ASEAN DRUG MONITORING REPORT 2023

ASEAN-NARCO
ASEAN Narcotics Cooperation Center

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Edited by:
Manop Kanato
Rachanikorn Sarasiri
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August 2024

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Foreword

The ASEAN Drug Monitoring Report 2023 is the ninth publication of the ASEAN Drug Monitoring Network (ADMN) since the first publication of ADM Report of 2015 had been launched in 2016 at the 37th ASEAN Senior Official Meeting on Drug Matters (ASOD) hosted by Office of the Narcotics Control Board Thailand in Bangkok. The information provided in the annual ASEAN Drug Monitoring Report was obtained from timely detection of drug issues as well as research and policy development in each ASEAN Member State. The ADM annual report described drug use and trends as well as the emerging issues related to drugs; the report was available in print and on the ASEAN-NARCO website. The ADMN, a platform which is aimed at collecting information over time from existing and archival data systems of ASEAN Member States that reflect the situation of drug abuse, such as drug treatment and seizure reports as well as promoting the sharing of information on policy and drug control programme implementation operated by ASEAN Member States.

ASEAN Member States remained facing the seriousness of drug problem in terms of supply and demand. The emergence of synthetic drugs and New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), the polydrug use, unidentified substances and illicit precursor trafficking were alarming in 2023. The ADM Report 2023 presented the pattern of illicit drug use among ASEAN populations with the analysis of seven drug types which found to be significant drugs of abuse in the ASEAN region, namely ATS, opiates/opioids, cannabis, New Psychoactive Substance (NPS), cocaine, Central Nervous System depressant (CNS), hallucinogen as well as other substances which were mostly unidentified substances, caffeine and precursors. The top three drugs of abuse remained being ATS, opiates/opioids and cannabis.

ATS dominated drug use, treatment and trafficking in ASEAN region. In 2023, a significant number of drug users in ASEAN region received treatment totaling 671,387 persons; among these number, 231,710 ATS users were treated while opiates and opioids were the second most treated with 44,104 persons and 12,525 cannabis users were treated. ATS has variety of synthetic substances designed to stimulate the central nervous system such as amphetamine, methamphetamine both crystalline and tablet, MDMA or ecstasy; such substances had emerged as significant concerns in ASEAN region. Recent data revealed the increase in the use of ATS

across Southeast Asia. According to data in 2023, methamphetamine both crystalline and tablet forms were accounting for the majority of ATS users; crystalline meth-amphetamine users numbered 66,289 while tablet users were 156,994. In 2023, authorities seized 172,794.75 kilograms of ATS. This figure reflects the immense scale of ATS trafficking in ASEAN region.

The monitoring of drug situation in ASEAN region, therefore, is important like a warning to the emergence of new drugs and narcotic substances that happened in the region. The ASEAN Drug Monitoring Report 2023 revealed that there were 10 cases of polydrug users and 1,659 cases involving unclassified or unidentified substances. The 1,659 unclassified or unidentified substances cases was considered large volume of emerging drugs which underscored a significant challenge in the realm of drug abuse. Polydrug and unidentified substance use carry significant health risks. The combination of multiple drugs can lead to severe, unpredictable health outcomes. At the same time, unidentified substances may include new psychoactive substances (NPS) that are often more dangerous than traditional drugs. The unidentified substances were the substances that were not readily identified or classified during case reporting. The issues on polydrug use and unidentified substances use should be monitored closely by ASEAN Member States and required effective public health strategy as well as a multifaceted approach, including enhanced identification capability, robust regulatory frameworks, improved data collection, public awareness campaign and strengthened regional cooperation to address the issues which will help the ASEAN Member States to combat more effectively the danger of polydrug use and unidentified substances and to ensure a safer and healthier future for their populations. In 2023, significant quantities of unidentified substances were seized in ASEAN region. The data categorized these seizures into precursors, caffeine, multiple drugs and unclassified substances. Law enforcement agencies should have advanced tools and training to detect and classify new and emerging substances.

The ADMN Report System was improved and adjusted according to comments and suggestions of ADMN teams of ASEAN Member States during the ASEAN Drug Monitoring Network (ADMN) Meetings. The 16th ADMN Meeting was hosted on line via video conference on 7 March 2024 by the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control (CCDAC) of Myanmar. The meetings shared the drug situation of each ASEAN Member States and exchange views for the formulation of the ADM Report of 2023. The meeting followed up the progress made for the data key-in in the ADM Report System and exchanged views for the adjustment of the ADM Report System. The meeting agreed on the ADMN

Workplan for 2024-2025. Thailand hosted the 17th ADMN Meeting on line via video conference on 17 July 2023 which was the second meeting of the year 2024 to consider the relevant data for the 6 month-period of January to June 2024 and the draft ADMN Report 2023. The meeting also discussed the problem or errors found when keying in the data into the ADM Report System. The ADM Report 2023 was scheduled to be launched at the 48th ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Drug Matters hosted by the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) of the Philippines on 2-4 October 2024 in Manila.

Thailand as the coordinator and facilitator of the ASEAN-NARCO and ADMN would like to thank the ADMN Teams of the ASEAN Member States, ASOD Leaders, ASEAN Secretariat and all stake holders for the hard efforts and contribution to the success of the formulation of the ADM Report 2023 and for the continuity of the ADMN work for the benefit of ASEAN Member States. The special thanks also go to Thailand Substance Abuse Academic Network led by Assc.Prof. Manop Kanato, Ph.D and his team, Office of the Narcotics Control Board, ASEAN-NARCO for the support rendered to the success of the ADM Report System and the formulation of the ADM Report 2023.

The ADMN Team would also like to thank the Dangerous Drugs Board of the Philippines for organizing the launch of the ADM Report of 2023 on 3 October 2024 at the 48th ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Drug Matters (ASOD) and for the kind offer to host the 18th ADMN Meeting in the first half of 2025.

The ADMN is the pride of ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters, the ADMN Team hoped that the ASEAN Member States would make use of the ADM Report of 2023 for monitoring of the emergence of drugs of abuse in the ASEAN region and in each ASEAN Member States and looked forward to strengthening the ADMN through the collaborative efforts and spirit of partnership of ASEAN.

"Securing ASEAN Communities Against Illicit Drugs"

ASEAN Drug Monitoring Team
October 2024

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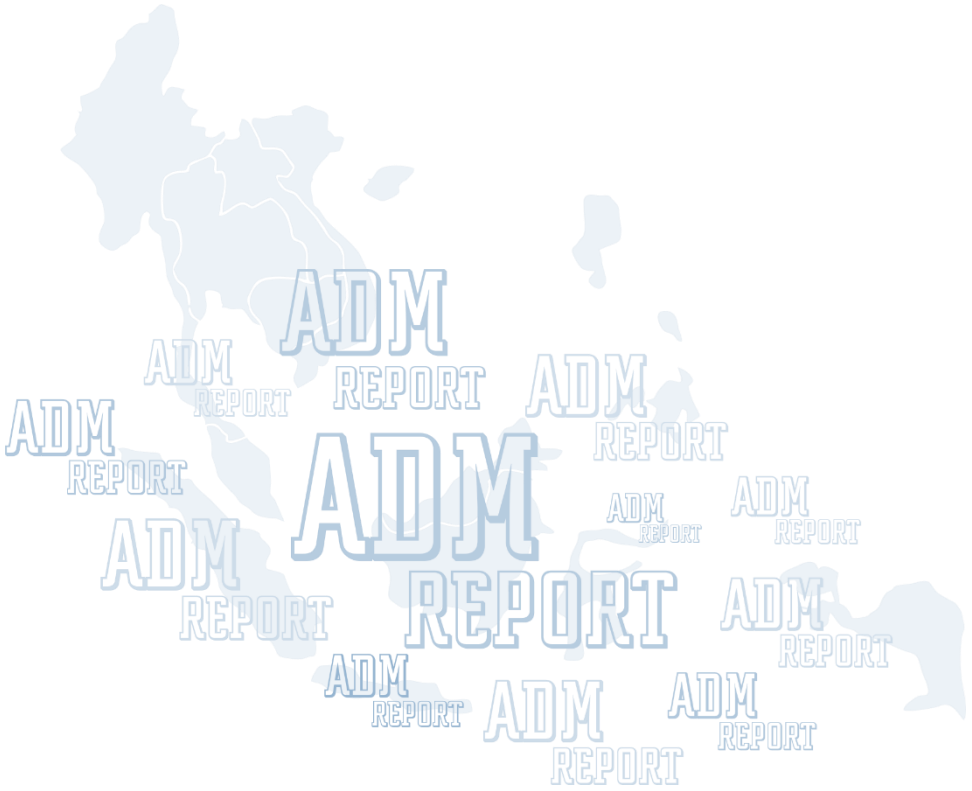
CHAPTER 1

Overview of ASEAN Drug Trends and Patterns



1. BACKGROUND

Southeast Asia is located south of China, east of India, and northwest of Australia. It is divided into two subregions: Mainland Southeast Asia and Maritime Southeast Asia. The mainland includes Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam, while the maritime region comprises Brunei, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Timor-Leste, and New Guinea.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a regional organization that promotes economic, political, and security cooperation among its ten members: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Established in 1967, ASEAN launched the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 to enhance regional integration and competitiveness through security, socio-cultural, and economic integration. This initiative has boosted regional economic growth by creating a free trade area, improving transportation networks, and promoting the free movement of goods, services, capital, investment, and labor, aiming to develop a drug-free region.

To address drug-related issues, ASEAN convenes the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD) to collaborate on regional drug abuse resolution in five key areas: law enforcement, preventive drug education, treatment and rehabilitation, research, and alternative development. ASOD also facilitates information sharing on drug syndicates and suspect watch lists. International assistance supports drug analysis capabilities, intelligence, and investigation efforts. The ASEAN Narcotics Cooperation Center (ASEAN-NARCO) is a hub for preventive and suppressive measures, proactively addressing drug abuse across ASEAN countries.

In June 2015, the ASEAN Drug Monitoring Network (ADMN) was established as an ASEAN-NARCO initiative, supported by Thailand's Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB). ADMN provides a platform for sharing information, analyzing regional drug situations, and identifying emerging drug problems. The annual ASEAN Drug Monitoring (ADM) Report, available in print and on the ASEAN-NARCO website, presents national perspectives and innovative approaches to drug monitoring, aiding in policy development and research.

ADMN collects data from existing and archival sources, reflecting drug abuse situations through treatment and arrest reports. This data helps identify new drug abuse patterns and their spread across member states, even though it does not provide population-based incidence or prevalence rates. Since 2015, ADMN has used a questionnaire to gather drug demand and supply data, creating a collaborative database. This data analysis offers early warnings of new drug patterns and insights into spatial drug abuse trends, as reflected in the first ADM Report of 2015 and subsequent reports available on the ASEAN-NARCO website.

The ASEAN Drug Monitoring Report 2021 provides a comprehensive overview of ASEAN's latest drug situation by focusing on the demand and supply of illicit drugs encountered in the region. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the drug situation in ASEAN. Chapter 2 presents drugs of concern in ASEAN, namely Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS), Opiates/Opioids, Cannabis, New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), Cocaine, Central Nervous System (CNS) depressants, Hallucinogens, and others. Chapter 3 focuses on ASEAN Member States' national drug situation reports. Chapter 4 introduces research knowledge and innovations undertaken by the Member States, and Chapter 5 highlights ASEAN's best practices in policy and implementation programs.

2. POPULATION

As of 2023, ASEAN's population exceeds 680 million, making it one of the most populous regions in the world. The overall annual population growth rate for the ASEAN region is approximately 1.1% (World Bank, 2023). However, this average masks significant differences among individual member states. Countries like the Philippines and Indonesia experience relatively high growth rates due to their large young populations. At the same time, Thailand and Singapore see slower growth rates, reflecting their more advanced stages of demographic transition (United Nations, 2023). The youthful demographic remains a significant feature of several ASEAN countries, with over 30% of the population in nations like the Philippines under 15. This youth bulge presents both opportunities for economic growth and challenges in terms of providing adequate education, employment, and healthcare (ASEAN Secretariat, 2022).

ASEAN is experiencing rapid urbanization, with more than half its population living in urban areas. The urbanization rate is particularly high in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam, driven by rural-to-urban migration as people move to cities for better employment opportunities and living standards (World Bank, 2023). Urbanization brings significant challenges, including the need for improved infrastructure, housing, and public services. Cities in ASEAN are grappling with issues such as traffic congestion, pollution, and informal settlements. The rapid pace of urbanization requires robust urban planning and sustainable development strategies to ensure that cities can accommodate growing populations without compromising quality of life (Asian Development Bank, 2023).

