shared threat of drug trafficking. Collaborative efforts include:
 - Border Liaison Offices (BLOs), which facilitate communication and coordination between law enforcement agencies to prevent drug movement across borders.
 - Joint operations and border patrols aimed at intercepting illicit drugs before they reach Cambodian territory.
 - Training and capacity-building programs for border security forces, enhancing their ability to detect and disrupt drug-related activities.
4. **Implementation of Drug-Free Initiatives:** In collaboration with its regional neighbors, Cambodia has worked on promoting drug-free villages, communes, and sanctuaries along its borders. These initiatives aim to reduce the demand for drugs and strengthen community engagement in preventing drug abuse. Through education campaigns, local enforcement, and empowerment programs, these areas are being transformed into zones where the cultivation, trafficking, and use of drugs are minimized or eliminated.
5. **International Conferences and Meetings:** Cambodia is a regular participant in international drug control conferences and bilateral meetings, where it exchanges insights, strategies, and best practices with global partners. Key events include:
 - ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Drugs (ASOD), where policy recommendations and joint efforts are discussed.
 - International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) meetings, focusing on global narcotics control initiatives.
 - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) engagements, where Cambodia contributes to global efforts in addressing drug production, trafficking, and abuse.
 - Bilateral meetings, such as the Cambodia-Thailand and Cambodia-China dialogues, which focus on joint anti-drug operations and cooperation on drug law enforcement.
6. **Strategic Partnerships for Capacity Building:** Cambodia's international cooperation extends to building its capacity in drug law enforcement and control mechanisms. This includes technical assistance, training for officials, and the provision of equipment, such as scanners, sniffer dogs, and drug detection technologies.

Through these multi-faceted partnerships, Cambodia is advancing its efforts to combat the global drug trade, reduce the adverse impact of narcotic trafficking on its population, and contribute to regional and international security. Its commitment to collaborating with neighboring countries and international organizations reflects a whole-of-nation approach in addressing the challenges of drug trafficking and transnational crime, reinforcing Cambodia's position as an active and responsible player in the global fight against drugs.

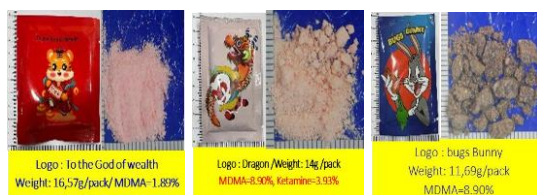
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DRUGS' PACKAGING DESIGN & PURITY



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Ecstasy (MDMA)



Indonesia

I. Introduction

The drug situation in Indonesia is very complex due to Indonesia's geography, with approximately 17,508 islands and a coastline stretching 85,000 km. Indonesia is situated between two continents and borders 10 neighboring countries. With a total population of 280 million people, Indonesia is a significant market for drug trafficking. This geographic layout results in 80% of drug smuggling entering Indonesia via sea routes.

II. Drug and Trafficking Situation

One of the fundamental issues faced by Indonesia is the development of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS). Globally, 1,342 NPS substances had been identified as per May 2025, according to the UNODC Early Warning Advisory.

So far, the Indonesian Ministry of Health has regulated a total of 167 NPS substances. 97 NPS identified circulating in Indonesia. Among them, 91 have been included in the Ministry of Health Regulations, while 6 substances remain unregulated: ketamine, kratom, alpha-propylaminopentiphenone, MDMB-5methyl-INACA Bromazolam, and etomidate.

There has been a decrease in the narcotics prevalence (annual use and ever use) in urban and rural areas, with a decrease observed particularly in rural areas. The prevalence rate of narcotics in the category of annual use in urban areas decreased by 0.13 points, and ever use decreased by 0.24 points.

Meanwhile, in rural areas, the prevalence rate of annual narcotics use decreased by 0.41 points, and ever use decreased by 0.64 points. The prevalence rates of narcotics use (annual and ever use) in 2023 decreased compared to 2021 but remain higher than those in 2019.

III. Law Enforcement

Throughout 2024, 36 narcotics syndicate networks have been disclosed, consisting of 34 domestic narcotics syndicate networks and 2 international narcotics syndicate networks. Through firm and measured actions by the law enforcement consisting of BNN, Indonesian National Police (INP), Indonesian Armed Force, Directorate General Customs and Excise,

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and related stakeholders, about 46,747 cases have been uncovered alongside 61,452 suspects. The evidence seized includes 7.65 tons of crystal methamphetamine, 4,576,655.03 methamphetamine pills (Yaba), and 44.73 tons of dried cannabis. Aside from drug seizures, about 13.5 hectares of cannabis fields were also eradicated.

In breaking the chain of narcotics syndicate networks, money laundering related to drug crimes is also investigated as an effort to impoverish the dealers so that they cannot return to the illicit narcotics business. In 2024, law enforcement succeeded in disclosing 13 money laundering cases involving 15 suspects by confiscating evidence in the form of assets worth a total of IDR 111,535,843,866.26.

IV. Regional/International Cooperation

Increasing and strengthening cooperation among ASEAN countries is crucial in addressing the illicit trafficking and circulation of narcotics. By hosting and attending bilateral, regional, and multilateral meetings, Indonesia consistently collaborates with all ASEAN Member States and international organizations to secure the region from the trafficking and circulation of narcotics.

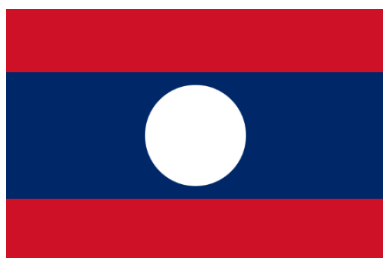
Strong collaboration between government institutions and components of society at the national, regional and international levels is one of many crucial components in the successful implementation of hard power approach, soft power approach and smart power approach strategy. BNN as the focal point in the handling of drug abuse and illicit trafficking in Indonesia has signed 56 cooperation documents at the national level, consisting of 25 cooperation documents with government institutions, 5 documents with state owned companies, 12 documents with educational institutions, and 14 documents with private sector institutions.

V. Treatment and Rehabilitation

Throughout 2024, BNN RI, together with 417 partner institutions, provided rehabilitation services to 14,387 clients. Based on measurements of the quality-of-life percentage of drug abusers conducted by BNN RI using WHOQOL (World Health Organization Quality of Life), the results were as follows: 85.06% for the physical domain, 85.24% for the psychological domain, 83.79% for the social domain, and 87.16% for the environmental domain. These measurement results exceeded the set target of 68%. In other words, it can be concluded that the rehabilitation efforts provided by BNN and its partners have had a significant impact on improving the quality of life of clients

Various breakthroughs are continuously being made to optimize rehabilitation programs, one of which is the establishment of Community-Based Interventions (IBM). IBM has proven to be an effective strategy by involving communities as active partners in efforts to prevent and address drug abuse. Currently, BNN RI has established 418 IBM units across 34 provinces, serving 2,235 drug abusers. These units are manned by recovery agents from the community who are tasked with outreach, mentoring, and guidance for drug abusers.

The efforts of optimizing rehabilitation services carried out by BNN RI have yielded results. This is evidenced by an increase in the Rehabilitation Capability Index (*IKR*) achievement in 2024, rising by 0.10 from 3.41 in 2023 to 3.51 (in the great category) on a scale of 1-4.



Lao PDR

Introduction

The Lao PDR is a landlocked country in the center of the Greater Mekong Sub-region that shares long borders with China, Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. Due to its geographic and topographic location and the rapidly emerging economies of some its neighbors, the Lao PDR become as a transit route for drug trafficking as well as precursor chemicals in the sub-region unavoidably. The drug trafficking through Lao PDR has been increasing with higher frequency and volume. The northwest border still being the main gateway of drug flow to Lao PDR, while the border in the Southwest part of the country has been increasingly used for drug outflow. methamphetamine tablet (ATS) remains the main drugs of abuse, while the number of opium users remains almost stable.

In response, the government of the Lao PDR prioritized the fight against drug trafficking and drug use and instructed line sectors, local administrations, and the public to focus on the successful implementation of national legislative strategies against drugs such as the Law on Narcotics and The National Agenda for Drug and Precursor Chemical Control 2021-2023, and now we continue this agenda until 2025.

Legislation/National Drug Control Policy

The Government of the Lao PDR is constantly adjusting and improving legislative instruments and mechanisms to enable relevant authorities to respond effectively and immediately to the existing situation.

Under the National Drug Control Programme implemented from 1994 to 2000 drug control mechanisms has been established such as Provincial Commission on Drug Control and Supervision “PCDC”, Provincial Counter Narcotic Police Units “CNU”, Border Liaison Office “BLOs” which support capacity building, gradual and balanced approaches to drug control focusing on Alternative Development. The strategy of a “Balanced Approach to Opium Elimination” which includes Alternative Development, Demand Reduction and Law Enforcement has been implemented from 2000 to 2006. The National Programme Strategy for the Post-Opium Scenario and The Action Plan focused from 2006 to 2009 on 1,100 poorest villages to provide them with Alternative Development, Demand Reduction, Civic Awareness

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& Law Enforcement linked to 6th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDPlan) to overall reduce poverty. The implementation phase of the National Drug Control Master Plan 2009 to 2013 has been extended to 2015 to address the recent rise and proliferation of illicit drug production, trafficking, abuse as well as activities through a nine-point comprehensive strategy. The National Agenda for Drug and Precursor Chemical Control 2021 - 2025. This Drug Control Master Plan was officially approved by the Lao National Assembly on 10 August 2021.

The National Agenda for Drug and Precursor Chemical Control 2024-2025

The 6th Ordinary Session of the National Assembly, Series IX on 31 October to 21 November 2023 agreed to the government's proposal to extend the time to implement the national agenda for Drug and Precursor Chemical Control until the end of 2025.

National Agenda for Drug and Precursor Chemical Control 2024-2025 composes of 6 programmes:

- ❖ Program re-education and dissemination of legal information and adverse consequences due to drug abuse
- ❖ Program of the formulation and improvement on drug law and regulation
- ❖ Program on data collection, law enforcement
- ❖ Enhance supervision for implementing Drug Control program
- ❖ Streamlining the organization for Drug control at Centre and Local level
- ❖ International cooperation program

Measures taken on Drug Control

- 1) Alternative Development.
- 2) Law Enforcement.
- 3) Civic Awareness Campaign.
- 4) Drug Demand Reduction.
- 5) International cooperation.

Alternative Development

LCDC integrated Alternative Development programmes into national drug control plans and policies. Every year, LCDC of Lao PDR and NNCC of China have jointly conducted an annual opium poppy cultivation survey, monitoring and assessments in 9 Northern Provinces of Lao PDR. In 2024, the opium poppy cultivation in Laos was 5,831 hectares, and opium poppy eradication in Laos was 126 hectares. LCDC has cooperated with China and UNODC to implement an Alternative Development program with in Northern Provinces of Lao PDR. Actually, our local authorities in the Northern part of the country have supported ex-

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opium poppy farmers in remote areas to gain better living conditions by introducing sustainable Alternative Development and lawful livelihoods.

Law Enforcement

Capacity enhancement of law enforcement agencies, increasing border surveillance, and the intelligence, ability to detect, investigate and prosecute illicit trafficking and related crimes are key priorities of the Government of the Lao PDR.

Police officials have cooperated with concerned sectors at different levels to carry out their functions with high responsibility. This could be seen from the crackdown of *in 2024: 4,158 cases, arrests of 6,297 suspects of which 608 females and 232 foreigners, seizures of 91,509,571 Tablets of methamphetamine (ATS), 391.58 Kg of Heroin, 88.75 Kg of raw Opium, 3,274.28 Kg of dry Cannabis, 5,361.72 Kg of Crystal methamphetamine (Ice), 10,453.84 Kg of Powder for mixing, and producing drugs.* In addition, vehicles, weapons and other equipment were also seized.

Preventive Education

LCDC mobilizes communities through effective civic awareness campaigns to prevent drug abuse, production, and trafficking. The authorities concerned have worked actively towards drug prevention by means of drug education and anti-drug campaign to raise drug awareness in society, primarily among the youth population of negative impact and danger of drugs. LCDC and local authorities have strived for establishing families, villages, educational institutions, firms, and other organizations to be drug-free places.

Attention has been made to awareness raising and dissemination in different forms to create awareness amongst people in the society to acknowledge and understand the rule of law and understand the danger of drugs. A number of people of all ethnicities have been mobilized to participate in drug control and prevention. In 2024, the effects of drugs were advertised in colleges, schools, and villages along the border with a total of 35,118 participants.

To contribute to the implementation of the Government Policy on Three Builds Directive connected with the development of the village as a development unit, each locality has actively paid attention to the implementation of the drug free village development plan. The drug free families, villages, education institutes, and communities have contributed to the reduction of drug use to a certain extent.

Treatment, Rehabilitation and Vocational Training Centers

At present the concerned authorities of the Lao PDR provide 14 standard and non-standard treatment, rehabilitation and vocational training centers while three are under construction. The authorities concerned plan to expand the availability of Community-Based Treatment (CBT) for ATS users including the access to counseling services to all citizens by enabling hospitals, and health facilities to offer these services.

We paid attention to drug addict treatment in drug treatment and habitation centers, hospitals, community-based treatment, and family levels in order to help drug victims to

normalize their health. In addition to the physical and mental treatment, about 4,000 to 5,000 patients/times were also provided with basic vocational training. This is to provide them with job opportunities after reintegrating to their families.

International relation and cooperation

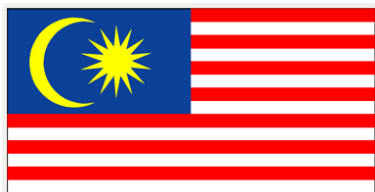
The Lao PDR pays high attention to the implement the National Agenda for Drug and Precursor Chemical Control 2024-2025, the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs 2016 – 2025 and 3 single United Nations Convention and international collaboration to combat the drug menace and tackle challenges. As drug prevention is considered as a first priority task the Lao government pays seriously attention to strengthening international cooperation and implementing bilateral agreements on narcotic drug cooperation, as well as implementation of community-based projects on drug demand reduction.

Lao PDR has implemented existing bilateral and multilateral agreements on drug control cooperation, exchange of information and intelligence and against drug trafficking with ASEAN countries, friendly countries and with international organizations. Regional cooperation such as the joint operation “Safe Mekong” strengthened networks and collaboration at regional level between Lao PDR, China, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam.

As we know that drugs are common problems in the region and in the world, international cooperation especially with the neighbor countries and ASEAN member's states to share lessons and data and information has been highlighted. These countries host regular meetings at national and local levels on rotational basis. We participated in the implementation of a drug control related crime project jointly with 5 bordering countries.

Conclusion

The drug problem is not a person or single state can solve, it needs more cooperation to assist each other, and this can get a win-win for everyone. Law enforcement is a mechanism to use force for preventing and arresting drug trafficking in the criminal justice system. Therefore, this is only a way how to stop drug dealers. The Government of Lao PDR is undertaking considerable efforts to ensure the sustainability of opium elimination as well as to address the threats from other drugs by integrating Alternative Development work nationwide and supporting the development of alternative sustainable livelihoods for former and opium poppy-growing farmers, drug addicts' treatment, but also for other vulnerable communities.



Malaysia

In safeguarding the nation from the harms of illicit drugs, Malaysia prioritizes the well-being of its youth and vulnerable populations. A well-integrated and balanced strategy is actively pursued; combining enforcement, preventive education, and drug treatment rehabilitation with strong support from government agencies, grassroots organizations, and civil society.

PREVALENCE OF DRUG ABUSE

The National Drug and Substance Abuse Data Collection Taskforce reported that in 2024, a total of 192,857 individuals have been identified as substance abusers and drug addicts in Malaysia. The collected data are divided into four categories as follows:

- i. Data of arrest under Section 15 (1) of the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952 carried out by the Royal Malaysia of Police;
- ii. Data of clients receiving treatment and rehabilitation at the National Anti-drugs Agency under the Drug Dependents (Treatment and Rehabilitation) Act 1983;
- iii. Data of patients receiving treatment for addiction at Ministry of Health facilities; and
- iv. Data of patients receiving treatment and rehabilitation in Private Drug Rehabilitation Centres.

In 2024, Malaysia recorded a significant surge in the number of identified substance abusers and drug addicts; a 32.5% increase compared to 2023, bringing the total to 192,857 individuals. This sharp rise was attributed to intensified detection operations led by the Narcotic Crime Investigation Department of the Royal Malaysia Police. And National Anti-Drugs Agency (NADA) Enforcement Division that shows enforcement efforts were aggressively scaled up nationwide.

Encouragingly, the year also saw a notable increase in voluntary admissions to drug rehabilitation centres, reflecting growing awareness and willingness among People Who Use Drugs (PWUD) to seek help. Based on current data, the prevalence rate in 2024 stood at 566 cases per 100,000 population, equivalent to one individual for every 177 Malaysians.

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Table 1 shows the number of Drug & Substance Abusers and Addicts in Malaysia. It shows 192,857 people in the year 2024.

Table 1: Number of Drug & Substance Abusers and Addicts, 2020 – 2024

Year	Total
2020	128,325
2021	123,139
2022	137,176
2023	145,526
2024	192,857

Notes:Source of Information from: National Anti-Drugs Agency, Royal Malaysia Police, Ministry of Health Malaysia and Private Drug Rehabilitation Centre.

In 2024, youth aged 19 to 39 years old represented the largest demographic of drug and substance abusers in Malaysia, accounting for 116,245 individuals or 60.3% of the total cases. This marks a notable increase of 28.4% compared to the previous year. The adult category (aged 40 and above) followed as the second-largest group, with 75,354 individuals or 39.1%. Meanwhile, adolescents aged 13 to 18 years comprised the smallest segment, with 1,255 individuals or 0.7%.

These figures, as shown in Table 2, highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions and preventive strategies, particularly among the youth population.

Table 2: Number of Drug & Substance Abusers and Addicts categorised by Age Category, 2021 – 2024

Age Category	Age range	2021	2022	2023	2024	%2023 & 2024
Child	≤ 12	2	2	1	3	200.0%
Adolescent	13-15	135	92	78	82	5.1%
	16-17	776	609	550	438	-20.4%
	18	1,050	970	823	735	-10.7%
Youth	19	1,880	1,692	1,435	1330	-7.3%
	20-24	16,062	15,592	15,171	17,627	16.2%
	25-29	20,759	22,149	23,391	29,955	28.1%
	30-34	20,868	22,943	24,781	33,319	34.5%
	35-39	21,543	24,191	25,742	34,014	32.1%
Adult	40-44	16,277	19,675	21,634	30,051	38.9%
	45-49	11,004	13,440	14,737	20,828	41.3%
	≥ 50	12,678	15,821	17,183	24,475	42.4%
No Information	-	105	-	-	-	-
Total		123,139	137,176	145,526	192,857	32.5%

Notes:

Source of Information from National Anti-Drugs Agency (NADA), Malaysia

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In 2024, there were 139,909 individuals or 72.6 per cent have used amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS). Then followed by 39,875 individuals or 20.7 per cent have used opiates. In the ATS category, methamphetamine (crystalline) was the highest abuse with 77.8 per cent, followed by methamphetamine (tablets) and amphetamine at 15.2 per cent and 6.9 per cent respectively. The table 3 shows that number of Drug & Substance Abusers and Addicts categorised by drug/substance group.

Table 3: Number of Drug & Substance Abusers and Addicts categorised by drug/substance group, 2020 – 2024

Year	Opiate ¹	Opium	Marijuana	Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) ²	Psychotropic Group ³	Others ⁴	Total
2020	39,549	52	3,396	83,710	557	1,061	128,325
2021	39,048	52	3,179	79,816	347	697	123,139
2022	37,686	56	3,858	93,610	813	1,153	137,176
2023	33,761	18	4,358	104,122	1,488	1,779	145,526
2024	39,875	20	7,121	139,909	2,789	3,143	192,857
%2023 & 2024	18.1%	11.1%	63.4%	34.4%	87.4%	76.7%	32.5%

Notes:

¹ Refers to Heroin & Morphine

² Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS) refers to:

- i) Methamphetamine (crystalline): Syabu, Ice and Stone (Batu)
- ii) Methamphetamine (tablet): Horse (Pil Kuda), YABA, YAMA, and Bomb Pills
- iii) Ecstasy
- iv) Amphetamine

³ Includes Benzodiazepine, Psychotropic pills & Eramine⁵

⁴ Includes Kratom, Depression, Dissociative, Hallucinogens, Inhalant etc.

Source of Information from National Anti-Drugs Agency, Royal Malaysia Police, Ministry of Health Malaysia and Private Drug Rehabilitation Centre

In terms of ethnicity, Table 4 shows that Malays dominated with 75.6 per cent, followed by Indians at 7.74 per cent, Chinese with 7.71 per cent, Sabah Indigenous at 4.8 per cent, Sarawak Indigenous at 2.9 per cent, and other ethnicities at 1.2 per cent.

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Table 4: Number of Drug & Substance Abusers and Addicts by Ethnicity, 2020 – 2024

Year	Malay	Chinese	Indian	Sabah Indigen-ous	Sarawak Indigeno-us	Others	Total
2020	98,652	9,822	7,540	6,970	3,217	2,124	128,325
2021	97,068	8,559	7,573	5,984	2,447	1,508	123,139
2022	108,705	9,561	8,206	6,584	3,159	961	137,176
2023	111,124	10,696	9,607	7,787	4,642	1,670	145,526
2024	145,877	14,861	14,935	9,322	5,530	2,332	192,857
% 2023 & 2024	31.3%	38.9%	55.5%	19.7%	19.1%	39.6%	32.5%

According to academic background in 2024, the data showed that 30.4 per cent were school dropouts. Out of 192,857, substance abusers and drug addicts in 2024, 7.7 per cent have completed Primary School, followed by 58.8 per cent have completed Secondary School and 3.1 per cent went to Tertiary Qualifications.

Table 5: Statistics of Drug and Substance Abuse and Addicts by Educational Level, 2021 – 2024

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	2021	2022	2023	2024
School Dropout	28,025	35,406	33,066	58,659
Primary School	10,712	11,611	12,755	14,773
PMR or equivalent	34,612	36,236	37,321	42,545
SPM/SPMV or equivalent	43,863	47,951	55,855	70,102
STPM or equivalent	610	644	703	762
Diploma	2,333	2,405	2,692	3,098
Bachelor Degree/ Master/ PhD	584	602	717	817
Others ^a	2,400	2,321	2,417	2,101
TOTAL	123,139	137,176	145,526	192,857

Notes:

^aIncluding Matriculation, Basic Non-MLVK Skills Certificate, Advanced Non-MLVK Certificates, Non-Technical Skills Certificate, MLVK Skills Certificate and other related skills certificates

DRUG SUPPLY REDUCTION

In Malaysia, the Narcotics Crime Investigations Department (NCID) of the RMP is the main agency for the enforcement of drug laws. The Narcotic Division of the Royal Malaysian Customs Department (RMCD) also plays a vital role in enforcing drug laws. In addition to that, the Pharmacy Enforcement Division (PED) of the Ministry of Health enforces the Poisons Act 1952 and its regulations and the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952 and its regulations which controls

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the sale, import and export of dangerous drugs (narcotics), poisons (including psychotropic substances), precursors and essential chemicals.

In addition to that, Malaysia Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) is the sole maritime law enforcement agency that enforces all federal laws in the Malaysia Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ). It was established and started its operation in November 2005. One of the main purposes of the agency is to combat the distribution and smuggling of drugs in EEZ. To ensure that EEZ is a drug-free zone, maritime operations are planned in areas regarded as hot spots based on intelligence information as well as by conducting joint operations with other enforcement agencies. MMEA is also in the process of establishing a cooperative arrangement with coastguards from neighbouring countries such as Singapore and Indonesia.

Arrests and Seizures

In 2024, as shown in Table 6, a total number of 248,449 individuals were arrested under the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952. It showed an increase by 48.2 per cent compared to the previous year, 2023 (167,619 individuals). There were 6,314 arrested cases under Section 39B for trafficking, 4,378 cases under Section 39A(2) for major possession and 17,131 cases under Section 39A(1) for minor possession. There were 63,757 individuals were arrested under other Section [Sec.6 /Sec. 6B/ Sec.9/Sec.12(2)] the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952, and 156,869 cases under Section 15(1)(a) for self-administration.

Table 6: The Number of People Arrested for Various Offences Under the Dangerous Drugs Act (DDA) 1952 in 2020 – 2024

YEAR / SECTION	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% 2023 & 2024
Sec. 39B – Trafficking	6,694	7,250	6,687	6,225	6,314	1.4%
Sec.39A(2) – Major Possession	3,427	3,336	3,389	1,535	4,378	185.2%
Sec.39A(1) – Minor-Possession	13,441	14,664	17,267	17,726	17,131	-3.4%
Other sec. (under DDA 1952)[Sec.6 /Sec. 6B/ Sec.9/Sec.12(2)]	48,309	44,853	56,824	57,129	63,757	11.6%
Sec.15(1)(a) – self-administration	65,724	52,631	69,122	85,004	156,869	84.5%
TOTAL	137,595	122,743	153,259	167,619	248,449	48.2%

Notes:

Source of information: Royal Malaysian Police (RMP), Royal Malaysian Customs (RMC) & Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency

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Table 7: Drug Seizures in 2020 – 2024

DRUGS/ SUBSTANCE	UNIT	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% 2023 & 2024
CANNABIS							
Marijuana (Herb)	kg	5,728.26	3,728.28	8,120.89	4,800.45	4,024.74	-16.2%
Plant	plant	57.00	64.00	185.00	39.00	154	294.9%
ILLICIT OPIOIDS							
Heroin	kg	930.21	2,166.49	717.72	950.06	589.93	-37.9%
Opium (Raw & Prepared)	kg	0.00	0.08	1.38	10.21	0.001	-100.0%
Codeine	litres	4,187.78	6,451.86	3,255.40	1,582.59	3,237.89	104.6%
COCAINE							
Salt (Cocaine HCl, Powder Cocaine)	kg	10.40	5.84	20.07	293.66	181.24	-38.3%
AMPHETAMINE-TYPE STIMULANTS							
Methamphetamine (crystalline)	kg	7,644.47	9,682.07	8,298.41	10,345.72	8,728.54	-15.6%
“Ecstasy” – Type Substances	kg	1,966.52	1,033.65	335.77	6,863.33	1746.27	-74.6%
Methamphetamine (Tablet)	kg	207.44	357.45	383.63	245.88	1517.71	517.3%
Methamphetamine (Liquid)	kg	5,959.95	188.52	49.59	585.75	1,834.31	213.2%
SEDATIVES AND TRANQUILIZERS							
Erimine 5	kg	925.40	2,030.65	158.72	573.25	549.36	-4.2%
Psychotropic Pill	kg	1.98	3.31	10.49	4.24	23.30	449.5%
DRUGS UNDER NATIONAL BUT NOT INTERNATIONAL CONTROL							
Ketamine	kg	3,018.28	474.61	3,000.27	1,540.74	349.12	-77.3%
Kratom (Leaf)	kg	296,023.70	368,040.39	128,285.88	80,508.61	56,768.90	-29.5%
Kratom (Liquids)	Litres	139,162.62	76,212.79	78,909.89	61,236.46	57,600.33	-5.9%

Notes:

Source of information: Royal Malaysian Police (RMP), Royal Malaysian Customs (RMC) & Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA). Starting 2018, as required by the UNODC Annual Report Questionnaire, data for ecstasy, methamphetamine (Tablet), Erimin-5, Benzodiazepines and Psychotropic pill reported in ‘kg’ unit measurement. Therefore, the data is converted accordingly: - (i) YABA Pil [1 tablet = 0.1gram]; (ii) ecstasy [1 tablet = 0.3 gram]; (iii) Erimin-5/ Benzodiazepine [1 tablet=0.2gram] and (iv) methamphetamine liquid [1kg = 1litre].

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Table 8 showed the property seized in Malaysia. The number of cases investigated a increase in 2024 about 1.7 per cent. The value of properties seized and value of properties forfeited have a decrease about 6.3 per cent and 16.4 per cent respectively.

The success of forfeiting their property can contribute to national revenue as the wealth gained by drug traffickers causes income tax is not collected on them.

Investigation of property forfeiture and action under the prevention law as well as the Dangerous Drugs Act is a powerful action to cripple the network of capabilities of syndicates and individuals involved in drug smuggling and distribution activities.

Although the value of properties seized and forfeitures has shown a slight decrease, the continuous efforts of NCID officers and members have worked hard to ensure that the property of those involved in drug trafficking activities is successfully confiscated.

Table 8: Value of Property Seized Under Dangerous Drugs Act (Forfeiture of Property) Act 1988 in 2020 – 2024

Year	Number of Cases Investigated	Value of Properties Seized (RM)	Value of Properties Forfeited (RM)
2020	4,884	501,032,797.54	11,402,756.30
2021	4,949	162,979,893.58	19,152,234.06
2022	5,282	122,981,431.26	24,615,556.36
2023	4,766	104,007,647.09	14,158,023.33
2024	4,848	97,432,940.45	11,831,183.57
% 2023 & 2024	1.7%	-6.3%	-16.4%

Notes:

Source of information: Royal Malaysian Police (RMP)

Intensified enforcement efforts done by the enforcement agencies had resulted in numerous successes in tackling the supply dimension of the drug problem. However, the IDTS continues to adapt their manufacturing and smuggling strategies in order to avoid detection. This caused the syndicates to change their modus operandi. Rather than conducting their operations in a state-of-the-art drug producing facilities, these syndicates conducts their operations in smaller labs to avoid detection by authorities. With drug processing methods at their fingertips, these syndicates resort to construct 'kitchen labs' in order to produce the drugs to cater to their customers. These labs, easily constructed and requires less manpower to be operated than an advanced clandestine, pose a threat for the local drug enforcement agencies as it is far more difficult to be located.

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Table 9: Clandestine Laboratories Dismantled in 2020 - 2024

YEAR	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% 2023 & 2024
Cases	20	19	15	22	12	-45.5%
Arrests	71	85	50	64	44	-31.3%

Notes:

Source of information: Royal Malaysian Police (RMP)

Table 10: Number of illicit drug manufacturing facilities dismantled in Malaysia by drug type in 2020 - 2024

Drug type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% 2023 & 2024
Methamphetamine	4	3	3	4	1	-75.0%
Heroin	10	7	5	12	8	-33.3%
Ecstasy	3	4	3	4	2	-50.0%
Benzodiazepines	0	1	0	1	0	-100.0%
Ketamine	3	4	4	1	1	0.0%
Other drugs*	0	0	1	1	0	-100.0%

Notes:

Source of information: Royal Malaysian Police (RMP)

*Other drugs: Oil Cannabis Benzodiazepines includes Erimine 5

Drug Trafficking Threats

Drug trafficking and abuse remain critical challenges confronting Malaysia. Illicit drug use has long been regarded as a major social menace and has been officially declared the nation's number one enemy due to its far-reaching impact on public safety and national security. Malaysia's strategic geographical location — situated near the Golden Triangle — has historically positioned the country as a transit hub for international drug trafficking syndicates.

Following the post-pandemic recovery of global trade and mobility, there has been a resurgence in drug trafficking and smuggling activities. Traffickers have exploited the increased movement of goods and people to facilitate the entry and distribution of illicit substances. Concurrently, the economic downturn triggered by the pandemic may have contributed to rising drug demand, as individuals seek coping mechanisms for financial stress and related hardships.

Moreover, intensified enforcement efforts have led to notable operational successes, which in turn have contributed to a higher number of reported cases in 2024. These developments underscore the urgent need for sustained, multi-agency collaboration and strategic interventions to combat the evolving drug threat.

Drug Trafficking Trends

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) are novel chemical substances with psychoactive properties, designed on the basis of the chemical structure of a given parent drug and synthesized specifically for sale on the illicit market and to circumvent regulations on controlled substances. It gives the same or almost the same stimulation effects to drug addicts who consumed it. The rapid emergence of a large number of NPS on the global drug market poses a significant risk to public health and a challenge to drug policy. It is feared that this NPS will be the main alternative to prohibited activities because there are still NPS that have been detected but have not yet been controlled in the Scheduled Drug Act.

In Malaysia, currently, 86 NPS have been gazetted under the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952 and the Poisons Act 1952. The listing of this NPS under the DDA 1952 is important in the direction of more effective enforcement actions and subsequently taking legal action against those involved.

Drug Smuggling by Road

Drug distribution and addiction has been one of the most serious threats to Malaysia's national security. The threat of cross-border crime between countries is difficult to control due to various constraints in terms of geographical factors, logistics, enforcement, and many more. In relation to that, Malaysia's land and sea borders are strengthened through the five-front approach, which involves the northern border of Kedah and Kelantan, the South, Sabah, and Sarawak, in an effort to combat cross-border crime.

Drug Smuggling by Sea

Drug smuggling from countries around the Mekong Valley persistently occurring is due to the existence of rat routes or unregulated borders. This smuggling is still happening because those who take care of the 'water' for drug syndicates are fishermen who are always there at the sea. These fishermen are aware to the patrol schedules which is carried out by the maritime enforcement authorities, causing the drug syndicate easily escape at the sea route. Most of these syndicates will use illegal jetties to carry out its activities.

Local Drug Couriers Arrested Overseas

Many awareness campaigns have been organised to raise citizens awareness of the dangers being involved in drug trafficking activities. However, it is not uncommon to hear of Malaysians being arrested abroad for trying to smuggle drugs. In many cases, the pursuit of an easy life causes Malaysians to voluntarily become drug mules for international syndicates, and most of them are aware of what they carry. Social media has also been exploited by IDTS to recruit drug mules, some from various nations. Besides easy money, they are easily tempted by the promise of marriage or the opportunity to travel, which has been reported by arrested Malaysian drug couriers.

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From 2010 until 2024, a total of 980 Malaysian citizens were detained in foreign countries for their involvement in the drug trade. In 2024, a total of 82 Malaysian citizens were arrested abroad with the drug in their custody. The most popular drugs seized are Heroin, Methamphetamine, Cocaine and Cannabis. In the pursuit of an easy life, many Malaysians voluntarily become drug mules for international syndicates. The drug mules carry drugs by swallowing, strapping the drugs to their bodies, concealing them in luggage, and many other methods.

Malaysia as Transit Country

Drug trafficking syndicates continue to devise various methods to smuggle illicit substances in and out of Malaysia. This persistent threat has long been a concern for the Narcotics Crime Investigation Department (NCID), which actively conducts enforcement operations to disrupt smuggling activities. In addition, NCID frequently collaborates with courier service companies to exchange intelligence related to drug concealment and delivery tactics.

Due to its porous borders and strategic location near the drug-producing region of the Golden Triangle, Malaysia remains vulnerable to transnational drug trafficking. Illicit Drug Trafficking Syndicates (IDTS) have exploited this proximity by using Malaysia as a transshipment hub to reroute drugs to other countries. Common trafficking methods include air routes via cargo and parcels, as well as maritime routes using shipping containers and vessels.

To counter these threats, enforcement at both domestic and international airports has been intensified. This includes stricter checks at entry and exit points, cargo terminals, and enhanced screening to detect drug mules. Investigations have revealed numerous cases of smuggling through domestic airports particularly between Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah /Sarawak and via international shipments disguised as commercial packages. As a preventive measure, periodic inspections should be scheduled for outbound cargo suspected of containing illicit substances.

Local Syndicates

The trend of crime happening nowadays is Cybercrime. Cybercrime is an activity in which information technology equipment such as computers, telephones and networks (internet) are used as a medium to commit crime. Criminal trends in Narcotics such as sales and promotional advertising drugs are carried out rampantly on social media sites (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, Telegram) and e-commerce platforms (Lazada, Shopee and Carousell).