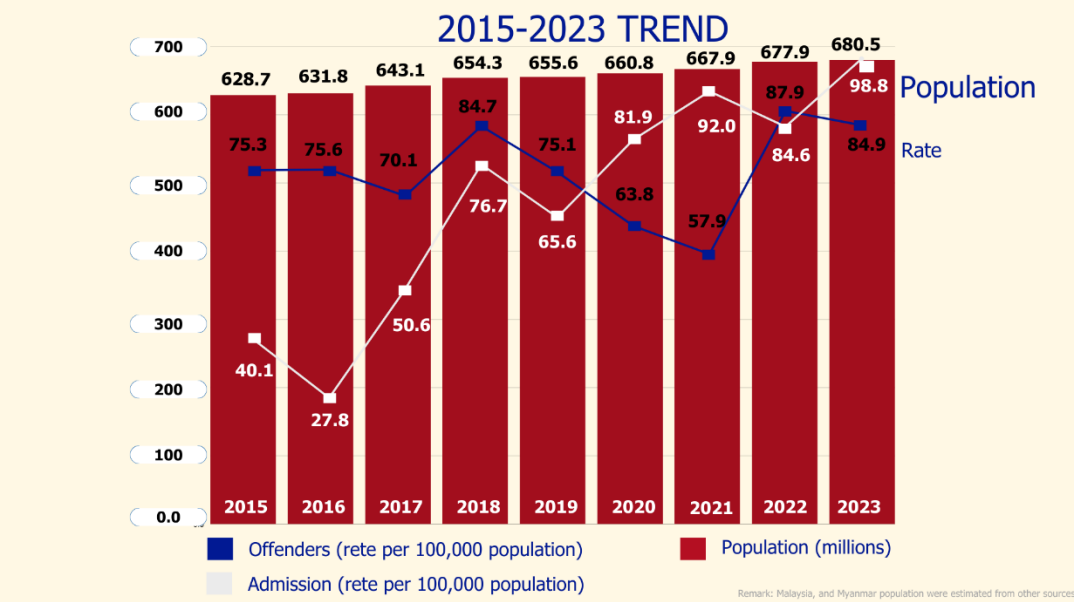


Figure 1: Population and General Trends in ASEAN

3. SITUATION

The COVID-19 pandemic broke out in late 2019, leading the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare it a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. The pandemic ended in 2022, impacting the drug situation with direct and indirect effects on ASEAN member states' drug control. Since prevalence data across the ASEAN Member States are unavailable, treatment data reflects the drug users' situation (WHO, 2020).

In 2023, 98.8 drug users per 100,000 population in ASEAN received treatment, marking a 14.4% increase from the previous year. This figure represents a significant escalation compared to historical data. From 2015 to 2023, the number of treated drug users surged by 166.5%, illustrating a long-term upward trend that reflects the growing challenge of drug abuse in the region.

The increase in treatment numbers is common across all years. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual increase rate was 17.6%. However, during the pandemic, this rate slowed to 10.6% per annum. This deceleration can be attributed to the disruption of healthcare services, lockdowns, and the redirection of resources to combat the pandemic, which affected the accessibility and delivery of drug treatment services.

A closer examination of the types of drugs used by individuals receiving treatment reveals that Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS) are the predominant substance, accounting for over three-

quarters of the treated population. This prevalence highlights ATS's significant challenge to public health and law enforcement in ASEAN.

Although opium cultivation in the Golden Triangle is recognizable, opiates/opioids constitute 15% of those treated, underscoring the persistent issue of opioid abuse, which has global resonance due to its severe health implications and the potential for overdose. Cannabis users, while comprising a smaller portion at 4.2%, still represent a notable fraction of the drug-using population, indicating the widespread nature of this substance.

In 2023, a significant number of drug users in the ASEAN region received treatment, totaling 672,117 individuals. The treatment rates per 100,000 population in various countries reveal vital trends and variations.

The data also indicates an overall increase in the number of individuals receiving treatment compared to 2022 in most ASEAN countries. This upward trend reflects a growing recognition of the importance of treating drug abuse and possibly the implementation of more effective treatment programs or policies.

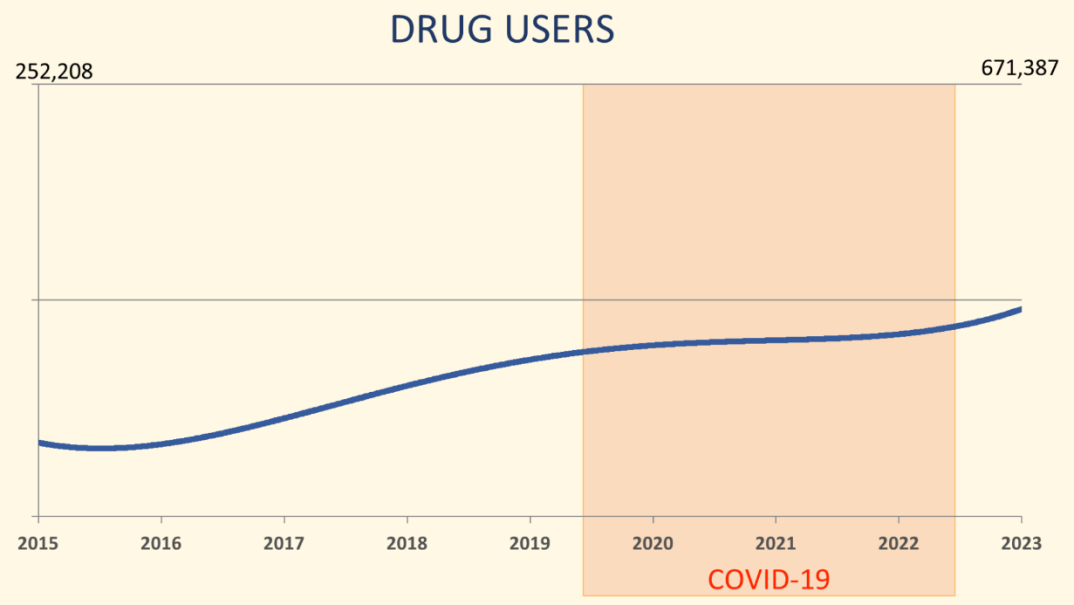


Figure 2: drug users' Trends in ASEAN

4. DRUG USE TRENDS

Drug abuse remains a critical public health issue impacting individuals and societies worldwide. Trends in drug usage are essential for developing effective intervention strategies and policies. The data on drug usage trends from 2017 to 2021 across

various categories, including ATS (Amphetamine-Type Stimulants), Opiates /Opioids, Cannabis, NPS (New Psychoactive Substances), Cocaine, CNS (Central Nervous System) depressants, Hallucinogens, and other drugs, provides insights into shifting consumption patterns, highlighting fundamental changes and persistent issues

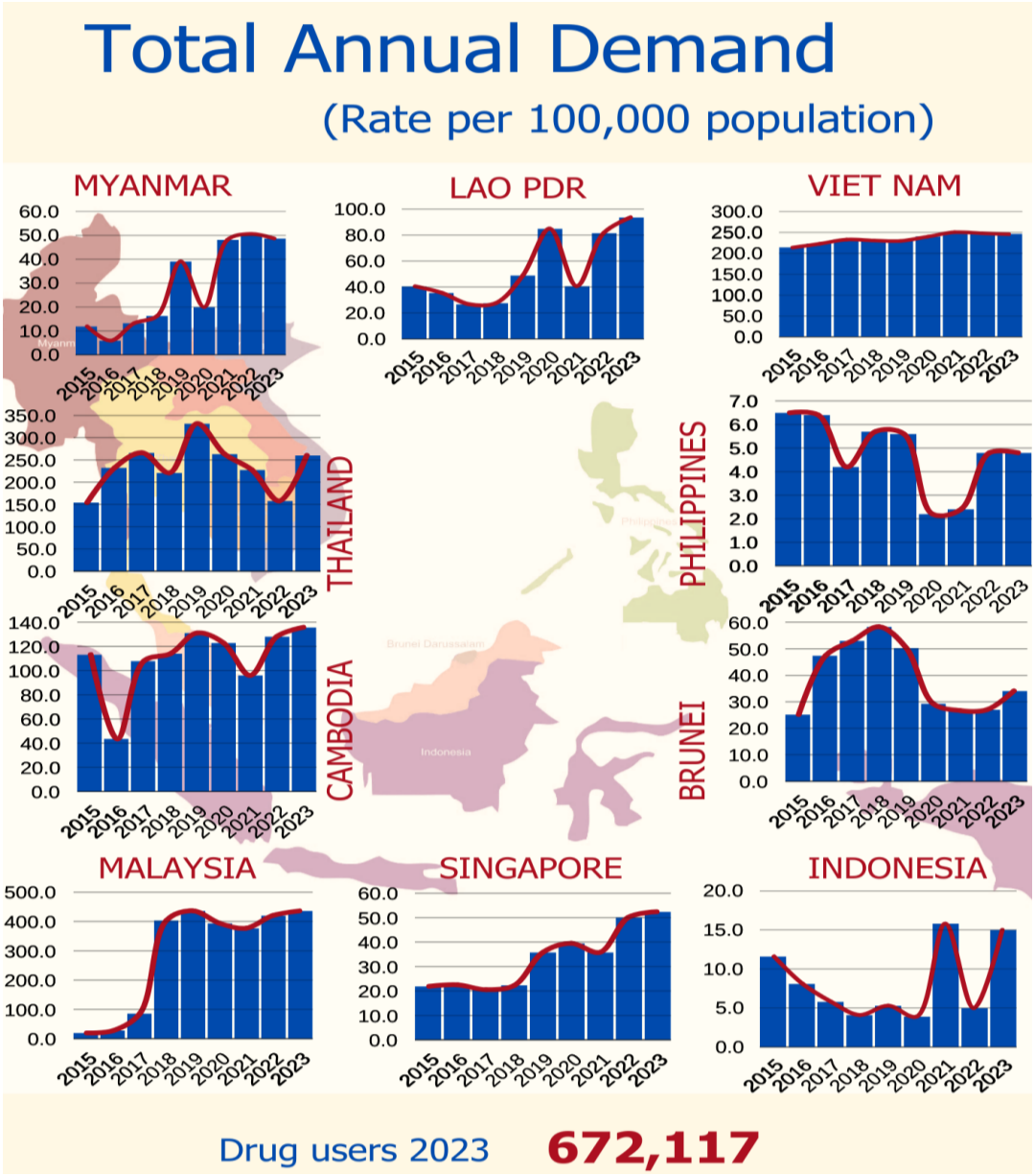


Figure 3: Drug users under treatment by the ASEAN Member States in 2023

The trend in opiate/opioid usage reveals a concerning rise, especially in 2019 and 2021. The opioid crisis, particularly in the United States, may be reflected in these numbers, with increased misuse of prescription opioids, heroin, and synthetic opioids like fentanyl. The spike in 2019 might be linked to heightened awareness and reporting alongside increased use. The data underscores the ongoing challenge of addressing opioid addiction and the necessity for continued public health efforts to mitigate this crisis.

Cannabis usage has remained relatively stable over the analyzed period, with slight year-to-year variations. The stable trend might reflect the widespread acceptance and legalization of cannabis in various regions, normalizing its usage. However, the relatively steady numbers also suggest that cannabis continues to be a popular drug of choice without significant fluctuations in user numbers despite legal and social changes.

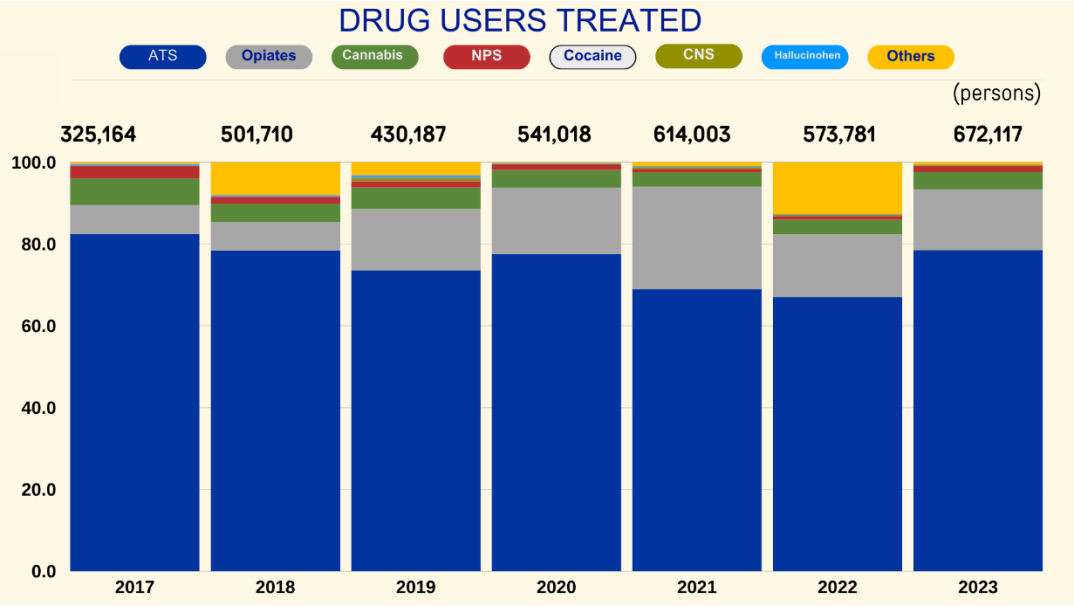


Figure 4: Drug users' treated in ASEAN 2022

5. DRUG TRAFFICKING TRENDS

Drug trafficking remains a significant global challenge with far-reaching implications for public health, safety, and security. Trends in drug trafficking can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of law enforcement, changes in drug production and distribution networks, and the evolving dynamics of the illicit drug trade. The data on drug trafficking cases,

offenders, and seizures from 2017 to 2023 highlight critical changes and implications.

From 2017 to 2020, there was a consistent decline in the number of trafficking cases, suggesting a possible reduction in activities or improvements in enforcement strategies. This period saw intensified efforts to dismantle drug networks, enhanced international cooperation, or effective preventive measures. In 2021, the cases decreased to the lowest in the observed period. However, 2022 marked a significant increase in trafficking cases, followed by a decrease in 2023. The surge in 2022 could be attributed to shifts in drug trafficking routes, increased production of illicit drugs, or changes in enforcement priorities. The subsequent decline in 2023 may indicate a temporary spike rather than a sustained increase in activities.

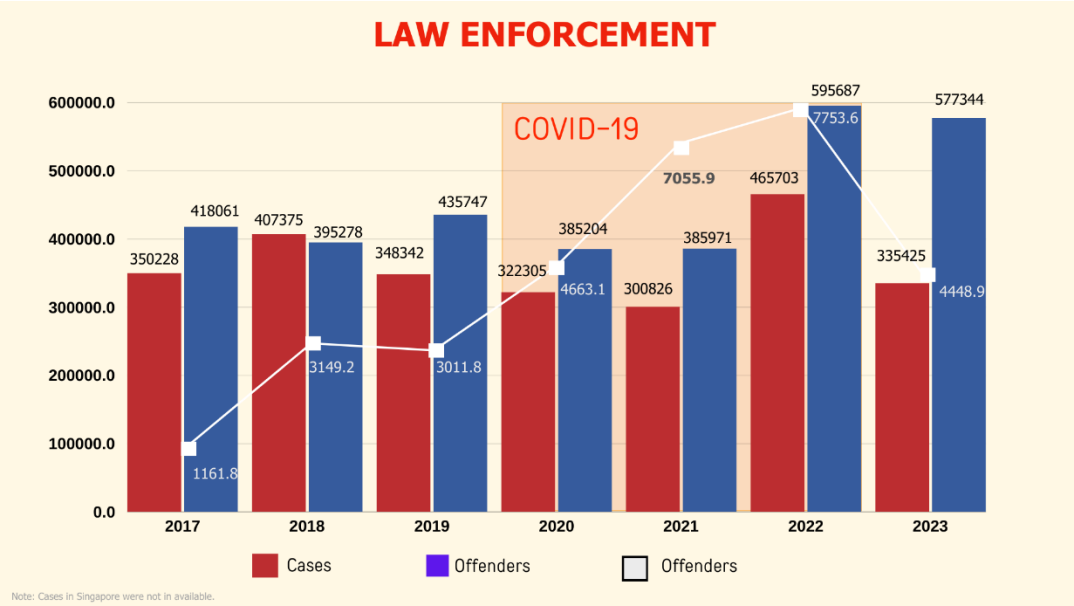


Figure 5:Law enforcement trend in ASEAN

The number of drug trafficking offenders shows a somewhat different pattern, with fluctuations and a general downward trend from 2017 to 2020. This trend might reflect successful enforcement actions targeting major organizations, leading to fewer recorded offenders. In 2021, there was a slight increase in the number of offenders, followed by a significant rise in 2022. This spike could be associated with increased law enforcement activities or a resurgence in operations. The slight decline in 2023 suggests that the peak in 2022 may have been an anomaly driven by specific operations or a temporary increase in activities.

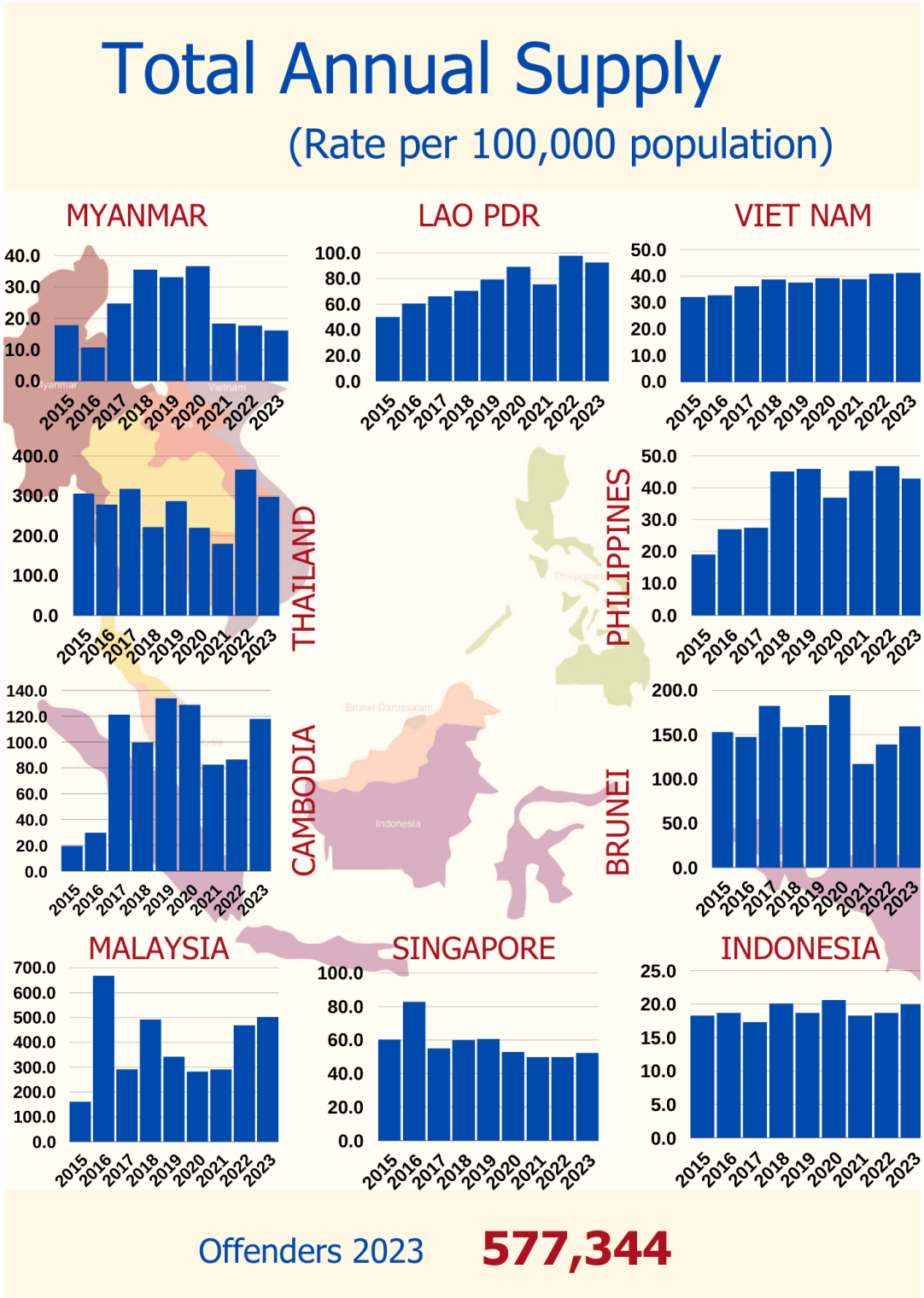


Figure 6: trend of Offender Rates by the ASEAN Member States

The quantity of drug seizures measured in tons presents a more dramatic picture. From 2017 to 2020, there were significant increases in seizures, particularly in 2018 and 2020. These peaks indicate substantial efforts by law enforcement agencies to intercept large quantities of illicit drugs, possibly through improved intelligence, international cooperation, or primary operations against trafficking networks. The upward trend continued in 2021, with an even more dramatic increase in 2022, reaching the highest level of seizures recorded. This peak underscores the scale of drug production and trafficking activities during this period. However, in 2023, there was a noticeable reduction in seizures. This decline might suggest a temporary decrease in activities, successful disruption of significant supply chains, or shifts in trafficking methods to evade detection.

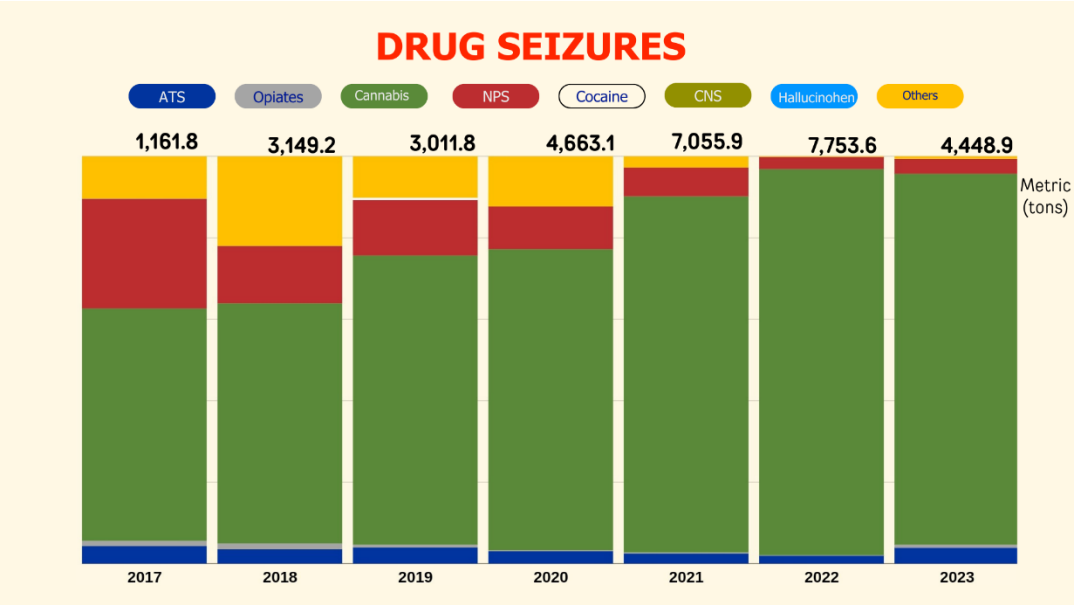


Figure 7:Drug seizures in ASEAN 2023

6. FOREIGN TRAFFICKERS

Drug trafficking is a global issue that transcends national borders, involving networks and individuals from various regions. Analyzing trends in foreign traffickers can provide insights into the shifting dynamics of the illicit drug trade and the effectiveness of international law enforcement efforts. The data on foreign traffickers from different regions, including Africa, ASEAN, Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania, and South America, from 2017 to 2021, highlights these shifts.

The data on traffickers from Africa shows a decreasing trend from 2017 to 2021. The significant drop in 2018 and continued reduction in subsequent years indicate improved law enforcement and international cooperation targeting African networks. The decline could also reflect route changes, with traffickers possibly avoiding Africa due to heightened enforcement activities. The trend suggests that efforts to combat drug trafficking in Africa are yielding positive results, but continuous vigilance is necessary to sustain these gains.

The number of traffickers from the ASEAN region shows a significant spike in 2020, followed by a sharp decline in 2021. The spike in 2020 could be attributed to increased drug production and trafficking activities in the region, possibly exacerbated by socio-economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The subsequent decline in 2021 suggests effective crackdowns by law enforcement agencies. This trend highlights the dynamic nature of drug trafficking in ASEAN and the need for adaptive strategies to address emerging challenges.

There is a steady increase in the number of traffickers from Asia, peaking in 2020, with a slight decrease in 2021. The rising trend indicates that Asia remains a significant source of activity. The peak in 2020 may be linked to increased production and distribution of synthetic drugs, particularly in countries with established manufacturing capabilities. The slight decrease in 2021 suggests ongoing enforcement efforts but also points to the persistent challenges in controlling activities from Asia. A coordinated international approach is essential to address the complexities of trafficking in this region.

The trend for traffickers from Europe shows a declining pattern over the years, with a noticeable drop in 2021. This decline may reflect successful law enforcement operations targeting European networks and enhanced international cooperation. The number reduction could also be due to route changes, with traffickers opting for less monitored pathways. The data indicates progress in combating European activities, but continued efforts are necessary to adapt to evolving methods.

The number of traffickers from North America is relatively low and shows slight fluctuations but remains consistently low over the years. This stability suggests North America is not a significant source of foreign traffickers compared to other regions. The

low numbers could be due to effective domestic enforcement measures and the region's focus on controlling distribution networks within its borders. While the situation appears stable, ongoing monitoring and enforcement are crucial to prevent any potential activity rise.

Similar to North America, the number of traffickers from Oceania is low and stable, with slight fluctuations. The data indicates that Oceania is not a significant contributor to foreign trafficking. The stability in numbers may result from practical regional enforcement efforts and the geographic isolation of the region, which can act as a natural barrier to large-scale trafficking. Maintaining strong enforcement measures is essential to ensure that Oceania remains a minor player in global drug trafficking.

The number of traffickers from South America is minimal and shows a decreasing trend over the years. This decline suggests successful enforcement actions targeting South American networks and route shifts. The low numbers reflect the focus on disrupting significant organizations in South America known for producing and exporting large quantities of cocaine and other illicit drugs. Continued international collaboration is vital to sustain these efforts and address emerging threats.

The total number of foreign traffickers shows a significant increase in 2020, followed by a sharp decline in 2021. The spike in 2020 could be linked to increased production and trafficking activities globally, influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic's socioeconomic impacts. The subsequent decline in 2021 suggests effective global enforcement measures and a possible temporary network disruption. This trend underscores the importance of adaptive and coordinated international strategies to combat trafficking effectively

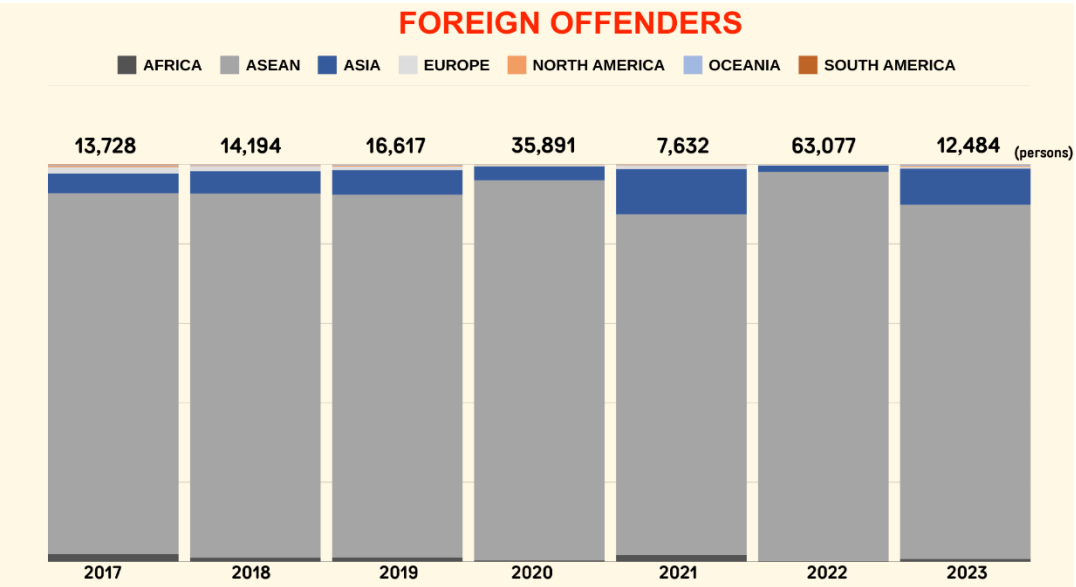


Figure 8:Foreign Offenders

7. REGIONAL COOPERATION

ASEAN Member States have faced similar illicit drug problems, such as opium poppy cultivation, heroin production, and methamphetamine manufacturing in the Golden Triangle. Thailand, Myanmar, and Lao PDR have collaborated with China in the "Safe Mekong Operation" since 2013, aiming to suppress drug trafficking along the Mekong River and the nearby Golden Triangle area. In 2015, the international law enforcement initiative expanded to include Vietnam and Cambodia.