In the era of the Technological Revolution 4.0, communication technology and internet networking has become much better and faster. This situation is due the advancement of wireless technology such as 3G, 4G and the latest is 5G. Rapid development in this field indirectly change the modus operandi (MO) used by drug dealers in carrying out distribution activities. Drug dealers start using websites E-commerce, app in a mobile phone such as

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WhatsApp / Telegram, Facebook/Instagram social pages and dark web as a new medium of distribution. As the results, money and property are also more difficult to detect because drug dealers are also starting to use digital currencies to hiding money and profit from their activities.

In Malaysia, abuse through social media and communication services can be dealt with appropriately based on the law as provided under the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998. This concern needs to be addressed considering that the use of the internet by Malaysians covers various ages and is feared to attract teenagers to try something new, causing them to get stuck in drug activities.



Myanmar

Brief background

1. Myanmar gained independence from British colonial rule in 1948 and since then, has inherited the dire legacy of poppy cultivation in its northern territories. Although successive Governments have strived to eliminate this problem, poppy cultivation thrived in various forms taking advantage of political instabilities, weak prevalence of law and order, poverty and underdevelopment of ethnic population residing along border areas, occurrence of ethnic armed conflicts, and the inability to have complete control over border areas. Additionally, with the illegal inflow of precursor chemicals used for manufacturing narcotic drugs from neighboring countries, the country is also faced with challenges of methamphetamine (ATS) problem in nationwide.

Enacting Laws

2. As a member of the United Nations, Myanmar is a signatory to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961), the Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971), the Protocol Amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1972) and, the Convention against Illicit Traffic of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and has been implementing the provisions contained in these International Conventions. Accordingly, Myanmar has enacted Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances law in 1993 and the Rule Relating to Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law in 1995 and Rule Relating to Supervision of Controlled Precursor Chemicals in 2004 respectively. Myanmar has undertaken a comprehensive review of its narcotics legislation to ensure contemporary relevance. Significant amendments were made to the 1993 Law on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, with the revised legislation being enacted on 14 February 2018. In keeping with these reforms, updated implementing rules and regulations were issued on 30 December 2024 to further strengthen the legal framework for drug control.

3. To effectively manage the problem of narcotic drugs, the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control (CCDAC) was formed in 1976 headed by the Union Minister for Home Affairs

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as Chairman and together with 19 members; the Central Committee is taking measures to control narcotic drugs. CCDAC has not only formed Drug Abuse Control Committee at all Region/State, District, Township, Ward and Village levels but has also subdivided itself into following eleven sectors: Law Enforcement and Administration; Alternative Development; Crop Substitution; Livestock Breeding; Medical Treatment; Rehabilitation; Educating Students and Youths; Public Awareness; International Relations; Community Service Supervision and Supervision of Controlled Precursor Chemicals. All sectors are actively engaged in reducing the production and use of narcotic drugs.

4. The Government of Myanmar has elevated drug control to a matter of national priority. In accordance with the recommendations adopted at the 30th Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the world drug problem, Myanmar formulated and promulgated its comprehensive National Drug Control Policy on 20 February 2018, which incorporates a multi-dimensional approach to this critical issue. To ensure effective implementation of this policy, the National Drug Control Strategy was subsequently developed and put into operation, with region-specific action plans being tailored and executed across all states and regions to address local requirements.



Supply Reduction and Alternative Development

5. To assess the scope of opium poppy cultivation and opium production in Myanmar, UNODC has been conducting opium surveys regularly in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar since 2002. The opium surveys have been implemented within the technical framework of the UNODC Illicit Crop Monitoring Programme (ICMP). The 2024 survey points to a slowing down of cultivation, with a slight decrease of 4% to 45,200 ha from 47,100 ha in 2023. Opium production in Myanmar declined in 2024 by about 8% from 1,080 tons in 2023 to 995 tons in 2024. The poppy eradication campaign eliminated 4,700 acres of poppy fields in 2025.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Cultivated (Hectares)	41000	37300	33100	29500	30200	40100	47100	45200
Production (MT)	550	520	508	405	423	795	1080	995

6. The supervisory Committee for Controlled Precursor Chemical was formed in 1998, and the reform process of the committee, was finalized on 19-9-2016 which is chaired by the Deputy Chief of Myanmar Police Force and consists of 14 members from respective ministries. The Rules relating to the Supervision of Controlled Precursor Chemicals was issued on 1st July 2004, and currently there were 43 substances under the national controlled list.

Table 1 (1988 UN Convention)	43 Types of Controlled Chemicals	Table 2
1. Acetic anhydride 2. N -Acetylanthranilic acid 3. 4-Anilino-N-phenethylpiperidine (ANPP) 4. Ephedrine 5. Ergometrine 6. Ergotamine 7. Isosafrole 8. Lysergic acid 9. 3,4-MDP-2-P methyl glycidate acid 10. 3,4-MDP-2-P methyl glycidic acid 11. 3,4 Methyleneedioxyphenyl-2-propanone 12. Norephedrine 13. N-phenethyl-4-piperidone (NPP) 14. Phenylacetic acid 15. 1-phenyl-2-propanone 16. alpha-Penylacetacetamide (APAA) 17. alpha-Phenylacetacetoneitrile (APAAN) 18. Piperonal 19. Potassium permanganate 20. Pseudoephedrine	21. Safrole 22. tert-Butyl 4-(phenylamino) piperidine-1- carboxylate (1-boc-4-AP) 23. Methyl alpha-phenylacetacetate (MAPA) 24. Norfentanyl 25. N-Phenyl-4-piperidinamine (4-AP)	1. Acetone 2. Anthranilic acid 3. Ethyl Ether 4. Hydrochloric acid 5. Methyl ethyl ketone 6. Piperidine 7. Sulphuric acid 8. Toluene
	Table 1 (1988 UN Convention)	Others
		1. Ammonium Chloride 2. Ammonium Nitrate 3. Caffeine 4. Lead Acetate 5. Methylamine / Methylamine Hydrochloride 6. Sodium Acetate 7. Sodium Cyanide 8. Safrole rich oil 9. Tartaric Acid 10. Thionyl Chloride

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7. The precursor chemicals are smuggled into Myanmar from neighboring countries across the borders in many ways and the following table was the figures of uncovered and confiscated in Myanmar. A specialized Chemical Control Committee monitors these substances to prevent diversion to illegal drug labs. All imports of controlled precursors require Pre-Export Notification clearance, while other potentially divertible chemicals are tracked through an online monitoring system to prevent misuse.

8. The Government of Myanmar maintains a strong commitment to alternative development in former opium-producing regions. Through substantial annual investments, we implement comprehensive rural development programs across affected areas. Currently, the Alternative Development Implementation and Management sector is executing its second five-year pilot project (2024-2025 to 2028-2029) targeting 65 villages in Ho Pong and Si Seng Townships of Southern Shan State. This integrated initiative encompasses agricultural development, livestock breeding programs, educational infrastructure improvement, healthcare services, water resource management, transportation infrastructure development, electrification projects, vocational training, religious support, communication networks, public awareness campaigns, commercial development, and microfinance services.

9. Our international cooperation efforts have yielded significant results through partnerships with UNODC, including the establishment of alternative crop plantations (forestry, coffee, and tea) in Ho Pong and Loi Leng Townships. Upon his implementation, 60 villages from Loi Leng and Ho Pong township of Southern Shan State for the extent of 3 year from 2016-2018 have instigated public preserved forestry with the financial support worth 5.9 million \$ from Germany and Finland in which has now 900 members in Green Gold coffee farmers since the establishment in 2016, and with the close supervision of UNODC, These efforts have successfully generated coffee exports to France, Since 2018, 156.72 metric tons in 2023 and 153.36 metric tons in 2024.

10. In accordance with the Myanmar-Thai Alternative Development program, and 350 million Baht financial support from Mae Fah Luang Foundation, Crop Substitution Programs was implemented at Tachileik and Mai Sat township of Eastern Shan State during 2012-2017. The programs include health care services, Agricultural, livestock breeding, treatment, socio-eco for forest ranch, grater income services, socio-eco analysis, study tours, study visits to AD project areas, and capacity building trainings respectively. Moreover, the central government has also agreed for CCDAC sign a MoU agreement between ONCB to continue the implementation of alternative development project. The Committee of Alternative Development Management from the Ministry of Border Affairs and the Mae Fah Luang Foundation from Thailand continue to conduct the programme in Naung Taya, Pin Laung township, Shan State (South).

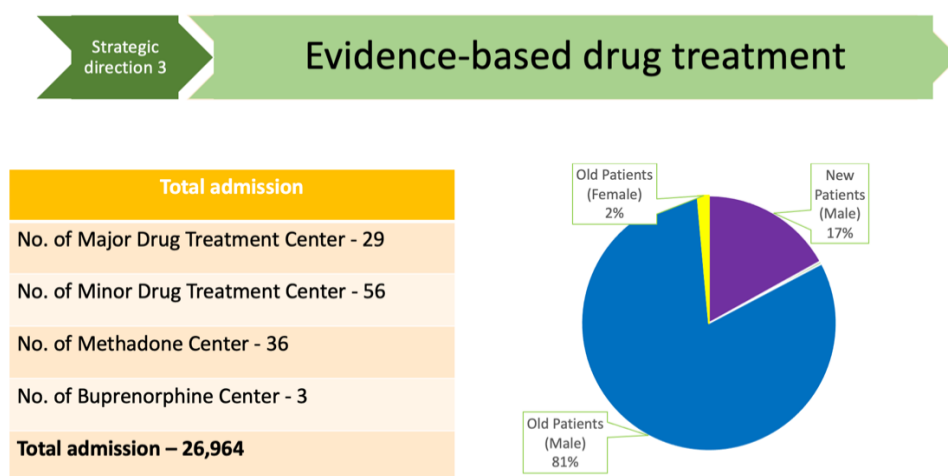
11. The Crop Substitution Sector has implemented extensive agricultural support programs across 56 project townships during the 2024-2025 fiscal year. These initiatives include distribution of seasonal crop seeds, provision of perennial saplings, allocation of fertilizers and pesticides, cultivation of demonstration plots, agricultural extension services, and specialized training programs, with a total investment of 47,350.28 million Kyats.

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12. For the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the Union Government allocated 51.734 million kyats from the national budget to support livestock development programs in drug-affected townships across Kachin State, Shan State, and Sagaing Region. These funds were used to distribute poultry and swine, conduct livestock breeding Sector, provide vocational training programs, and implement beekeeping education initiatives. Additionally, under the second phase of the pilot project, the Shan State (South) government invested 14.6 million kyats from regional funds to carry out similar programs in Ho Pong Township of the Pa-O Self-Administered Zone, focusing on livestock distribution, livelihood training, and public awareness activities.

Demand Reduction and Harm Reduction

13. Myanmar adopts a public health approach to drug addiction, providing comprehensive medical services including HIV screening, hepatitis B and C testing, and treatment for sexually transmitted infections. The country has established a network of 29 major drug treatment centers, 56 satellite clinics, 36 methadone maintenance therapy facilities, and 3 buprenorphine treatment centers. In 2024 alone, these facilities provided care to 26,964 patients with substance use disorders.



14. Under the supervision of The Ministry of Social Welfare, there are 14 Rehabilitation Centers that are helping drug users, who have undergone treatment, to be reintegrated back into the social stream. Campaigns are being launched to encourage drug users to get treated at drug treatment centers. While getting treated, they themselves and their dependents can receive necessary support, undergo physical and mental rehabilitation, receive vocational training programs and be part of reintegration programs that are linked to continuum of care interventions. If they so desire, they can even get trained to become volunteer drug wardens.

15. The Ministry of Education takes the lead in raising awareness on the dangers of narcotic drugs among school children and youths. awareness campaigns about narcotic drugs,

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exhibitions, competitions, and youth discussion forums have been extensively conducted to create drug-free zones in universities, degree colleges, colleges, education degree colleges, basic education schools, and out-of-school centers. Additionally, informational pamphlets have been distributed and awareness signboards have been erected. Furthermore, the civil society organizations, and members of the Anti-Narcotic Task Force have been conducting preventive awareness talks about the dangers of narcotic drugs and distributing educational materials in basic education schools and universities across states and regions.

16. To ensure the entire population widely understands and can avoid the dangers of narcotic drugs, Public awareness-raising activities are being carried out for the public through five departments and organizations - the Information and Public Relations Department, Myanmar Radio and Television, News and Journal Enterprise, Printing and Publishing Enterprise, and Public Relations and Psychological Warfare Directorate using various communication methods including radio, television (talk shows and short dramas), newspapers, journals, feature articles, paintings, cartoons, and posters to educate people nationwide about the dangers of narcotic drugs.

International Cooperation

17. Myanmar is taking the measures by signing in the United Nations Conventions in order to control the diversion of substances, and closely cooperation with countries within ASEAN Member States, the Greater Mekong Sub Region and BIMSTEC member countries, as well as neighbouring countries to combat narcotic drugs. In addition, joint efforts are being made with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Yangon, the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) Thailand, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the National Narcotics Control Commission (NNCC) of China and also set up Border Liaison Offices (BLOs) along the Myanmar-Bangladesh, Myanmar-China, Myanmar-India, Myanmar-Lao PDR, and Myanmar-Thailand borders. These centers primarily serve as information exchange hubs.

18. Myanmar has also signed Bilateral Agreements with the United States of America, Bangladesh, China, India, Korea, Lao PDR, Philippines, Russia, Thailand, and Vietnam, in order to jointly combat narcotic drugs.

Enforcement Measures

19. The Tatmadaw (Myanmar Armed Force), Myanmar Police Force and the Customs Department are the responsible entities to combat narcotic drugs in Myanmar. Drug Enforcement Division is being formed under Myanmar Police Force and its (11) Sub Divisions and (71) Units are placed in areas around the country where production and trafficking of drugs are found to be highest and along the border areas and are undertaking effective anti-narcotic drugs enforcement measures. From 2013 to 2024, Myanmar conducted 40 major counter-narcotics operations nationwide. During 2024 alone, authorities handled 5,593 drug-

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related cases, arresting 7,828 suspects and seizing narcotics worth over 1.163 trillion kyats (approximately 349 million USD).

20. The following Chart illustrates the seizures of narcotic drugs in Myanmar.

Types of drugs	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Opium (Kg)	3882.908	2632.009	1209.77	581.25	1719.15
Heroin (Kg)	1853.363	2526.109	1345.49	1873.36	1978.63
ATS Pill (Millions)	382.41	198.18	169.07	253.34	227.79
ICE (Kg)	17363.877	13815.775	23401.92	17829.34	21048.25
Kratom	2632.723	1058.480	766.48	1769.94	1944.37
Cannabis (Kg)	737.597	503.715	929.43	686.74	1185.08
Case	13960	6990	6759	6539	5593
Suspect	19994	10063	9600	8853	7828

Conclusion

21. Currently, Myanmar is grappling with a resurgence in opium production, while simultaneously confronting significant challenges related to the production, trafficking, and distribution of synthetic drugs, similar to many other countries worldwide. The essential precursors used in synthetic drug production process are illegally smuggled in by the Ethnic Armed Organizations deployed along the borders. The illicit flow of precursors used in the drug production process into ethnically controlled areas in Myanmar's border regions has further increased the problem of the production of synthetic drugs. This situation presents persistent challenges for our law enforcement agencies.

22. Myanmar views combating the drug problem as a fundamental national duty, independent of international aid or support. Our commitment to this cause is resolute and driven solely by our own initiative, not external influence. We have actively collaborated with various nations and established strong partnerships with international organizations. Our commitment to addressing the drug issue is without assigning blame to any specific entities or countries. With sincerity and steadfast determination, we pledge to persist in our efforts with unwavering conviction. However, we would like to reiterate that, Myanmar is trying its best to face and overcome these constraints and challenges by adopting plans and programs that conforms to the country's reality.



The Philippines

Drug Situation and Anti-Drug Accomplishment

The Philippines remains steadfast in implementing comprehensive drug supply and demand reduction programs under the Philippine Anti-Illegal Drugs Strategy. While significant and meaningful progress have been made, addressing the drug problem continues to be a national priority.

At the forefront of the national advocacy against illegal drugs is the Dangerous Drugs Board, providing policy and strategy direction, while the Philippine Drug Enforc

Supply reduction remains a critical pillar in the nation's comprehensive response to the illegal drug problem. Grounded in the rule of law and guided by national policies, enforcement efforts aim to dismantle drug syndicates, disrupt the supply chain, and bring perpetrators to justice. These actions are carried out with the objective of protecting communities and upholding public safety, while ensuring that operations adhere to principles of human rights.

In 2024, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency and other law enforcement agencies conducted 38,555 operations, leading to the arrest of around 51,000 drug personalities and the seizure of roughly \$375 million worth of illegal drugs.

Among these, 997 were high-impact operations, targeting 3,001 high-value individuals. Additionally, an estimated 50,000 drug cases were filed against drug personalities for the year 2024.

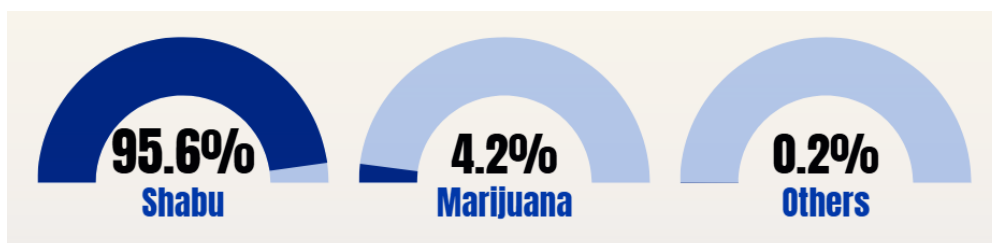
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Dangerous Drugs Seized in 2024

Dangerous Drugs	Volume
Shabu	2,551.88 kilograms
Cocaine	32.74 kilograms
Ecstasy	66,540 pieces
Dried Marijuana Leaves and Bricks	3,088.72 kilograms
Marijuana Kush	939.73 kilograms
Marijuana Plants	8,828,051 pieces
Marijuana Stalks	1,864.94 kilograms
Marijuana Fruiting Tops	26.98 kilograms
Marijuana Seedlings	339,898 pieces
Marijuana Seeds	3.81 kilograms

Based on the seized volume of dangerous drugs in 2024, the majority of items measured in pieces were Marijuana Plants, accounting for 95.60%, followed by Marijuana Seedlings (3.68%) and ecstasy tablets (0.72%). Meanwhile, for items measured in kilograms, the largest portion was Dried Marijuana Leaves and Bricks at 36.30%, followed by Shabu (29.99%), Marijuana Stalks (21.92%), and Marijuana Kush (11.04%).

Drugs of Concern



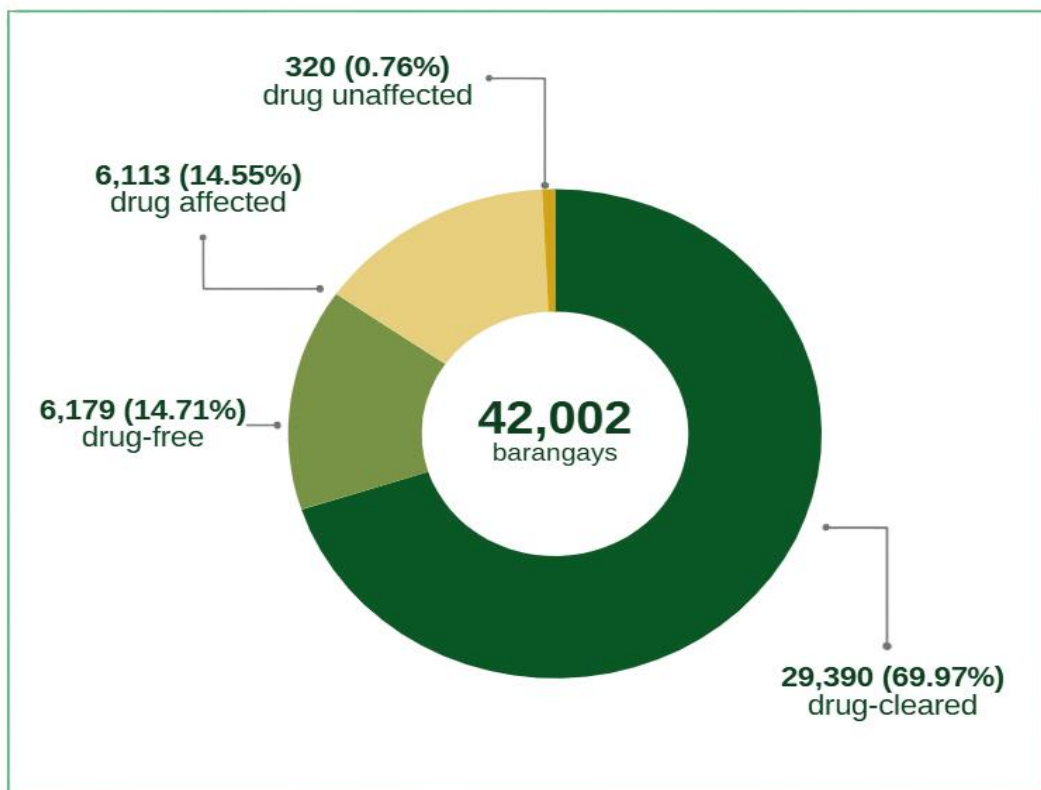
Based on arrests and seizures, methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu and cannabis or marijuana are the top two drugs of concern in the country. Though cannabis or marijuana comprise only 4% of arrests and seizures, it remains a drug of concern as it is locally produced and continues to be a challenge for authorities.

Drug Affection and Barangay Drug Clearing Program

To measure the extent of the country's drug problem, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), in coordination with local government units, continuously monitors the drug affection status of villages or barangays nationwide. The presence of

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illegal drug activities and identified drug personalities are key indicators in determining the level of drug affectation. As a response, the government continues to implement the Barangay Drug Clearing Program as part of its broader campaign against illegal drugs.

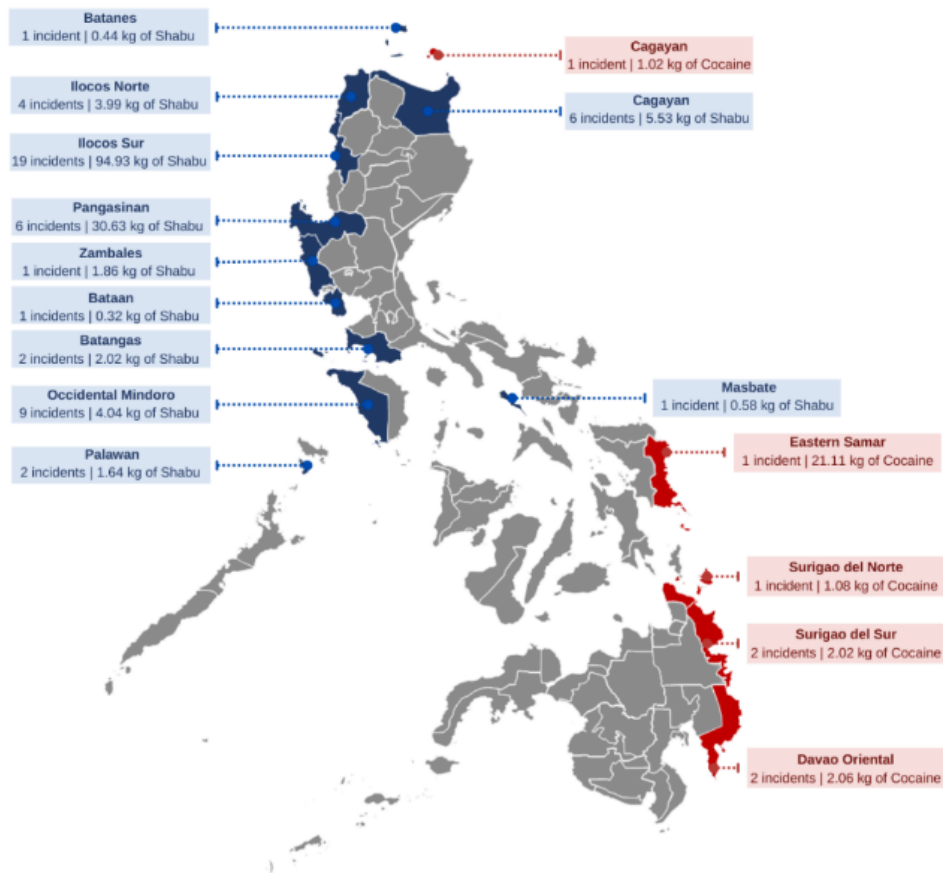


Status of Barangay Drug Clearing Program as of December 31, 2024

As of December 31, 2024, there were approximately 42,002 barangays across the country. Based on the latest data, around 35,521 barangays, or approximately 84.6%, were identified as drug-affected.

Throughout the year 2024, a total of 1,314 drug-affected barangays were officially declared drug-cleared, while 51 barangays were certified as drug-free. Consequently, by the end of the year, 69.97% of all barangays nationwide had achieved drug-cleared status, and 14.71% were categorized as drug-free.

Drug Entry Points



With its vast coastline, the Philippines is highly susceptible to illegal drug smuggling through various entry points, including airports, seaports, and coastlines, as well as the mail and parcel system.

In 2024, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency and other law enforcement agencies successfully intercepted five (5) drug smuggling attempts at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. Compared to the previous year, there was a 62% decrease in incidents recorded.

With over 36,000 kilometers of maritime routes, the Philippine coastline remains highly vulnerable to illegal drug trafficking. An emerging trend of Shabu recovery along the western shoreline of the country has been observed. Meanwhile, there continues to be a minimal recovery of Cocaine along the eastern coast. In seaports, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency observed a notable influx of smuggled Marijuana Kush.

Emerging Drug Trends

The rise of marijuana-infused vapes and magic mushrooms has introduced new challenges in drug enforcement. Marijuana vapes, fueled by unregulated online markets, offer discreet consumption method, making detection difficult. To combat this, PDEA seized over 15.92 liters of marijuana oil, 541.29 grams of THC, and 7,614 vape cartridges, among other materials.



Meanwhile, Psilocybin-infused products, including edibles like chocolate bars and lollipops, have gained popularity despite being classified as controlled substances. Law enforcement efforts led to the confiscation of various Psilocybin products, such as 1,090.14 grams of Psilocin-infused chocolate and 87 chocolate lollipops. Authorities continue to intensify interception operations and public awareness campaigns to address these emerging drug threats.

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High-Impact Operations

In line with the Agency's commitment to conducting intelligence-driven operations, PDEA and other law enforcement agencies, successfully conducted 997 high-impact operations aimed at dismantling and disrupting the illegal drug supply chain.

High-Impact Operations Conducted In 2024	
Dismantled Drug Den	444
High-volume Seizure	418
Marijuana Eradication	134
Dismantled Clandestine Laboratory	1

High-Value Targets Arrested

High-Value Targets Arrested	Number	High-Value Targets Arrested	Number
Elected Official	38	Wanted-Listed Personality	10
Uniformed Personnel	14	Celebrity/Prominent Personality and PRC licensed individual/BP Member	4
Government Employee	141	Drug Den Maintainer	446
Foreign National	61	Clandestine Laboratory/Warehouse Worker	2
Leader/Member of a Drug Group	15	Resurgent Personality	12
Leader/Member of a Armed Group	2	Arrest from HIOs	1,592
Regional Target-Listed Personality	212	Other HVTs	283
Target-Listed Personality	169	Total	3,001

A total of 3,001 high-value targets were arrested in 2024. This is vital in disrupting the illegal activities of drug syndicates and the proliferation of illegal drugs in the communities

Foreign Nationals Arrested

A total of 61 foreign nationals were arrested for violation of RA 9165 .

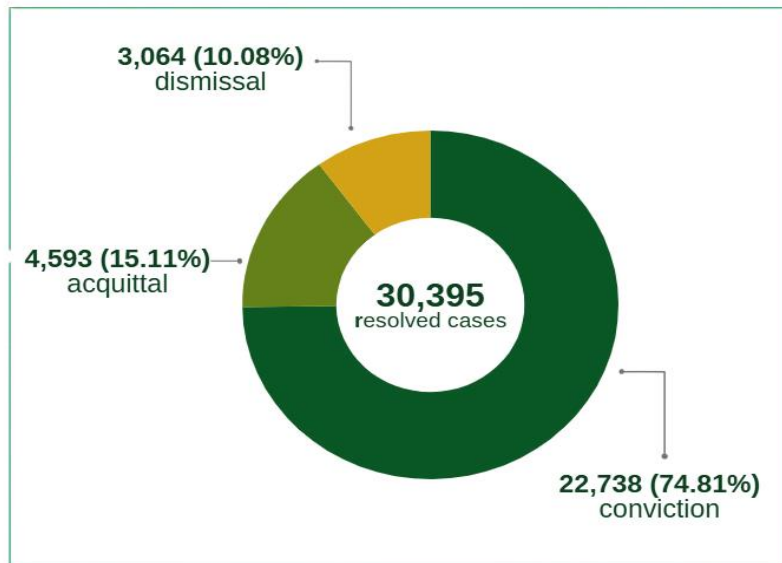
Foreign National Arrested			
Chinese	31	Zambian	1
American	6	Colombian	1
Vietnamese	5	German	1
South African	3	Indian	1
Malaysian	2	Indonesian	1
Nigerian	2	Korean	1
Pakistani	2	Russian	1
Canadian	1	Taiwanese	1
Thai	1	Total	61

Drug Cases Filed

The Philippines remains committed to sustaining anti-illegal drug operations beyond the apprehension of drug offenders. The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency ensures prompt filing of drug cases and strengthens the presentation of case folders to the prosecution

In 2024, PDEA and other law enforcement agencies filed 49,785 drug cases against arrested drug personalities nationwide. There were also a total of 30,395 resolved cases recorded in 2024. Out of these cases, 22,738 resulted in conviction, 3,064 in dismissal, and 4,593 in acquittal.

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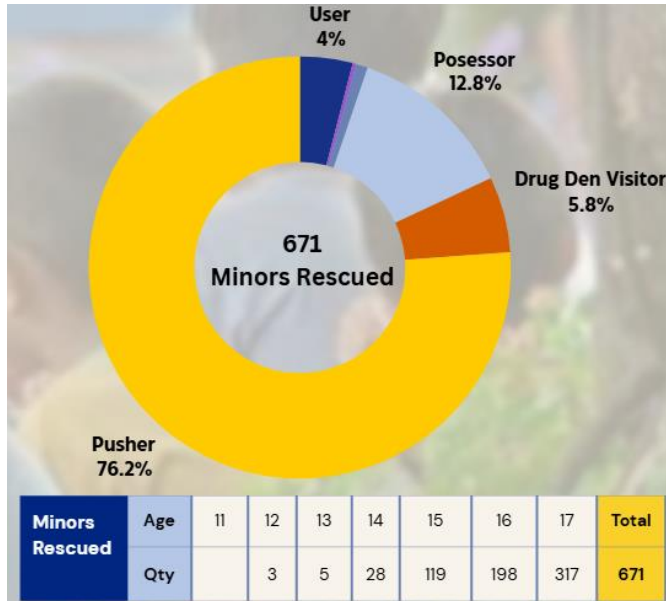
The number of resolved cases is based on Decisions and Orders received in 2024 regardless of the year the cases were filed.

Drug Cases Filed for Violation of RA 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002

VIOLATION		NUMBER
Section 5	Sale of Dangerous Drugs	18,725
Section 11	Possession of Dangerous Drugs	26,742
Section 12	Possession of Equipment, Instrument, Apparatus, and Other Paraphernalia	1,675
Others	Other Offenses	2,643
Total		49,785

Based on consolidated data, violations of the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 including sale and possession of dangerous drugs, equipment, instruments, apparatus, and other paraphernalia resulted in nearly 50,000 drug-related cases filed in 2024.

Minors Rescued

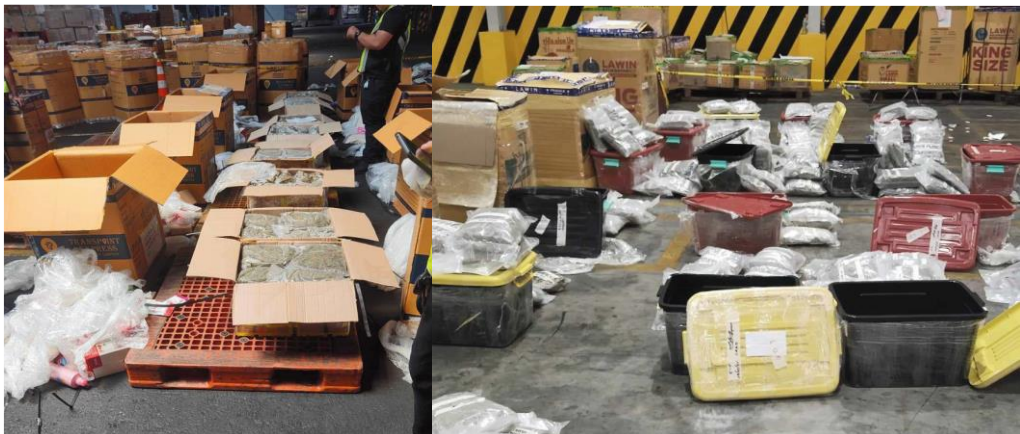


In 2024, 671 minors were rescued during anti-illegal drug operations. This includes minors who used, possessed and visited drug dens. Around 76% of those rescued were pushers.

Rescued minors are promptly turned over to local Social Welfare and Development Offices, where they undergo comprehensive intervention and rehabilitation programs aimed at ensuring their recovery and reintegration into society.

Major Drug Hauls

As part of the effort of the government to heighten the quality of operations, PDEA and other law enforcement agencies accomplished the following drug hauls.



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24.93 kilograms of Shabu were seized during the buy-bust operation conducted by elements of PDEA and PNP on January 22, 2024 along Anaheim Street, Beverly Place, Barangay Masamat, Mexico City, Pampanga.



278.32 kilograms of Marijuana Kush, 2.36 liters of liquid Marijuana in vape cartridges, 1.06 kilograms of dried Mushroom, and 880.25 grams of Hash were seized during the interdiction operation conducted by PDEA, BOC, and PNP Maritime Group on March 7, 2024 at the Manila International Container Port, Tondo, Manila.



30.44 kilograms of Shabu were seized during the interdiction operation conducted by Clark Inter-Agency Drug Interdiction Task Group on March 25, 2024 at Federal Express (FedEx), Warehouse, Clark Freeport Zone, Mabalacat, Pampanga.

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31.76 kilograms of Shabu were seized during the interdiction operation conducted by NAIA Inter-Agency Drug Interdiction Task Group on April 17, 2024 at PAIR-PAGS Center, NAIA Complex, Pasay City



13.99 kilograms of ecstasy (more or less 40,389 pieces) were seized during the interdiction operation conducted by NAIA Inter-Agency Drug Interdiction Task Group on May 6, 2024 at Central Mail Exchange Center, Pasay City.

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Seizure of 9.97 kilograms of Meth on July 17, 2024 in Biñan, Laguna and 5.98 kilograms of Meth on October 12, 2024 at NAIA Terminal 3, Pasay City



Seizure of 4.39 kilograms of Meth on November 18, 2024 in Zamboanga City and 8.80 kilograms of Meth on December 17, 2024 at NAIA Terminal 3, Pasay City.