The "Safe Mekong Operation" emphasizes intelligence exchange, joint investigations, and operations to intercept essential chemicals and precursors, resulting in effective suppression within the Golden Triangle and related areas. This cooperation has led to increased seizures of powerful drugs and precursors in a short time.

The SAFE-Mekong Operation is a crucial initiative aimed at combating trafficking in the Mekong region, a significant area for the production and trafficking of illicit drugs. This section analyzes trends in cases, offenders, and drug seizures (methamphetamine tablets, methamphetamine crystal, and heroin) from 2015 to 2023, providing insights into the effectiveness of enforcement efforts, the evolving dynamics of trafficking, and ongoing challenges in the region.

The number of cases recorded in the SAFE-Mekong Operation shows significant fluctuations over the years, with a peak in 2016 followed by a general decline and another rise in 2023. The spike in 2016 may reflect intensified efforts to crack down on networks, driven by increased resources or heightened international cooperation. The decline in subsequent years suggests a temporary reduction in activities or a shift in enforcement focus. The rise in 2023 indicates a resurgence in activities or renewed enforcement efforts, highlighting the need for sustained vigilance and adaptive strategies.

The trend in the number of offenders apprehended during the SAFE-Mekong Operation shows a substantial increase, peaking in 2020. This peak suggests significant success in identifying and capturing individuals involved in trafficking, possibly due to enhanced intelligence, improved coordination among enforcement agencies, and increased operational intensity. The decline in offenders after 2020, while still high compared to earlier years, may indicate a temporary disruption in networks or a shift in strategies to evade capture. The high numbers underscore the ongoing challenge of dismantling complex organizations and the importance of continuous enforcement efforts.

Regarding seizures in the SAFE-Mekong operation, the seizure of methamphetamine tablets (measured in units of ten million tablets) shows a dramatic

increase from 2018 onwards, peaking in 2023. This trend reflects the growing production and trafficking of methamphetamine in the region, driven by high demand and the profitability of the trade. The sharp rise in seizures indicates successful interdiction efforts but also underscores the scale of the challenge. The increasing availability of methamphetamine tablets poses significant public health risks and highlights the need for comprehensive strategies, including prevention, treatment, and international collaboration, to reduce supply and demand.

The seizure of methamphetamine crystal (measured in tons) also shows an increasing trend, with notable peaks in 2020 and 2023. The rise in seizures reflects the proliferation of methamphetamine production facilities and trafficking routes in the Mekong region. The significant peaks suggest periods of intensified enforcement operations, possibly targeting major production hubs and trafficking corridors. The data underscores the importance of sustained and coordinated efforts to disrupt the supply chains of methamphetamine and address the root causes of its production and distribution.

The seizure of heroin (measured in tons) exhibits fluctuations, with significant peaks in 2016 and 2021 and a notable drop in 2022. The peaks in seizures indicate successful enforcement actions during these periods, possibly driven by targeted operations against known heroin networks. The fluctuations suggest variability in production levels, trafficking routes, and enforcement intensity. The drop in 2022 may reflect a temporary reduction in activities or a shift in focus towards other drugs. The data highlights the ongoing challenges in combating heroin trafficking and the need for adaptive strategies to respond to changes in the trafficking landscape.

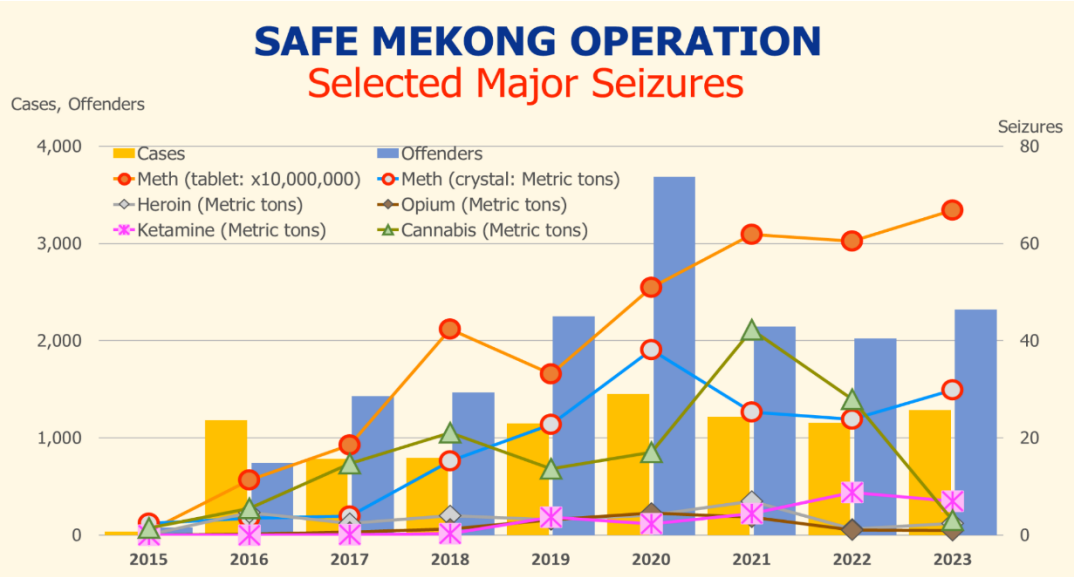


Figure 9:Arrests and srizures by safe Mekong Operation

8. CONCLUSION

The drug situation in Southeast Asia, particularly within the ASEAN region, highlights the complex and evolving nature of trafficking and abuse. Through various initiatives, such as the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD) and the SAFE-Mekong Operation, significant efforts are being made to address these challenges.

From 2015 to 2023, there has been a noticeable increase in the treatment of drug users across the ASEAN region, reflecting the growing challenge of abuse. The data on trafficking cases, offenders, and seizures indicates fluctuating trends that underscore the dynamic and persistent threat posed by illicit drug activities. The rising number of methamphetamine seizures, both in tablet and crystal form, signals an increasing production and trafficking of this substance. In contrast, fluctuations in heroin seizures reveal the ongoing challenges in controlling this aspect of the trade.

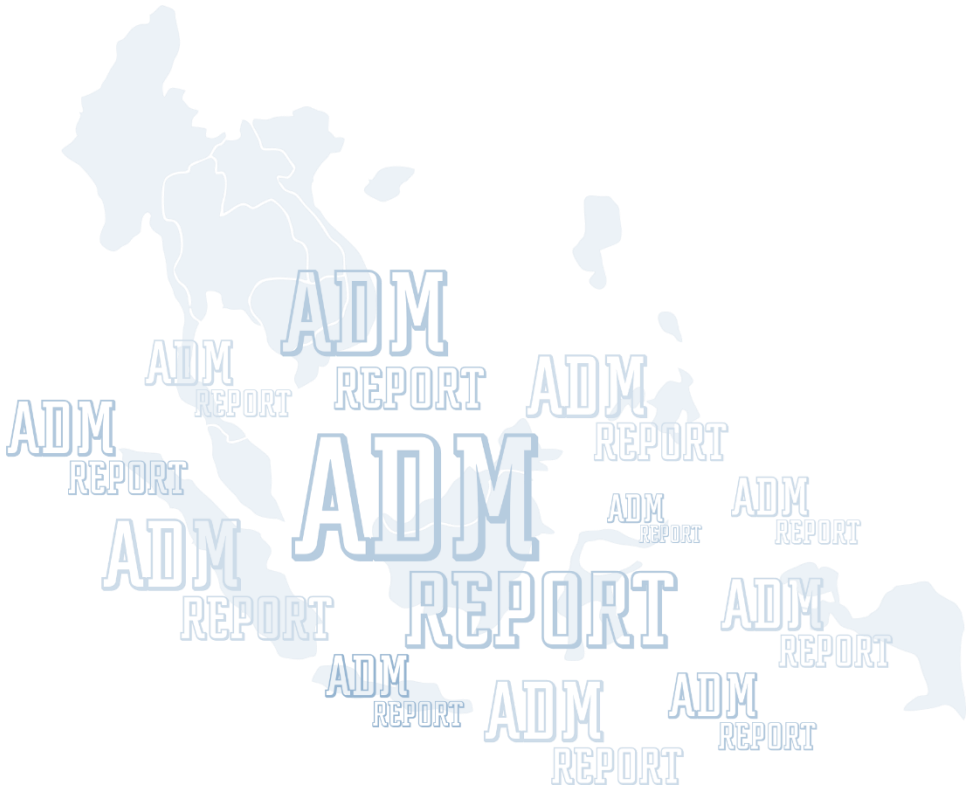
The data also points to the importance of continuous adaptive and coordinated enforcement efforts. Effective responses to trafficking require a multifaceted approach, including robust law enforcement, preventive measures, international cooperation, and strategies to address the socio-economic factors driving the illicit drug trade.

Urbanization and demographic changes in ASEAN present both opportunities and challenges. Rapid urbanization necessitates improved infrastructure and public services, while a youthful demographic presents potential for economic growth but also demands education, employment, and healthcare.

In conclusion, to effectively combat trafficking and abuse in Southeast Asia, it is crucial to maintain and enhance international cooperation, invest in intelligence and technology, and implement comprehensive strategies addressing both supply and demand. Policymakers and law enforcement agencies must continuously adapt to the changing dynamics of trafficking and abuse to mitigate their impact on society and contribute to regional and global security. The combined efforts of ASEAN member states, supported by international partners, are essential in creating a safer, drug-free region.

CHAPTER 2

Major Drug problems in ASEAN



OVERVIEW

Archaeological evidence indicates that betel nut usage dates back to at least 2660 B.C. in Southeast Asia. One notable site is Duyong Cave on Palawan Island in the Philippines, where researchers found human teeth stained with the characteristic reddish color of betel nut chewing in a burial pit. Similar findings have been made at the Bronze Age site of Nui Nap in Vietnam, with human remains dating between 2400 and 2000 B.C. also showing the same reddish stains on teeth. These discoveries suggest that betel nut chewing was widespread in prehistoric Southeast Asia, likely for its psychoactive effects and aesthetic reasons [Guerra-Doce E., 2021].

Betel nut use in prehistoric Southeast Asia underscores its significance in the daily lives of ancient communities. The stimulant and euphoric properties of betel nut would have made it a valuable commodity for social and ritualistic purposes. In many Southeast Asian cultures, betel nut chewing is a traditional practice that fosters social bonds and is often associated with hospitality and ceremonial occasions. The aesthetic aspect, with the reddish stains on teeth potentially enhancing attractiveness, highlights the multifaceted importance of betel nut in these societies.

Drug abuse and addiction are significant challenges worldwide, affecting individuals, families, and communities. The ASEAN region is no exception, grappling with various substances' complexities and their public health impacts.

ATS continues to dominate the drug treatment landscape in the ASEAN region. In 2023, 231,710 ATS users were treated, making it the most significant category by a wide margin. The high number of treatments underscores the pervasive nature of ATS abuse, known for its addictive properties and severe health impacts. This persistent prevalence indicates a formidable challenge, necessitating sustained and enhanced strategies for both prevention and rehabilitation.

Opiates and opioids were the second most treated category, with 44,104 individuals receiving help in 2023. The opioid crisis is a well-documented global issue, and the ASEAN region is similarly affected. The high number of treatments reflects the severe and widespread impact of opioid addiction. Comprehensive strategies, including accessible treatment options, harm reduction programs, and public education initiatives, are essential to mitigate the adverse effects of opioid abuse.

Cannabis use and its related treatments saw a notable presence, with 12,525 users treated in 2023. This indicates a rising trend in cannabis use, possibly influenced by changing perceptions and increased availability. Addressing cannabis use requires a balanced approach, considering both its medicinal potential and the risks associated with recreational use. Public education campaigns and regulatory measures are crucial to managing and mitigating these risks.

NPS accounted for 4,064 treatments in 2023. Although lower in number than other substances, NPS pose unique challenges due to their constantly evolving nature and the difficulties in regulation and detection. Targeted intervention strategies and continuous research and monitoring are essential to stay ahead of trends and develop effective responses to this dynamic threat.

Cocaine remains the least-treated substance category, with 89 users treated in 2023. While the numbers are relatively low, vigilance is needed as even low levels of cocaine use can have significant health impacts. Preventive measures and targeted education should be implemented to prevent any rise in cocaine use.

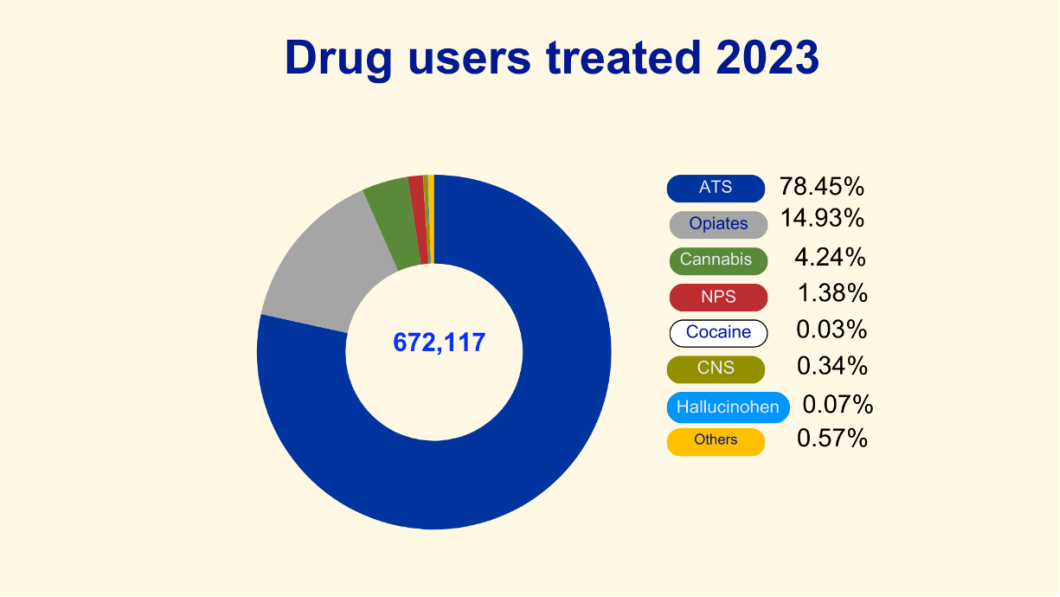


Figure 10: ASEAN drug users treated by drug types 2023

From 2017 to 2023, the number of drug users treated annually in the ASEAN region showed notable fluctuations:

During 2017-2019, the number of treated users rose from 325,164 in 2017 to 501,710 in 2018 and dramatically declined to 430,187 in 2019, reflecting heightened efforts by healthcare systems to address the drug epidemic.

In 2020, the number increased to 541,018 and continued to 614,003 in 2021, indicating a rebound in healthcare services and a renewed focus on drug treatment.

The numbers for 2022 and 2023 show a downward trend, with 573,781 and 671,387 users treated, respectively, raising questions about potential improvements in drug prevention, changes in reporting practices, or barriers to accessing treatment services.

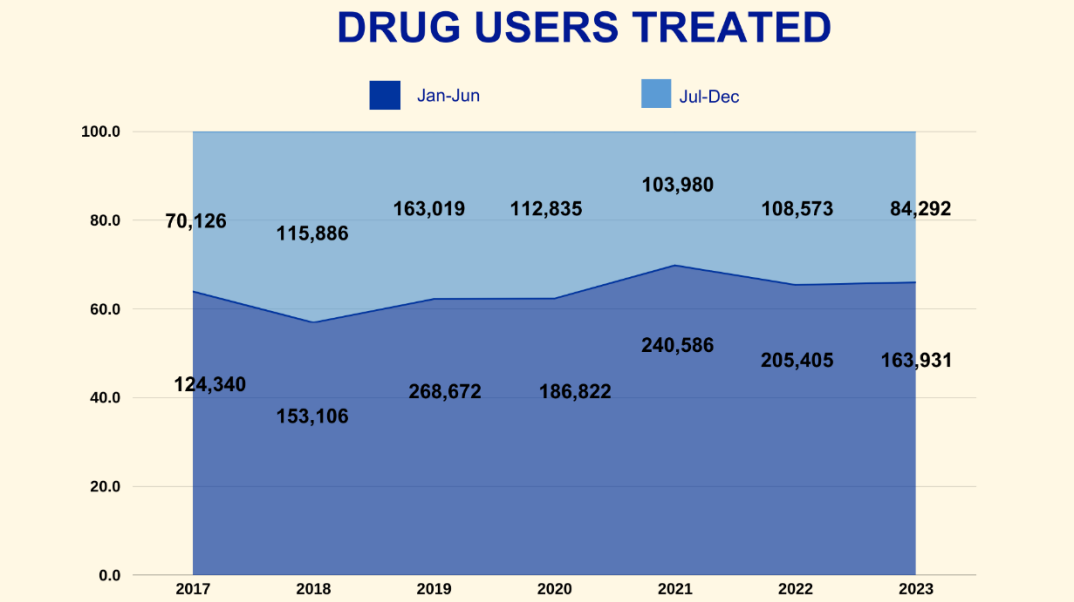


Figure 11: ASEAN drug users treated periodically

Distinct patterns emerge when breaking down the data into half-year periods (H1: January-June and H2: July-December):

Generally, the first half of each year (H1) consistently sees higher treatment numbers than the second half (H2). For example, in 2023, 163,931 users were treated in H1 compared to 84,292 in H2. This trend suggests more active treatment periods occur in the year's first half.
The consistently lower numbers in H2 may result from reduced outreach activities, seasonal declines in drug use, or administrative factors affecting reporting and treatment availability.

The 2023 data on drug treatments in the ASEAN region highlights the substantial burden of ATS and opioid addiction, with cannabis also emerging as a notable concern. The treatment of NPS and cocaine, though lower in numbers, points to the diverse and evolving nature of substance abuse challenges.

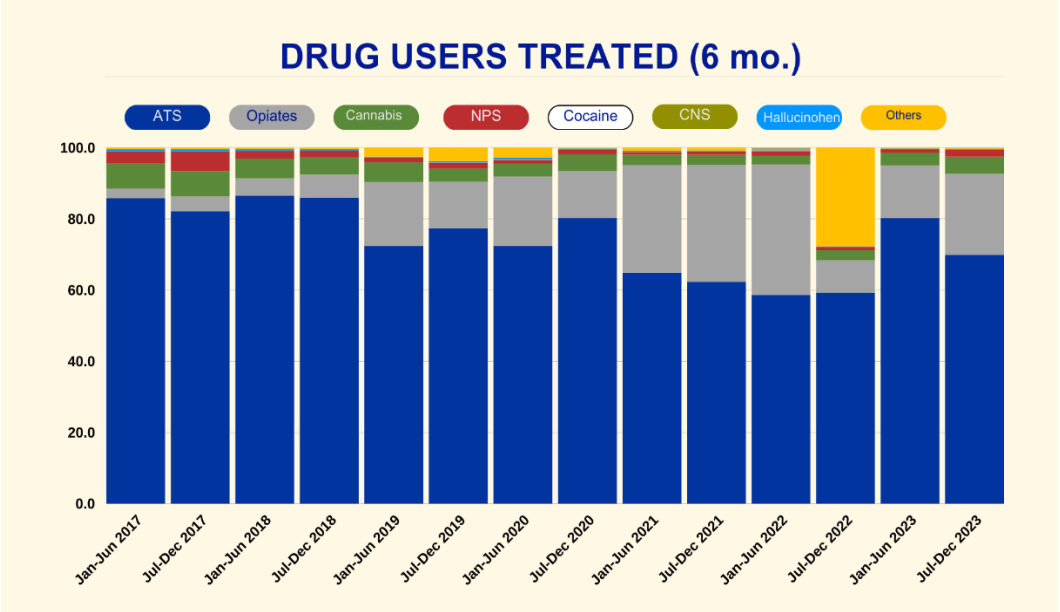


Figure 12: ASEAN drug users treated periodically by drug types

The ASEAN region, a focal point in the global fight against illicit drug trafficking and abuse, faced significant challenges in 2023. The data categorizes drug seizures into eight major groups: ATS, opiates/opioids, cannabis, NPS, cocaine, CNS depressants, hallucinogens, and other/precursor chemicals. The total quantity seized across all categories was approximately 4,448,910 kg, reflecting the vast scale of drug trafficking and production in the region.

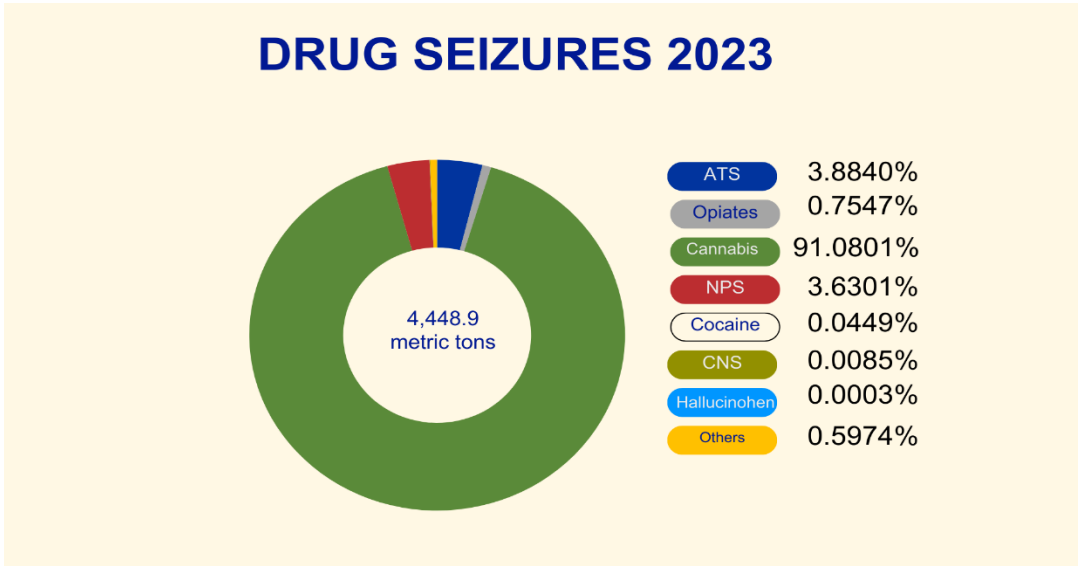


Figure 13: Illicit drugs seized by drug types 2023

Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), a total of 172,795 kg, were seized, emphasizing ASEAN's significant role as a hub for synthetic stimulants.

Opiates/Opioids: authorities confiscated 33,575 kg, highlighting the ongoing battle against these powerful drugs.

Cannabis, with 4,052,072 kg seized, the data reflects the extensive cultivation and prevalent use in the region.

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) seizures amounted to 161,498 kg, showcasing the traffickers' adaptability and the pressing need for adaptive legal measures.

Cocaine, a relatively smaller quantity of 380 kg, was seized, pointing to the global reach of drug trafficking operations.

Central Nervous System (CNS) depressant seizures totaled 1,997 kg, indicating the importance of strict regulation and oversight of prescription drugs.

Hallucinogens, although only 14 kg was seized, monitoring remains vital due to their distinct psychological impacts.

Other/Precursor Chemicals, authorities seized 26,579 kg, underlining the importance of disrupting synthetic drug production chains.

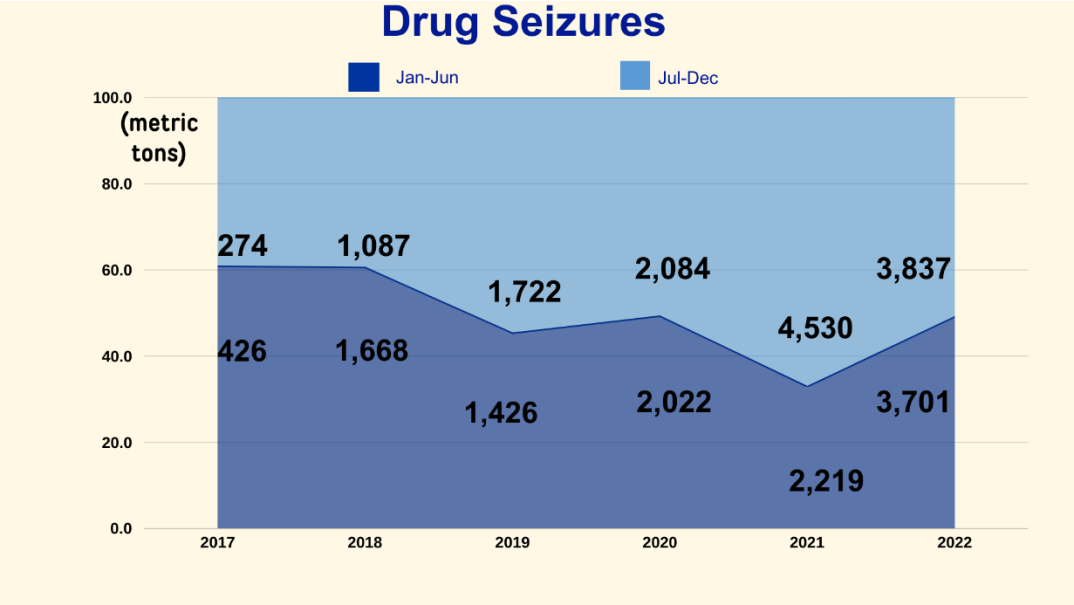


Figure 14: Illicit drugs seized periodically

Analyzing drug seizures in the ASEAN region from 2017 to 2023 provides valuable insights into the scale, patterns, and trends of drug trafficking and enforcement activities. The increasing trend in seizures, seasonal variations, and notable peaks and declines underscore the dynamic nature of the drug problem. A multifaceted approach involving enhanced enforcement, international cooperation, adaptive strategies, and robust public health interventions is essential to combat this issue effectively.