Anti-Illegal Drug Campaign Support Initiatives

Demand Reduction

Demand reduction is pivotal in the anti-illegal drug campaign. The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, as the lead enforcement arm of drug control policies also implement programs on drug abuse prevention, community engagement, and drug rehabilitation and reformation.

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In 2024, PDEA conducted a total of 2,945 drug prevention education activities that reached 221,517 audiences from different sectors nationwide.

Support in the Reformation and Rehabilitation Program

Balay Silangan Reformation Program

PDEA, in collaboration with local government units, continued implementing the Balay Silangan Reformation Program. In 2024, this reformation program for drug offenders has recorded the establishment of additional 67 Balay Silangan Reformation Centers that produced 1,778 reformists.

To date, a total of 602 Balay Silangan Reformation Centers has been established since the inception of the program in 2018. These centers have produced a total of 8,929 reformists and aided the employment of 2,715 individuals.

Regulatory Efforts



As a law enforcement and regulatory agency mandated by RA 9165, PDEA actively implements efforts to regulate medical practitioners and companies involved in handling and administering dangerous drugs and controlled substances.

These efforts aim to ensure strict compliance with regulations and minimize the risk of misuse. As part of the Agency's streamlining and process improvement efforts, PDEA deployed the Regulatory Compliance System on 1 January 2024. This is an online platform that streamlines the submission of applications, reports, and notifications and provides a paperless, contactless system that ensures faster processing and issuance of licenses, accreditations, and Local Order Permits.

Operation: “Private Eye



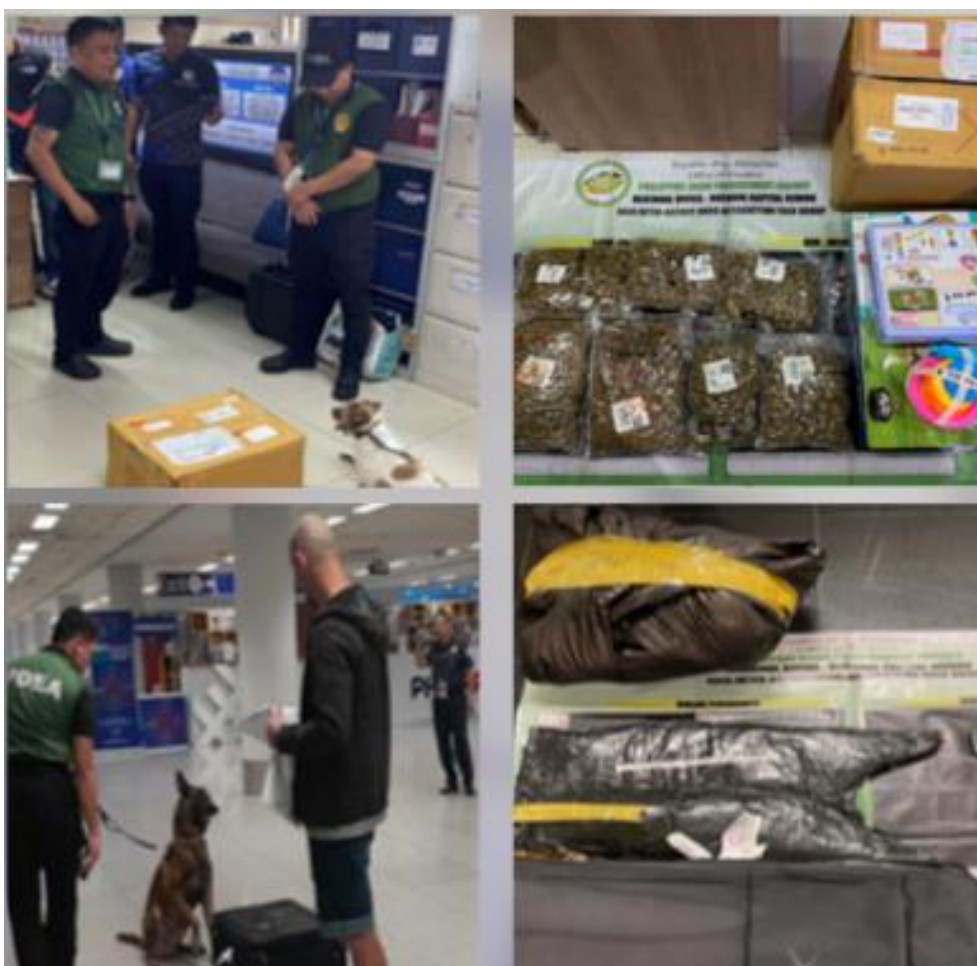
Operation: “Private Eye” is a reward and incentive scheme designed to encourage private citizens to report any suspected illegal drug activities in their community.

In 2024, PDEA awarded a total of PHP 19,250,579.00 reward for 59 claims with 40 informants who provided drug-related information that led to successful anti-illegal drug operation.

K9 Unit Operations

One of the initiatives of PDEA is the strengthening of its drug interdiction capabilities through the utilization of Narcotic Detection Dogs in proactive paneling/sweeping for dangerous drugs, controlled precursors, and essential chemicals.

For the year, PDEA K9 units conducted 26,627 activities nationwide which resulted in 90 positive operations and arrest of 40 drug personalities and seizure of 148.19 kilograms of Shabu, 616.15 kilograms of Marijuana, 9,382 pieces of ecstasy, 24.52 kilograms of Cocaine, and 9.3 grams of Ketamine, among others.



Destruction of Dangerous Drugs and Controlled Precursors and Essential Chemicals (CPECs)

In line with RA 9165 and court orders, the Agency conducted 19 destruction activities nationwide, destroying PHP 17.79 billion worth of dangerous drugs, CPECs, and lab equipment. Additionally, Marijuana eradication operations led to the onsite destruction of PHP 2.14 billion worth of Marijuana, including 1,477.60 kg of dried leaves, over 8.7 million plants, 340,896 seedlings, 1,640.63 kg of stalks, and 3.75 kg of seeds.

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Types of Dangerous Drugs and CPECs Destroyed	Unit	Quantity
Methamphetamine HCl	grams	2,530,477.93
Marijuana	grams	3,040,625.60
Cocaine	grams	44,902.86
Methamphetamine HCl	milliliters	429.86
Marijuana	milliliters	2,023.80
MDMA	grams	17,532.04
Dextropropoxyphene	grams	5,315.79
Heroin	grams	4,864.94
Ephedrine	grams	361,695.98
Meth+Cocaine	grams	0.25
Meth+MDMA	grams	2,539.32
Meth+Ephedrine	grams	3,042.07
Diazepam	grams	5.98
Midazolam	grams	0.30
Morphine	grams	0.01
Toluene	grams	75.28
Benzocaine	grams	2,102.36
Opium Poppy	grams	4,940.00
Ketamine	grams	0.84
Psilocin	grams	1,156.40
Surrendered Expired Meds	pieces	33,105.00
Hydrochloric Acid	liters	11,760.00

International Cooperation

PDEA's international cooperation provided opportunities that enhanced the capabilities of the Agency, with its officers and personnel attending a total of 31 international training programs and conferences, and 27 in-country foreign trainings.

International Meetings/Trainings/Conference	Date	Venue
8th International Cooperative Review Group Progress Report Meeting with the Asia Pacific Joint Group	15-16 January 2024	Bangkok, Thailand
26th Asia Pacific Operational Drug Enforcement Conference	29-31 January 2024	Tokyo, Japan
Global Workshop on Advanced Targeting for Operational Officers and Express Courier and Freight Forwarding Industry Partners	13-16 February 2024	Vienna, Austria
Control of Drug Offences	18 February – 6 March 2024	Tokyo, Japan
International Transnational Organized Crime Course	19 February – 1 March 2024	Bali, Indonesia
Training for Agilent Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometer (GC-MS)	25 February – 1 March 2024	Singapore
Precursor Chemical Diversion Investigation Course	26 February – 1 March 2024	Bali, Indonesia
Southeast Asia Regional Women in Law Enforcement Workshop	26-29 February 2024	Chiang Mai, Thailand
Countering Transnational Organized Crime	27 February – 21 March 2024	Germany
International Air Cargo Interdiction Training	4-8 March 2024	Bangkok, Thailand
67th Regular Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)	18-22 March 2024	Vienna, Austria
Asia Pacific Division IDEC Working Group	26-27 March 2024	Da Nang, Vietnam
11th Bilateral Strategic Dialogue Rule of law and Law Enforcement Working Group	22-23 April 2024	Washington D.C., U.S.A
Visit, Board, Search and Seizure Training on Identification of Precursor Materials	22 April – 3 May 2024	Batam, Indonesia
4th International Symposium of Forensic Drug Testing Lab Directors	29 April – 3 May 2024	Bangkok, Thailand
Visit, Board, Search and Seizure Training on Identification of Hazardous Materials	6-17 May 2024	Batam, Indonesia
Emerging Trends in Illicit Synthetic Drugs Course	13-17 May 2024	Bangkok, Thailand
9th International Cooperative Review Group Meeting with the Asia Pacific Joint Group	14-16 May 2024	Bali, Indonesia

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International Meetings/Trainings/Conference	Date	Venue
Investigating the Criminal Use of Cryptocurrencies Course	3-7 June 2024	Bangkok, Thailand
Financial Investigative Techniques Course	3-7 June 2024	Bangkok, Thailand
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Regional Workshop on Early Warning	10-11 June 2024	Bangkok, Thailand
Training for Agilent Gas Chromatograph Flame Ionization Detector	June 18-20, 2024	Singapore
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America 23rd Mid-Year Training Institute	14-18 July 2024	Chicago, Illinois
Colombo Plan National Secretariats Meeting 2024	6-8 August 2024	Thimphu, Bhutan
Training of Narcotic, Precursor, and Chemical Interception and Suppression for ASEAN Narcotics Law Enforcement Officers	13-24 August 2024	Bangkok, Thailand
International Narcotics Enforcement Course	19-23 August 2024	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
UNODC SMART Drug Forensics Regional Workshop	10-12 September 2024	Phnom Penh, Cambodia
ASEAN-Australia Workshop on Safe Handling and Disposal of Illicit Drugs and Precursor Chemicals	17-18 September 2024	Bangkok, Thailand
Critical Communications Skills in Officer/Citizen Encounters Instructors Training Program	23-27 September 2024	Cha Am, Thailand
38th International Drug Enforcement Conference	24-26 September 2024	Athens, Greece
Chemical Diversion Investigation Course	30 September – 4 October 2024	Bangkok, Thailand
4th NIS-PDEA Intelligence Exchange Meeting	3-6 December 2024	Seoul, Korea

Capacity Building and Advocacy

From January to December 2024, the Dangerous Drugs Board conducted capacity-building activities, including seminars, trainings, and workshops. These programs supported the development of prevention toolkits, enhanced local implementation through trainings for Anti-Drug Abuse Councils, and promotion of youth engagement, parenting education, and gender-responsive approaches. Select activities also focused on professional accreditation and inter-agency coordination in drug abuse prevention.

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Programs	Date
Seminar on Drug Abuse Prevention Education for NSTP Students	5 January 2024 20 June 2024
Seminar-Workshop on Genderizing IEC Materials on Drug Prevention for LGUs	29-31 January 2024
Training of Trainers on Life Skills Enhancement on Drug Abuse Prevention	7-9 February 2024 15-16 February 2024 6-7 March 2024 2-4 April 2024 24-25 April 2024 5-6 June 2024 27-29 August 2024 22-23 October 2024
Seminar Workshop on Parent-Youth Resource Against Drug Abuse (PYRADA)	6-7 March 2024 13-14 August 2024
Seminar on DBB Regulations on Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation	12-13 March 2024 18-19 April 2024
Training on Universal Prevention Curriculum for Substance Use, Curriculum 1 – Introduction to Prevention Science	12-14 March 2024
Seminar on Drug Abuse Prevention Education for the At-Risk Population and Indigenous People	21-22 March 2024
Roll-out Training on YAKAP BAYAN Program	15-19 April 2024 28 April-4 May 2024 28-31 May 2024
4 th National BKD Convention	22-26 April 2024
Design Thinking Planning Workshop for the Development of Model of Intervention for Special Drug Education Center Clients	29 April-3 May 2024
Orientation Seminar for DDB Authorized Representative	8-9 May 2024 12-13 September 2024
Continuing Seminar on Anti-Illegal Drug Operations and Investigation	13-17 May 2024
Youth Camp Against Drug Use (YCADU)	28-30 May 2024
Orientation Seminar and Training of Trainers on Drug-Free Workplace Program	5-6 June 2024
Seminar Workshop on Dangerous Drugs Law For Judges, Prosecutors And Law Enforcers	24-26 April 2024 3-5 July 2024
Writeshop on the Development of the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention Tool Kit	17-21 June 2024 8-12 July 2024
Writeshop for the Development of the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention Education Tool Kit for Early Adolescent	15 to 19 July 2024
Development of Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention Education (DAPE) Tool Kit for Late Adolescents	12-16 August 2024
Conduct of End-user Training on the Enhanced Anti-Drug Abuse Council Reporting System (ADAC-RS)	27-29 August 2024
Women's Empowerment on Drug Abuse Prevention Education (DAPE)	29-30 August 2024

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Programs	Date
Training Course on the Accreditation of Physicians on the Screening and Assessment of Drug Dependents	2-6 September 2024
Campus Tour for Kids	16-20 September 2024
Line Up, Live Up Program	1-4 October 2024
Training of Trainers on Personal and Interpersonal Skills	8-9 October 2024
Kids Development Program – Training of Trainers on Personal and Interpersonal Skills	8-9 October 2024
Celebration Of The Drug Abuse Prevention and Control (DAPC) Week	October 2024
Barkada Kontra Droga Launching Seminar	18 October 2024
Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment and Assessment (SBIRTA) for Provisional Accreditation of Physicians Module 1.0 And 2.0	24-27 September 2024 6-11 October 2024
Inter-Agency Workshop on the Comprehensive Review of Board Regulations related to Drug Testing, Confirmatory and Proficiency Testing	14-15 October 2024
UPC Curriculum 6 - Media Based Prevention Interventions	15-18 October 2024
Seminar on Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP)	15-18 October 2024
Training of Trainers on Life Skills Enhancement on Drug Abuse Prevention	
Student Anti-Drug Abuse Council (SADAC) Compendium	5-6 November 2024
Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Seminar at Manila Central University	08 November 2024
Capacity Building of SDEC Implementers Cum Pre-Testing of the SDEC Manual	11-15 November 2024
Participation to the 3rd ISSUP Philippine National Conference	14 November 2024
Drug-Free Workplace Policy for the Private Sector, in collaboration with the Manila Anti-Drug Office	20 November 2024
Hosting of the 11th National Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee Subcommittee on Intelligence Meeting	21 November 2024
Women's Intervention for Substance Exposure: Comprehensive Care for Substance Use Disorder	25-29 November 2024
Seminar on the Mental Health Gap (MHGAP) Intervention for the Anti-Drug Abuse Councils (ADACs)	27 November 2024
1 st National Convention of Anti-Drug Abuse Councils/Offices	27-29 November 2024
Training of Trainers (TOT) On Life Skills Enhancement In Drug Abuse Prevention Education (DAPE) For The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) – National Capital Region (NCR) Guidance Counselors, Heads and Officers	4-6 December 2024

Statistical Analysis CY 2024

PROFILE OF DRUG ABUSERS *(FACILITY-BASED) CY 2024	
Age: Mean age of <u>34</u> years	Place of Residence: Urban Core (NCR 26.64%)
Sex: Ratio of Male to Female (12:1)	Duration of Drug - Taking: More than six (6) years
Civil Status: Single (52.87%)	Nature of Drug - Taking: Mono drug use**
Status of Employment: Employed (58.25%) (Workers/Employees, Businessman, and Self-Employed)	Drugs/Substances of Abuse: • Methamphetamine Hydrochloride (Shabu) • Cannabis (Marijuana) • Cocaine
Educational Attainment: High School Level (27.80%)	*Residential and Out-Patient Facilities
Economic Status: Average Monthly Family Income - US\$229.04 (Php 13,287.61)	**Mono drug use - abuse of one (1) drug only

Based on data gathered from residential and outpatient facilities in 2024, the mean age of a typical Person Who Use Drugs is 34 years old and is predominantly male, with a 12 is to 1 ratio of male to female.

Most of them are single and employed, working across different sectors, including business.

However, their educational attainment is often limited, with almost 28% reaching only the high school or secondary level. In terms of economic status, the average monthly family income is about 229 US dollars, indicating a financial situation that may impact access to rehabilitation and recovery services.

Geographically, the urban core remains a key area of concern, with an estimated 27% of cases recorded in the National Capital Region.

Drug use patterns also indicate long-term substance use, with most users engaged in drug-taking for more than six years. A significant trend observed is mono-drug use, where individuals tend to abuse only one substance

Demographic Profile

The center's admissions report shows that 91.43% of the individuals are male, approximately 7.75% are female, and less than 0.82% identify as LGBT. The male-to-female ratio remains at 12:1, consistent with previous years. The higher number of males in rehabilitation facilities may be attributed to societal pressures and the expectation to appear tough, which, coupled with financial stress, can lead to substance abuse as a coping mechanism.

Drug abuse does not affect only men but women as well. An intensified advocacy campaign should also be undertaken to encourage more female PWUDs to seek appropriate treatment interventions.

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For the year under review, the youngest admission is 12, while the eldest is 76. Most of the admissions belong to the age group of 40 and above, with around thirty-four percent (33.95%) of the reported cases. The computed mean and median are 34 years old.

More than half (52.87%) are single, and about a fourth (24.38%) are married; those who have live-in partners comprised nineteen percent (19.10%), and the rest, approximately four percent (3.65%) are either widow/er, separated, divorced, or annulled.

As to educational attainment, almost a third (27.80%) have attained high school. On the second spot are those who have reached college, with nineteen percent (19.44%), followed by those who have graduated high school, with seventeen percent (17.41%). The monthly family income is approximately thirteen thousand pesos (Php 13,287.61) or about two hundred twenty-nine US dollars (US\$229.04).

Regarding employment status, those employed (either workers/employees or people in business and self-employed) comprised fifty-eight percent (58.25%), while unemployed comprised thirty-eight percent (37.53%). Three percent (3.19%) of the admissions constitute students, and less than one percent (0.81%) are out-of-school youth, while a few (0.21%) are pensioners. Emphasis should be placed on the campaign for drug-free workplaces.

Around twenty-seven percent (26.64%) of reported cases are residents of the National Capital Region, while thirteen percent (12.9073%) are from Region III.

Considering the age at first drug use, forty percent (40.08%) belong to ages 15 to 19 years old. Forty percent (39.99%) admitted to having taken drugs two (2) to five (5) times a week, twenty-three percent (23.27%) monthly, and twenty percent (20.17%) weekly

2024 Most Commonly Abused Drugs *(Facility-Based)



Methamphetamine Hydrochloride or “Shabu” remains the leading drug of abuse, comprising around ninety-four percent (93.65%) of the total admissions. This is followed by Cannabis (Marijuana) at twenty-five percent (24.96%) and on the third by Cocaine at less than one percent (0.53%). It seems that cocaine, as a local drug of abuse, is gaining popularity, as supported by the increase in seizures by our drug law enforcers, which tends to show that

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there is a demand within the illicit local market. Seized drugs, in 2024, included methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu, marijuana, ecstasy, and cocaine. Mono-drug use remains to be the nature of drug-taking with administration routes through inhalation/sniffing and oral ingestion.

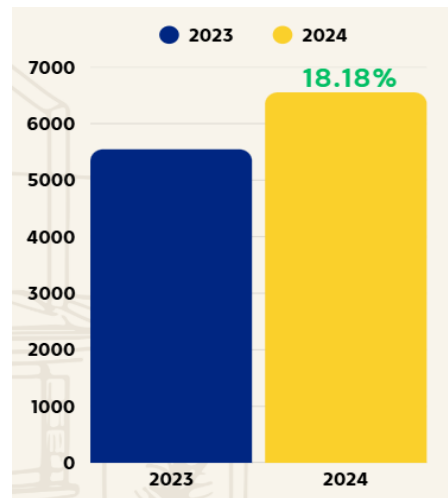
Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers (DATRCs)

ADMISSIONS	Number
New Admissions	5,537
Re-admitted	111
Outpatients	906
Total	6,554

In 2024, eighty-eight (88) Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers (DATRCs) reported to the Treatment and Rehabilitation Admission Information System (TRAIS). Seventy-six (76) are residential, and twelve (12) are outpatient.

These reporting facilities recorded six thousand five hundred fifty-four (6,554) admissions. Of these numbers, five thousand five hundred thirty-seven (5,537) are new admissions, one hundred eleven (111) are readmitted, or relapse cases and nine hundred six (906) are outpatients.

Compared with the previous year's cases, an eighteen percent (18.18%) increase in admission was noted. The increase in admission can be attributed to the continuous improvement of the implementation of programs for Persons Who Use Drugs (PWUDs), the holistic approach that assists them in gaining access to appropriate intervention, the different advocacy programs implemented by various sectors that encourage PWUDs to seek help and undergo treatment and rehabilitation.





Singapore

Overview

In 2024, CNB arrested 3,175 drug abusers. This was a 2% increase from the 3,122 drug abusers arrested in 2023.

The number of repeat drug abusers arrested increased by 0.4% from 2,170 in 2023 to 2,179 in 2024. The number of new drug abusers arrested increased by 5% from 952 in 2023 to 996 in 2024. 54% of new abusers arrested in 2024 were under 30 years old.

Methamphetamine, heroin, and cannabis were the three most commonly abused drugs in 2024, with 95% of drug abusers arrested abusing at least one of these three drugs. For new drug abusers, methamphetamine, cannabis and 'ecstasy' were the three most commonly abused drugs, with 92% of new drug abusers arrested abusing at least one of these three drugs. Out of the 3,175 drug abusers arrested in 2024, 689 abusers (22%) were poly-drug abusers who abused more than one type of drug.

Sustained Drug Enforcement

CNB continued to launch enforcement operations against drugs and worked closely with Home Team² agencies to deter and detect the flow of drugs into and within Singapore.

In 2024, together with the Singapore Police Force and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority, CNB conducted 11 island-wide operations targeting drug traffickers and abusers, as well as 1,053 operations at our checkpoints to intercept attempts to smuggle drugs into Singapore. CNB also carried out major operations that crippled 25 drug syndicates.

² The Home Team is a collective term for 11 law enforcement agencies under the Ministry of Home Affairs that work together to keep Singapore safe and secure.

Drug Seizures

The drugs seized in 2024 were estimated to have a street value of about S\$15.7 million. There was a 16.1% decrease in seizures of heroin to 69.61kg in 2024, from 83.00kg in 2023. Cannabis seizures saw a 43.9% increase to 101.03kg in 2024, from 70.19kg in 2023. Seizures of crystalline methamphetamine (more commonly known as 'Ice') saw a 62.1% increase to 39.53kg in 2024, from 24.38kg in 2023.

Local Drug Seizures in 2024					
Drug type	2023	2024	% change in seizure	Estimated market value 2023	Estimated market value 2024
Heroin No.3	83.00kg	69.61kg	-16.1%	≈ S\$15.58 million	≈ S\$15.66 million
Methamphetamine ('Ice')	24.38kg	39.53kg	+62.1%		
Cannabis	70.19kg	101.03kg	+43.9%		
Cocaine	117.37g	196.89g	+67.8%		
'Ecstasy'	7,899 tablets + 3,082.48g	5,610 tablets + 3,985.94g	-29.0% (tablets) -29.3% (weight)		
Methamphetamine tablets ('Yaba')	197 tablets	3,330 tablets	+1590.4%		
Ketamine	5.96kg + 1,247 tablets	10.42kg + 3,833 tablets	+74.8% (weight) +207.4% (tablets)		
Erimin-5	8,260 tablets	26,596 tablets	+222.0%		
Buprenorphine ('Subutex')	NIL	NIL	-		
New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) (e.g. synthetic cannabinoids and synthetic cathinones)	3,289 tablets + 616.21g + 57 bottles	280 tablets + 1,578.76g + 165 bottles	-91.5% (tablets) +156.2% (weight) +189.5% (bottles)		



Thailand

Overview

Thailand continues to face significant challenges from cross-border drug trafficking, driven in part by the internal political instability and weak governance in certain neighboring countries. These conditions have facilitated the involvement of several armed ethnic groups in the production and trafficking of illicit drugs from the Golden Triangle. Among the most pressing challenges is the trafficking and abuse of YABA (methamphetamine tablet), which is widely produced and smuggled from the Golden Triangle. YABA use causes severe health problems, including cognitive impairment and psychiatric disorders, with long-term impacts on individuals and communities. Due to geography next to the production site, Thailand faces a dual challenge; it is not only a primary market for the widespread use of YABA but also serves as a significant transit country for other drugs, such as ICE (Crystal methamphetamine), heroin, and ketamine, destined for third countries. Thailand's strategic location makes its drug situation a reflection of the broader security risks posed by regional drug production and trafficking.

Drug Trafficking & Epidemic Situations

There are four main drugs seized in Thailand: YABA, Crystal Meth (ICE), Ketamine, and Heroin. Recent law enforcement operations have resulted in the confiscation of approximately 105,557 kilograms of YABA, 34,622 kilograms of ICE, 4,942 kilograms of Ketamine, and 2,051 kilograms of Heroin. These figures highlight the serious challenge and strong influence of organized crime in and beyond the region. An analysis of recent drug seizures in Thailand reveals the overwhelming dominance of methamphetamine. Together, these two forms of methamphetamine make up 96% of the total weight of seized narcotics, underscoring their status as the primary drug threat. In contrast, seizures of Ketamine (4,942 kg) and Heroin (2,051 kg) represent significantly smaller portions of the total, at 3% and 1% respectively.

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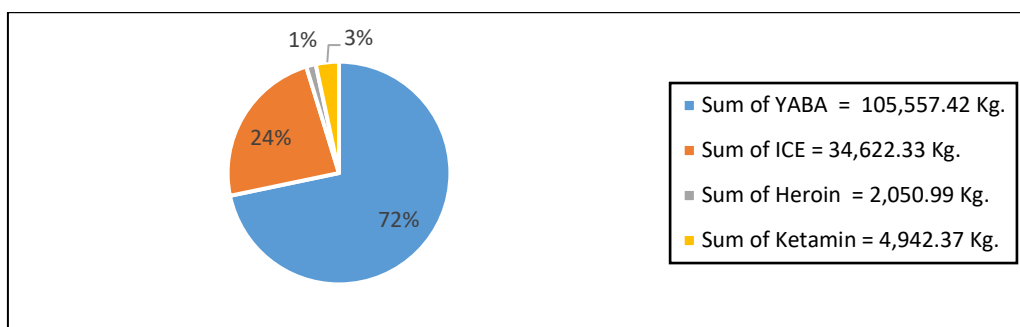


Figure : The prevalence of drugs seized in Thailand during 2024

In 2024, drug smuggling through Thailand's airports and seaports remained a serious concern. Although the number of arrests slightly declined, the quantities of drugs seized continued to rise, with ICE increasing by 21%, YABA by 46%, and ketamine by over 300%.

These figures reflect the evolving tactics of trafficking networks. However, they also demonstrate Thailand's growing capacity to intercept larger drug shipments and disrupt organized smuggling routes. Through the Airport Interdiction Task Force (AITF), Thailand handled a total of 165 cases in 2024, including 121 parcel post cases and 33 human courier cases. At the same time, the Seaport Interdiction Task Force (ASITF) successfully interdicted 11 major drug smuggling cases.

Drugs seizure at Airports/Seaports

Year	Cases	Offenders	ICE (Kg.)	Heroin (Kg.)	YABA (Tablets)	Ecstasy (Tablets)	Cocaine (Kg.)	Ketamine (Kg.)
2023	225	64	446	419	39,592	27,692	116	82
2024	165	70	541.21	235	57,981	8,355	35.08	335.26
			21.37%	46.45%	308.73%			

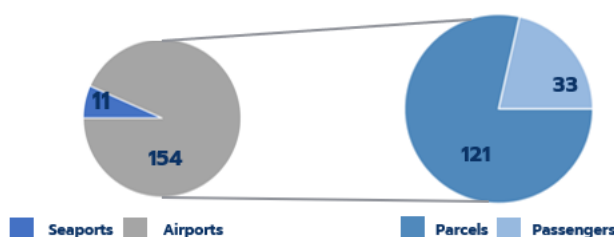


Figure : Drug Seizures at Airports and Seaports in Thailand, 2023–2024

Law Enforcement

Drug-related problems remain a serious concern in Thailand and across the region. While the number of arrests and reported drug cases has declined in recent years, this does not reflect a reduction in drug trafficking activities. In fact, drug syndicates have adapted their methods, moving larger quantities per shipment and using more advanced concealment techniques.

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The graph shows that in 2024, there were a total of 127,169 drug cases and 136,921 offenders in Thailand. These figures are the lowest in the five-year period from 2020 to 2024. The decline is partly due to the policy change that removed cannabis and kratom from the list of controlled narcotics, which led to fewer arrests being recorded.

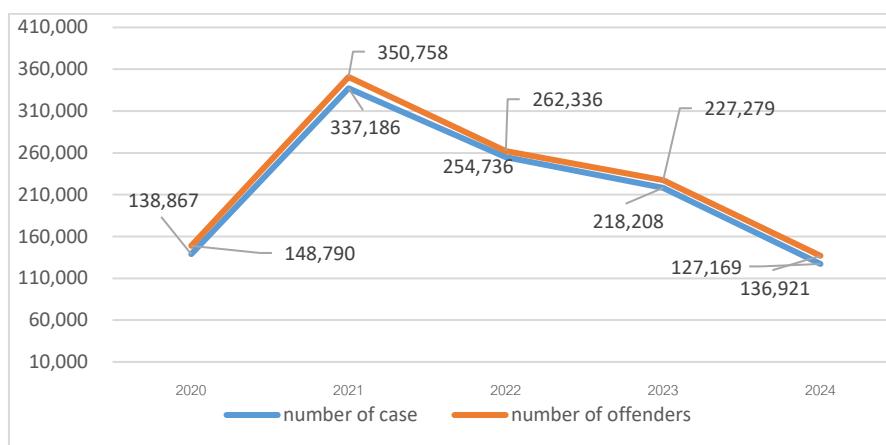


Figure : Statistics on Drug-Related Cases and Offenders in Thailand, 2020–2024

Year	YABA (Million tablets)	Heroin (Kilogram)	ICE (Kilogram)	Ecstasy (Tablet)	Ketamine (Kilogram)	Cocaine (Kilogram)	Dried Cannabis (Kilogram)	Kratom (Kilogram)
2020	380.17	1,829.47	27,609.04	580,000	1,708.57	30.14	21,341.22	107,134.05
2021	598.82	3,439.82	22,135.65	580,000	1,031.90	37.35	56,087.45	60,105.71
2022	552.34	850.01	9,846.90	460,000	1,898.31	50.21	11,211.89	66.50
2023	648.59	1,098.20	26,390.97	160,000	6,385.34	34.69	-	-
2024	1,172.86	2,050.98	34,622.33	*51.70 Kg.	4,942.37	26.72	-	-

Table : Statistics on Drugs Seized in Thailand, 2020 - 2024

(YABA in million tablets; Heroin, ICE, Ketamine, Cocaine, and Kratom in kilograms; ecstasy in tablets for 2020 - 2023 and kilograms in 2024;
Dried cannabis in kilograms)

Note: *The reporting unit for ecstasy changed in 2024 from tablets to kilograms due to the variety of forms in which ecstasy was seized, making it impossible to standardize the data in tablet units.

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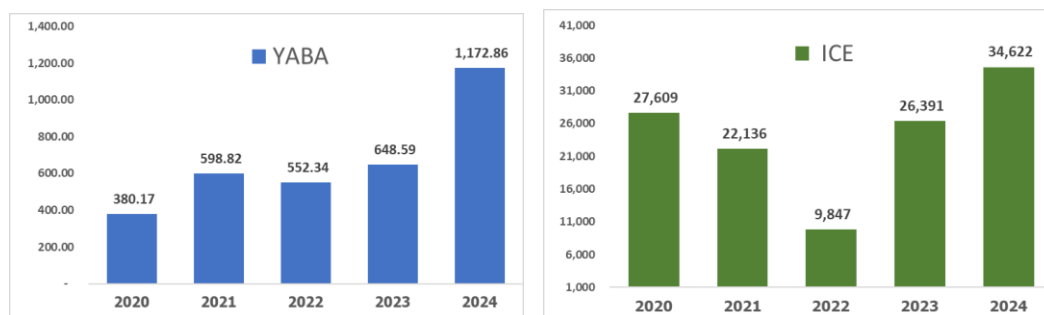


Figure : Quantities of YABA and ICE Seized, 2020–2024
(YABA in million tablets; ICE in kilograms)

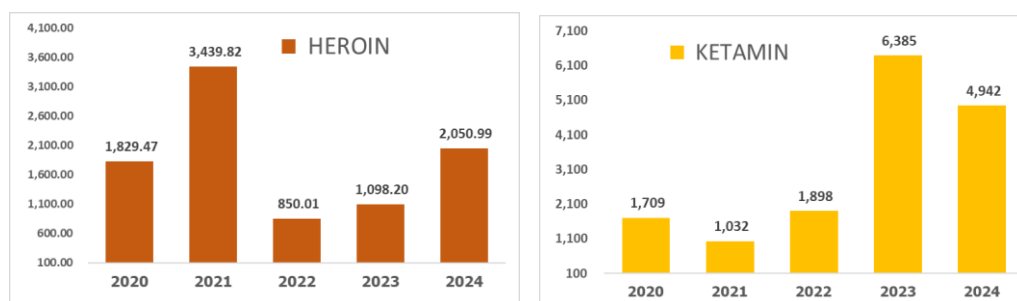


Figure : Quantities of Heroin and Ketamine Seized in Thailand, 2020–2024
(Both Heroin and Ketamine in kilograms)

Regarding drug seizures, the data over the past five years reflect both increasing trends and shifting trafficking dynamics. The amount of YABA seized has surged dramatically, from 380.17 million tablets in 2020 to a record high of 1,172.86 million tablets in 2024. ICE seizures have also risen significantly, reaching 34,622 kilograms in 2024, the highest level in five years. Heroin seizures peaked at 3,439.82 kilograms in 2021, with 2,050.99 kilograms seized in 2024. Ketamine seizures followed an upward trajectory, reaching 6,385 kilograms in 2023 before declining slightly to 4,942 kilograms in 2024.

In 2024, Thailand prioritized the dismantling of major drug trafficking networks through asset-based measures, with the clear objective of crippling their financial infrastructure. Key efforts focused on strengthening legal tools and expanding enforcement powers to effectively target financial assets, properties, and economic benefits derived from drug-related activities. A notable development was the enhancement of legal authority to pursue asset-related cases independently of criminal proceedings. This allowed for greater flexibility and effectiveness in disrupting drug syndicates. The adoption of value-based confiscation has emerged as a crucial legal instrument, enabling law enforcement agencies to seize the equivalent value of illicit proceeds when the original assets are no longer available. This has significantly contributed to efforts to dismantle both the operational and financial structures of transnational drug trafficking organizations. In total, assets seized and frozen in drug-related cases throughout 2024 were valued at 9,389.93 million Thai Baht (approximately USD 263 million), underscoring Thailand's commitment to dismantling drug trafficking networks through robust asset-based enforcement measures.

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Value of Seizures/Assets	
Year	Million Baht
2020	790.57
2021	7,346.82
2022	11,003.02
2023	21,610.89
2024	9,389.93

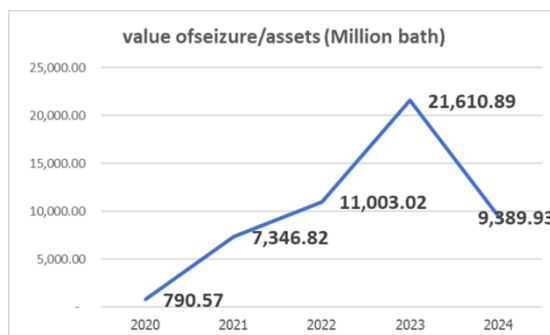


Table : Value of Seizures/Assets (Million Baht), 2020–2024

Figure : Value of Seized Assets in Drug Cases, 2020–2024 (Million Baht)

Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation

In 2024, a total of 201,009 patients entered Thailand's drug treatment and rehabilitation system, a notable increase of approximately 26% from the 158,732 patients recorded in 2023. While patient numbers fluctuate annually, this figure indicates a renewed demand for treatment services, and the increase is viewed as a positive outcome of policies aimed at bringing users into care, which has also been linked to a reduction in reports of drug-induced public disturbances. The treatment landscape is overwhelmingly dominated by methamphetamine, with YABA accounting for 83% of all patients, followed by other substances such as ICE (3%) and Heroin (3%). An analysis of patient age reveals critical insights; while the majority of patients in 2024 (80%) were aged 25 and over, the problem of addiction often begins much earlier. A significant 75.8% of all patients reported that they first used drugs during their childhood or adolescence, most commonly between the ages of 15 and 19. These findings underscore the urgent need for early intervention and prevention programs targeting youth, particularly during their formative teenage years.

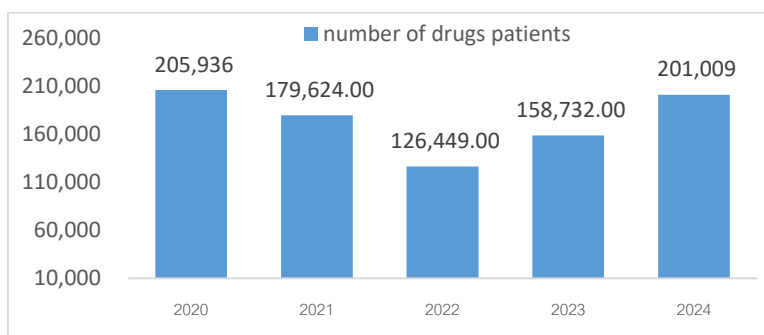


Figure : Number of Patients Entering Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation System, 2020 – 2024

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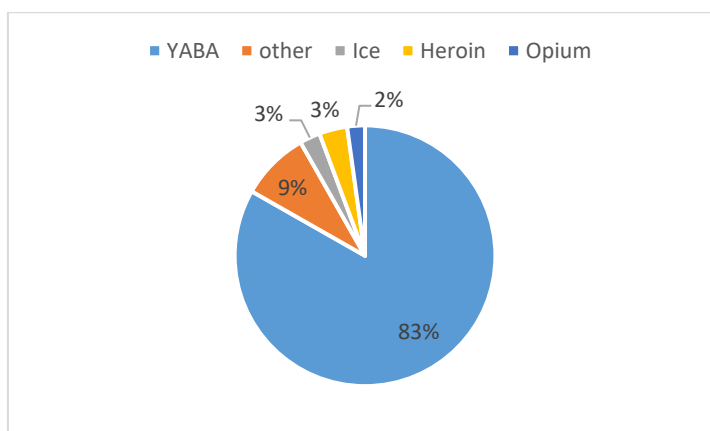


Figure : Common Types of Drugs Used by Patients in 2024

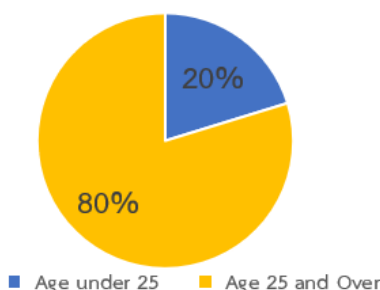


Figure : Proportion of Drug Patients by Age Group in 2024

Drug Prevention

Thailand places a strong emphasis on a comprehensive approach to prevention strategy to protect its population from involvement in drug-related activities, including use, trafficking, and victimization by criminal networks. Prevention efforts target key demographic groups, including children, youth, and workers in both formal and informal sectors, and the general public. The principal objective is to enhance awareness, develop protective factors, and foster resilience against drug involvement. This is achieved by providing accurate information, developing essential life skills, and reinforcing positive attitudes that support a drug - free lifestyle.

A core component of this approach is the systematic integration of drug prevention content into educational materials spanning from early childhood to higher education.

At the preschool level, this begins with an emphasis on the development of life management skills and the strengthening of Executive Functions (EF) to establish a foundational capacity for self - regulation and informed decision - making. Such competencies serve as critical protective factors against future drug involvement. Implementation occurs through formal educational institutions and child development centers.

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Picture : Strengthening Executive Functions (EF) in Early Childhood for Drug Prevention

At primary, secondary, and higher education levels, drug education is promoted through the integration of the curriculum “Think Smart, Be Aware, Say No to Drugs” into health education subjects. This curriculum is implemented at all grade levels in primary and secondary schools, as well as their equivalents, nationwide. This approach aims to enhance students’ cognitive and social competencies, equipping them with the knowledge and attitudes necessary to make informed choices regarding substance use.



Picture : Integrating Drug Education into the School Curriculum: Think Smart, Be Aware, Say No to Drugs

At the higher education level, drug prevention efforts focus on promoting inter-institutional collaboration to incorporate drug law education into academic curricula, particularly within faculties of law and science. This approach aims to equip students with practical legal and scientific knowledge related to narcotics control, while fostering their involvement in socially constructive and ethically responsible activities.

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Picture : Enhancing Drug Law Education in Higher Institutions through Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Beyond formal education, prevention strategies have been broadened to engage communities and online platforms. These initiatives make use of appropriate digital technologies, mobilize networks from the public, private, and civil society sectors, and collaborate with social media influencers to amplify anti-drug messages. A notable example is the TikTok campaign “Be Smart, Say No to Drugs,” which encourages youth participation through a short video contest to raise national awareness of the dangers of drug use. Another initiative, “Music in the Garden,” held in June to mark the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, combines cultural expression with drug prevention advocacy, fostering community engagement and public awareness.



Picture: Music in the Garden is held in June as part of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking



Picture: TikTok Campaigns Be Smart, Say No to Drugs

Illicit Crop Cultivation

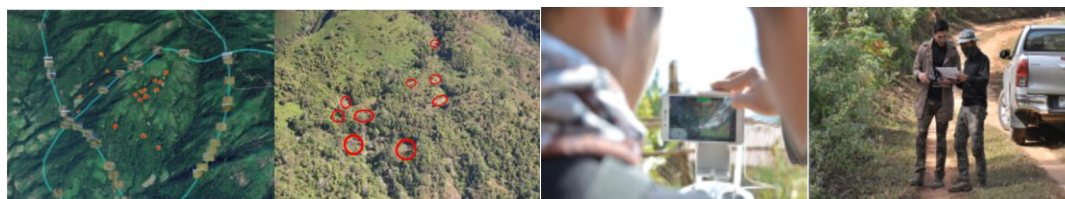
The continued cultivation of opium in Thailand is influenced by several interrelated factors. Farmers are often drawn to opium due to its relatively high market value compared to other crops. Cultivation typically occurs in remote and underserved areas, where government support and oversight are limited. In recent years, cultivation methods have become more sophisticated and harder to detect. Approximately 80% of opium is now grown in small, scattered plots of less than one rai (0.16 hectares), often hidden within other vegetation, arranged in rows similar to vegetable crops, or intercropped with other plants. Some fields are also harvested multiple times, further complicating detection and eradication efforts. Additionally, local demand for raw opium among users in certain areas sustains ongoing cultivation.

Despite these challenges, Thailand has made significant progress in reducing illicit opium cultivation. In 2024, the total cultivation area was recorded at only 11.39 hectares, a sharp decline of 46.88% compared to 21.44 hectares in 2023. The majority of these cultivation sites were found in the northern provinces. A key factor contributing to this success is the consistently high rate of field eradication. Each year, authorities have destroyed nearly all detected opium fields. This achievement is closely linked to the deployment of advanced surveillance technologies, such as high-resolution satellite imagery and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), which enable effective detection, monitoring, and verification of opium cultivation in remote mountainous terrain.

The continuous decline in opium cultivation reflects Thailand's sustained efforts in enforcement and eradication operations, as well as its commitment to applying advanced technology to effectively combat illicit crop production.



ASEAN DRUG MONITORING REPORT 2024



Picture : Thailand's enforcement and technology-driven efforts to reduce opium cultivation and eradicate illicit crops.

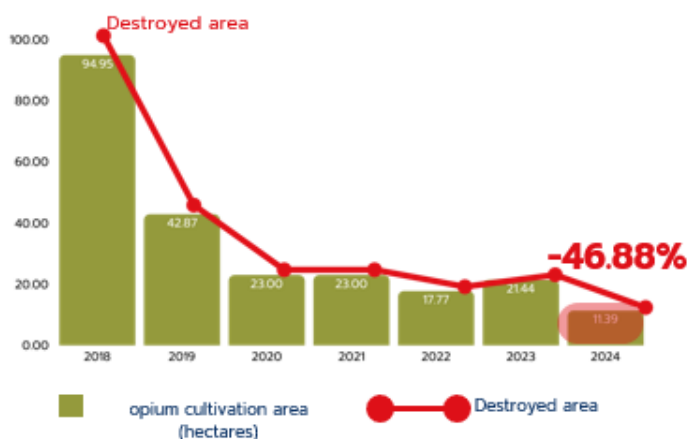


Figure : Opium Cultivation and Destroyed Areas in Thailand, 2018–2024

Drug Analysis

The Narcotics Analysis and Technical Service Institute (NATSI) of the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) is responsible for analyzing seized drugs to support investigations and enforcement. NATSI studies the physical and chemical composition of seized drugs to trace their origins and distribution areas, while also developing and supporting drug analysis techniques. The institute reports on drug characteristics, including physical data like packaging and markings, and chemical data such as purity levels and the precursor chemicals used in production. The analysis results for the most commonly seized drugs in Thailand, based on data from Thailand's 2024 fiscal year, are as follows:

1. YABA

Analysis focused on major seizure cases (10,000 tablets or more), covering 217 cases, with a total of 677.5 million pills.

Physical Characteristics: Most seized YABA tablets were round and flat, typically in shades of orange and green. The vast majority of tablets were impressed with the 'WY' logo, accounting for 99.73% of the total, while other markings such as '999' 'Y1' and APPLE were found on the remaining 0.27%.



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Picture : Stamps and colors of Yaba found in Thailand



Picture : Brand marks on packaging of Yaba found in Thailand

Chemical Analysis: The primary active ingredient in Yaba is methamphetamine hydrochloride, which was detected at varying levels of purity ranging from 0.01% to 30.00%. The most commonly observed purity range was between 15.01% and 20.00%, found in 85.27% of the samples analyzed. Caffeine, another major component, was detected at purity levels ranging from 60.01% to over 90.00%. The most frequently observed range for caffeine purity was between 70.01% and 80.00%, present in 71.09% of the analyzed tablets.

Precursor Chemicals: The analysis indicated that Ephedrine/Pseudoephedrine (Ep/Pep) was the most commonly used precursor, identified in 81.43% of cases. This was followed by Phenyl-2-Propanone (P2P) at 8.60%, while in 9.97% of cases, the precursor could not be identified.

2. ICE

The analysis of major Ice seizures (1 kg or more), covering 72 cases, totals 14,489 bags with a combined weight of approximately 14,468 kg.



Picture : Ice Packaging found in Thailand

Physical Characteristics: Seized Ice typically consists of large, white crystals packaged in clear, vacuum - sealed plastic bags, often disguised as Chinese tea packages. Each package is approximately 3.5 to 6.5 inches wide and weighs around 1 kilogram. The packaging varies in terms of brand, symbols, and colors, which allows for classification into 12 distinct groups based on the markings or brand logos printed on the tea bags.

Chemical Analysis: The primary active ingredient in ICE is methamphetamine hydrochloride, which constituted 91.95% of the sample weight on average. The purity levels ranged from 90.00% upwards, with the most common purity range being between 94.00% and 96.00%, found in 33.26% of the samples. The average purity of major ICE samples was recorded at 92.17%, with the highest observed purity at 99.97% and the lowest at 2.15%. A comparison of the purity levels of methamphetamine hydrochloride in seized ICE samples between fiscal year 2023 and fiscal year 2024 showed no significant change in the predominant purity range. In cases where ICE samples exhibited unusually low purity, forensic

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analysis revealed the presence of cutting agents added to increase weight. Common adulterants included citric acid, dimethyl sulfone, and ketamine.

Precursor Chemicals: The most commonly used precursors in methamphetamine production were Ephedrine (Ep) and Pseudoephedrine (Pep), accounting for 70.30% of all analyzed samples. Phenyl-2-Propanone (P2P) was used in 9.90% of the cases, while 19.80% of the samples could not be conclusively identified in terms of the specific precursor used. A comparison between fiscal years 2023 and 2024 showed that Ephedrine/Pseudoephedrine continued to be the primary precursors in the production of methamphetamine, maintaining their dominant role in illicit ICE manufacturing.

International Cooperation

International cooperation is also a crucial measure for supporting and advancing drug control efforts and raising awareness at all levels. Therefore, Thailand has taken a major role bilaterally, regionally, and multilaterally. Thailand has been working on mutual drug control cooperation and partnerships with relevant drug control agencies of neighboring countries, foreign countries, international organizations, and international non - government organizations. The cooperation focuses on drug law enforcement, drug treatment and rehabilitation, drug prevention, and alternative development. The cooperation is strengthened by ongoing and new joint initiatives and operations in response to up-to-date situation. There are three main cooperation levels as follows;

(1) Bilateral cooperation

Thailand engages in proactive cooperation through ministerial and high-level visits and promotes bilateral efforts in meetings with various countries, especially within the Mekong Sub-region, including China, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Vietnam



Picture : An official visit of Pol. Col. Tawee Sodsong, Minister of Justice of Thailand, to the People's Republic of China, including a courtesy call on H.E. Mr. Wang Xiaohong, Minister of Public Security of the P.R. China (31 January – 2 February 2024)



Picture : An official visit of Pol. Col. Tawee Sodsong, Minister of Justice of Thailand, to the Lao People's Democratic Republic, including a courtesy call on Gen. Vilay Lakhomfong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Security of the Lao PDR (14 February 2024)

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Picture : The 14th Cambodia - Thailand Bilateral Meeting on Drug Control Cooperation, hosted by Cambodia (26 - 27 March 2024)



Picture : The 25th Thailand - Myanmar Bilateral Meeting on Drug Control Cooperation, hosted by Thailand (2 April 2024)



Picture : The 19th Thailand - China Bilateral Meeting on Drug Control Cooperation, co-hosted by Thailand (10 July 2024, Bangkok)



Picture : The 16th Thailand - Viet Nam Bilateral Meeting on Drug Control Cooperation, co-hosted by Thailand (28 August 2024, Bangkok)

(2) Regional and Multilateral cooperation

Thailand in cooperation with five countries namely Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam mutually established the Safe Mekong Coordination Center (SMCC) as a regional mechanism to combat drug trafficking in the Mekong Subregion. The SMCC facilitates joint operations and information sharing among member countries. The 2024 Safe Mekong Joint Operation, hosted by the Office of the National Narcotics Control Commission (NNCC) of the People's Republic of China, was conducted from 1 June to 31 August 2024 over a three-month period, the operation resulted in over 11,000 drug-related cases, more

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than 18,000 arrests, the seizure of approximately 35.5 tons of illicit drugs, and the apprehension of six major drug traffickers.



Picture: The 2024 Safe Mekong Joint Operation, hosted by China with Thailand participating online (17 October 2024)

Other than SMCC Thailand also promoted the joint cooperation with the Greater Mekong Sub-region country. Major engagements included:



Picture : The Focal Point Meeting of the Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding on Drug Control in the Greater Mekong Sub-region, hosted by Lao PDR (17–18 January 2024)



Picture : Senior Officials Committee Meeting of the Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding on Drug Control in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (28–29 May 2024)

Apart from the regional cooperation, Thailand also highlights the multilateral cooperation, particularly the cooperation with ASEAN Member States. The cooperation in jointly solving drug problems among 10 countries was an active collaboration to combat the illicit smuggling of narcotic drugs and precursor chemicals in the Golden Triangle area.

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The focus of such cooperation is on timely intelligence-sharing, joint task forces, and capacity - building through training, seminar workshops, and meetings. The key mechanisms of ASEAN cooperation include the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (AMMD), a bi - annual platform for the ministers in 10 countries to set common guidelines on drug control, and the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Drug Matters (ASOD), an annual platform for policy-makers to discuss and resolve drug problem with concrete decisions. To enhance ASEAN cooperation for effective implementation and operations, ASEAN Member States collectively established the ASEAN Narcotics Cooperation Center (ASEAN-NARCO) in 2015 of which three main projects were initiated, namely, the ASEAN Drug Monitoring Network (ADMN) to make an annual ASEAN drug report to monitor regional drug situation, the ASEAN Airport Interdiction Task Force (AAITF), and the ASEAN Seaport Interdiction Task Force (ASITF) to conduct joint operations and task forces for intercepting the trafficking of drugs and precursor chemicals.



Picture : The ASEAN Secretary - General met with the Secretary-General of the Narcotics Control Board of Thailand to jointly promote a regional agenda for addressing drug issues (5 November 2024)



Picture : The 16th ASEAN Drug Monitoring Network (ADMN) Meeting, hosted by Myanmar (7 March 2024)

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Picture : The 17th ASEAN Drug Monitoring Network (ADMN) Meeting, hosted by Thailand (17 July 2024)



Picture : Malaysia, through the National Anti-Drugs Agency (NADA), hosted the 9th ASEAN Seaport Interdiction Task Force (ASITF) Meeting in Penang (19–22 November 2024)



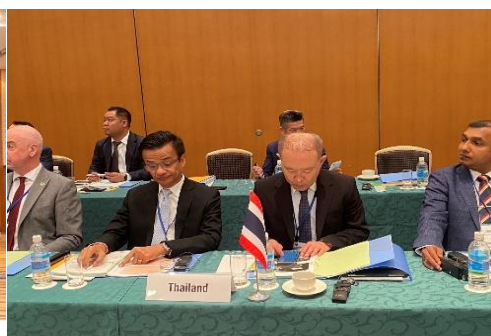
Picture : The 14th ASEAN Airport Interdiction Task Force (AAITF), hosted by Thailand (12 December 2024)

In addition to ASEAN - focused initiatives, Thailand has also pursued broader multilateral cooperation, underscoring its strong commitment to working with the wider international community, such as

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The 26th ASIA-PACIFIC OPERATIONAL DRUG ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE



Picture: The 26th Asia - Pacific Operational Drug Enforcement Conference (ADEC), held in Japan (30 - 31 January 2024)



Picture: 2024 ONCB - FANC/DLO Seminar Workshop and Study Visit on Drug Control, held in Ranong, Thailand (8 - 10 May 2024)



Picture: The 12th International Conference on Narcotics (ICON), held at Sevit Island, Seoul, Republic of Korea (10 - 11 September 2024)

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Picture: The 5th General Meeting of APICC and the 31st ADLOMICO, held in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea (28 October - 2 November 2024)



Picture: 8th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances, and Precursor Chemicals (SG - NTPSC), held in New Delhi, India (19 - 20 December 2024)

(3) Global cooperation

Thailand has been a member of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) since 1973 with the mandate of the supervision of international efforts to control the use and movement of narcotics and psychotropic substances, as well as supporting the implementation of international drug control treaties. During the 67th CND (14 - 22 March 2024), the Thai delegation was headed by Minister of Justice, Police Colonel Tawee Sodsong, leading Thailand's participation in steering the implementation of international drug control treaties. Thailand reaffirmed its commitment to international drug control by endorsing the

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high-level outcome document, promoting health-centered legal reforms, and co-hosting a side event marking the 10th anniversary of the UN Guiding Principles on Alternative Development. The country pledged to reduce domestic drug problems within one year through expanded treatment access, strengthened border controls, and enhanced international cooperation. Thailand also supported the international scheduling of 23 new substances under the UN drug conventions.



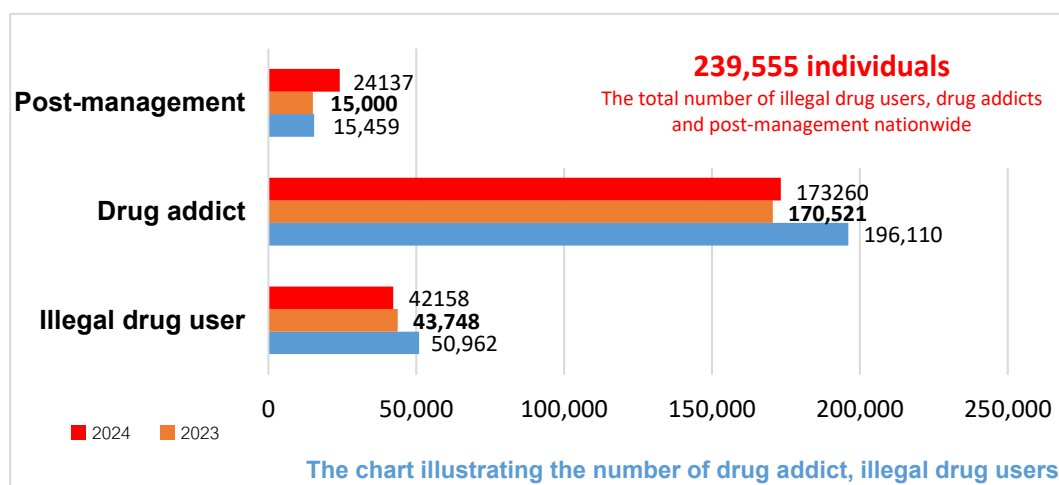
Picture : The 67th Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in Vienna, Austria



Viet Nam

I. General Situation

According to statistics, Vietnam currently has 239,555 individuals who are drug addicts, drug users and under post-treatment management. This constitutes a substantial “demand source” for drug consumption, placing considerable pressure on efforts to combat drug-related crimes.



Regarding the drug crime situation, along land routes, illicit drug trafficking and transportation mainly occur through four major areas: the Northwest, Northeast, North Central–Central Highlands, and Southwest regions. In particular, there has been a recent increase along the Southwest route, with drugs being illegally traded and transported from the Golden Triangle area through Laos and Cambodia into Vietnam's interior or to third countries for consumption.

In air and postal routes, a growing trend is the use of express delivery services, freight forwarding, and non-commercial shipments to smuggle illicit drugs from certain European countries into Vietnam for domestic consumption or transshipment to third countries.



The maritime route presents complex and unpredictable challenges, making it a target for criminal elements to smuggle large volumes of drugs from abroad into Vietnam or use the country as a transit point to third countries.

In addition, drug-related criminals are increasingly using international bank cards and virtual currencies such as Bitcoin and Ethereum for transactions. They communicate through social media platforms like Zalo, Facebook, Viber, Telegram, and even the dark web (deep web) to conduct illegal activities, making detection, investigation, and prosecution significantly more difficult.

II. Key Results of Drug Prevention and Control Work in the first half of 2025

1. Policy and Strategy

The Government of Vietnam has consistently directed all levels and sectors to rigorously implement a comprehensive approach, combining supply reduction, demand reduction, and harm reduction related to drug use.

In 2024, Vietnam continues to enforce the Law on Drug Prevention and Control (2021), the National Drug Prevention and Control Program for the 2021–2025 period, and is in the process of developing the National Target Program on Drug Prevention and Control for the 2026–2030 period. These efforts focus on raising public awareness on drug prevention, investing in equipment and applying scientific and technological advances, strengthening the professional capacity of specialized forces, ensuring infrastructure, and improving the effectiveness of drug rehabilitation work.

LUẬT PHÒNG, CHỐNG MA TÚY 2021



(Luật số 73/2021/QH14
được thông qua ngày
30/3/2021 tại Kỳ họp thứ 11,
Quốc hội khóa XVI; thay
thế Luật Phòng, chống
ma túy năm 2000,
sửa đổi bổ sung
năm 2008)

LAWS ON DRUG PREVENTION AND CONTROL 2021



NATIONAL TARGET
PROGRAMME ON DRUG
PREVENTION AND
CONTROL 2026-2030



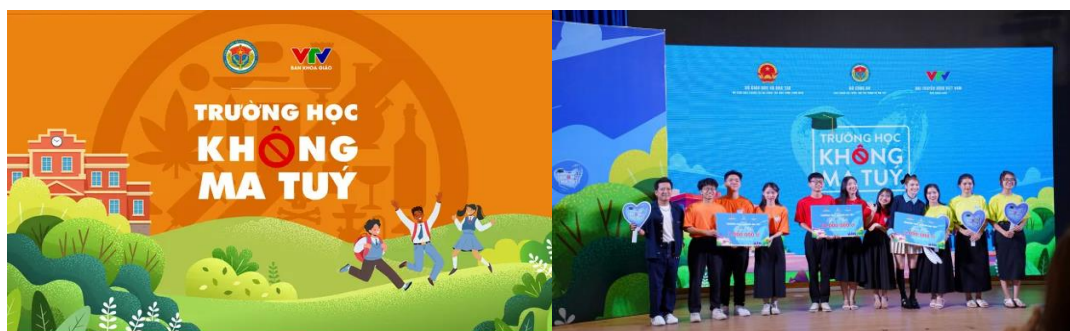
Regarding rehabilitation, from March 1, 2025, the Ministry of Public Security will officially assume the state management function over drug rehabilitation and post-rehabilitation management, a responsibility previously held by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs.



2. Preventive education

In 2024, Viet Nam implemented a comprehensive strategy on preventive education, in which we organized propaganda, dissemination and education of drug laws to raise awareness of people, students and youth. The Vietnam Ministry of Public Security cooperated with competent authorities to organize a series of events under the theme "United Determination – For a Drug-Free Community" on the occasion of the International Days against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking and the national month of action on drug prevention.





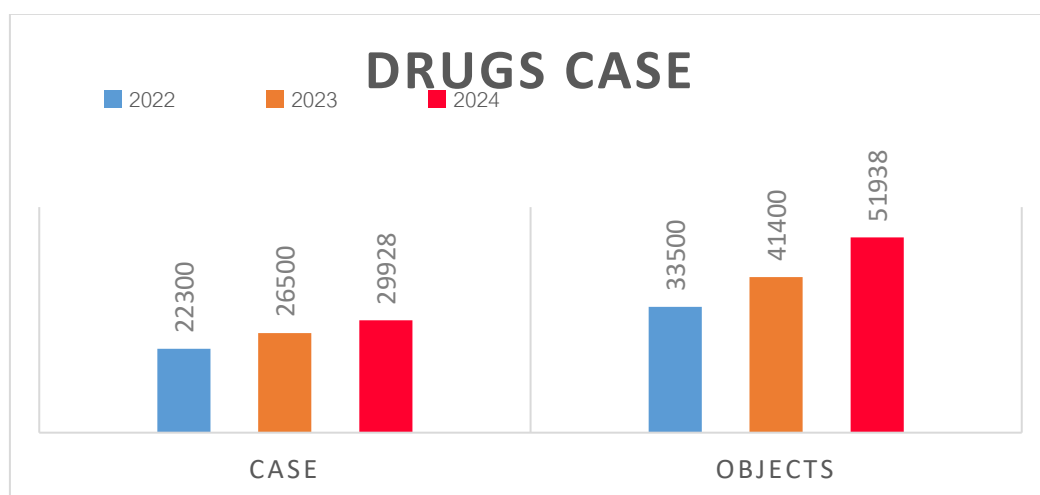
A series of events under the theme "United Determination – For a Drug-Free Community"

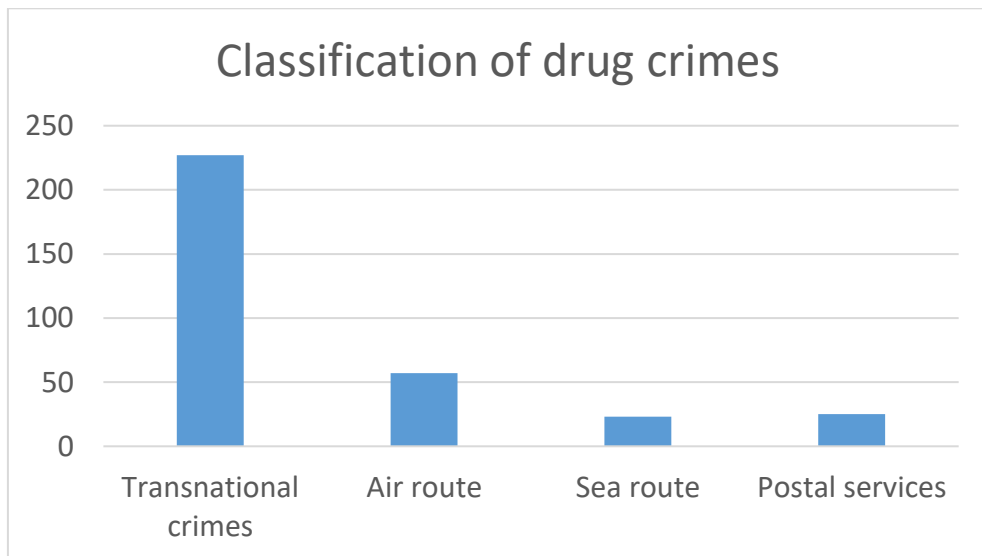
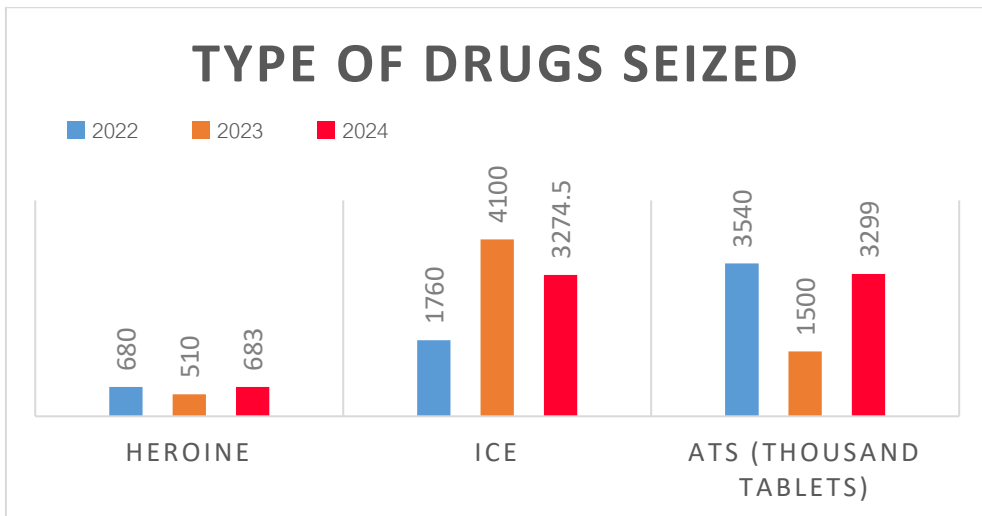
Strengthening drug preventive education on mass media: Produced and distributed short videos on drug prevention in shopping centers and urban digital displays, along with other artistic communication activities; Collaborated with media agencies, broadcasting over programs and radio segments and publishing articles on achievements of the Drug Prevention and control work.

3. Results of the Fight Against Drug Crimes

In the 2024 year-end review, Vietnam's drug prevention and control forces successfully handled 29,928 drug-related cases, arresting 51,938 offenders, including 100 foreign nationals. The authorities seized 683 kg of heroin, 2,278.8 kg of cannabis, 3,274.5 kg and 3,299,859 tablets of synthetic drugs, 59 kg of opium, 138 firearms, and 37 billion VND in cash.

Compared to the same period in 2023, this reflects an increase of 9.38% in the number of cases and 19.32% in the number of offenders. In terms of seized evidence: heroin increased by 42.06%, cannabis by 320.69%, synthetic drugs increased by 66.29% in tablet count, but decreased by 20.18% in weight.





4. Treatment and Rehabilitation Efforts

Currently, there are 97 public drug rehabilitation centers nationwide with a total capacity to accommodate 57,896 patients; additionally, there are 13 private rehabilitation centers, though still small in scale, accommodating between 100 to 300 patients each.



Voluntary drug treatment at home and in the community: there are 444 facilities in 36 provinces and cities, including 439 public units and 5 non-public units that meet the conditions to provide voluntary drug rehabilitation services at home and in the community.

Opioid substitution therapy: The Ministry of Health has directed and guided the implementation of opioid substitution therapy for 46,542 individuals at 347 treatment facilities and 303 medicine dispensing sites across all 63 provinces and cities. In addition, multi-day Methadone take-home dosing has been implemented for approximately 5,000 individuals in six localities.



Post-rehabilitation management: localities nationwide have implemented post-rehabilitation management for individuals at their places of residence in accordance with the relevant regulations.

5. Precursor Chemical Control

Vietnam currently regulates **572 narcotic substances**, categorized into **three schedules** as follows:

- **Schedule I:** “Narcotic substances that are absolutely prohibited from use in medicine and social life; the use of these substances is only permitted for research, testing, forensic assessment, and criminal investigation under special regulations by competent authorities.”

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- **Schedule II:** “Narcotic substances permitted for limited use in research, testing, forensic assessment, criminal investigation, or in the medical field as regulated by competent authorities.”
- **Schedule III:** “Narcotic substances permitted for use in research, testing, forensic assessment, criminal investigation, or in the medical field as regulated by competent authorities.”

In **2024**, **15 new narcotic substances** were added to the list. In **2025–2026 (expected)**, **20 additional substances** will be added.

Vietnam has also issued **5 import licenses for narcotic samples** and **5 transit licenses for industrial precursors**. Additionally, the country has fully complied with regulations on **pre-export notifications** for precursor shipments via the **Penonline system**.

Vietnam has responded to **659 requests for precursor imports** and **495 requests for precursor exports**, while **122 requests were denied** due to the absence of valid permits within the required time frame. Furthermore, **60 pre-export notifications** were sent for precursor shipments exported to other countries.

6. International Cooperation

Vietnam is an active member of international cooperation frameworks on drug control. We attended a lot of meetings in global and regional framework like CND 68, 18th ADMN meeting in Philippines. We also exchange the delegations to neighboring countries to work and discuss about drug situation like Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and China.



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International Cooperation on drug control activities

Vietnam organized and participated in 73 outbound delegations, including 03 ministerial-level and 25 department-level delegations, to attend conferences and coordinate on drug prevention and control efforts with partners from the United States, Australia, China, Austria, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia.

Vietnam also hosted 11 international delegations for working visits and participation in conferences and workshops to exchange experiences in drug prevention and control.

Additionally, Vietnam received and processed 27 pieces of information and requested 18 pieces of information related to drug offenders. The country has cooperated in investigating transnational drug trafficking networks, supported verification, and exchanged drug-related criminal information with partners in China, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Thailand, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore.

CHAPTER 4

Research Knowledge and Innovation



Malaysia

IMPACT STUDY OF THE INTEGRATED INITIATIVE TO ADDRESS DRUG, SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND SOCIAL DEVIANCE ISSUES

This study evaluates the impact of the Integrated Initiative to Address Drug, Substance Abuse, and Social Deviance Issues, piloted in Malaysia. It assesses the effectiveness of a collaborative approach involving government agencies, private sector stakeholders, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in tackling drug and substance abuse across twelve identified high-risk areas. The initiative aims to reduce both the demand and supply of illicit substances, in alignment with the objectives of the National Drug Policy to cultivate and sustain a drug-free Malaysian society.