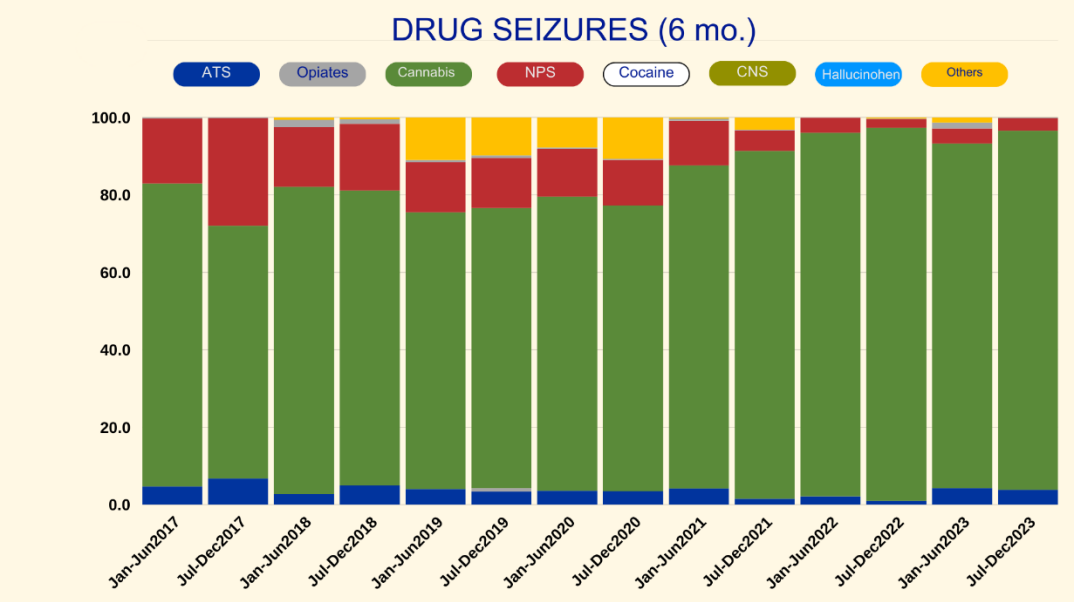


Figure 15: Illicit drug types seized periodically

In conclusion, continuous monitoring and responsive policy-making are crucial as the ASEAN region addresses the complex challenge of drug abuse and trafficking. The data highlights significant challenges and underscores the need for comprehensive and adaptive strategies to maintain and enhance treatment and enforcement efforts.

1 Amphetamine-Type Stimulants

Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) have become a significant public health and security challenge in the ASEAN region. There has been a dramatic increase in the production, trafficking, and consumption of these synthetic drugs, including substances such as amphetamine, methamphetamine, and ecstasy (MDMA).

ATS are synthetic drugs known for stimulating the central nervous system. They enhance alertness, concentration, and energy levels while inducing euphoria. However, these benefits come at a high cost, including increased heart rate, blood pressure, and body temperature, which can lead to severe health issues and addiction. Unlike natural stimulants, ATS are produced in laboratories, often illicitly, contributing to their widespread availability and abuse potential (UNODC, 2022).

The proliferation of ATS in ASEAN has significant social, health, and economic implications. The region has become a hotspot for the production and trafficking of these drugs, driven by high demand and the involvement of organized crime networks. Methamphetamine, in particular, has surged in popularity, with its crystalline form, known as "ice," being the most prevalent (UNODC, 2021). Health consequences of ATS abuse include addiction, mental health disorders, cardiovascular diseases, and an increased

risk of infectious diseases due to needle sharing among users. The social impact is equally devastating, with families and communities facing drug-related crimes, violence, and economic instability. The financial burden of drug abuse is substantial, with governments spending significant resources on healthcare, law enforcement, and rehabilitation programs (WHO, 2021).

Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) encompass a variety of synthetic substances designed to stimulate the central nervous system. These substances can vary in their specific chemical structures and effects, but they generally share similar characteristics regarding their stimulating properties and potential for abuse.

Amphetamine: A potent central nervous system stimulant used both medically and recreationally. It increases wakefulness and concentration while decreasing appetite. Medically, it is prescribed for ADHD and narcolepsy, but it is often abused for its euphoric effects and ability to enhance physical performance and cognitive function.

Methamphetamine: A powerful, highly addictive stimulant chemically similar to amphetamine but with more pronounced effects. Commonly found in crystalline form (crystal meth or "ice") and powder, it produces intense euphoria, increased activity, and decreased appetite. Chronic use can lead to severe dental problems ("meth mouth"), skin sores, and weight loss.

MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxyme thamphetamine): Also known as ecstasy, MDMA is a synthetic drug that alters mood and perception. It produces feelings of increased energy, pleasure, emotional warmth, and distorted sensory and time perception. It is commonly used recreationally at parties, raves, and music festivals.

Ephedrine and Pseudoephedrine: Stimulant compounds derived from the ephedra plant, used in over-the-counter medications for asthma and nasal congestion. They increase heart rate and blood pressure and are regulated in many countries due to their potential for use in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine.

Other ATS: This includes mephedrone, a synthetic stimulant chemically similar to cathinone (found in the khat plant), and fenethylline, marketed initially as a treatment for ADHD and narcolepsy, widely used in the Middle East.

The ASEAN region generally enforces stringent regulations and harsh penalties concerning ATS to deter production, trafficking, and use. These measures reflect the severe public health and security threats these substances pose. The uniformity in severe penalties across the region underscores the collective effort to combat the proliferation of ATS and mitigate their impact on society. However, differences in legal frameworks and enforcement practices still exist, requiring continuous regional cooperation and harmonization of drug control policies.

The diverse array of substances within the ATS category underscores the complexity of addressing the issues related to their use and abuse. Each substance varies in its specific effects, medical applications, and potential for abuse, necessitating tailored approaches to regulation, prevention, and treatment. The legal status of ATS in ASEAN countries is generally strict, with severe penalties for production, trafficking, and possession, highlighting the region's commitment to combating this growing threat.

Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), including substances like methamphetamine

(both crystalline and tablets), amphetamine, and ecstasy, have emerged as significant concerns in the ASEAN region. The rising prevalence of ATS use has profound implications for public health, law enforcement, and regional stability.

Recent data reveals a worrying increase in the use of ATS across Southeast Asia. According to the data from 2023, the total number of ATS users in the region reached 231,710, with methamphetamine (in both crystalline and tablet forms) accounting for the majority of this figure. Specifically, crystalline methamphetamine users numbered 156,994, while tablet users were 66,289. This trend highlights a shift towards more potent forms of methamphetamine, which poses a greater risk to users due to its higher purity and addictive potential.

ATS use spans various demographics but has shown particular prevalence among young adults and adolescents. This age group is particularly vulnerable due to factors such as peer pressure, the allure of increased productivity, and the misconception that ATS can enhance academic or professional performance. Moreover, the use of ATS in recreational settings, such as nightclubs and parties, has been on the rise, further embedding these substances into the social fabric of younger generations.

The impact on public health is severe. Chronic use of ATS can lead to significant mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and psychosis, as well as physical health problems like cardiovascular diseases and neurological damage. The burden on healthcare systems is substantial, with increasing numbers of individuals requiring medical and psychological interventions.

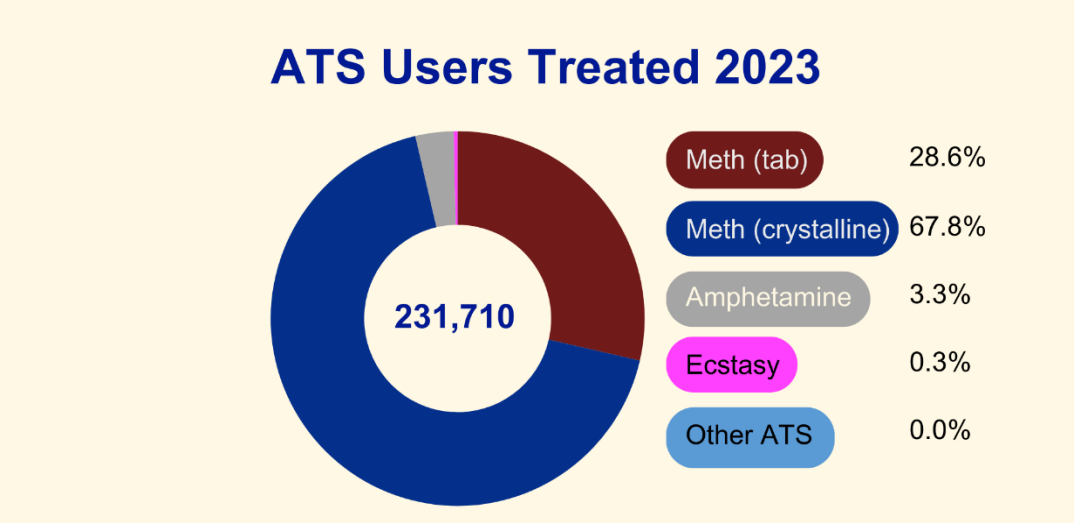


Figure 16: ATS users treated in 2023

ATS users in ASEAN from 2017 to 2023 show an overall increasing trend, albeit with some fluctuations. The highest recorded number of ATS users was in 2019, with 320,467 users. This peak represents a significant rise from the 164,497 users recorded in 2017. The consistent increase highlights the growing challenge posed by ATS in the region.

The annual totals reveal a concerning upward trajectory. ATS users rose sharply from 2017 to 2019, indicating an escalating problem. Although there was a decline in 2020, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on drug distribution and consumption patterns, the numbers remained high in the subsequent years. In 2020, the total dropped to 225,672 users, but it rebounded to 220,828 in 2021 and slightly decreased to 184,800 in 2022. By 2023, the number rose again to 190,415, suggesting a resurgence in ATS use.

A notable pattern in the semi-annual data is that the first half of each year (January to June) consistently reports higher numbers of ATS users than the second half (July to December). This trend is evident across all years in the dataset. The highest semi-annual record was in the first half 2019, with 194,428 users. This pattern of higher numbers in the year's first half, followed by a decrease in the second half, could be attributed to seasonal variations, enforcement activities, or reporting practices.

The dip in ATS users in 2020 can be attributed to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Lockdowns, travel restrictions, and heightened border controls disrupted the supply chains and availability of ATS, leading to a temporary decline in usage. However, the resurgence in numbers in 2021 and 2023 indicates that the underlying demand for ATS remains strong and resilient to such disruptions.

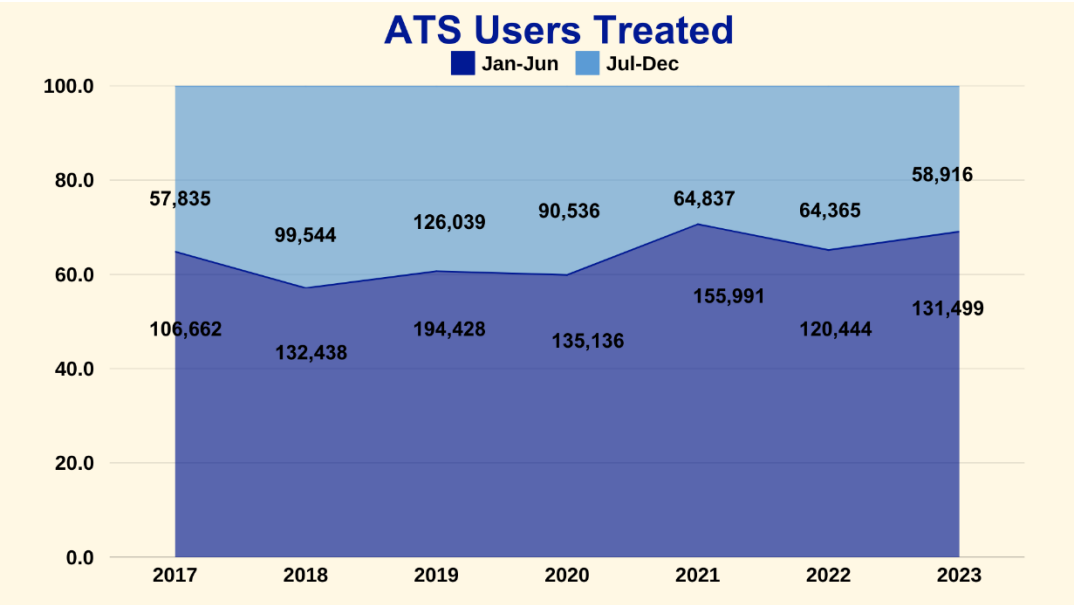


Figure 17: ATS users treated periodically

Figure 18 provides a detailed look at the semi-annual and annual usage of various ATS types in ASEAN. This allows for a comprehensive analysis of how the use of each substance has evolved.

Crystalline methamphetamine (*SHABU* or *ICE*) use has increased significantly over the period. Starting from 16,205 users in the first half of 2017, the number peaked at 76,919 in the first half of 2019. This trend shows periodic spikes and reductions, with notable highs in 2021 and significant decreases in the latter halves of each year. The total number of crystalline methamphetamine users over the period is 448,266.

Methamphetamine tablets (*YABA*) consistently have the highest number of users among ATS types. Usage increased from 90,211 in the first half of 2017 to 114,844 in the first half of 2019, with fluctuations in subsequent years. The total number of tablet users over the period is 1,056,683, indicating its dominance in the ATS market.

Data for amphetamine users starts from 2018, showing an increasing trend from 392 users in the first half of 2018 to 6,122 in the first half of 2023. The total number of amphetamine users over the period is 30,069.

Ecstasy usage shows relatively lower numbers compared to other ATS types. There are fluctuations, with a peak of 704 users in the second half of 2019. The total number of ecstasy users over the period is 4,093.