About the Research

This research was conducted by a team of 26 officers from the National Anti-Drugs Agency (NADA), representing various divisions including the NADA Training Centre, Policy, Planning and Research Division, Prevention Division, Enforcement and Security Division, Treatment, Medical and Rehabilitation Division, State NADA Offices, and Narcotic Addiction Rehabilitation Centres (PUSPEN).

The study was funded under the budget allocated for the *Integrated Initiative to Address Drug, Substance Abuse, and Social Deviance Issues*, as approved by the Malaysian Government.

Led by Dr. Mohd Rafidi bin Jusoh, Director of the NADA Training Centre, the research commenced in 2020 and culminated in the publication of its final report on 5 March 2024.

Importance of the Study

This study holds strategic importance as it assesses the effectiveness of the Integrated Initiative a key response under the National Drug Policy aimed at addressing substance abuse and social deviance.

During the Cabinet Committee Meeting on Eradicating Drug Abuse (1/2019), it was agreed that adolescents under the age of 18 should receive focused attention in tackling these issues. Following this, a series of multi-agency workshops involving government bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were conducted between late 2019 and early 2020.

These collaborative sessions culminated in a proposal to implement the Integrated Initiative on a pilot basis across twelve identified high-risk areas, with the aim of fostering coordinated action among stakeholders.

These high-risk areas were characterised by a high number of clients enrolled in community-based treatment and rehabilitation programs, widespread substance abuse, and significant levels of social deviance among adolescents and youth. The high risk areas are comprised of:

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- Kuala Kedah
- Felda Lubuk Merbau
- Langkawi
- Sungai Besar
- Felda Hulu Selangor Cluster
- Petaling Jaya Selatan 1–6
- Setapak
- Johor Bahru
- Parit Sulong
- Pengkalan Chepa
- Felda Keratong 1, 3 & 4
- Kuala Dungun

The approach used in this initiative was holistic, covering Physical, Emotional, Spiritual, and Social (JERIS) dimensions. The initiative emphasised cohesive and sustained inter-agency collaboration, moving away from siloed efforts toward a unified strategy involving all sectors in the twelve selected areas.

Objectives of the Study

- a) To assess the level of collaboration among NADA, government departments/agencies, and NGOs
- b) To evaluate the degree of community empowerment in areas implementing the integrated initiative
- c) To determine the effectiveness of the initiative on targeted groups
- d) To assess the level of stigma among the clients (drug addicts who seek treatment and rehabilitation programs)

Methodology

The study adopted a survey-based methodology involving both service providers and service recipients. The target population included representatives from the National Anti-Drugs Agency (NADA), various government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as clients, families, communities, employers, and adolescents.

A purposive random sampling technique was employed, with sample sizes for each study location determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling table, ensuring statistical validity and representation.

Data collection was conducted using a researcher-developed questionnaire, which explored key dimensions such as inter-agency collaboration, community empowerment, impact of the JERIS program, and perceptions of stigma. A pilot study involving **719 respondents** demonstrated **high reliability across all questionnaire items**, affirming the robustness of the instruments:

- Collaboration: Cronbach's Alpha = 0.97
- Community Empowerment: 0.99
- JERIS Program Impact: 0.90–0.99
- Stigma: 0.83–0.87

All dimensions exceeded the accepted reliability threshold ($\alpha > 0.70$), indicating the instrument's appropriateness for measuring the study constructs.

Key Findings

Data was collected from 6,001 respondents across different categories of service providers and recipients. Analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 22. The main findings include:

- a) High levels of collaboration were observed among NADA officers, government departments personnel, and NGO volunteers. All three groups demonstrated strong inter-agency collaboration, with the development of new structures, shared commitments, joint planning, clear communication, and mutual sharing of resources, benefits, and outcomes.
- b) Community empowerment was analysed through four stages: community activation, community development, program management skills, and supportive environments. Six of the twelve areas reached the supportive environment stage, while the remaining six achieved up to the community development stage.
- c) Impact of program components:
 - i. Prevention programs had a high impact on all target groups — communities, families, and adolescents across all twelve areas.
 - ii. Treatment and rehabilitation programs were highly impactful on clients, their families, and employers.
 - iii. Programs based on the JERIS model proved particularly effective among adolescents.
- d) Stigma levels among clients were categorised into three forms:
 - i. Enacted stigma: low
 - ii. Anticipated stigma: low
 - iii. Internalised stigma: moderate

Recommendations

The study clearly demonstrates that the integrated initiative approach yielded positive and significant impacts across the twelve targeted areas. It is therefore recommended that the implementation of drug prevention and rehabilitation programs using this model be continued and expanded in the future. Greater stakeholder involvement and a stronger focus on proven effective modules are encouraged to enhance outcomes.

The research team is composed of:

- 1) Dr Mohd Rafidi bin Jusoh (Principal Investigator)
Director, NADA Training Centre
- 2) Hafidah binti Mohd @ Maasom
Principal Assistant Director (Community-Based Rehabilitation), Treatment, Medication and Rehabilitation Division
- 3) Dr. Mohamad Salleh Bin Abdul Ghani
Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Human Ecology, Universiti Putra Malaysia
- 4) Nazir Bin Mohamad
Director, Selangor State of NADA

ASEAN DRUG MONITORING REPORT 2024

- 5) Mohd. Azizi Bin Salleh
Director, PUSPEN of Rawang
- 6) Shamsul Anuar Bin Mohamad Saleh
Director, PUSPEN of Sepang
- 7) Chong Siew Ngoh
Director, PUSPEN of Sungai Besi
- 8) Siti Azura Binti Mohd. Saad
Assistant Director, Selangor State of NADA
- 9) Mashayani Binti Md. Arif
Assistant Director, PUSPEN of Karangan
- 10) Maslia Irina Binti Mohd Ali
Director, PUSPEN of Raub
- 11) Nur Alisa Binti Alia'm
Director, PUSPEN of Perlop
- 12) Adzhar Kamarudin Bin Saidin
Assistant Director, PUSPEN of Karangan
- 13) Wan Maisarah Binti Wan Abu Mansor
Assistant Director, Negeri Sembilan State of NADA
- 14) Melati Binti Ahmad Selar
Assistant Director (Public Awareness), Prevention Division
- 15) Nur Izzati Binti Naim
Assistant Director, Enforcement and Security Division
- 16) Aida Suhana binti Mohd Yusoff
Assistant Director, Kuala Lumpur Federal Territory of NADA
- 17) Siti Badariah Ismi Binti Che Berahim
Statistician, Department of Statistics Malaysia
- 18) Mohd Nazri Bin Hashim
Assistant Director, Ministry of Home Affairs
- 19) Wan Naimah Binti Mohamad Haidir
Assistant Director, Treatment, Medication and Rehabilitation Division
- 20) Nikmat Mohamad bin Md Yusop
Assistant Director, Kedah State of NADA
- 21) Hairulzaman Bin Jaman
Rehabilitation Officer, Negeri Sembilan State of NADA
- 22) Zalehan Binti Tajuddin
Rehabilitation Officer, Johor State of NADA
- 23) Muhamad Zamri Bin Mustapha
Administrative Assistant, Policy and International Affairs Division
- 24) Siti Salisa binti Musa
Administrative Assistant, Policy and International Affairs Division
- 25) Khairul Hisham bin Mohamed Yusof
Rehabilitation Officer, Selangor State of NADA
- 26) Noor Amirah Hidayah binti Azmi
Statistician, Policy and International Affairs Division

The Philippines

2024 DDB Policy and Research Forum on Drug Abuse Prevention and Control

The Policy and Research Forum Series (PRFS) highlights the leadership of the DDB in building knowledge and increasing the participation of stakeholders on matters concerning drug prevention and control policies and research.

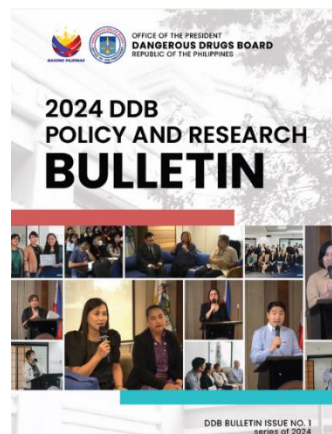
For 2024, the PRFS adopted the theme “Bridging the Gaps through Policy and Research”. The theme emphasizes that although progress has been made in using research to help create policies, there remains a difference between what research reveals and the policies in place. To bridge this gap, the DDB leads intersectoral and participatory platforms like the PRFS to identify needs, encourage dialogues, and craft solutions informed by the best available evidence.



Highlights	Number	Sectors Engaged	Percentage
Policies Presented	3	Local Government	67%
Research Presented	3	National Government	20%
Academic Institutions Engaged	12	Students	5%
Online interactions	6,389	Others	4%
Registrants	12,937	Educators	2%
People Reached	43,400	Civil Society/NGO	1%
		Citizens	1%
		Medical and Allied Health Fields Professionals	1%

Publication of the 2024 DDB Policy and Research Bulletin

The DDB, through the Policy Studies, Research, and Statistics Division (PSRSD), will have its fifth issue of the DDB Policy and Research Bulletin series of 2024, highlighting the previously conducted scientific research and studies on the field of drug abuse prevention and control. The previous issues can be accessed through this link: tinyurl.com/psrsd2023resources. This annual publication is released every first quarter of the following year.



Preliminary Study on Employment and Drug Use

This study intends to be a preliminary investigation that explores the connection between employment status and drug use among Filipinos. By analyzing existing information and gathering new data from clients in treatment and rehabilitation centers, the study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of drug behavior through the lens of employment, productivity, and work.

For 2024, the research project successfully conducted planned activities in seven (7) regions of the country. These activities included focus group discussions and key informant interviews, which involved 131 participants. Data processing, report writing, and the release of results are scheduled for 2025.

Conduct of the 2023 National Household Survey on the Patterns and Trends of Drug Abuse in the Philippines

Section 7 of Executive Order No. 66, Series of 2018, mandated the Dangerous Drugs Board to conduct a nationwide survey to determine the drug abuse prevalence in the country. Section 7 further states that the Nationwide Survey to Determine Drug Abuse Prevalence in the Country must be conducted every three (3) years. With this, the conduct of the 2023 National Household Survey on the Patterns and Trends of Drug Abuse is proposed.

The 2023 National Household Survey intends to determine drug abuse prevalence, patterns, and trends. It also aims to determine the public perceptions about the government's current anti-drug programs and projects, the drug-related problems experienced, and actions taken by the family members.

The main objective of the 2023 National Household Survey on the Patterns and Trends of Drug Abuse is to determine the magnitude of the drug problem nationwide and estimate the number of lifetime and current drug users.

The following are the activities conducted during the year:

CY 2024 Activities	Timeline
1. Finalization of the Data Tables and Initial Outline of the Written Report	March - September
2. Draft Presentation of the Report	March - September
3. Review of the Data Figures and First Draft of the Final Report	March - September

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CY 2024 Activities	Timeline
4. Finalization of the Report	September
5. Approval of the 2023 NHS Full Report for Dissemination	November
6. Development of DDB Technical Report of the 2023 NHS	December

Key Findings

The 2023 survey results show that lifetime drug use prevalence has decreased to 3.99%, or approximately 3.45 million individuals, while current drug use prevalence has dropped to 1.71%, equivalent to roughly 1.48 million Filipinos.

Highlighting the critical demographic insights, the survey showed that lifetime drug users are, on average, 42 years old, with initial exposure to drugs typically occurring at 22 years old—an age corresponding to the transition from high school to college.

Regional trends in the survey revealed significant reductions in lifetime drug use in Regions 4A, 6, 10, and 5, while slight increases were noted in Metro Manila, Region 3, and Region 11. Additionally, the survey highlighted that 48% of current drug users are employed, primarily in manual labor and service-related jobs.

A significant 36% of respondents emphasized the need to continue anti-drug programs, particularly those focused on training, livelihood support, and community development, which are seen as critical in preventing drug use by offering constructive opportunities. Additionally, 16% of respondents stressed the importance of expanding public education campaigns to address the root causes of drug use. Meanwhile, 13% prioritized improving rehabilitation services, specifically by enhancing access to professional assistance and upgrading existing rehabilitation centers.

Management, Maintenance, and Enhancement of Data Collection

The Integrated Drug Abuse Data and Information Network (IDADIN) is a network of data providers involving information on treatment, research, mortality/morbidity, law enforcement, and other available drug-related concerns. Its objectives are to collect drug-related data for information sharing, assess the government's drug demand and supply reduction efforts, program planning, prioritization/evaluation, and pursue the government's regional and international commitment to information exchange.

The Integrated Drug Abuse Data and Information Network (IDADIN) was developed in response to the UNODC F-97 regional project on amphetamine Type Stimulants (ATS).

In 2006, the IDADIN was institutionalized through Board Regulation No. 7. Thirteen (13) forms were then developed for uniformity and clarity of reporting. These forms are proposed to be developed as a system to improve data collection as a basis for policy formulation and program development.

The IDADIN Form 6-06 is the first form developed into a system, now the Treatment and Rehabilitation Admission Information System (TRAIS). It was enhanced and fully implemented in July 2018.

This continuing activity involves updating the accredited Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers (DATRCs) reporting to the TRAIS.

DOH Accredited Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers
(as of 31 December 2024)

Classification	Residential	Non-Residential	Residential with Out-Patient Services	Total
Government	12	6	16	34
Non-Government Organizations	54	1	0	55
Total	66	7	16	89

To improve data collection, a series of end-user training and orientation sessions was conducted to familiarize the authorized and alternate personnel of the DATRCs with the features of the TRAIS. Likewise, one-on-one consultations with selected DATRCs through focus group discussions (FGDs) were also conducted to identify challenges encountered in reporting to the system.

In line with the agency's effort to automate other forms, a series of meetings and workshops are conducted for the Drug Test Result Reporting System - DTRRS (Form 8-06).

The DDB, through the Policy Studies, Research and Statistics Division (PSRSD), also maintains the Anti-Drug Abuse Council Reporting System (ADAC-RS). This serves as a database for persons who use drugs (PWUDs) reported by Local Government Units (LGUs) nationwide. It was developed to capture the number of drug surrenderers nationwide and those undergoing the Community-Based Drug Rehabilitation Program (CBDRP). The City/Municipality Anti-Drug Abuse Councils (ADACs) have utilized the system since 2016. The said system is undergoing enhancement to cater to the needs of stakeholders. In 2024, a policy guideline was drafted to guide end-users in the use of the system.

As part of our commitment to establishing accessible and effective platforms for the reporting and monitoring of anti-drug data and information, the following activities were carried out during the year.

1. Conduct of the TRAIS Monitoring Activities from May 27 to June 28, 2024
2. Conduct of the Orientation Training on the Treatment and Rehabilitation Admission Information System (TRAIS) for the DATRCs Authorized and Alternate Personnel in May and September 2024
3. Consultative Meeting with the Department of Health – Knowledge Management and Information Technology Service (DOH-KMITS) Re: Status report on the plans and activities for the Drug Test Results Reporting System (DTRRS)
4. Action Planning Workshop re: Drug Test Results Reporting System (DTRRS)
5. Refresher Training on the Enhanced Anti-Drug Abuse Council Reporting System (ADAC-RS) for DDB Trainers
6. Preliminary meeting on the Enhanced ADAC-RS Training for July 2024 with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Central
7. Training of Enhanced Anti-Drug Abuse Council Reporting System (ADAC-RS) for DILG Central and Regional Offices
8. Preliminary Meeting on the Enhanced ADAC-RS Policy Workshop
9. Anti-Drug Abuse Council-Reporting System (ADAC-RS) Policy Guidelines: Review and Presentation

Singapore

Perceived risk of illicit drug consumption in Singapore: Findings from a nationwide survey

by the Institute of Mental Health

Rajeswari Sambasivam, Yen Sin Koh, Edimansyah Abdin, P. V. Asharani, Yunjue Zhang, Wen Lin Teh, Siow Ann Chong, and Mythily Subramaniam

Background / Aims

The low lifetime prevalence of illegal drug consumption in Singapore can be attributed to the strong emphasis on preventive measures, including education and public awareness campaigns. A zero-tolerance environment may amplify perceived harm, where the consequences of drug consumption are not only viewed through a health lens but also as carrying profound legal and social repercussions. Understanding the dynamics between perceived risk and its associations is crucial for developing targeted prevention and education initiatives that address the underlying beliefs and attitudes contributing to drug consumption behaviours.

Primary objectives of this study were to (1) identify distinct groups of risk perception of illicit drug consumption, and (2) ascertain the sociodemographic factors and mental health outcomes associated with these various classes of risk perception among the general population of Singapore.

Methodology

This study used data from the nationwide Health and Lifestyle population survey that was undertaken to establish the prevalence of behavioural and substance addictions among those aged 15-65 years in Singapore. The survey sample was a representative sample of Singapore residents (Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents) who were randomly selected. The final survey response rate was 73.2% with 6509 respondents completing the interview.

Analysis was weighted to account for disproportionate stratified sampling, non-response and post-stratification by age, gender, and ethnicity. Latent class analysis (LCA) was used to determine the different groups of risk perception of harm. A multinomial logistic regression model was generated to determine the sociodemographic correlates of different classes of risk perception.

Findings

- Four representation profiles of perceived risk were identified through LCA:

Class 1: High risk perception across all substances and frequencies profile

- The group comprises nearly 90% of the respondents (n=5045), who had a high probability of indicating that occasional and frequent use of all substances was associated with a moderate or great risk of harm. This high level of perceived harm in Singapore is likely influenced by several factors, including the country's long-standing zero-tolerance policy toward drug use, stringent enforcement measures, and strong public messaging on the dangers of drugs. Societal norms that stigmatise drug consumption may reinforce risk-averse attitudes.

Class 2: Low risk perception across all substances and frequencies profile

- 0.4% of the respondents (n=34) were more likely to view all illicit drug consumption to have no or little risk of harm, regardless of frequency of use.
- Individuals with this profile were 7.17 times more likely to experience moderate or severe anxiety symptoms than individuals with a high risk perception across all substances and frequencies profile.

Class 3: Low risk perception of cannabis profile

- Individuals in this group (9.4%, n=557) had a high probability of indicating occasional and frequent use of cannabis as having little or no risk of harm. Nonetheless, they were more likely to view occasional and frequent use of other illicit drugs to have moderate or great risk of harm. The observation that cannabis is more widely accepted and normalised than other drugs has been supported by other research studies.
- Individuals with this profile also had a higher propensity to report symptoms indicative of anxiety. Some individuals may use cannabis as a means to cope with underlying mental health issues such as depression and anxiety or to alleviate sleep problems but, rather than effectively addressing these concerns, cannabis use may exacerbate or perpetuate these symptoms over time.
- Ever smokers and those who endorsed safe drinking and hazardous drinking were found to be more likely to perceive occasional and frequent use of cannabis use as low risk. These findings align with previous studies showing that individuals with prior use of tobacco or alcohol tend to predict lower risk perceptions of illicit substances.

Class 4: Low risk perception of occasional illicit drug consumption profile

- This group (1.9%, n=98) had a high probability of viewing occasional use of illicit drugs to have no or little risk of harm. However, they perceived frequent use of illicit drugs to have moderate or great risk of harm. This suggests that their

perception of risk is nuanced and dependent on the frequency of drug consumption. While they might downplay the risks associated with occasional use, they are more inclined to recognise and acknowledge the potential harm when drug consumption becomes more frequent.

- Other identified associations with sociodemographic factors:
 - Participants aged 50-65 years were less likely to be in the “low risk perception across all substances and frequencies” profile, compared to those aged 15-34 years. Participants aged 35-49 years and 50-65 years were also less likely to be in the profile of “low risk perception of cannabis”, compared to those aged 15-34 years. As found in previous research, older individuals demonstrated a decreased likelihood of perceiving any illicit drug consumption as having minimal or no risk, irrespective of frequency of use, and exhibited reduced tendencies to perceive low risks associated with either occasional or frequent cannabis use.
 - Participants who had secondary school or pre-tertiary educational qualifications were significantly less likely to perceive low risk of occasional and frequent cannabis use than those with a university degree. While further research is warranted to elucidate this observed relationship more fully, it is plausible that the involvement in drug consumption among young adults often coincides with the period when many individuals commence higher education and undergo neurodevelopmental processes in the prefrontal cortex, thereby influencing risk-taking behaviour.

Implications

- This study provides critical insights into the varying perceptions of risk associated with illicit drug consumption in Singapore and highlights the diverse ways in which different segments of the population perceive the potential harms of drug consumption. Furthermore, the findings underscore the influence of sociodemographic factors on these perceptions.
- As Singapore continues to navigate its strict drug policy framework, insights gained from this study provide guidance for improving public health initiatives and mitigating the risks associated with drug consumption.

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Thailand

Introduction

Substance abuse continues to pose a formidable global challenge, profoundly impacting public health, social stability, and economic development (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2024). In 2022, an estimated 292 million individuals aged 15 to 64 years reported illicit drug use worldwide. This figure includes 228 million cannabis users, 60 million opium users, 30 million amphetamine users, 23.5 million cocaine users, and 20 million ecstasy users (UNODC, 2024). These statistics highlight the pervasive nature of drug use and underscore the urgent need for empirically grounded interventions to mitigate its multifaceted consequences.

Historically, the use of psychoactive substances, particularly those derived from plants, dates back approximately 50,000 years (Merlin, 2003). In Southeast Asia, evidence of such practices extends over 15,000 years (Sullivan et al., 2002), initially serving medicinal and ritualistic purposes. Over time, these practices evolved to encompass recreational consumption, reflecting broader sociocultural transitions (Courtwright, 2001).

In Thailand, opium was introduced during the Sukhothai era, leading to significant societal consequences in the Ayutthaya period. Concerns over addiction-related dysfunctions, notably the erosion of economic productivity, prompted King Ramathibodi I to enact punitive measures, codified in the Royal Code of Criminal Offenses (B.E. 1609) (Office of the Narcotics Control Board [ONCB], 2011). Successive monarchs continued this regulatory trajectory through a series of legislative instruments, including the Act of Prohibiting the Purchase of Opium (1811), the Decree of Prohibition of Smoking Opium (1819), and the Opium Tax Act (1871) (ONCB, 2011). Thailand's drug policy has since transitioned from colonial-era opium regulation to contemporary legislative frameworks such as the Narcotics Act (1979), the Psychotropic Substances Act (2016), and the Decree on Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention (1990) (ONCB, 2023a).

Despite sustained legal efforts, Thailand's substance use problem has not abated. Instead, it has diversified, shifting from traditional substances like opium, cannabis, and kratom to synthetic drugs and misused pharmaceuticals (Kanato et al., 2020; ONCB, 2021). This trend highlights the resilience and adaptability of the illicit drug market and underscores the necessity for dynamic, integrated policy responses addressing both supply- and demand-side factors (Degenhardt & Hall, 2012).

The current legal architecture in Thailand primarily targets substances with high abuse potential, delineated in four key statutes: the Narcotic Act (B.E. 2522), the Psychotropic Substances Act (B.E. 2559), the Decree on Volatile Substance Prevention (B.E. 2533), and the Commodity Control Act (B.E. 2495) (ONCB, 2023b). Notably, these laws exclude

regulated legal substances such as alcohol, tobacco, and caffeinated beverages, thereby emphasizing the distinct public health risks associated with illicit drugs.

Recent data further reinforce the gravity of the situation. In 2019, the UNODC (2021) reported that 275 million individuals globally—approximately 5.5% of the population aged 15–64—had used drugs in the previous year, with 36.3 million requiring treatment for substance use disorders. Regionally, the 2019 ASEAN Drug Monitoring Report indicated that 430,187 individuals accessed drug treatment services, with 73.8% of cases involving amphetamine-type stimulants (ASEAN Drug Monitoring Report, 2020). In Thailand, a national household survey estimated that 1.91 million individuals, or 2.62% of those aged 12–65, had used at least one illicit drug that year (Kanato et al., 2020).

Comprehensive and up-to-date epidemiological data are imperative to understand the evolving drug landscape and to inform evidence-based policy and intervention strategies. The first formal effort to estimate Thailand's drug-using population dates back to 1985, via Hirunrak and Piranpitak's pilot study using the Key Informant Survey System (Hirunrak & Piranpitak, 1985). This was followed by the 1993–1994 study by the Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI), which employed mixed methods to estimate 1.27 million drug users (Thailand Development Research Institute, 1994). Despite their contributions, these studies faced limitations in sampling representativeness and methodological precision.

In response, the ONCB partnered with the Administrative Committee on Substance Abuse Academic Network (ACSAN) in 2001 to initiate a nationally representative household survey, based on World Health Organization (WHO)-endorsed population-based methodologies (ACSAN, 2001). This survey, covering nine substances and sampling 40 provinces, estimated over 7.3 million lifetime users and identified 1.94 million past-year users, particularly of methamphetamine, cannabis, and kratom (ACSAN, 2001).

Subsequent national surveys were conducted in 2004, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2016, and 2019, providing invaluable trend data and informing national prevention and treatment initiatives (Kanato et al., 2020; ONCB, 2021). Yet, the rapid evolution of drug use across age groups, regions, and substance types necessitates continuous monitoring. Recognizing this, a new nationwide survey has been scheduled for 2024 to provide updated and actionable data for public health and policy stakeholders.

Objectives

The primary objectives of this study are to:

1. Estimate the number of individuals in Thailand engaged in drug use in 2024.
2. Determine the prevalence of substance use, disaggregated by specific drug categories and usage patterns.

Methods

1. Study Design

This study employed a descriptive, cross-sectional design utilizing a nationwide household survey to estimate the prevalence and distribution of drug use in Thailand in 2024. The methodology aligns with best practices recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) for generating population-level data on substance use behaviors (World Health Organization, 2003).

2. Population and Sample

2.1 Target Population

The target population comprised Thai nationals registered in the national population database. As of mid-2024, the total population was 64,753,796, with 49,055,591 individuals aged 12 to 65 years, the defined age range for survey eligibility. Geographically, 16.6 million resided in urban municipalities (including Bangkok), while 32.4 million lived in non-municipal (rural) areas. The population was nearly evenly distributed by gender: 24.15 million males and 24.91 million females (National Statistical Office, 2024). Eligible households were identified from updated community maps and included only those occupied for at least six months prior to the survey date.

2.2 Sample Size and Inclusion Criteria

The study sample included Thai residents aged 12–65 who had lived in the household for at least three months within the past year. The final sample consisted of 34,410 individuals from 17,205 households across 27 provinces. Sample size estimation was based on prior prevalence rates (ranging from 17.48 to 240.72 per 1,000), a margin of error of 1%, and a design effect of 8 to accommodate complex sampling structures (Kish, 1965).

2.3 Sampling Methodology

A five-stage stratified cluster sampling approach was employed to ensure national representativeness:

Stage 1 – Province Selection: Thailand was divided into 10 strata based on the ONCB's operational zones. A total of 27 provinces (including 17 districts within Bangkok) were selected using probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling.

Stage 2 – Sub-district Selection: From the selected provinces, 533 sub-districts were systematically sampled based on population distribution.

Stage 3 – Community Selection: From these sub-districts, 1,165 communities or villages were selected via PPS-sampling.

Stage 4 – Household Selection: Within the sampled communities, 17,205 households were chosen using systematic PPS methods.

Stage 5 – Participant Selection: Within each selected household, eligible residents were stratified by gender. One male and one female participant were selected using simple random sampling (via random number tables), yielding a final sample of 34,410 individuals.

3. Data Collection

Trained field researchers conducted structured, face-to-face interviews between March and October 2024. The questionnaire was standardized and aligned with WHO guidelines for substance use surveys (World Health Organization, 2003). Participants under 12 years of age were excluded due to potential cognitive and communicative limitations. To account for gender-based differences in substance use patterns, the survey ensured equal representation of male and female respondents.

3.1 Data Collection Teams

Data collection was coordinated by six regionally assigned academic research teams:

Northeastern Region: Center for Addiction Science, Vongchavalitkul University

Northern Region: Health Sciences Research Institute, Chiang Mai University

Eastern Region: Social Research Institute, Chulalongkorn University

Central Region: College of Public Health, Chulalongkorn University

Southern Region: Southern Academic and Research Network on Substance Abuse, Prince of Songkla University

Bangkok/Western Region: ISAN Substance Abuse Academic Network, Khon Kaen University

3.2 Data Collection Procedures

Fieldworkers underwent extensive training, including mock interviews and evaluations, to ensure methodological consistency (Groves et al., 2004). Each team comprised eight field staff supervised by a senior researcher. Participants were given a full day to consider participation after being informed of the study's purpose. If a participant was unavailable, up to three follow-up appointments were scheduled. Non-participation after the third attempt was recorded as a refusal. Completed interview forms were reviewed daily for completeness and accuracy by the field supervisor and independently validated by another team member before submission.

4. Data Management and Analysis

The data management process involved several phases: validation (checks for completeness, logical consistency, and missing data), coding (using a predefined codebook for standardized variable coding), entry (employing a double-entry method to minimize transcription errors, followed by discrepancy reconciliation), and quality assurance (flagging and correcting outliers and inconsistencies). Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, medians, interquartile ranges) and point estimates were generated using statistical software to assess prevalence and demographic patterns (IBM Corp., 2023).

5. Ethical Considerations

The study funded by ONCB which received ethical approval from the Vongchavalitkul University Ethics Committee (Reference No. 050/2567). Informed consent was obtained from all participants; for minors, parental or guardian consent was also required. Confidentiality was strictly maintained, and data were used solely for research purposes, adhering to international ethical standards (World Medical Association, 2013).

Results

The 2024 national household survey revealed that substance use remains a significant public health concern in Thailand. Approximately 9.40 million individuals (19.16% of the population aged 12–65 years) reported lifetime use of at least one illicit substance. Past-year use was reported by 6.01 million individuals (12.24%), while past-month use involved 4.44 million individuals (9.06%). Furthermore, 1.83 million individuals (3.73%) were classified as habitual users, defined as consuming drugs on at least 20 days in the past month.

Substance-Specific Prevalence

Methamphetamine tablets (Yaba) remained the most frequently used drug across all temporal measures, with 3.08 million lifetime users and over 1.57 million past-year users. Other substances with notable prevalence, in descending order of lifetime use, included crystal methamphetamine (Ice), ecstasy, heroin, ketamine, cocaine, opium, and inhalants. Polydrug use was reported by approximately 1 million individuals, highlighting a growing complexity in drug use patterns.

Following their recent decriminalization, kratom and cannabis displayed distinct and high prevalence patterns. Kratom was reported by 5.93 million lifetime users, 3.85 million past-year users, and 1.32 million frequent users. cannabis showed 3.66 million lifetime users, 1.59 million past-year users, and 353,000 frequent users. These figures represent a notable increase compared to pre-legalization baselines, suggesting an upward shift in normalization and accessibility.

Demographic Profile of Past-Year Users

Among past-year users (6,005,450):

Gender: The majority were male (80.15%), with a male-to-female ratio of approximately 4:1. Females constituted 19.85% of past-year users.

Age: The largest proportion (52.97%) fell within the working-age adult group (26–50 years). Youth (18–25 years) accounted for 17.57%, and adolescents (12–17 years) represented 5.80%.

Education: Most users had primary (31.36%) or lower secondary (33.19%) education. Only 7.65% held a bachelor's degree or higher.

Occupation: Basic laborers formed the largest occupational group (55.93%), followed by formal employees (13.73%), students and retirees (18.47%), and self-employed workers.

Psychological Risk Assessment and Comorbidities

The WHO Alcohol, Smoking, and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST) revealed significant psychological risk among users:

Among amphetamine-type stimulant (ATS) users, 266,643 (15%) were classified as high-risk, while 1.06 million (60%) fell into the moderate-risk category.

For opioid users, 13,000 were high-risk, and 119,274 were moderate risk.

cannabis and kratom users also demonstrated considerable mental health overlap, with over 295,000 and 261,000 moderate-risk users, respectively.

Regarding observed mental health comorbidities

405,623 individuals (6.75%) exhibited observable psychiatric symptoms.

An additional 2,196,475 individuals (36.57%) were at risk of developing mental disorders. Geographically, Northeast showed the highest concentration of users with reported psychological symptoms.

These results underscore the growing dual burden of substance use and mental health disorders, highlighting significant implications for integrated treatment planning.

Discussion

The present findings underscore the evolving and entrenched nature of substance use in Thailand. While historical analyses have largely focused on legislative efforts and enforcement (ONCB, 2011), this study reveals a complex interplay of individual, structural, and socio-cultural determinants, each contributing to the resilience of drug use across diverse population segments.

The pervasive prevalence of methamphetamine use, in particular, can be interpreted through the lens of ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which emphasizes how behavior is shaped by multiple layers of environmental influence—from immediate family and peer groups to broader societal norms and policies. The widespread accessibility of Yaba and the increase in habitual users suggest breakdowns not only at the individual or familial level but also in institutional and policy-based protective systems (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2020).

Furthermore, social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) helps explain the persistent clustering of substance use within demographic groups, especially among youth and marginalized communities. Repeated exposure to drug use within peer networks, combined with perceived social rewards and lack of negative consequences, normalizes consumption patterns and reinforces risky behaviors (Akers, 1998).

From a public health ethics perspective, the increase in habitual and polydrug use also highlights systemic gaps in treatment accessibility and stigma reduction (Room, 2005). The dual burden of addiction and mental illness observed in nearly half of past-year users reflects a profound failure of integration between mental health and substance use services, as predicted by syndemic theory (Singer, 1994). This theory posits that social inequities exacerbate interconnected health issues, creating a synergistic effect that compounds public health challenges (Stenner et al., 2019).

The sharp increase in heroin use over the past decade, mirroring global trends (UNODC, 2021), may further reflect shifting drug market economies. This aligns with supply-demand theory and risk environment frameworks (Rhodes, 2002), where changes in enforcement, price, or availability can redirect consumption patterns toward more potent or cost-effective alternatives. For instance, increased interdiction of certain synthetic drugs might inadvertently push users towards more traditional, yet equally harmful, substances like heroin (Collins & Lapsley, 2019).

In sum, the Thai drug landscape is shaped not by isolated behavioral choices but by dynamic systems of inequality, policy, peer influence, and psychological vulnerability. This necessitates a paradigm shift from punitive deterrence to evidence-based, multilevel

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interventions that address the root causes and contributing factors of substance use (McKenzie et al., 2010).

Conclusion

The 2024 National Household Survey reveals that substance use in Thailand is both prevalent and multifaceted, with increasing rates of methamphetamine, heroin, cannabis, and kratom use. Habitual use and psychiatric comorbidities are rising, particularly among men and working-age adults. The evolving patterns of drug consumption—especially the rise in polydrug use and the normalization of legalized substances—require a strategic reevaluation of current prevention and treatment models. Rather than isolated or static, drug use in Thailand is an adaptive phenomenon shaped by structural vulnerabilities, historical trajectories, and evolving normative frameworks. Comprehensive, theory-informed responses are urgently needed to disrupt the ongoing cycle of addiction and societal harm.

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CHAPTER 5

Policy and Programme Implementation



Brunei Darussalam

POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Brunei Darussalam adopts a zero-tolerance approach against drugs and implements a comprehensive and holistic strategy that addresses both drug supply and drug demand reduction. This approach aligns with the national aspirational objectives outlined by Brunei Vision 2035, which emphasizes the country's commitment to building a safer and drug-free society.

Preventive drug education serves as the line of defence in addressing the underlying causes of drug abuse. Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) promote public awareness by disseminating anti-drug messages to the public through preventive drug education programmes targeting all levels of the society.

IMPLEMENTATION OF PREVENTIVE DRUG EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Through its Preventive Drug Education Division, NCB actively conducts talks and lectures for students and the communities through community-based and school-based activities.

❖ COMMUNITY-BASED

Community-based programmes include roadshows, interactive activities, exhibitions, talks and workplace programmes at both government and private Sectors.

As continuous efforts to reach all segment of societies in Brunei Darussalam, Narcotics Control Bureau has been actively promoting drug awareness programmes through various initiatives. These includes organising events at public venues such as shopping complexes/malls, distributing drug awareness pamphlets and showcasing anti-drug messages through visual displays at popular places of interest. Narcotics Control Bureau also participates in public roadshows organized by other ministries or departments.

NCB actively collaborates with relevant agencies to address drug-related issues amongst the employees in the workplace. This on-going programme aims to assist respective agencies or companies in ensuring a drug-free workplace through preventive drug education's lectures and exhibitions.



✦ SCHOOL-BASED

In targeting our youths, our Preventive Drug Education continue to promote education and public awareness through creative efforts in order to be relevant in reaching out to this group. Over the years, we engage our youths through compulsory education settings (such as schools) by priming them with the information and consequences of drug abuse by instilling life skills aimed at building resilience against adversities; such as to prevent drug use or delay the onset of drug use through fostering informed decision-making, and resilience when exposed to drugs.

This is also being reinforced with our Malay Islamic Monarchy – national ideology that upholds traditional, cultural and Islamic values, that are supplemented in the national curriculum.

School-based activities target students at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The students are given opportunity to engage in anti-drugs activities that offer an interactive approach to learning the dangers of drug abuse.

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❖ PUBLICITY

NCB utilizes social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook to promote preventive drug education programmes and promote awareness on drugs. These platforms reach a wide audience, efficiently disseminating antidrug messages, materials and information on the dangers of drugs abuse. Short music videos with anti-drug themes and messages are also shared on these platforms to further enhance the awareness campaign.

NCB also collaborate with local radio and TV station namely Radio Televisyen Brunei (RTB) in hosting anti-drug quizzes with amazing prizes to win. This initiative encourages public participation while simultaneously educating and raising awareness on the harmful effects of drugs.

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Digital screens at the airport displaying anti-drugs messages to raise public awareness and serve as a reminder to both locals and tourist travellers. Launched in June 2024, this campaign features a series of digital messages highlighting drug awareness and preventive information. These messages are prominently displayed on large LED screens, strategically placed to capture the attention of both departing and arriving passengers.



INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING, 2024

With the theme “Empowering Future Society Without Drugs”, several events had taken place to commemorate this auspicious day.

- **FRIDAY SERMON** - Anti-drugs messages were delivered through a Friday Prayer Sermon on 28 June 2024, which highlights the social consequences of drug abuse on individuals, families, communities, and the nation as a whole. The sermon also emphasized on the importance of early drug education and awareness within family, stressing the vital role of parents and guardians in safeguarding future generations from the harmful effects of drugs.

- **THANKSGIVING CEREMONY** - On 28 June 2024, during the Congregational Fardhu Subuh prayer, special prayers were recited at selected mosques across all districts, to seek protection for the nations against the detrimental impact of drugs.



- **NIGHT BRISK WALK** – On the evening of 26 June 2024, Night Brisk Walk took place at the Golden Jubilee Eco-Corridor Park, to mark the International Day Against Drug Abuse and illicit Trafficking. This event aimed to raise awareness about drug abuse while encouraging a healthy lifestyle and served as a powerful reminder of the collective responsibility in **combating** the drug abuse and fostering a society where healthy habits and positive behaviors can thrive.



- **LAUNCHING OF KURNIA SABDA VIDEO AND THE INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING FORUM 2024**

A *Kurnia Sabda* video by His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Mateen ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah was launched on 08 October 2024, with a youth-focused message that highlights the importance of resilience against drugs use and to serve as a reminder to adopt healthy and positive lifestyle. The video was launched by The

Honourable Pehin Datu Lailaraja Retired Major General Dato Paduka Seri Awang Haji Halbi bin Haji Mohammad Yussof, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Defence.

A forum which carries the theme of "Empowering a Future Community without Drugs" also took place during the event. The panellists featured two distinguished panellists namely Yang Berbahagia Datuk Doctor Zafari Bin Zulkifli, Adjunct Professor of Anthropology and Sociology, Malaysia who discussed on Human Capital in Developing Countries: Threats Opportunities and Hopes; while Doctor Haji Mohd Rozan bin Dato Paduka Haji Mohd Yunus, Adjunct Professor at University Brunei Darussalam, shared on the Role and Responsibility of Society in providing a Positive Environment for Youth.





- **TALK BY THE STATE MUFTI IN COLLABORATION WITH THE MUFTI DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE** – The State Mufti, The Honourable Pehin Datu Seri Maharaja Dato Paduka Seri Setia Doctor Ustaz Haji Awang Abdul Aziz Bin Juned, delivered a talk entitled 'Internalising Islam to Address the Issue of Drugs in Brunei Darussalam' on 20 November 2024.

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The talk emphasized the importance of unity in addressing the use of drugs to ensure universal security. The State Mufti also highlighted the Islamic laws related to drugs and adapting the knowledge to serve as guidance in taking appropriate actions, as well as strengthening and reinforcing relationships among the involved agencies.



Cambodia

POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM ON PREVENTIVE DRUGS' EDUCATION

Cambodia had adopted a comprehensive approach as zero tolerance towards drugs free in future with a balanced and holistic strategy between drug supply and demand reductions. These are aligned with the national aspiration objectives set forth by Cambodian Government for holistic achievement.



The National Authority for Combating Drugs (NACD) under the leadership of His Excellency Santebindith NETH SAVOEUN, Deputy Prime Minister, and the Chairman of NACD has set drug preventive education as its main strategic approach. It has instructed the General Secretariat of the NACD, ministries, institutions, provincial and municipal drug control commissions, and other relevant stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness of awareness campaigns on drug prevention and the mitigation of drug-related risks promotion and education. This is in response to the directive from Samdech Thipadei HUN MANET, Cambodia Prime Minister who has emphasized that "Drugs are a collective issue of the national society that requires everyone's cooperation to eliminate." The goal is to achieve a vision of developing Cambodia where drugs are no longer an obstacle or societal issue.

Beyond the existing preventive awareness mechanisms implemented in past years, the NACD has achieved significant accomplishments during its new mandate, including:

1. Establishing a National Movement against Drugs

Drug-related issues have become a shared concern for citizens across all demographics, ages, and sectors, including both public and private entities. Everyone is collectively involved in addressing these issues through prevention, suppression, and law enforcement measures. In the past, the public often viewed drug-related issues as the sole responsibility of law enforcement officers, such as the national police or the royal gendarmerie forces. However, in this new mandate, efforts



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have been made to shift public perception, encouraging people to recognize the drug issues as a collective problem requiring joint solutions. This is achieved through boosting awareness campaigns that educate the public stakeholders about the harmful effects of drugs, targeting family members, public and private enterprises, students, workers, athletes, and religious sectors alike.

2. Implementing Digital Transformation



The NACD has developed the mobile NoDrug Application to support its strategic goals. The application provides educational and entertainment materials related to drugs, including lessons, up-to-date information, and the locations of rehabilitation centers. Additionally, the application serves as a platform for citizens to report any drug-related crimes within their communities directly to the relevant authorities.

3. Collaborating with the Private Sectors



The NACD has signed memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with the private sectors such as Khmer Artists Association, Hang Meas Video Co., Ltd, Galaxy Navatra Group Ltd, the Cambodian Boxing Federation, the Electronic Sports Federation, and several other private institutions. These partnerships aim to encourage the private sector to

collaborate with the NACD in promoting public education and awareness campaigns.

IMPLEMENTATION OF PREVENTIVE DRUG EDUCATION PROGRAMME

The NACD had actively conducts various discussion and lectures for students and the communities through school-based activities:

SCHOOL-BASED

The School-based target students at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels:

- Primary students of Year 5 and 6
- Secondary students of Year 7 to 9
- Tertiary levels: students from Higher Educations, Institutions to Universities

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Students at all levels are able to participate in anti-drug activities by giving them opportunity to learn more about the drug's danger with funds and interaction.

We had encourage the Youth in leading the movement in combating drug activities “Say No to Drugs”

COMMUNITY-BASED

Community-based programmes include roadshows, interactive activities, exhibitions, discussion and workplace programmes at both Publics and Privates.

As continuous efforts to reach all elements, the NACD has been promoting drug awareness through public events, national day's, and religious affairs. NACD actively collaborate with all relevant agencies, institutions to curb with drugs problems among Public Servants and Arm forces under the Clear our Home Policy in implementing a compulsory drug test in order to Keep the Pond Always Transparence. This is an ongoing agenda to foster agencies or private companies in ensuring a drug free workplace through preventive education and participation.



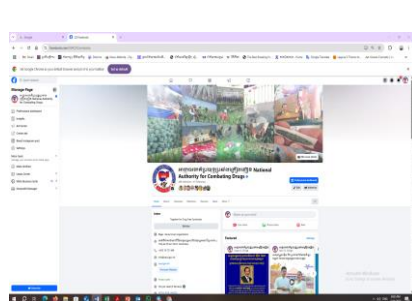
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We had integrated into Police Academy School of the Effectiveness Harm Reduction Programmes among Drugs Users; and the Drug Control Law had been introduced to Universitie students' curriculums.



PUBLICITY

The NACD utilize the social medi platform such as Facebook and Telegram to advertise the prevetive drug eductaion programmes and promote awareness on drugs. Such platform attract larger adiences in spreading anti-drug messages, materials and information, short videos, particularly among the youth. Call ones had been placed by mobile phone companies, with instant drug messages altered frequently on the approaching to International Against Drugs. Tvs. Radio broadcasting had been highlighted the danger of drugs. Public's participation simultanously provide knowledge and awareness on the drug's harm.



INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING, 2024

Under the UNODC's theme United for Health and Safety, Cambodian also broadly disseminated of drug harm messages during the celebration period across the nation. The anti-drug was a success, with its main attraction drawing a large crowd during the event's commencement. Moreover, the June 26's event had been widely commenced in all provinces across the nation; the narcotics destruction were included during the events.

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Malaysia

Introduction

Illicit drug use is a complex, concealed, and highly stigmatized behaviour, posing significant challenges to national drug surveillance systems. Since 1983, drug abuse has remained a primary concern for the Malaysian government. The National Anti-Drugs Agency (NADA), under the purview of the Ministry of Home Affairs, serves as the lead agency in addressing drug-related issues through a comprehensive approach encompassing preventive education, public awareness, law enforcement, treatment and rehabilitation, and international cooperation.

Malaysia remains firmly committed to tackling drug-related challenges by actively sharing and exchanging information on current and effective strategies. These efforts are guided by best practices and evidence-based approaches, aimed at reducing drug abuse and safeguarding public health and safety.

Treatment and Rehabilitation

Malaysia Encourages Voluntary Participation in Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Through Legislative Reform

The Drug Dependants (Treatment and Rehabilitation) (Amendment) Act 2024 was passed in the Dewan Rakyat on 18 July 2024 and subsequently in the Dewan Negara on 1 August 2024, marking a significant enhancement to the existing legislation. The amendments provide clearer guidance and introduce progressive provisions aimed at streamlining the treatment process for individuals seeking help voluntarily.

One of the key features of the amendment is the authorization of Rehabilitation Officers to certify clients who voluntarily seek treatment and rehabilitation. This certification expedites access to care and allows for early intervention. Trained Rehabilitation Officers are now responsible for administering screening tools such as the structured clinical interview for DSM-III-R (SCID), the Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST), and other validated assessments to identify individuals at risk of substance use disorders and determine appropriate treatment pathways.

Additionally, the amendment grants the Director-General of the National Anti-Drugs Agency (NADA) the authority to shorten treatment and rehabilitation orders at rehabilitation centres, based on recommendations from Rehabilitation Officers. These officers assess clients based on the severity of their addiction and their progress throughout the rehabilitation process.

Post-treatment integration is recognized as a critical phase in sustaining recovery. NADA continues to promote community empowerment, encouraging collaborative efforts to support individuals in recovery, reduce stigma, and prevent relapse; all in pursuit of a healthier, drug-free society.



Minister of Home Affairs, Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail presenting amendments to the Drug Addict (Treatment and Rehabilitation) Act 1983 at Parliament



Director General of NADA, Datuk Ruslin Jusoh said amendments to the Drug Dependents (Treatment and Rehabilitation) Act will further expand the types of treatment for drug addicts

- **Professionalism Empowerment of National Anti-Drugs Officer
Strengthening Professional Competency in Addiction Treatment**

The National Anti-Drugs Agency (NADA) continues to elevate the professionalism of its officers in the addiction treatment sector through nationally recognized certification programmes. In 2024, a total of 44 Rehabilitation Officers, appointed as Mobile Recovery Treatment experts, successfully completed and were accredited with the Malaysian Skills Diploma (DKM); a vocational qualification awarded by the Skills Development Department under the Ministry of Human Resources. This certification is aligned with the National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS) and is widely recognized both nationally

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and internationally for its emphasis on practical and technical competency relevant to industry needs.

In addition, NADA has implemented the Certified Psychoeducation Practitioner (CPP) programme also known as the Certificate of Treatment & Rehabilitation Practice under its NADA Certification Programme (PPA). This initiative aims to enhance officers' expertise in treatment and rehabilitation. The programme comprises four progressive levels, with advancement contingent upon successful completion of each stage. Only participants who pass Level 1 are eligible to proceed to subsequent levels. Notably, the CPP certification is also recognized by the International Accreditation Organization (IAO). As of 2024, 195 NADA officers have been accredited with CPP, reflecting the agency's commitment to building a skilled and competent workforce in addiction recovery services



The National Anti-Drugs Agency (NADA) Training Centre provides training for professional empowerment in drug demand reduction

Preventive Drug Education

The National Anti-Drugs Agency (NADA) of Malaysia adopts a comprehensive drug prevention strategy anchored on two primary pillars: Preventive Drug Education (PDE) and the Public Awareness Programme. The PDE framework is implemented through four approaches - Drug-Free Family, Drug-Free Education Institution, Drug-Free Workplace, and

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Drug-Free Community - all of which aim to create a holistic and sustainable drug-free environment across Malaysian society. These initiatives are guided by evidence-based methodologies and international best practices, targeting reductions in drug demand, especially among new and at-risk individuals.

In the workplace sector, NADA introduced the Drug-Free Workplace Programme to address substance-related risks in professional environments. The programme encourages the establishment of internal drug prevention committees and promotes five key elements: leadership commitment, policy adoption, supervisor training, employee education, and community engagement through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). As of 2024, the initiative had reached 154 public sector departments (1,822 participants) and 210 private companies (1,988 participants). Furthermore, three (3) Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) have been signed with key private sector entities to reinforce long-term collaboration and sustainability.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Signing Ceremony to implement the Drug-Free Workplace Program



Petroleum Nasional Berhad (PETRONAS)



The Royal Klang City Council (MBDK)

In the education sector, NADA launched the Junior SQUAD in 2024; a proactive, school-based initiative targeting students aged 13 to 17. The programme aims to foster volunteerism among youth and instill early awareness of drug prevention. Through educational campaigns, interactive learning, and health-focused activities, students are empowered to become peer ambassadors. These ambassadors work closely with teachers, community leaders, and NADA officers to promote anti-drug messages within and beyond their school communities. This peer-led model enhances students' resilience against peer pressure and contributes to creating safer, drug-free educational environments.

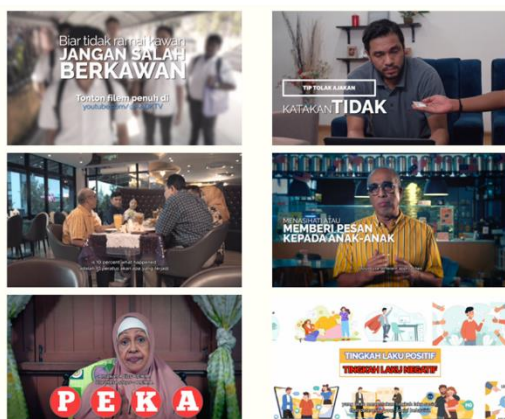
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Launching of Junior SQUAD



To broaden the impact of these initiatives, NADA implements a nationwide Public Awareness Programme through a robust multimedia strategy. This includes radio and television broadcasts, billboards, social media campaigns, digital games, and online comics aimed especially at young audiences. High-visibility outreach events such as the Anti-Drug Roadshow are held regularly in schools and public venues to maintain community engagement.

Public Service Announcement (PSA)



“Tak Payah, Tak Nak!” campaign



Scan the QR code below to view the “Tak Yah, Tak Nak!” campaign and explore our nationwide drug prevention initiatives:



A central feature of this effort is the “Tak Payah, Tak Nak!” campaign—a youth-focused movement that promotes refusal skills, self-confidence, and healthy living. Using relatable and creative messaging, the campaign targets schools, high-risk communities, and families to instill a proactive “say no to drugs” mindset from an early age.

Enforcement Initiatives

Malaysia has intensified its enforcement efforts through several strategic initiatives aimed at curbing drug abuse and trafficking.

1. Strengthened Airport & Border Surveillance

- Enhanced screening at domestic and international airports, especially cargo and parcel checkpoints.
- Increased focus on detecting drug mules and smuggling via air and sea routes.
- Collaboration with courier service companies to monitor suspicious shipments.

2. Integrated Enforcement Operations

- Joint operations with the Royal Malaysia Police (PDRM) and other agencies to dismantle trafficking syndicates.
- Use of mobile enforcement teams to conduct surprise inspections in high-risk areas.
- Periodic inspections of packages sent abroad to detect concealed narcotics.

3. Expanded Screening & Certification Authority

- Under the Drug Dependents (Treatment and Rehabilitation) (Amendment) Act 2024, certified Rehabilitation Officers now conduct structured screening tests (e.g., SCID, ASSIST) to expedite voluntary treatment.
- Officers assess addiction severity and recommend treatment duration, with the Director-General of NADA empowered to shorten rehabilitation orders based on progress.

4. Inter-Agency & International Collaboration

- Participation in regional dialogues and summits to share enforcement strategies and best practices.
- Engagement with ASEAN counterparts to address transnational drug trafficking and strengthen regional security frameworks.

5. Drug Assessment Centres (DAC): A Rehabilitation-First Approach

- DACs were introduced as part of a major transformation under the Drug Dependents (Treatment and Rehabilitation) (Amendment) Act 2024, shifting the focus from punishment to early intervention and rehabilitation.
- These centres serve as single-point reference hubs for individuals detained for drug-related issues, offering comprehensive medical and psychosocial evaluations rather than immediate entry into the criminal justice system.
- DACs are staffed by registered medical doctors and trained Rehabilitation Officers, who use eight specialized screening instruments to assess addiction severity and recommend appropriate treatment pathways.
- The model accelerates the treatment process by eliminating delays associated with pathology results, allowing individuals to be referred to recovery programs more quickly.
- DACs also uphold human rights principles, providing a more compassionate and conducive environment for assessment and care.

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Drug Assessment Centre (DAC)
Headquarters

Drug Assessment Centre (DAC)
Tampin

Harm Reduction

The prevention of HIV transmission among key populations is unequivocally prioritized as one of the key strategies in Malaysia's National Strategic Plan Ending AIDS (NSPEA) 2016 – 2030. This strategic focus is essential in a landscape where Malaysia, like many other nations, has been grappling with rising HIV epidemics, particularly among these key populations, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive intervention strategies. Historically, People Who Inject Drugs (PWID) were identified as the initial driving force of the HIV epidemic in Malaysia, followed by female sex workers (FSW), transgender people (TG), and men who have sex with men (MSM). While sexual transmission has become the main mode in the last decade, and MSM are projected to be the main key population by 2030, the foundational importance of addressing PWID remains critical to the nation's overall HIV response.

To effectively curb the spread of HIV, particularly among these vulnerable groups, the success of HIV prevention outcomes in Malaysia hinges heavily on a multifaceted approach. This approach involves various outreach programs conducted both online and offline, which are further supplemented by internet-based campaigns. This comprehensive combination of prevention options is designed to ensure accessibility and reach for diverse segments of the population, specifically targeting key populations such as gay men and other men who have sex with men, transgender people, sex workers and their clients, people who inject drugs, and prisoners. By implementing a broad range of interventions through multiple platforms, Malaysia aims to achieve its ambitious goal of ending AIDS by 2030, ensuring that no group is left behind in the collective efforts to curb the spread of HIV.

Targeted Interventions for PWID

Malaysia's National Strategic Plan Ending AIDS (NSPEA) 2016-2030 prioritizes the prevention of HIV transmission among key populations, including PWID. The interventions for PWID are multifaceted. These are some **comprehensive outreach programs**;

Online and Offline Outreach: HIV prevention outcomes heavily rely on various outreach programs conducted both online and offline, supplemented by internet-based campaigns.

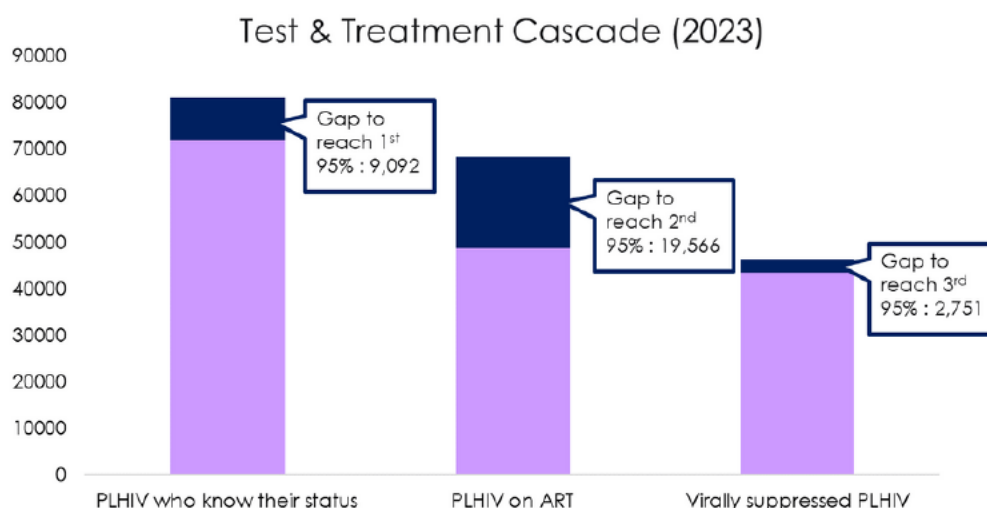
Tailored Prevention Services: Trained HIV outreach workers, who are members of key population-led organizations, deliver a defined package of prevention services tailored for each population, including PWID. This includes the distribution of prevention commodities and frequent contact.

Referrals: Outreach workers also provide crucial referrals for key population members to further health services, social, and legal support.

Key aspects:

- **Outreach Services:** Trained HIV outreach workers, who are members of key population-led organizations, deliver a defined package of prevention services to key populations. These packages are tailored to each population regarding the types of prevention commodities distributed and the frequency of contact. Outreach workers also provide referrals for key population members to further health services, as well as social and legal support.
- **HIV Prevalence and Testing:** HIV prevalence among key population groups generally reduced among respondents of the IBBS 2022 survey compared to earlier surveys. This is considered an encouraging finding, especially given the increased number of key populations who had been tested in the past 12 months.

HIV testing and treatment cascade in Malaysia, 2023:



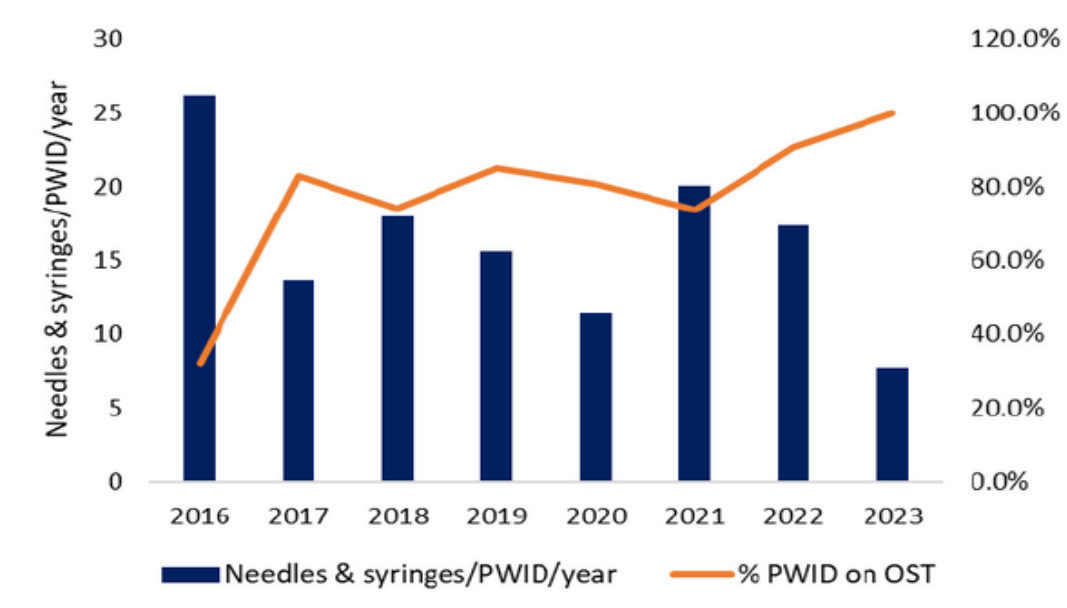
Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST) Programme:

- OST has been a critical component of Malaysia's harm reduction strategies, implemented at selected government and private health facilities since 2006.
- By the end of 2023, almost 100% of PWID were enrolled in OST. This is a significant increase from 91% reported by the close of 2022.
- The NSPEA specifically encourages opioid injectors to shift to OST to ensure better Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) uptake.

Needle-Syringe Exchange Programme (NSEP):

- Harm reduction strategies in Malaysia have transformed with the rise of OST, which has gradually replaced the NSEP.
- The demand for NSEP experienced a 15% reduction in needle-syringes distributed from 2019 to 2020 and continuing into 2023.
- This decline is attributed not only to a genuine decrease in demand due to PWIDs transitioning entirely to OST and altering patterns of drug use, but also to the nationwide implementation of COVID-19 related movement control orders. These restrictions significantly impeded PWIDs' access to NSEP points. This strategic shift aligns with the National Strategic Plan for Ending AIDS, which encourages opioid injectors to transition to OST to ensure better Antiretroviral Treatment (ART) uptake.

Needle-syringe exchange programme (NSEP) and Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST) Coverage among PWID, 2016 – 2023:



Challenges and Targeted Interventions for PWID

- **Condom Use among PWID:** While other key populations showed increased condom use, responses from PWID indicated a reduced uptake of condoms. This highlights an urgent need for targeted interventions to promote safe sexual practices specifically among PWID, ensuring comprehensive efforts to curb HIV spread.
- **Access Impediments during COVID-19:** The nationwide implementation of COVID-19 related movement control orders significantly impeded PWIDs' access to Needle-Syringe Exchange Programme (NSEP) points. This disruption contributed to a 15% reduction in needle-syringes distributed from 2019 to 2020 and 2023. While there was a modest recovery in 2022 as restrictions lifted, this period highlighted vulnerability in access to crucial harm reduction services.

International and Regional Cooperation

Drug abuse statistics over the past three years have shown an increase of 11.4 percent in 2022, 6.1 percent in 2023, and 32.5 percent in 2024. This upward trend highlights that drug-related issues are a global concern affecting many countries worldwide. Therefore, in facing this challenge, international cooperation is a crucial key to curbing the widespread abuse and trafficking of drugs at both the global and regional levels.

In this regard, the National Anti-Drugs Agency (NADA) remains committed to fulfill its responsibility by maintaining bilateral and multilateral relations with foreign countries and international organizations every year. This international cooperation complements the other four pillars under the National Drug Policy: Preventive Education, Treatment and Rehabilitation, Enforcement, and Harm Reduction.

Approaches and Strategies

Several approaches and strategies have been implemented to strengthen international relations in line with current drug-related developments:

a) Hosting and Participation of Officers at the International Level

Organizing and participating in conferences, meetings, programs, workshops, working groups, and forums to share expertise and best practices internationally.

b) Participation in Courses and Training

Qualified and eligible officers in relevant fields attend courses and training offered by international organizations to enhance their knowledge and competencies.

c) Collaboration with International Anti-Drug Agencies and Organizations

Expanding collaborative networks with international agencies and organizations through courtesy visits, working visits, and bilateral meetings to strengthen joint efforts in combating drug-related problems.

Program Implementation

Hosting of the 9th ASEAN Seaport Interdiction Task Force (9th ASITF) Meeting

In 2024, Malaysia served as the host for the 9th meeting of the ASEAN Seaport Interdiction Task Force (ASITF), organised by the National Anti-Drugs Agency (NADA). The meeting was attended by 46 delegates from ASEAN Member States, including representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat and the dialogue partner, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). It was held in Penang from 19 to 22 November 2024.

The main objective of the meeting was to strengthen cooperation among ASEAN countries through information sharing to address drug smuggling activities at ports and in international waters. Discussions also focused on holistic initiatives and coordinated actions involving multiple regional enforcement agencies to enhance maritime security and control measures.

During the meeting, each country presented its Country Report, providing statistical updates on the current drug situation, including arrest and seizure data. Delegates also participated in a field visit to the Seberang Jaya Customs Complex for a briefing delivered by Penang Port Sdn. Bhd. and the Customs Division of the Royal Malaysian Customs Department, Penang. The programme continued with a visit to the North Butterworth Container Terminal (NBCT) – Penang Port, offering delegates direct insights into the port's operational management and cargo handling processes.

The Malaysian delegation comprised officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN), Royal Malaysian Customs Department (RMCD), Royal Malaysia Police (RMP), Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA), Ministry of Transport (MOT), Penang Port Commission, Penang Port Sdn. Bhd., Port Klang Authority, and the NADA.

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The meeting was held in hybrid



Briefing delivered by Customs Department officer

CONCLUSION

Malaysia strongly believes in improving international cooperation, notably in the exchange of information and intelligence, as well as accurately reporting any illegal drug trafficking incidents. Malaysia actively supports efforts and steps to combat illicit drug trafficking at the national, regional, and international levels. Examining the harm and impacts of drugs on society. To stop the illegal drug trade, it is necessary for international collaboration between activities to be coordinated and integrated. Information about the countries of origin, the countries of transit, and the countries of destination. Capacity building, cooperation, and sharing are all good examples.

The Philippines

In line with its mandate, the Dangerous Drugs Board continues to formulate responsive policies to address new and emerging challenges in drug abuse prevention and control. From January to December 2024, the Board adopted and promulgated a total of three (3) Board Regulations and seven (7) Board Resolutions have been adopted and promulgated.

Board Regulations

Board Regulation No. 1, Series of 2024

Creating a Technical Working Group for the Executive Review of Republic Act No. 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002)

This regulation establishes a Technical Working Group (TWG) to review the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002. In consultation with government agencies and organizations, the TWG reviews current policies, rules, and procedures on dangerous drugs. It is also tasked to provide recommendations in line with the proposed amendment or revision of the dangerous drugs law.

Board Regulation No. 2, Series of 2024

Extension of the Provisional Removal of Lianhua Qingwen from the List of Dangerous Drugs

This regulation extends for one more year (2024) the provisional removal of *Lianhua Qingwen*, a medical preparation for managing symptoms of COVID-19 containing ephedra, from the list of dangerous drugs. The extension is based on the absence of reported adverse reactions, overdoses, abuse, seizures, or diversion related to its ephedra and ephedrine content.

Board Regulation No. 3, Series of 2024

Mandatory Registration of Entities Providing Narcotics Detection Dog (NDD) Services and Accreditation of Narcotics Detection Dogs

Narcotics Detection Dogs (NDDs) play a significant role in the prevention of smuggling and spread of illegal drugs by detecting them at ports, borders, and public areas. Through Board Regulation No. 3, Series of 2024, the Philippines requires all NDD providers and their dogs to be registered and accredited to ensure only qualified teams assist in anti-drug operations.

Board Resolutions

Board Resolution No. 1, Series of 2024

Amending Board Resolution No. 5 Series of 2022 Re: Authorizing the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency to Implement the Orders of the Health Facilities and Services Regulatory Bureau (HFSRB) of the Department of Health

Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers (TRCs) are monitored and accredited by the Department of Health (DOH) through the Health Facilities and Services Regulatory Bureau (HFSRB), as required by Republic Act No. 9165, to protect patients from abuses, substandard care, and excessive fees. In line with this, Board Resolution No. 1, Series of 2024 clarifies that the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) is authorized to assist only in enforcing HFSRB closure orders against centers with revoked licenses and without accreditation. This resolution ensures action from authorities on facilities that fail to meet legal standards.

Board Resolution No. 2, Series of 2024

Denial of the Appeal of TOYOFLEX CEBU CORPORATION Re: Application for Renewal of its P-5 and P-6 Licenses

The Committee on Appeals of the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) reviews appeals on licensing and regulatory decisions under Republic Act No. 9165. In Board Resolution No. 2, Series of 2024, the Board denied the appeal of Toyoflex Cebu Corporation after the Committee found procedural lapses and upheld PDEA's denial of its license renewal due to violations involving unauthorized importation of controlled chemicals and a pending criminal case against its officers.

Board Resolution No. 3, Series of 2024

Adoption of the Culture Sensitive Information, Education, and Communication Materials focusing on Drug Abuse Prevention Education and Advocacy

The Board adopts Culture Sensitive Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Materials focusing on Drug Abuse Prevention Education and Advocacy. These materials are tailored to effectively educate Indigenous Peoples in Mindanao and other cultural minority groups on drug abuse prevention, addressing both its legal and medical aspects, as well as the latest developments in the anti-illegal drug campaign.

Board Resolution No. 4, Series of 2024

Approval of the Amendment of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Dangerous Drugs Board and the Provincial Government of Davao Del Norte

Providing financial assistance to Community-Based Drug Rehabilitation (CBDR) programs is part of the Board's mandate to help local government units strengthen anti-drug efforts through improved facilities and services. In line with this, a resolution was adopted authorizing the amendment of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the

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Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) and the Provincial Government of Davao del Norte, revising the project title from "Construction of Luntiang Paraiso Regional Drug Rehabilitation Center Administration Building" to "Rehabilitation/Improvement of Administration Building" and extending the project period by one (1) year.

Board Resolution No. 5, Series of 2024

Commending the University of the Philippines Drugs of Abuse Research Laboratory on the Development and Validation of a Plastic-Based Microfluidic POCT Device (E-TOX) for Detecting Intoxication with Selected New Psychoactive Substances and Pharmaceuticals

A research project on the development and validation of a plastic-based microfluidic point-of-care testing (POCT) device, known as E-Tox, was conducted by the University of the Philippines Drugs of Abuse Research Laboratory (UP DARL), in collaboration with the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, the College of Arts and Sciences (UP Manila), and the National Poison Management and Control Center (UP-PGH). The E-Tox device uses microfluidic technology to rapidly detect intoxication with selected new psychoactive substances, such as cathinones, ketamines, and synthetic cannabinoids, as well as pharmaceuticals like paracetamol, salicylates, and isoniazid. In line with the mandate of the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) to support scientific research in the prevention and control of dangerous drugs, the Board commended the UP DARL and its partner institutions for their significant contribution to advancing technology in toxicology and supporting national efforts against drug abuse.