The combined total of ATS users (considering all types) shows significant usage, with methamphetamine tablets being the predominant substance. Seasonal variations are evident, with higher numbers in the first half of each year, similar to previous datasets.

The data underscores several vital points:

1. Market Dominance of Methamphetamine Tablets
   - The high number of methamphetamine tablet users indicates this form of ATS is widely available and used in the region. Factors contributing to this include lower cost, ease of production, and extensive distribution networks.

2. Emerging Trends in Amphetamine Use
   - The rising numbers of amphetamine users, despite starting from a lower base, suggest an emerging trend that needs close monitoring.

3. Fluctuations and Seasonal Variations
   - The fluctuations and semi-annual variations suggest that enforcement activities, seasonal factors, and possibly supply chain disruptions significantly influence ATS usage patterns.

4. Public Health and Policy Implications
   - The persistently high numbers of ATS users call for comprehensive public health strategies, including prevention, treatment, and harm reduction.
   - There is a need for coordinated regional efforts to tackle the production and trafficking of ATS, supported by robust law enforcement and intelligence sharing.

The increasing trend in ATS use, especially methamphetamine in both crystalline and tablet forms, underscores a

significant public health and safety issue in the ASEAN region. The persistent high numbers of ATS users suggest a complex and resilient demand not quickly curtailed by enforcement alone.

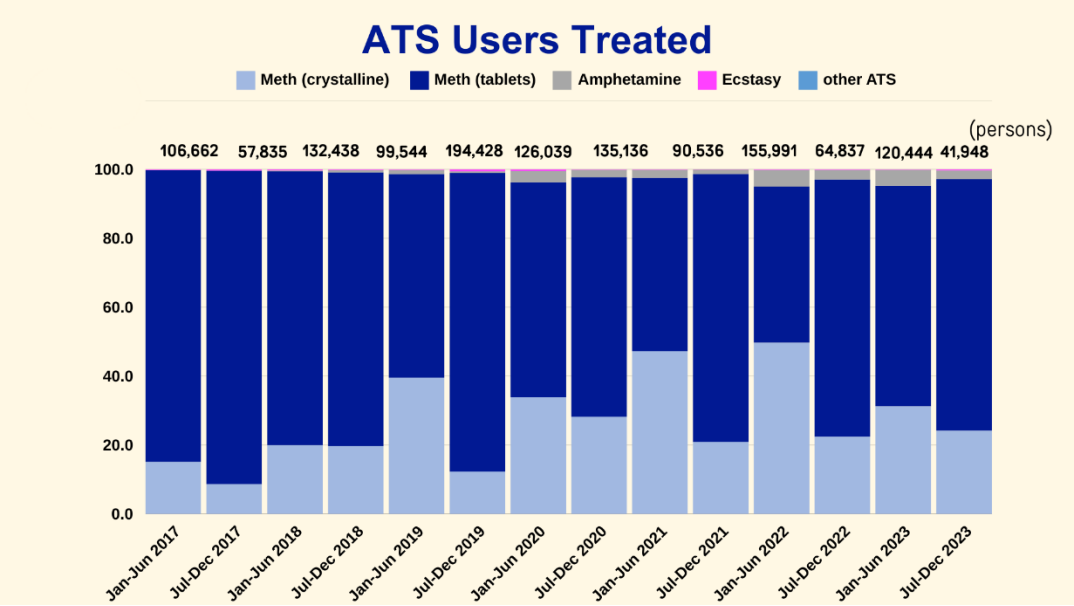


Figure 18: ATS users are treated periodically by drug types

In 2023, ASEAN authorities seized 70,301.08 kg of crystalline methamphe tamine, which constituted 40.68% of the total ATS seizures. This high quantity underscores the widespread production and trafficking of crystalline methamphetamine, making it a significant focus of enforcement efforts.

Methamphetamine tablets represented the largest share of ATS seizures, with 94,122.63 kg intercepted, accounting for 54.47% of the total. The dominance of tablet-form methamphetamine indicates its ease of production and distribution, contributing to its widespread use across the region.

Other forms of methamphetamine were less prevalent, with 1,445.67 kg seized, amounting to 0.84% of the total. This suggests that while alternative forms exist, they do not significantly impact the overall ATS market in ASEAN.

Authorities seized 6,923.41 kg of ecstasy, representing 4.01% of total ATS seizures. Though not as prevalent as methamphetamine, the significant quantity of ecstasy intercepted reflects its continued presence and popularity within specific demographics.

A negligible amount of 1.97 kg of ephedrine/pseudoephedrine was seized, making up just 0.0011% of the total. This low

figure suggests effective precursor control or lower trafficking volumes in this form.

In total, 172,794.75 kg of ATS were seized in 2023. This figure highlights the immense scale of ATS trafficking in the ASEAN region and the significant resources required to combat it. These provide several key insights into the nature and extent of drug trafficking in the ASEAN region:

1. The high quantities of methamphetamine (both crystalline and tablets) seized underscore its dominant position in the ATS market. Methamphetamine production and trafficking networks are deeply entrenched, requiring sustained and coordinated enforcement efforts.

2. The significant seizures reflect robust enforcement activities by ASEAN countries. However, the persistence of high seizure quantities indicates that supply chains remain resilient and adaptive. Continued investment in enforcement, along with intelligence sharing and regional cooperation, is crucial to disrupting these networks.

3. The distribution of seizure quantities among different ATS forms provides insights into market preferences and trafficking trends. The predominance of methamphetamine tablets suggests that this form is more favored due to its lower production costs and ease of distribution compared to crystalline methamphetamine.

4. The large volumes of seized ATS highlight a potential public health crisis. Effective public health strategies are needed to reduce demand, provide treatment and rehabilitation for users, and prevent the harmful consequences of ATS abuse. Public education campaigns and harm reduction programs are essential to a comprehensive response.

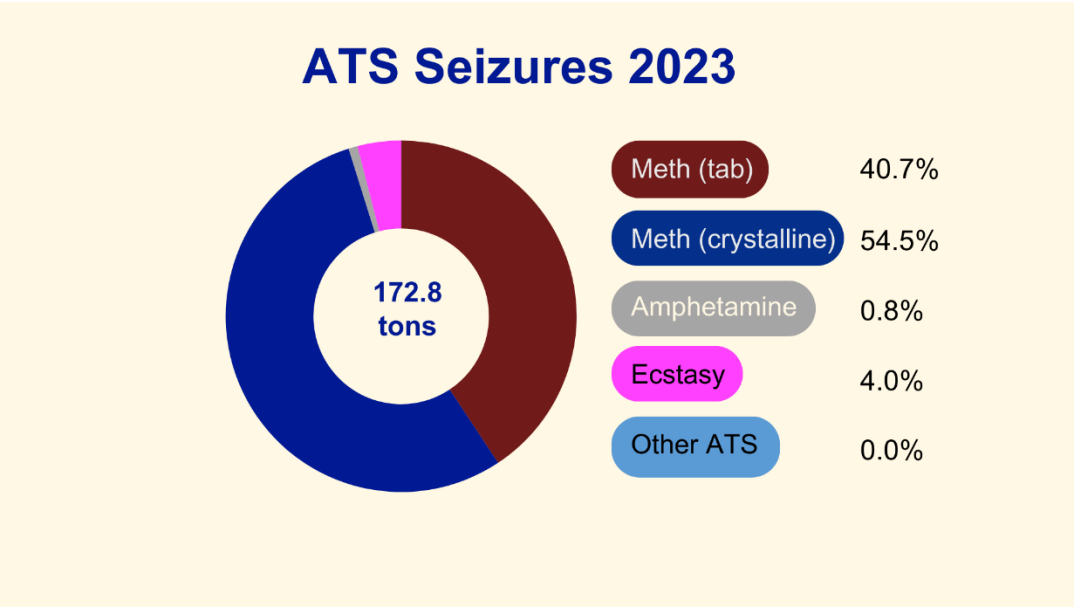


Figure 19: ATS seizures 2023

ATS-related cases, offenders, and seizures from 2017 to 2023 reveal significant trends and insights into the region's fight against drug trafficking.

The number of ATS-related cases fluctuated, peaking in 2018 at 309,364 cases. Following this peak, there was a noticeable decline, with 207,493 cases recorded in 2023. The decline after 2018 suggests that initial heightened enforcement may have led to a surge in reported cases, followed by stabilization as enforcement strategies were adopted.

Similar to the case trend, the number of offenders peaked in 2019 at 328,535 before declining to around 254,000-268,000 in subsequent years. Reducing the number of offenders in 2020 and beyond indicates potential improvements in enforcement efficiency or shifts in trafficking patterns.

The quantity of ATS seized generally increased, with significant peaks in 2020 and 2021, reaching 142,863.95 kg and 175,032.11 kg, respectively. In 2023, authorities seized 172,794.75 kg of ATS, indicating continued high levels of trafficking despite ongoing enforcement efforts.

The data on ATS cases, offenders, and seizures provides critical insights into the nature and effectiveness of enforcement efforts in the ASEAN region.

1. The fluctuations in the number of cases and offenders may reflect changes in enforcement intensity, the effectiveness of interdiction efforts, and variations in ATS trafficking activities. The peak in 2018, followed by a decline, suggests that initial aggressive enforcement may have resulted in a surge of detections, with subsequent years showing a more stabilized approach.

2. Despite fluctuations in cases and offenders, the increasing trend in ATS seizures indicates that enforcement agencies have become more effective in intercepting larger quantities of drugs. The significant peaks in 2020 and 2021 highlight the ongoing challenges posed by ATS trafficking and the resilience of supply chains.

3. The data suggests that while enforcement efforts have successfully reduced the number of cases and offenders, the persistently high levels of ATS seizures indicate that trafficking activities remain robust. This underscores the need for sustained, adaptive, and multifaceted enforcement strategies.

4. The continued high levels of ATS seizures point to a significant public health concern, as the availability of these drugs remains high. Effective public health strategies, including prevention, treatment, and harm reduction, are essential to complement enforcement efforts and address the root causes of ATS abuse.

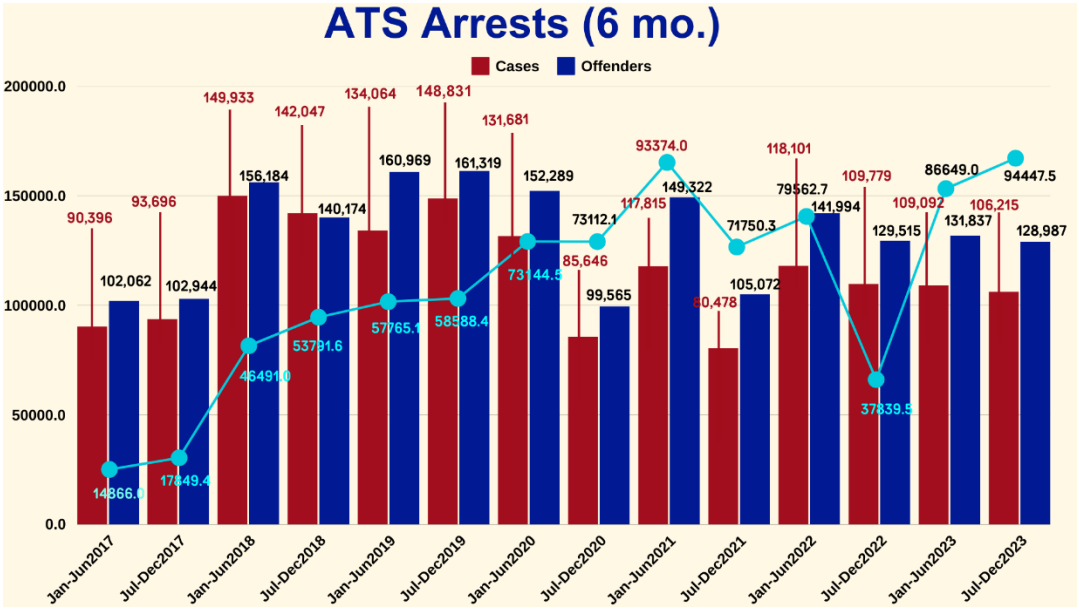


Figure 20: ATS arrested periodically

ATS seizures from 2017 to 2023 reveal significant trends and patterns across different types of substances, including methamphetamine (crystalline and tablets), other forms of methamphetamine, ecstasy, ephedrine/pseudoephedrine, and other ATS.

The quantity of crystalline methamphetamine seized has fluctuated significantly, with a clear upward trend. The highest semi-annual seizure occurred in the first half of 2023, with 44,821.69 kg seized. Over the seven years, a total of 350,609.91 kg of crystalline methamphetamine was seized, highlighting its persistent presence in the region.

Methamphetamine tablets consistently account for the largest share of ATS seizures. The peak occurred in the second half of 2023, with 60,113.26 kg seized. The total quantity seized from 2017 to 2023 was 458,124.40 kg, indicating widespread production, trafficking, and use of methamphetamine tablets in the ASEAN region.

Other forms of methamphetamine were less prevalent but showed notable peaks, such as in the first half of 2020, when 7,141.52 kg were seized. The total quantity seized over the period was 11,616.97 kg, suggesting that while these forms are present, they are not as dominant as crystalline and tablet forms.

Ecstasy seizures varied, with the highest quantity recorded in the second half of 2023 at 5,608.61 kg. The total amount seized over the period was 14,366.67 kg, reflecting its continued popularity in specific market segments.

Seizures of ephedrine/ pseudoephedrine occurred sporadically, with a significant peak in the second half of 2021 at 5,573.40 kg. The total quantity seized from 2017 to 2023 was 7,796.71 kg, highlighting its role as a crucial precursor in methamphetamine production.