Board Resolution No. 6, Series of 2024

Resolution on the Petition for the Reclassification of Cannabis and Cannabis Resin in the Philippine Schedules of Dangerous Drugs from Schedule 1 to Schedule 2, to Align and Adopt Decision 63/17 of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (UN-CND)

Under the Board Resolution, the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) considered a petition filed on 6 December 2022 seeking the reclassification of cannabis and cannabis resin from Schedule 1 to Schedule 2 of the Philippine Schedules of Dangerous Drugs. The petition aimed to align the country's classification with United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (UN-CND) Decision 63/17, which reclassified cannabis at the international level, and to allow legal medical access for the petitioners' children. After thorough review and consultation by the Technical Working Group, the DDB found that the change by the CND in the classification of cannabis and cannabis-related substances from Schedule IV to Schedule I will not permit legal access on such substances since these are still considered highly addictive and highly liable to abuse. Petitioners cannot legally access cannabis as medicine since it is yet to be allowed both by the local laws of the Philippines and the schedules of international drug control conventions to which the country is a signatory. It was decided that despite the classification by the CND of cannabis from Schedule IV to Schedule I, both RA 9165 and the international drug control conventions consistently classify cannabis as dangerous drugs and its legal access is limited to medical experiments and research purposes.

Board Resolution No. 7, Series of 2024

Approving the Provision of Financial Assistance from the Special Account in the General Fund of the Board to Government Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers and Local Government Community-Based Treatment and Rehabilitation Facilities for CY 2024

In this resolution, the board approves the allocation of financial assistance for CY 2024 from the Special Account in the General Fund (SAGF) to selected government-operated in-patient rehabilitation centers and local government-led community-based treatment and rehabilitation facilities. This funding is designated for infrastructure-related projects vital to the effective implementation of anti-illegal drug programs and interventions.

Preventive Education and Capacity-Building Programs

The Philippines, through the Dangerous Drugs Board, pursued numerous capability-building and advocacy programs across multiple sectors in 2024.

Capacity Building Programs

Training of Trainers on Life Skills Enhancement on Drug Abuse Prevention

This training program aimed to build resilience against life's pressures and drug use while preparing a core group of trainers to promote life skills.

Throughout 2024, it reached various key stakeholders including educators, government employees, healthcare professionals, students, and law enforcement officers across multiple regions in the Philippines, fostering a wide network of trained individuals equipped to support their communities.



The three-day live-in Training of Trainers on Life Skills Enhancement in Drug Abuse Prevention was conducted on 4 to 6 December 2024 at Microtel by Wyndham Acropolis in Quezon City.

Seminar-Workshop on Genderizing IEC Materials on Drug Prevention for LGUs in the NCR

This three-day program aimed to review and genderize existing IEC materials, support the implementation of the agency's Gender and Development (GAD) Plans and Programs, and encourage Local Government Units (LGUs) to develop gender responsive and gender sensitive IEC materials for stakeholders. It was attended by 49 Public Information Officers (PIO), Public Relations Officers (PRO), Doctors, and Anti-Drug Abuse Council (ADAC) officials.



Seminar-Workshop on Genderizing IEC Materials for the LGUs in the NCR held on January 29 to 31, 2024.

Seminar Workshop on Parent-Youth Resource Against Drug Abuse (PYRADA)

Attended by parents, youth leaders, local government officials, social welfare staff, and representatives from community and faith-based organizations, this brought together participants from different provinces to strengthen collaboration in addressing drug-related issues.

Anti-drug advocacy was advanced through initiatives targeting students, out-of-school youth, senior citizens, employees, faith-based groups, and anti-drug councils. Activities such as campus tours, School Anti-Drug Abuse Council (SADAC) initiatives, and workplace policy campaigns promoted awareness, community engagement, and support systems for persons who use drugs (PWUDs). Stakeholder meetings further strengthened rehabilitation and referral mechanisms.



Seminar-Workshop on Parent Youth Resource Against Drug Abuse (PYRADA) 13-14 August 2024 in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan

Seminar on DDB Regulations on Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation

The Department of Health (DOH) conducted capacity-building seminars for personnel from Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers (DATRCs) to strengthen implementation of drug treatment guidelines. The first session, held on 12-13 March 2024 at DOH-TRC Bauko, Mountain Province, involved 56 health workers, administrative staff, and LGU representatives. The second, on 18-19 April 2024 in Amadeo, Cavite, engaged 45 clinicians, program coordinators, Philippine National Police officers, and Local Government Unit personnel. These initiatives support ASEAN's regional goals for effective drug rehabilitation systems.

Seminar on Drug Abuse Prevention Education for At-Risk Population and Indigenous People

Focused on empowering at-risk and indigenous communities in the Bicol Region, this seminar provided essential knowledge on drug use prevention tailored to marginalized populations. It gathered 52 participants from Bicol Province at Hotel Venezia, Legazpi City, on 21-22 March 2024.

Orientation-Seminar and Training of Trainers on Drug-Free Workplace Program

The two-day training sought to enhance participants' abilities to manage and prevent drug abuse, while developing a core group of trainers to promote drug prevention within their organizations.

Roll-Out Training on YAKAP BAYAN Program

In partnership with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), this program supports the implementation of the national drug prevention strategy in the Philippines. It engaged a diverse group of participants from local government units, law

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enforcement, social welfare, educational institutions, and faith-based organizations across multiple regions. The program focused on strengthening collaboration and capacity-building among key stakeholders to enhance drug abuse prevention efforts at the community level.

Seminar-Workshop on Dangerous Drugs Law for Judges, Prosecutors and Law Enforcers

This program, jointly conducted by the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) and the Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA), provides continuing education for judges, prosecutors, and law enforcers to ensure consistent, effective, and rights-based implementation of the Dangerous Drugs Law. The seminar workshop covers updates on legal provisions, recent jurisprudence, and best practices in handling drug-related cases. It also aims to strengthen inter-agency coordination and enhance participants' skills in the fair and efficient administration of justice, contributing to a more effective and humane response to the country's drug challenges.

It engaged over 230 participants from criminal justice agencies across Regions VII and IV-A, held in Cebu City (April 24-26, 2024) and Batangas (July 3-5, 2024).

Orientation Seminar for DDB Authorized Representatives

This 2-day activity aims to orient and brief participants relative to voluntary and compulsory confinement cases pursuant to Article VIII of RA 9165.

62 DDB Authorized Representatives from Region X, Nurses, Doctors, Social Workers, Anti-Drug Abuse Council (ADAC), Department of Health – Treatment and Rehabilitation Center (DOH-TRC) and Rural Health Unit (RHU) of Tubod, Lanao del Norte were convened at Apple Tree Resort and Hotel, Cagayan De Oro City on 8-9 May 2024.



59 DDB Authorized Representatives from National Capital Region (NCR), Local Government Units (LGUs) and Department of Health – Treatment and Rehabilitation Center (DOH-TRC) Bicutan participated in a seminar at One Tagaytay Place Hotel, Tagaytay City on 12-13 September 2024.

Continuing Seminar on Anti-Illegal Drug Operations and Investigation

This training aims to enhance the knowledge and skills of the participants to effectively and efficiently conduct anti-illegal drug operations in the country.



A total of 180 officers from the National Police College (NPC) Training Center, Drug Enforcement from the National Services, the K9 Unit, and Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) Regional Offices participated in the training held at the Camp General Castañeda, Silang, Cavite, from 13 to 17 May 2024.

Youth Camp Against Drug Use (YCADU)

The YCADU is a 3-day collaborative project of the DDB and Sta. Rosa City Anti-Drug Abuse Council (ADAC) designed to develop a new generation of young leaders with a strong sense of civic responsibility and commitment.

50 Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) officers (youth councils representing barangays across the Philippines), along with representatives from various youth organizations and religious groups from Sta. Rosa, Laguna, participated in the activity held at Club Balai Isabel, Talisay, Batangas, from 28 to 30 May 2024.

Universal Prevention Curriculum (UPC) Trainings on Substance Use Prevention

Two major UPC trainings were conducted to strengthen the capacity of prevention professionals in addressing substance use across various settings:

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Curriculum 01: Introduction to Prevention Science

A four-day training held at Quezon City, from 2 to 6 September 2024, attended by 30 employees of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA). The training aimed to update participants on the latest developments and strategies in substance use prevention.

Curriculum 5: School-Based Prevention Interventions

A specialized training course designed for prevention practitioners working in schools and other community settings. It was attended by 56 medical officers, nurses, and guidance counselors from 11 Schools Division Offices of DepEd Region XI, held at YKG Hotel, Mati City, Davao Oriental, from 19 to 21 November 2024.

Universal Prevention Curriculum Course 2

Another training on the Universal Curriculum Course 2 was conducted for addiction treatment professionals in partnership with the Quezon City Anti-Drug Abuse Advisory Council.

This activity aims to provide participants with the tools to inform stakeholders and policymakers about the foundation of evidence-based substance use prevention.

Eighty-seven (87) nurses, doctors, and teachers from various Quezon City high schools attended the activity held at View Park Hotel, Tagaytay City, from 16 to 19 July 2024.

Seminar on Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment Program-DOH CARAGA

The training is designed specifically for medical doctors, focusing on the Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment, and Assessment (SBIRTA Module 2.0) for Persons Who Use Drugs (PWUDs). The training aims to enhance the participants' skills in early identification, effective communication, and appropriate referral processes to improve the care and support provided to PWUDs.

Sixteen doctors (16) attended the training held at Island View Suites, San Jose, Dinagat Island, from 13 to 15 August 2024.

Capacitating Municipal and Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Councils of Taytay, Rizal in Handling Persons Who Use Drugs (PWUDs) and the Protocols in Filing Court Petitions

This 2-day seminar aims to orient and strengthen the capabilities of Municipal and Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council members in Taytay, Rizal. It focuses on their roles and

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responsibilities as Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) Authorized Representatives, particularly in managing cases involving Persons Who Use Drugs (PWUDs) and following proper protocols for filing court petitions.

Thirty (30) Municipal Anti-Drug Abuse Council (MADAC) and Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council (BADAC) representatives from Rizal Province attended the event held at Tanay, Rizal, on 22 to 23 August 2024.

Training Course on the Accreditation of Physicians on the Screening and Assessment of Drug Dependents

Over five days, 41 Municipal Health Officers from Isabela, Cagayan Valley, and Nueva Vizcaya were trained on standardized protocols for screening and assessing drug dependents. The program emphasized professionalism, ethical conduct, and evidence-based approaches, held at Tuguegarao City, from 2 to 6 September 2024.

Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment, and Assessment (SBIRTA) for Persons Who Use Drugs (PWUDs)

In line with Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) Regulation No. 4, Series of 2019, a series of SBIRTA Module 2.0 trainings were conducted to expand the pool of qualified rehabilitation staff and accredited physicians for drug dependency evaluation and program implementation. The trainings capacitated medical and health officers on the guidelines and regulations in drug treatment and rehabilitation.

A total of 21 medical and health officers from Region I, Malinao, and CALABARZON Department of Health – Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers (DOH-TRCs), as well as personnel from DOH-DATRC Dagupan, participated in the sessions held in Dagupan City from 24 to 27 September 2024 and in October 2024.

Line Up, Live Up Program

This joint program by UNODC, DDB, and PDEA delivers an evidence-based, sport-focused life skills training curriculum developed by international experts. It involved government officials, sports associations, community workers, and trainees in sessions held in October 2024.

Training of Trainers on Personal and Interpersonal Skills

The training was conducted to prepare a new group of trainers and facilitators who will help youth leaders and volunteers enhance their personal and interpersonal skills within their communities. The event took place in Tagaytay City in October 2024.

Seminar on Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP)

Parents were equipped with skills and knowledge to support abuse prevention and to serve as community advocates. The activity took place in Tanay, Rizal, in October 2024.

National Summit for DDB Authorized Representatives

Authorized Representatives participated in a two-day session to update their knowledge and share best practices for effectively performing their duties. The activity was held in Quezon City in October 2024.

Student Anti-Drug Abuse Council (SADAC) Compendium

The activity equipped student anti-drug council officers and advisers to develop, collaborate on, and propose practical school-based drug prevention programs tailored to their capacities and resources.

Capacity Building of SDEC Implementers Cum Pre-Testing of the SDEC Training Manual

As part of Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)'s commitment to implementing Philippine Anti-Illegal Drugs Strategy (PADS), this project tested the validity and reliability of the draft Training Manual for Special Drug Education Center Implementers before its final refinement and institutionalization planned for 2025.

Advocacy Programs

Women's Empowerment on Drug Abuse Prevention Education

This 2-day seminar aims to empower women by raising awareness of their rights and roles in promoting drug-free communities. It focuses on gender equality, protection against discrimination, and equipping women with tools to actively participate in drug abuse prevention within their families and society.

Fifty-two (52) women representatives of Anti-Drug Abuse Councils (ADACs), Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children (VAWC) units, jail and police officers from the 17 Local Government Units (LGUs) in the National Capital Region (NCR), and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) attended the activity held at Quezon City, from 29 to 30 August 2024.

Seminar on Drug Abuse Prevention Education for NSTP Students

A seminar on drug abuse prevention was conducted to raise awareness among students on the dangers of drug use and abuse, as well as to disseminate information on government programs and initiatives in the campaign against illegal drugs. The activity was held for 27 students of National Book Store (NBS) College in Quezon City on 5 January 2024, and for 1,159 students from various colleges of Dr. Yanga's Colleges, Inc. (DYCI) in Bocaue, Bulacan on 20 June 2024.

Campus Tour for Kids

A series of activities was conducted to expose Grades 5 and 6 students from various public and private schools in Pasig City to positive and productive experiences, helping them understand the importance of living a healthy, drug-free lifestyle. The sessions were held in

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several schools from 16 to 20 September 2024, engaging hundreds of students in interactive and educational programs.

Seminar on Barkada Kontra Droga or “Peer Groups Against Drugs”

A Seminar on Barkada Kontra Droga was held at Banca-Banca Integrated National High School on February 6, 2024.



Resource Persons during the discussion of their respective topics

The Barkada Kontra Droga (BKD), which translates to “Peer Group Against Drugs,” is a project of the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) designed as a preventive education and information strategy to combat the dangers and harmful effects of drug abuse. The program empowers individuals, especially youth, to become catalysts within their peer groups by advocating for a healthy, drug-free lifestyle through positive and wholesome activities.

In 2024, the BKD engaged students as well as BKD and SADAC (Student Anti-Drug Abuse Councils) officers and members through various sessions held in Laguna and Valenzuela City. These efforts aimed to strengthen peer-led advocacy against drug use.



One of the highlights was the **4th National BKD Convention**, held at Iloilo Grand Hotel, Iloilo City, from 22 to 26 April 2024. The convention aimed to raise awareness about illegal drugs among the youth and develop their skills in promoting a healthy lifestyle. It involved 200 learners, student leaders, teachers, and technical working groups from the DDB, local government units, and the Schools Division Office of Region VI.



Another important component of BKD is its role in organizing local peer support groups that actively participate in community-based prevention programs, reinforcing the message of a drug-free environment among young people.

Orientation Seminar on DAPE for Senior Citizens

Conducted to raise awareness among senior citizens about the harmful effects of drug use and to enhance their capacity in drug abuse prevention and control. It engaged over a hundred senior citizens from Cavite Province along with representatives from the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office. Additionally, a separate session was held virtually, reaching nearly 500 personnel from the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA) across its main and regional offices.

2024 Stakeholders Consultative Meeting on the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Drug Dependents

The Consultative Meeting was organized to provide a platform for discussions on admission requirements, procedures, policies, and other concerns related to the management of in-patient, outpatient aftercare, and community-based drug rehabilitation programs at Department of Health – Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Center (DOH-DATRC) Dagupan, La Union, and Dagupan Community-Based Drug Rehabilitation Program (CBDRP). The event gathered 83 participants, including judges from Benguet, La Union, and Pangasinan, regional prosecutors from Region I, other prosecutors, Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), and Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) personnel.

Drug-Free Workplace Program

The activity was conducted to enhance participants' knowledge of the government's anti-illegal drugs campaign, raise awareness on the harmful effects of drug abuse, identify signs and symptoms, and provide practical tips on preventing drug use, particularly in the workplace. It engaged various sectors, including employees, officials, and representatives from government agencies, local government units, private companies, academic institutions, cooperatives, and civic organizations, through both in-person sessions and online platforms held in different locations across the country throughout 2024.

International Commission for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Dependency Forum for Interfaith Leaders

A one-day summit was held in Sison, Pangasinan, bringing together interfaith and multi-sectoral community leaders to discuss prevention education on alcoholism, smoking, and drug abuse. The event gathered around 100 interfaith leaders at the Sison City Hall on 19 March 2024.

Online Drug Abuse Prevention Seminar for Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Officials and Personnel

A seminar aimed at increasing drug abuse prevention awareness among DSWD employees from the Central and Regional Offices was held via Zoom on 26 June 2024, attended by 65 participants.

Seminar on Strengthening Anti-Drug Abuse Councils (ADACs) on Community-Based Drug Rehabilitation Program (CBDRP) and Current DDB Board Regulations for Barangay Officials and BADAC Members

In line with Board Regulation No. 4, Series of 2020, issued by the Dangerous Drugs Board, which prescribes the implementing guidelines for community-based drug rehabilitation, intervention, and aftercare programs to ensure a unified, evidence-based, and sustainable response to drug dependency at the local level, this activity aims to provide guidance in overseeing General Intervention and Community-Based Drug Rehabilitation Program (CBDRP) initiatives implemented by local government units at various levels.

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Participants included 58 representatives from the Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council (BADAC), Barangay Peace and Security Officer (BPSO), Brgy. Peacekeeping Action Team (BPAT), Support Watch Action Team (SWAT), Samahang Magkakapitbahay sa Lungsod (SMBL) of Brgy. 181, and PNP personnel in Caloocan City. The event was held at the Covered Court, Pangarap Village, Brgy. 181, Caloocan City, on 5 July 2024.

Online Seminar on Drug Abuse Prevention Program for Out-of-School Youth (OSY)

This awareness program was conducted to educate and equip out-of-school youths (OSYs) on the impact of drugs and substance abuse. The session involved 70 participants representing the Philippine National Police (PNP), Department of Education (DepEd), Sangguniang Kabataan (SK), LGBTQI+ groups, community volunteers, and OSYs, and was held via Zoom on 10 October 2024.

Seminar on the Mental Health Gap (mhGAP) Intervention for the Anti-Drug Abuse Councils (ADACs)

Participants received an updated overview of the country's mental health status and explored the links between mental health, culture, economy, and addiction. The session introduced the World Health Organization's Mental Health Gap Intervention Guide and trained attendees on basic assessment tools for use in their communities. The event was attended by 90 representatives from various Anti-Drug Abuse Councils and offices in National Capital Region (NCR) and was held at SM Aura Office Tower, Taguig City, on 27 November 2024.

Special Events

The observance of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (IDADAIT) featured motorcades and learning sessions highlighting evidence-based prevention and road safety. The Drug Abuse Prevention and Control (DAPC) Week emphasized a health-based approach through seminars, fun runs, and workplace activities. The first National Convention of Anti-Drug Abuse Councils/Offices focused on treatment, rehabilitation, reintegration, and aftercare.

Development of Modules and Materials on Drug Abuse Prevention Education

Design Thinking cum Planning Workshop for the Development of Model of Intervention for Special Drug Education Center Clients

Led by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), this five-day consultation gathered key stakeholders to review and provide input on the draft concept for the Model of Intervention for SDEC clients. Participants included representatives from government agencies, local government units, international organizations, faith-based groups, and addiction specialists. The event was held at Madison 101 Hotel, Quezon City, from April 29 to May 3, 2024.

Writeshop on the Development of the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention Education (DAPE) Tool Kit

A series of writeshop was conducted to design and develop the Comprehensive DAPE Tool Kit, targeting parents, children, early adolescents, and late adolescents. This toolkit will be part of the Model of Intervention for School Drug Education Coordinator (SDEC) clients.

Dialogue/Consultative Meeting with Stakeholders

A dialogue and consultative meeting was held with representatives from drug rehabilitation centers, partner agencies, and key stakeholders to develop a unified protocol and guidelines for substance abuse management, referrals, and collaboration among involved parties. The meeting included 30 participants from Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB), Department of Health - Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers (DOH-DATRCs) Dagupan and La Union, Department of the Interior and Local Government-Region I, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency Region I (PDEA RO I), Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), Regional Rehabilitation Center for Youth, Mental Health Coordinators, Provincial Health Officers, and Agoon Out-Patient Rehabilitation Centers. It took place at the Lenox Hotel, Rizal Street, Dagupan City, on 25-26 September 2024.

Regional and International Cooperation

The Philippines reinforced its leadership by hosting the 45th ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Drug Matters (ASOD) and its related meetings. It contributed to ASEAN and UNODC trainings to strengthen drug prevention planning and implementation, while participating in international forums like the ISSUP Philippines National Conference to promote best practices.

Singapore

Amendments to the Misuse of Drugs Act

The New Psychoactive Substances (“NPS”) situation remains a global concern, with novel NPS being identified across the world annually. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Early Warning Advisory on NPS, there were at least 1,245 substances reported from 142 countries and territories as of July 2024. NPS abuse has been associated with adverse health reactions, including paranoia, seizures, hallucinations, and even death. CNB regularly reviews its strategies to improve the detection of NPS, enforcement against its illicit use, and will continue to proactively monitor the global and local NPS situation.

As part of the reviews done in 2024, CNB has identified and listed an additional four NPS as Class A controlled drugs in the First Schedule. Additionally, eighteen precursors were listed as controlled substances in the Third Schedule.

For more information on the substances listed in 2024, please refer to:

- <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/SL-Supp/S431-2024/Published/20240524?DocDate=20240524>
- <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/SL-Supp/S926-2024/Published/20241129?DocDate=20241129>

Statutory Framework to deal with Unlisted NPS

A new statutory framework to deal with unlisted NPS came into effect on 1 June 2024. The framework will control substances which are not yet listed as controlled drugs in the MDA, but are in circulation in the recreational drug scene, based on their capacity to produce a psychoactive effect when consumed, rather than their chemical structure. This allows Singapore to strengthen control over such NPS before they proliferate. The offences involving psychoactive substances have been set out in a new Part within the MDA. For completeness, the framework will not apply to psychoactive substances that have legitimate uses or are controlled under other regulatory framework. These excluded substances will be listed in the Fifth Schedule to the MDA.

PREVENTIVE DRUG EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024

Preventive Drug Education (PDE) remains a vital pillar of Singapore’s commitment to building a drug-free society. In 2024, the nation strengthened its drug prevention efforts through a comprehensive whole-of-government approach, deeper community partnerships,

and the cultivation of a passionate volunteer network. The following highlights the key education and advocacy efforts that defined Singapore's drug prevention landscape last year.

Whole-of-Government Approach

Established in August 2023, the Inter-Ministry Committee (IMC) on Drug Prevention for Youths provides strategic direction for youth drug prevention in Singapore by leveraging resources and touchpoints across key sectors such as education, social and family development, community, and health. This approach enables Singapore to engage youths throughout their formative years, addressing youth drug abuse in a holistic and coordinated manner.

Within its inaugural year, the IMC appointed close to 1,000 DrugFreeSG Champions – a diverse group comprising educators, student leaders, counsellors, youth workers, as well as members from National Service and healthcare communities. The IMC aims to equip these champions with anti-drug knowledge to amplify drug-free messages within their spheres of influence.

To further raise public awareness for the anti-drug cause, the IMC introduced the Drug Victims Remembrance Day (Remembrance Day), observed annually on the third Friday of May. On 17 May 2024, Singapore united for the first time to honour the victims of drug abuse through a solemn one-minute silence followed by a candle-lighting ceremony, sending a powerful national message that drug abuse is not victimless; its impact extends beyond the abusers to their family, friends, and the wider community. From May to July 2024, more than 38,000 members of the public visited the Remembrance Day exhibitions, which toured eight public spaces island-wide, collecting close to 101,500 drug-free pledges. Educational institutions – from primary schools to autonomous universities – also conducted a wide range of PDE activities, including exhibitions and lesson packages.

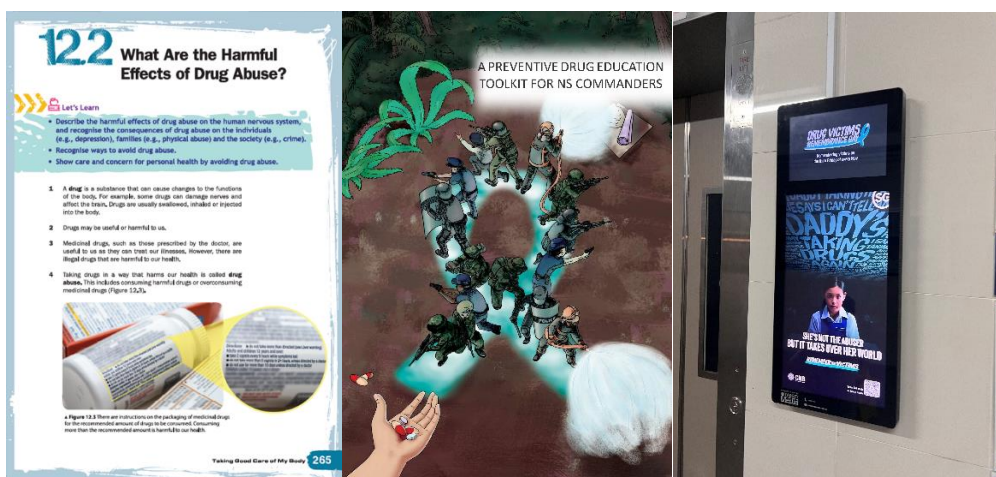


Various Political Office Holders observing one-minute silence at the observance.



Visitors penning down anti-drug pledge at the exhibition.

IMC agencies also integrated drug-free messages into their key platforms. For example, the Ministry of Education embedded drug-related topics across school curricula in primary and secondary schools as well as post-secondary institutions. The Defence and Home Affairs ministries equipped commanders with drug prevention knowledge to prevent, identify and manage drug abuse cases within their units. The Ministry of Digital Development and Information amplified outreach through digital display panels, social media, and public libraries.



Initiatives by various IMC agencies

Community Partnership

Singapore's commitment to community collaboration continued with the year-long DrugFreeSG Campaign, delivering a wide array of tailored initiatives to diverse groups.

School-Based PDE Programmes

Singapore maintained a strong presence in school-based PDE engagement initiatives through talks, skits, exhibitions, competitions (video, montage, essay writing), and radio roadshows –

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all designed to spark meaningful conversations about drug abuse among students. An example is the DrugFreeSG Video Competition, which provides youths passionate about filmmaking a platform to share their anti-drug perspectives through

storytelling and videography. An in-person workshop was also incorporated to teach participants storytelling, guerilla filming techniques, and the harms of drugs. The competition received 90 entries for both Youths and Young Adults categories. The [winning entries](#) can be viewed on Central Narcotics Bureau's YouTube channel.

Participants and Guest-of-Honour, then-Minister of State for Home Affairs, Mr Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, at the Videography Workshop

Community-Based PDE Programmes

The Dadah Itu Haram (DIH) ('Drugs Are Forbidden') Campaign is a ground-up, community-tailored effort that supports anti-drug initiatives within the Malay-Muslim community. Throughout 2024, the DIH Campaign organised several events, including outreach at barbershops, mosques, madrasahs, and Ramadan-specific activities. These efforts featured PDE talks by CNB officers, personal testimonies shared by former drug abusers, PDE exhibitions, and distribution of educational materials. One key initiative, "Date Your Loved Ones Today!" (DYLOT!), served as an anchor event during Ramadan. Dates and porridge bearing drug-free messages were distributed to the public to encourage families to cherish quality time together, fostering meaningful memories that promote a drug-free lifestyle. In 2024, a grant was also awarded to Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura, a statutory board under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth responsible for overseeing Muslim Affairs in Singapore. This grant empowered mosques to implement programmes aimed at raising drug prevention awareness within the Malay-Muslim community.



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Friday Prayers engagement at Bencoolen Mosque



Anti-drug Forum at Hasanah Mosque

Beyond the Malay-Muslim community, partnerships extended to the Indian community through collaboration with the Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA). For example, a partnership was made with SINDA Football Club in 2024 to educate youths in the Indian community about the harms of drugs and empower them to make informed decisions. The programme featured a sharing session by a CNB officer and a former drug abuser who offered personal experience into the harmful effects of drug abuse.



Public Events

Beyond school-based programmes and community-based campaigns, Singapore organises public events to foster resilience within the wider community. In 2024, the 7th edition of the DrugFreeSG Light-Up saw 48 community partners (including six new ones) illuminated iconic landmarks in green and/or white, the colours of the anti-drug ribbon, to showcase Singapore's collective commitment to a drug-free society.

Sharing by former drug abuser



Light-Up at Marina Bay Sands

National Council Against Drug Abuse

The National Council Against Drug Abuse (NCADA) serves as a conduit between the Government and the public, and the government continued to support NCADA's work by resourcing its public communication efforts and community engagement through the DrugFreeSG Fund, which supports ground-up anti-drug initiatives. With the support of the government, NCADA collaborated with several partners to reach out to parents

and youths. Key projects included outreach to IHL students via the Campus Legends social media campaign and the Campus Legends Parents Seminar, aimed at building parents' understanding of the harms of drugs.



Panel discussion at the Parents Seminar

Social Media Campaigns

Social media continues to be a vital platform for engaging and educating the public on the harms of drugs. Singapore's social media strategy skilfully blends human interest stories, fact-sharing, and viral content to maximise awareness and impact. Key social media series include:

- #CNBPerspectives: Provides clear insights into the dangers of drugs and explores the global and local drug

landscape to foster a deeper understanding of drug-related complexities.

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- #InTheNews: Amplifies drug-related news from local and international media, highlighting the societal harms of drugs. This series also offers perspectives on the consequences of relaxed drug laws abroad, reinforcing the importance of Singapore's firm legal stance and the impact of drug abuse on individuals, families, and communities.
- #SingaporeansAgainstDrugs: Showcases ordinary Singaporeans and advocates taking a stand for a drug-free society, inspiring youths and the wider public to lead healthy, drug-free lives.
- kNOw Cannabis: Employs engaging visuals to debunk common myths about cannabis, presenting factual, evidence-based information that empowers individuals to make informed choices.

Building Core of Volunteers

Singapore continues to cultivate a dedicated volunteer network to sustain community-driven advocacy. Volunteers under the DrugFreeSG Advocacy Network continued to show strong support for the anti-drug cause. For example, youth advocate Jaylen Chua, started a school-wide project in his school to spread awareness on the importance of staying drug-free through pop up booths and a school-wide anti-drug poster design competition. He also worked with his tutors on a lesson plan to discuss the drug issue with students during General Paper lessons. Another youth advocate, Anne Megan Kong also represented Singapore at the annual United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Youth Forum in March 2024.



DrugFreeSG advocates, Jaylen and Megan at the anti-drug pop-up booth

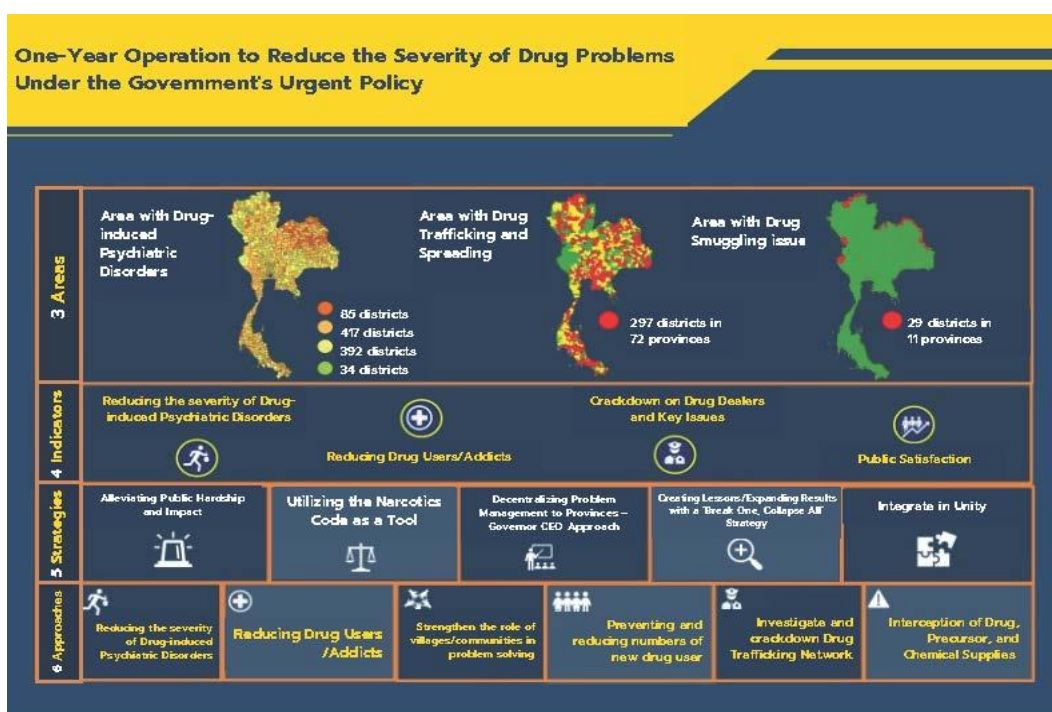
Thailand

Thailand's National Strategy for Addressing Drug Crisis within One Year:

“The Quick-Win Operation”

Background

Following the policy statement delivered by the Prime Minister to the Parliament on 11 September 2023, the Royal Thai Government declared its firm intention to eradicate illicit drugs. The policy emphasizes treating drug users as patients, prosecuting producers and traffickers, seizing assets to disrupt the drug trade, engaging in diplomatic negotiation, and permanently removing the public from the cycle of narcotics. In line with this commitment, the Government has designated drug suppression and control as a national agenda that must be addressed seriously and decisively. It set a clear target to reduce the severity of the drug problem within one year, leading to the launch of the “One-Year Operation to Reduce the Severity of the Narcotics Problem in accordance with the Government’s Urgent Policy.” This operation is based on the framework of the National Policy and Plan for the Prevention, Suppression, and Resolution of the Narcotics Problem B.E. 2567 (2024), focusing on targeted action in response to current critical drug situation and its serious impacts on communities and society.



3 Areas, 4 Indicators, 5 Strategies, and 6 Approaches

The One-Year Operation to Reduce the Severity of the Narcotics Problem, initiated under the Government's urgent policy, sets a clear objective: to reduce the severity of the drug problem within one year. The structure of this operation is built upon three key areas, four performance indicators, five strategies, and six implementation approaches, as follows:

Three Priority Areas: 1) Areas stricken by users with drug-induced psychiatric disorders 2) Areas affected by widespread drug trafficking and distribution and 3) Areas prone to drug smuggling and cross-border trafficking

Four Key Performance Indicators: 1) Reduction in the severity and prevalence of drug-related psychiatric conditions, 2) Reduction in the number of drug users and individuals with substance use disorders, 3) Effective suppression of drug traffickers and high-priority major drug cases and 4) Improved public satisfaction with anti-drug efforts and overall safety in communities.

Five Strategies: 1) Alleviating Public Distress: addressing drug-related issues that directly affect the safety and well-being of the general population 2) Leveraging the Narcotics Code: utilizing the comprehensive Narcotics Code as a legal instrument to drive effective and sustainable solutions 3) Decentralized Leadership through Provincial CEO Governance: empowering provincial governors to take the lead in tackling drug problems through area-based management 4) Develop and apply best practices through a strategic “break one point, dismantle the entire line” approach by identifying successful models and approaches, adapting them appropriately for implementation in other areas, and achieving broader impact and outcomes. This approach fosters continuous learning and promotes the development of innovative and scalable solutions 5) Unified and Integrated Implementation: ensuring cohesive, cross-sectoral coordination among all relevant agencies for maximum operational synergy.

Six Implementation Approaches: 1) Reducing the Severity of Drug-Induced Psychiatric Disorders 2) Reducing the Number of Drug Users and Addicts 3) Empowering Villages and Communities in Problem-Solving 4) Preventing and Reducing New Drug Users 5) Investigating and Suppressing Drug Trafficking Networks 6) Interdicting Illicit Drugs, Precursors and Chemicals



Six Implementation Approaches under the Quick-Win Operation to Reduce the Severity of the Narcotics Problem within One Year in accordance with the Government's Urgent Policy:

1. Reducing the Severity of Drug-Induced Psychiatric Disorders.

1) Conduct field survey to identify individuals with drug-induced psychiatric disorders based on the national survey database by the Royal Thai Police.

2) Refer identified individuals for assessment, screening, and classification based on their level of drug dependency at designated screening centers. This includes evaluating behavioral risks and the urgency of treatment to prevent potential violent incidents.

3) Refer individuals who have undergone screening to receive appropriate treatment and care based on the severity of their drug dependence and psychiatric condition.

4) Assign the individuals classified as "high surveillance" or "highest surveillance" with urgent intensive treatment.

5) Refer individuals in the "general surveillance" group to Subdistrict Health Promoting Hospitals (SHPHs) for continued care and treatment.

6) Prepare healthcare facilities and personnel for comprehensive psychiatric treatment related to drug use by assessing current service capacity and implementing measures to expand coverage and improve readiness.

7) Establish local operational teams to handle emergencies, including systems for reporting critical incidents, referral protocols, continuous follow-up care, and promoting the role of villages and communities in the treatment process.

8) Support social rehabilitation for individuals recovering from drug-induced psychiatric disorders, ensuring they can reintegrate into society without causing harm. This includes reshaping the attitudes of families, communities, and society, as well as establishing comprehensive post-treatment follow-up systems to prevent relapse or recidivism.

9) Systematically document successful strategies and key insights to develop a set of best practices that can be adapted and scaled for implementation in other contexts or regions.

10) Ensure that individuals with drug-induced psychiatric disorders who are incarcerated, under legal supervision, or on probation receive appropriate treatment and social rehabilitation in accordance with their clinical needs, in coordination with relevant agencies.

2. Reducing the Number of Drug Users /Addicts

1) Formulate the area-based plan for reducing the number of drug users/addicts by identifying and prioritizing target groups in each locality based on urgency, with a focus on reducing negative impacts on the general public.

2) Refer drug users and addicts to screening centers for assessment, classification, and appropriate treatment planning.

3) Launch public awareness campaigns to encourage voluntary treatment. For individuals who cause public disturbances and refuse treatment, legal measures shall be considered to reduce the risk to communities.

4) Emphasize the urgent referral of chronic or untreated drug addicts to treatment. For drug users (non-addicts), apply Community-Based Treatment (CBTx) as the primary approach.

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5) The Ministry of Public Health shall consider enhancing the effectiveness of treatment and rehabilitation mechanisms in all provinces to ensure comprehensive service coverage.

6) Each province shall establish coordination mechanisms among relevant ministries to support the welfare, rehabilitation, and reintegration of individuals who have undergone treatment.

7) Provinces shall consider this a priority task—ensuring continuous support and social reintegration of treated individuals, with a real-time and up-to-date follow-up reporting system.

8) Strengthen personalized care systems for treated individuals by involving communities, specialized groups, and professional networks in ongoing monitoring and support.

9) Improve the handling of drug users within the criminal justice system by promoting the use of psychosocial counseling mechanisms in court proceedings.

10) Encourage the application of the Narcotics Code provisions that allow courts to assign eligible offenders—those who show remorse and agree to treatment—to rehabilitation or alternative measures in lieu of punishment.

3. Empowering Villages and Communities in Problem-Solving:

1) All provinces, districts, and municipal areas shall conduct campaigns and public outreach to raise awareness and foster a collective sense of responsibility among villages and communities in preventing and addressing the drug problem.

2) In urgent target areas with high rates of drug-induced psychiatric disorders and widespread drug trafficking, local authorities shall promote and scale up the civil society groups to support the management of drug users and addicts within the community.

3) In the same urgent target areas, local authorities shall support the establishment of surveillance groups for follow-up and care of individuals who have undergone treatment, and promote active collaboration between communities and government agencies.

4) Community leaders in urgent target areas shall be developed and empowered to lead and coordinate anti-drug activities in partnership with community members.

5) Civil society and community-based organizations shall organize grassroots-driven initiatives in high-risk areas to support prevention, treatment, and post-treatment reintegration.

6) Designate and support the development of model areas for drug problem resolution that serve as best practice examples for replication and scale-up in other locations.

4. Preventing and Reducing New Drug Users

1) Prevent drug initiation among populations in vulnerable age groups to break the cycle of new users. Conduct nationwide and district-level awareness campaigns both online and on-site to disseminate drug prevention knowledge and promote protective behaviors.

2) Control environmental and social risk factors that lead youth into drug involvement. Implement legal and regulatory measures to enforce social discipline and rigorously suppress drug-related behaviors.

3) Promote drug prevention through active use of social media and digital platforms to reach youth and the broader public with timely and engaging content.

5. Investigating and Suppressing Drug Trafficking Networks

1) Conduct investigations and suppression operations against high-level drug trafficking networks with large-scale operations and financial activities, both domestically and internationally. Integrate intelligence and operational resources to dismantle organizational and financial structures using asset forfeiture and financial disruption measures.

2) Investigate and dismantle drug trafficking groups operating in provinces with widespread drug distribution. Extend financial investigations in all cases to support asset seizures and destroy local trafficking structures.

3) Create integrated mechanisms for intelligence and investigation at the national, regional, and provincial levels to consolidate data, expand leads on individuals and assets, and connect evidence leading to the dismantling of networks and disruption of financial flows to the greatest extent possible.

4) Enhance the capabilities of operational investigation units by prioritizing training, refresher courses, experience-sharing, and the study of landmark court rulings to stay current with evolving criminal methods and legal standards.

5) Strengthen investigations into the trafficking of precursor substances and chemicals used in drug production. Foster intelligence cooperation at both domestic and international levels, define appropriate control measures, and improve forensic analysis and information-sharing systems.

6) Expand and enhance investigative capacity to address drug trafficking via online platforms and digital channels.

6. Interdicting Illicit Drugs, Precursors and Chemicals

1) Establish a systematic and integrated approach to drug interdiction that spans from outside the country, along border areas, to inland zones. This aims to enhance and strengthen the overall effectiveness of interdiction efforts.

2) Develop collaborative mechanisms with Mekong subregional countries to interdict illicit drugs, precursors, and chemicals. This includes intelligence sharing, joint investigations, expanded operational cooperation, and increased collaboration to the next level of government-to-government.

3) Implement targeted interdiction strategies in 29 high-priority districts across 11 provinces along Thailand's borders. This includes developing specific operational plans, establishing joint mechanisms and specialized task forces in areas with high drug inflows, and focusing on dismantling trafficking networks and disrupting financial flows along border zones, as well as strengthening control at maritime routes, ports, airports, and international postal services.

4) Intensify operations to combat the smuggling of narcotics through logistics and transportation networks.

Three-Phase Operational Framework (December 2023 – September 2024)

The Quick-Win Operation to Reduce the Severity of the Narcotics Problem, under the Government's urgent policy, was implemented in three phases:

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Phase I (December 2023 - February 2024): Establishment of systems, readiness preparation, and rapid deployment of operational mechanisms in priority areas.

Phase II (March - June 2024): Continuation of operations, focused on risk factor control and enhancing public participation.

Phase III (July - September 2024): Expansion of successful initiatives, outcome evaluation, and measurement of public satisfaction. Performance assessment was conducted throughout all three phases.

As part of this initiative, the Government has also introduced a Quick-Win programme on urgently reducing public suffering caused by drug users with psychiatric conditions. The operation prioritizes 30 provinces and 85 districts identified as high- and highest-surveillance areas. These areas underwent proactive screening (Re X-Ray) to identify and refer affected individuals for appropriate treatment based on severity:

- Red/Orange Groups (High & Highest Surveillance): Referred to designated treatment centers under the Ministry of Public Health.
- Yellow/Green Groups (General Surveillance & Users): Treated under the Community-Based Treatment (CBTx) model.

To support implementation, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been developed, and training provided to frontline practitioners like “Kru Kor” (Teacher A) and “Kru Khaw” (Teacher B) to ensure effective results aligned with Government policy.

Furthermore, under Section 5 (10) of the Narcotics Code, the Government officially declared three provinces (Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, and Nakhon Phanom) as high-priority areas requiring urgent drug prevention and suppression measures. This designation targets drug, precursor, and chemical interdiction efforts in key northern and northeastern border areas—marking the first-ever invocation of this legal provision under the current Code.

Policy Launch and Government Signaling

On Tuesday, 26 December 2023, the Prime Minister officially launched the One-Year Operation at the Bangkok International Trade and Exhibition Centre (BITEC). The event was attended by the Deputy Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers, Commanders-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Commissioner-General of the Royal Thai Police, Permanent Secretaries, Director-Generals, Provincial Governors, Regional Police Commanders, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Provincial Police Chiefs, Provincial Public Health Officers, Provincial Administrative Organization Presidents, and other relevant government officials. At the launch, the Prime Minister delivered 10 Key Drug Policy Directives, as follows:

1. Reduce the severity of drug-induced psychiatric problems and alleviate public suffering.
2. Decrease the number of drug users through comprehensive treatment and long-term resolution.
3. Implement a proactive international cooperation policy and strengthen border interdiction.
4. Intensify drug law enforcement by dismantling trafficking networks and organizational structures.
5. Prevent the emergence of new drug users through early intervention and education.

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6. Mobilize public awareness and encourage community participation in drug control efforts.
7. Foster innovation in drug problem-solving strategies.
8. Establish national targets and KPIs to reduce drug problems within four years, in line with the Government's proactive policy.
9. Empower local administrative organizations as key players in drug prevention and suppression.
10. Ensure unified, integrated management at all levels of implementation.

These ten policy directives represent a clear and decisive policy signal, serving as a critical enabling factor for translating the One-Year Operation to Reduce the Severity of the Narcotics Problem into concrete and practical implementation.



Since its official launch, the Quick-Win Operation has produced significant outcomes that reflect the Government's strong commitment and coordinated nationwide effort to reduce the severity of the narcotics problem. Building on this momentum, the assessment of the operation highlights measurable progress across all four Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

1. Psychiatric conditions: A total of 2,741 drug users and addicts with psychiatric symptoms in high-risk and highest-risk surveillance groups underwent threat assessments of psychiatric conditions using the Assist V.2, SMI-V, or OAS tools and received appropriate treatment.

2. Drug users and addicts: Screening was conducted for 112,921 individuals, of whom 104,846 entered treatment and rehabilitation programs. In addition, 1,932 out of 4,692 people who sought help from the Social Rehabilitation Center received support.

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3. Drug trafficking and high-risk areas: Law enforcement actions were taken against 376 of the 651 targeted drug trafficking networks. Preventive inspections were also carried out in 9,808 of the 11,781 designated high-risk areas.

4. Public perception and safety: Surveys showed positive results across all three areas: public satisfaction with drug prevention, suppression, and intervention efforts reached 83.50%, public confidence stood at 79.90%, and public safety of life and property reached an impressive 93.80%, underscoring the tangible impact of the Quick-Win Operation in creating safer communities nationwide.

ANNEX



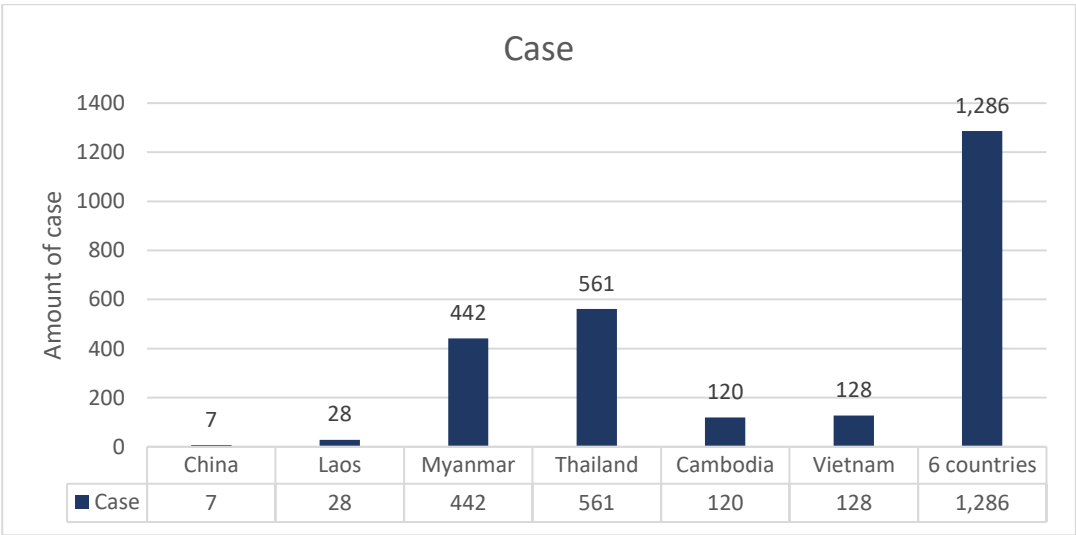
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List	(Between January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024)						
	China	Lao	Myanmar	Thai	Cambodia	Vietnam	Total
Narcotics arrest (case)	7	28	442	561	120	128	1,286
Offender (person)	22	38	959	736	371	228	2,354
Exhibit							
- Yaba (tablet)	902.300	67,562.900	139,762.872	774,714.399	1,010.149	1,506.157	985,458,777
- Ice (kg.)	70.20	4,642.00	18,656.80	20,875.86	4,946.22	461.83	49,652.91
- Cannabis (kg.)	-	802.00	2.00	325.90	135.64	3.06	1,268.60
- Heroin (kg.)	48.34	262.50	1,413.96	2,636.86	130.61	187.44	4,679.71
- Opium (kg.)	-	-	994.28	206.28	-	22.60	1,223.16
- Ketamine (kg.)	-	10.00	939.53	2,459.81	2,909.59	120.63	6,439.57
- Ecstasy (tablet)	-	610,000	54,855	301,384	7,506,690	231,033	8,703,962
- Caffeine (kg.)	-	1,500.00	23,975.15	-	-	-	25,475.15
- precursor (kg.)	-	-	12,400	-	-	-	12,400
- Chemical (kg.)	-	-	102.00	947,157.00	117.27	17,160.00	964,536.27
Psychotropic substances							
- Erimin 5 (tablet)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
- Methanol Nitric Acid (liter.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
- Happy Water (Kg.)	-	-	158.85	31.75	4.35	0.80	195.75
- Precursor (Kg.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

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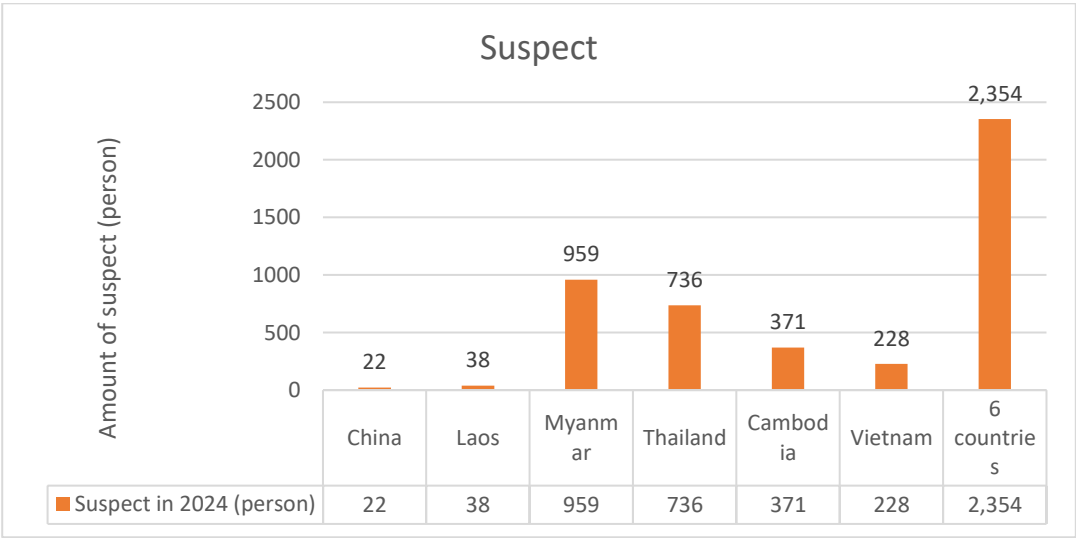
Drug seizure statistics, precursors and chemicals in 6 countries



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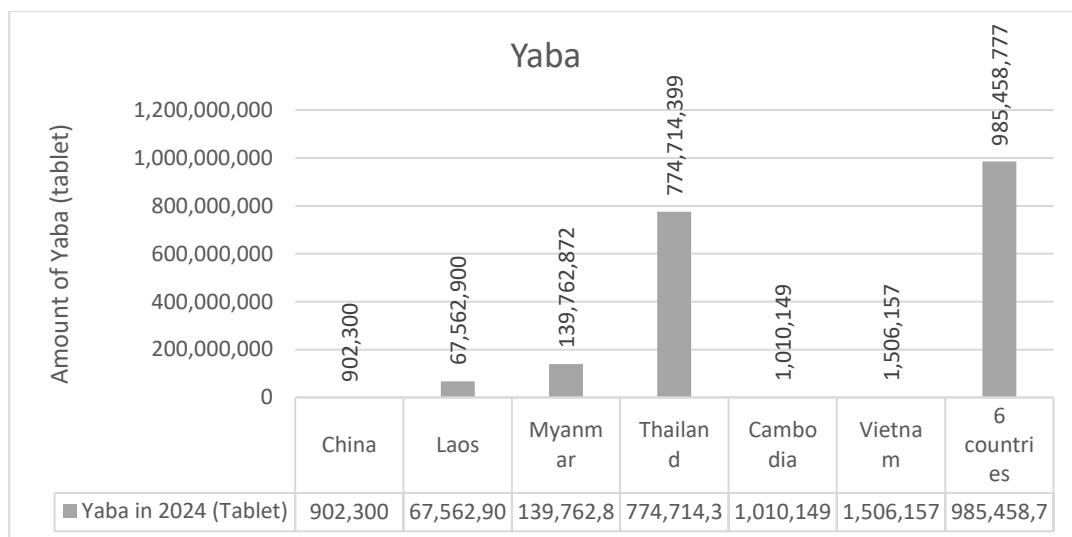


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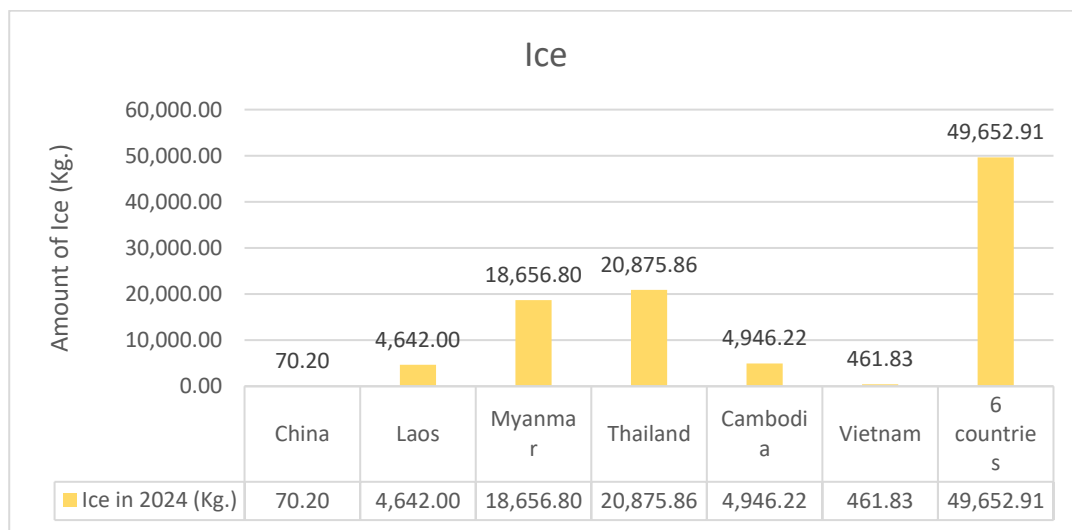
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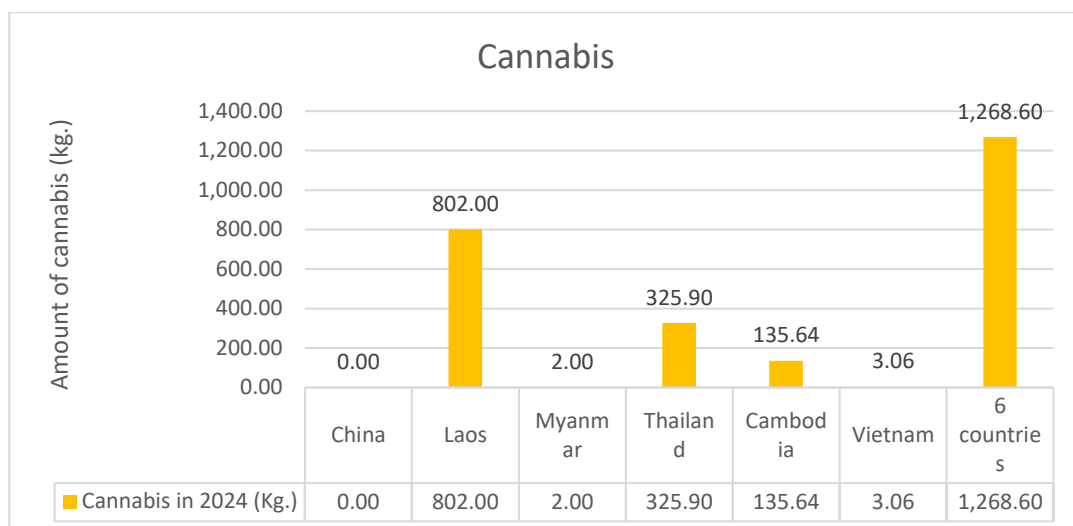


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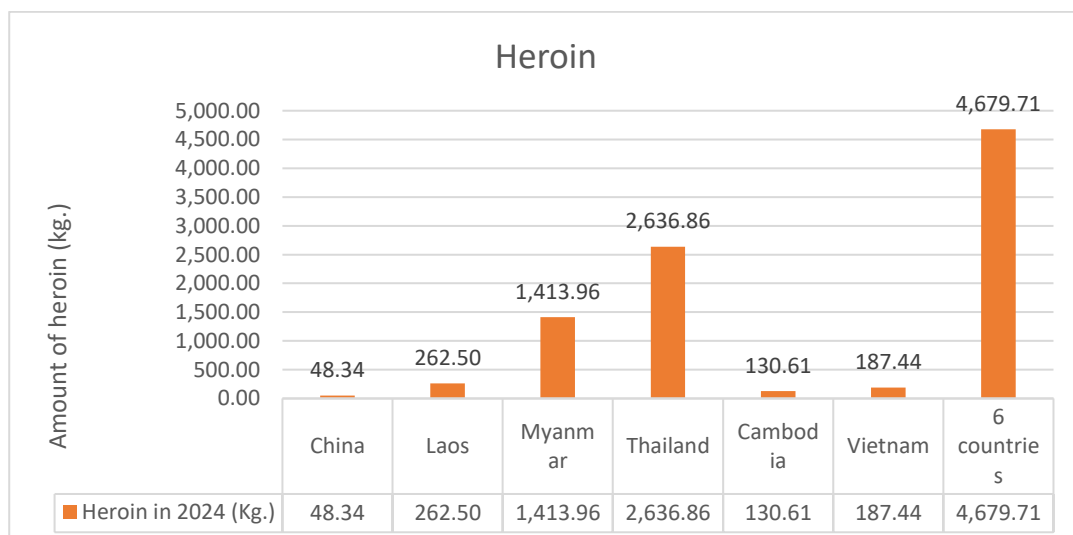
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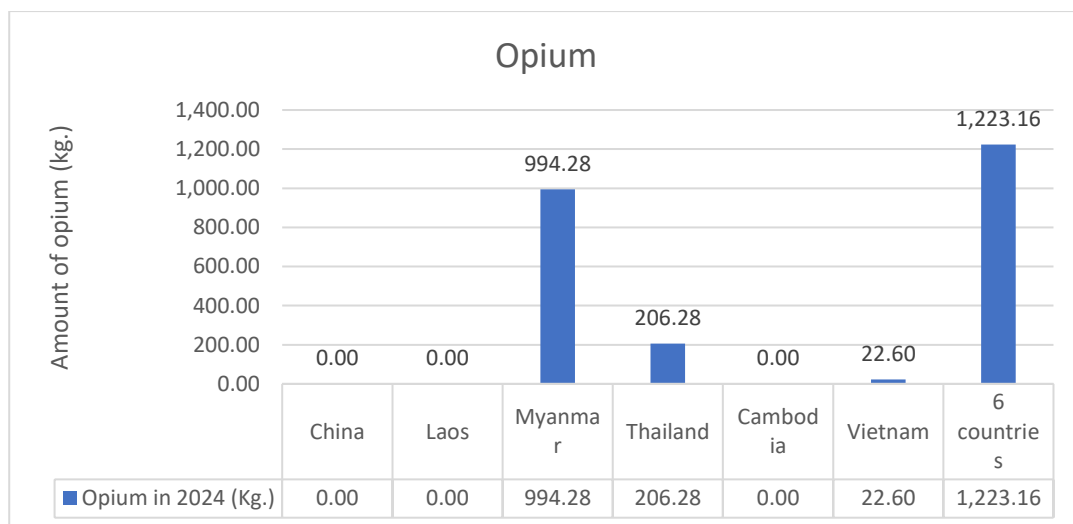


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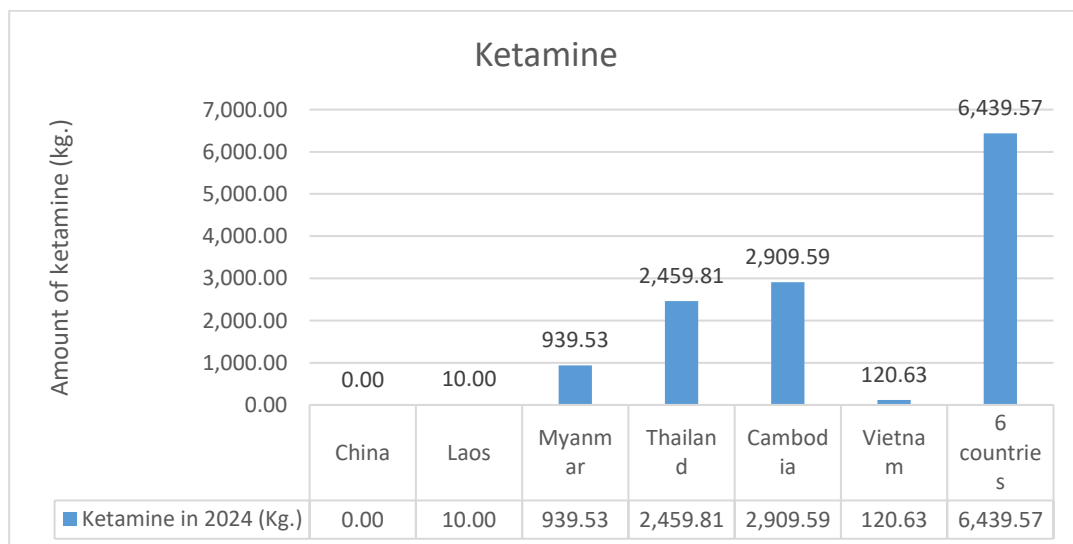
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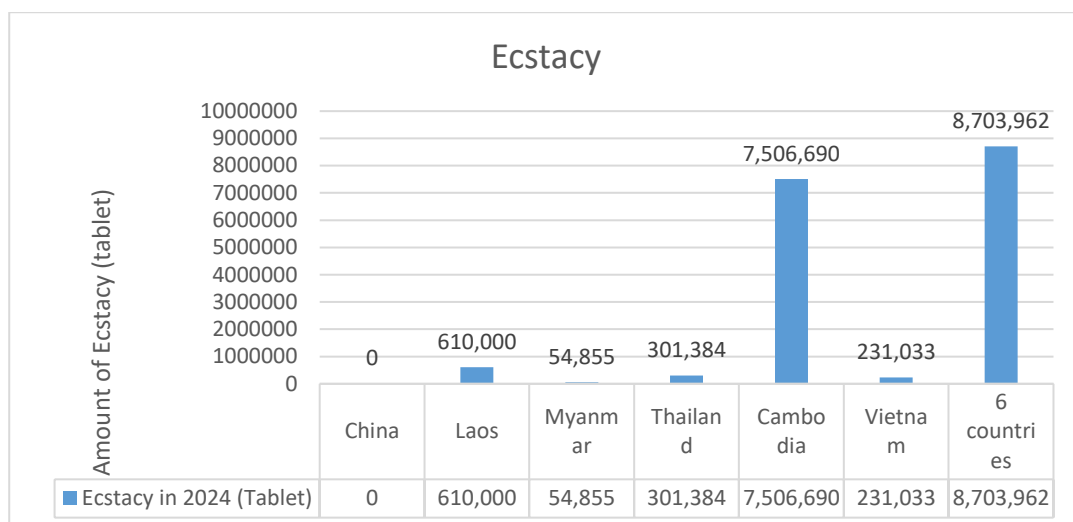


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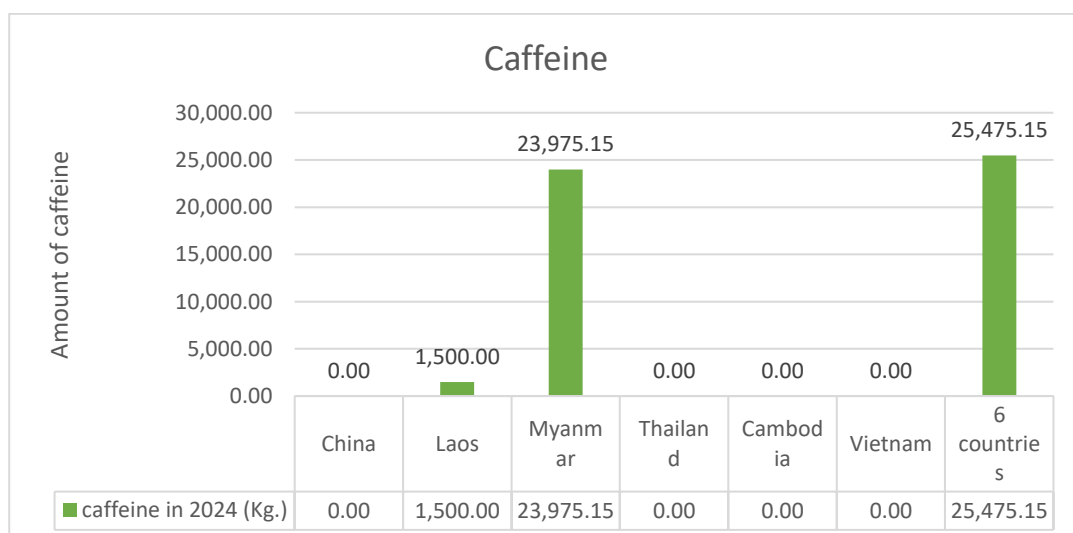
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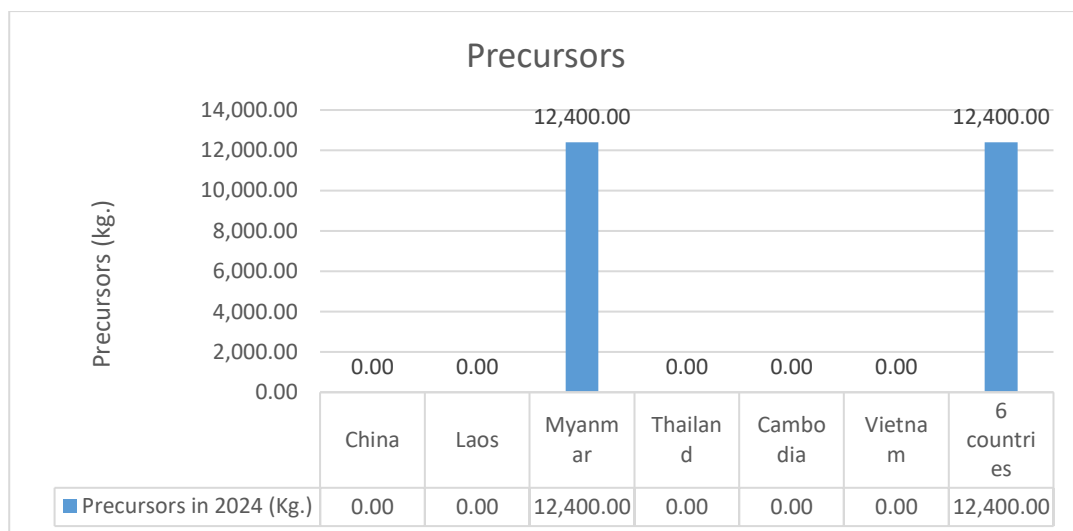


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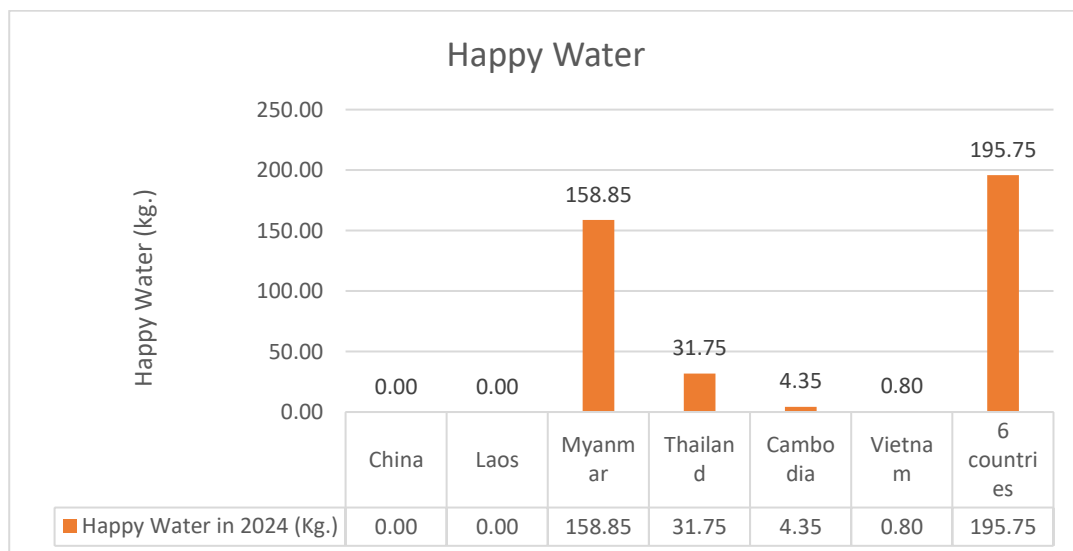
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