Seizures of other ATS types were infrequent but significant, with a peak in the first half of 2021 at 16,650 kg. The total quantity seized over the period was

16,716.42 kg, indicating their occasional but impactful presence.

The trends in ATS seizures provide several key insights into the dynamics of drug trafficking and enforcement in the ASEAN region:

1. **Prevalence of Methamphetamine Tablets**
 - The dominance of methamphetamine tablets in seizure quantities underscores their widespread production and distribution. The high seizure volumes reflect robust trafficking networks and high demand.
2. **Increasing Seizures of Crystalline Methamphetamine**
 - The significant quantities of crystalline methamphetamine seized indicate its growing presence and the challenges it poses to enforcement agencies. Its high purity and addictive potential make it an important public health concern.
3. **Fluctuations in Seizures**
 - The fluctuations in seizure quantities across different ATS types suggest varying enforcement efforts, shifts in trafficking routes, and changes in market demand. Peaks in seizures may correspond to intensified crackdowns or successful interdiction operations.
4. **Role of Precursors**
 - The seizure of significant quantities of ephedrine/pseudoephedrine highlights the ongoing challenge of controlling precursor chemicals essential for ATS production. Effective precursor control is crucial for disrupting the supply chain of methamphetamine.
5. **Public Health and Policy Implications**
 - The high levels of ATS seizures reflect the persistent threat these substances pose to public health. Comprehensive strategies involving prevention, treatment, and harm reduction are essential to complement enforcement efforts and address the root causes of ATS abuse.

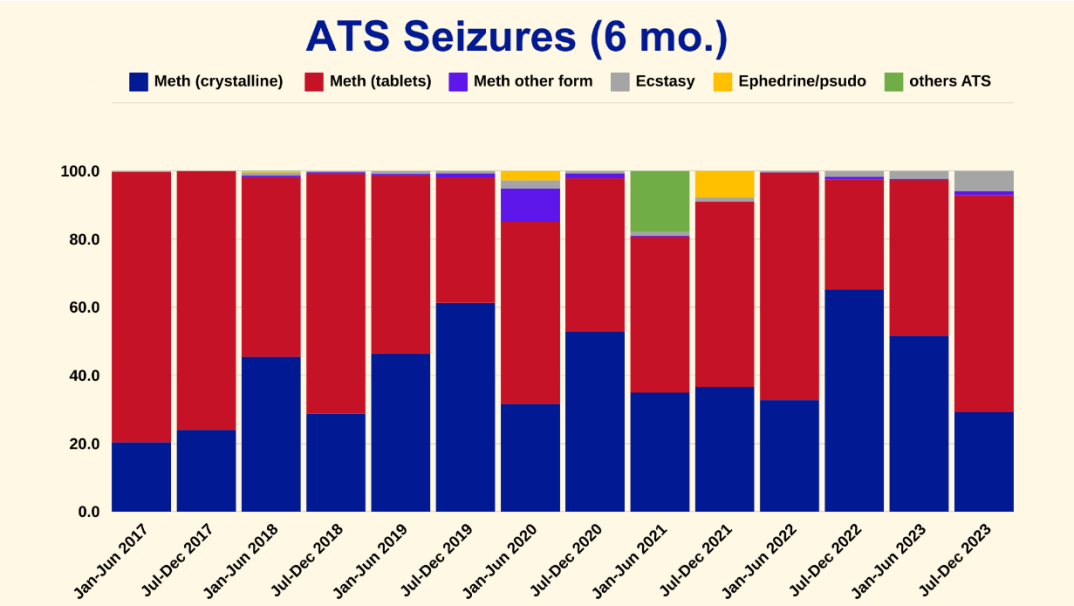


Figure 21: ATS seizures periodically by drug types

AMS has implemented various strategies to address the ATS crisis. These measures include stricter law enforcement, international cooperation, public awareness campaigns, and rehabilitation programs. Countries like Thailand, Myanmar, and the Philippines have intensified their efforts to dismantle drug trafficking networks through joint operations and intelligence sharing (ASEAN, 2022).

International cooperation is crucial in tackling the transnational nature of ATS trafficking. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is pivotal in coordinating efforts among ASEAN member states, providing technical assistance, and facilitating information exchange. Regional agreements, such as the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs, emphasize a collaborative approach to enhance border security, improve legal frameworks, and support sustainable development to reduce the vulnerability of communities to drug trafficking (ASEAN, 2022).

Public awareness campaigns aim to educate the population about the dangers of ATS abuse and promote healthy lifestyles. These campaigns often target young people, who are particularly vulnerable to drug experimentation and addiction. Rehabilitation and reintegration programs are also essential components of a comprehensive drug strategy, offering support to individuals struggling with addiction and helping them reintegrate into society (UNODC, 2021).

The rise of Amphetamine-Type Stimulants in ASEAN presents a multifaceted challenge that requires a coordinated and sustained response. Understanding the characteristics and impact of these drugs is crucial for developing effective policies and interventions. Through stringent law enforcement, international cooperation, public education, and robust rehabilitation programs, Southeast Asian countries can mitigate the adverse effects of ATS and work towards a drug-free future.

2 Opiates/Opioids

Opiates and opioids are substances used primarily for their pain-relieving properties. Derived from the opium poppy plant or synthesized in laboratories, they are highly effective in managing pain but carry significant risks of abuse, dependence, and addiction.

Opiates are naturally occurring compounds extracted from the opium poppy plant. They have a long history of use for pain relief and inducing sleep. Common opiates include Morphine, extracted directly from the opium poppy; morphine is widely used in medical settings for severe pain management, such as post-surgery or in palliative care. It provides significant pain relief and euphoria but can lead to physical dependence and tolerance. Codeine, derived from morphine and also found in the opium poppy, codeine is commonly used to treat mild to moderate pain and as a cough suppressant. It is less potent than morphine but still carries a risk of dependence and abuse.

Opioids encompass a broader category, including natural opiates and synthetic and semi-synthetic substances designed to mimic the effects of opiates. Common opioids include Heroin, a semi-synthetic opioid derived from morphine; heroin is an illicit drug with no accepted medical use in many countries. It is highly potent and addictive, leading to intense euphoria and a significant risk of overdose and death. Oxycodone, a semi-synthetic opioid derived from thebaine, is another compound found in the opium poppy. It is prescribed for moderate to severe pain and is effective in pain relief, but has a high potential for addiction and is commonly associated with prescription drug abuse. Fentanyl is a fully synthetic opioid used in medical settings for severe pain management, particularly in cancer patients and during surgery. It is highly potent, up to 100 times more powerful than morphine, with a high risk of overdose.

Both opiates and opioids work by binding to opioid receptors in the brain and other parts of the central nervous system, reducing the sensation of pain and producing feelings of euphoria. This mechanism contributes to their potential for abuse and addiction.

Opium, derived from the poppy plant, has been used since ancient times. The earliest recorded use was by the Sumerians around 3400 BC, who referred to it as the "joy plant." Knowledge of its cultivation and use spread to the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Egyptians, and by the 7th century, Arab traders had introduced it to China.

Significant milestones in the history of opiates and opioids include in 1804, when a German pharmacist isolated morphine from opium, 1830s French chemist isolated codeine from opium, 1874 English chemist first synthesized heroin (diacetylmorphine) by acetylating morphine. It was commercialized in 1898 as a cough suppressant and a purported non-addictive alternative to morphine.

By the early 20th century, the addictive properties of opiates were well-known, leading to international regulation efforts. The development of synthetic opioids, such as methadone (1937) and fentanyl (1960), initially aimed at medical use, also contributed to the modern opioid epidemic due to their high potency and potential for misuse. Recent decades have seen a significant increase in opioid prescriptions, misuse, and addiction, leading to widespread public health issues and increasing overdose deaths. Efforts to combat the epidemic include stricter prescription regulations, public health campaigns, and the development of medications for opioid use disorder, such as buprenorphine and naloxone.

Opium has been part of Southeast Asian culture for centuries, introduced primarily through trade routes. Its use spread rapidly across the region, initially for medicinal and recreational purposes. During the colonial era, opium became a significant economic commodity. The Golden Triangle, where Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand converge, has long been infamous as an important global hub for opium production and trafficking.

Today, the landscape of opiate and opioid use in ASEAN has evolved, with synthetic opioids becoming a significant

concern alongside traditional opium derivatives. The key issues include:
Opiates (Morphine and Codeine) These naturally occurring opiates are used medically to manage pain but are also subject to abuse. Morphine remains a critical pain management tool in hospitals but is tightly regulated due to its high potential for addiction. Opioids (Heroin), this semi-synthetic opioid derived from morphine, is a significant issue in ASEAN. Heroin production and trafficking are particularly prevalent in the Golden Triangle, fueling addiction and contributing to regional instability. Synthetic Opioids, substances like fentanyl and its analogs, are increasingly being trafficked and abused. These synthetic opioids are far more potent than heroin and pose significant challenges for law enforcement and public health systems due to their high overdose potential.

The ongoing challenges related to opiate and opioid use in ASEAN require coordinated efforts in regulation, public health initiatives, and international cooperation to address the complex issues of production, trafficking, and addiction.

In 2023, the data revealed a substantial presence of various opiates/opioids in the region. Opium and heroin remain the most prevalent, with reported usage figures indicating 4,152 and 39,365 users, respectively. Methadone, a drug often used in opioid replacement therapy, also shows a significant user base, with 533 individuals reported. Morphine and codeine, though less prevalent, still present concerning figures with 31 and 23 users, respectively.

The percentages of users for each drug type provide a clearer picture of their relative prevalence. Opium users constitute approximately 9.41% of the total drug-using population. Heroin, being the most prevalent, accounts for a staggering 89.25%. Methadone users make up about 1.21%, while morphine and codeine users represent 0.07% and 0.05%, respectively. These proportions underline the dominance of heroin in the region's drug landscape.

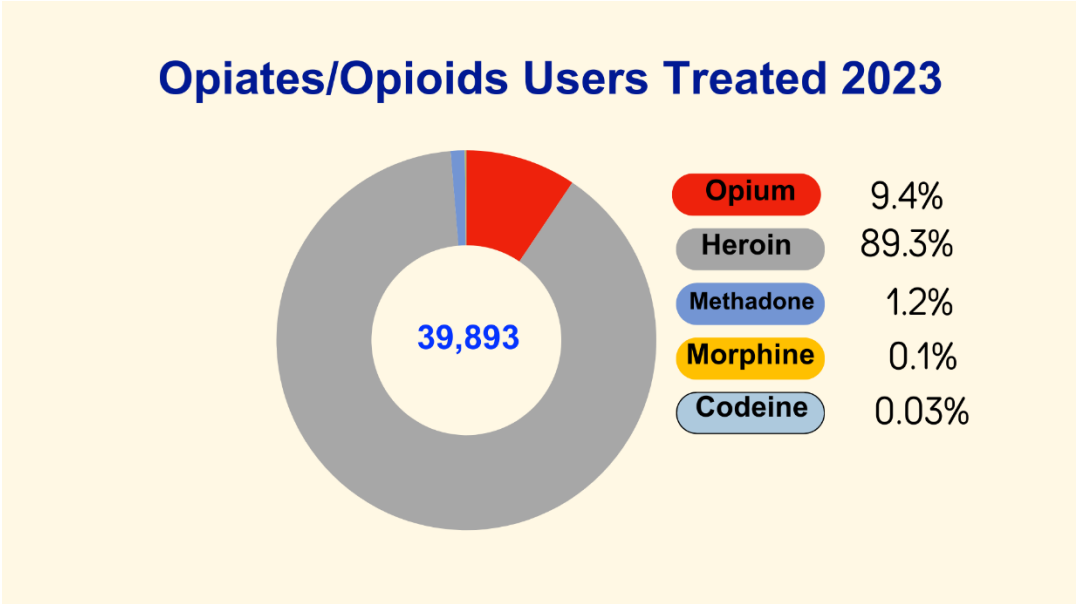


Figure 22: Opiates/Opioids users treated in 2023

The high prevalence of heroin and opium use is particularly alarming due to their severe health implications. Heroin addiction can lead to numerous health problems, including respiratory depression, infectious diseases due to needle sharing, and overdose fatalities. The substantial number of heroin users poses a significant burden on public health systems, necessitating extensive resources for treatment and harm reduction.

Methadone, while used in treatment, still represents a significant portion of drug users, indicating the ongoing efforts to manage opioid addiction. However, the presence of methadone in the user base also suggests gaps in addiction treatment and the need for more comprehensive rehabilitation programs.

The drug situation in Southeast Asia in 2023 highlights the ongoing challenges and complexities associated with drug use and trafficking. The dominance of heroin and opium, the health impacts on the population, and the intricate supply networks underscore the need for continued and enhanced efforts to combat this issue. Governments, regional bodies, and international organizations must collaborate effectively to address the root causes, provide comprehensive treatment and support, and implement robust law enforcement strategies to reduce the prevalence and impact of drugs in the region.

The data from 2017 to 2023 shows significant fluctuations in the number of opiate and opioid users. The data underscores several vital points:

1. The most notable rise occurred between 2018 and 2019, where user numbers increased by over four times. This dramatic surge suggests a period of increased drug availability or a lapse in control measures.
2. The peak in 2021, with over 106,000 users, marks a critical point in the region's battle against opiate and opioid use. This peak could be attributed to various factors, including socioeconomic conditions, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and disruptions in drug enforcement.
3. The consistent decline in user numbers post-2021 indicates that measures taken to

curb drug use might be yielding results. This decline could also reflect successful rehabilitation programs, stricter law enforcement, or reduced drug availability.

4. The data reveals higher user numbers in the first half of each year. This variation might be due to seasonal factors, law enforcement cycles, or socio-economic conditions affecting drug use patterns.

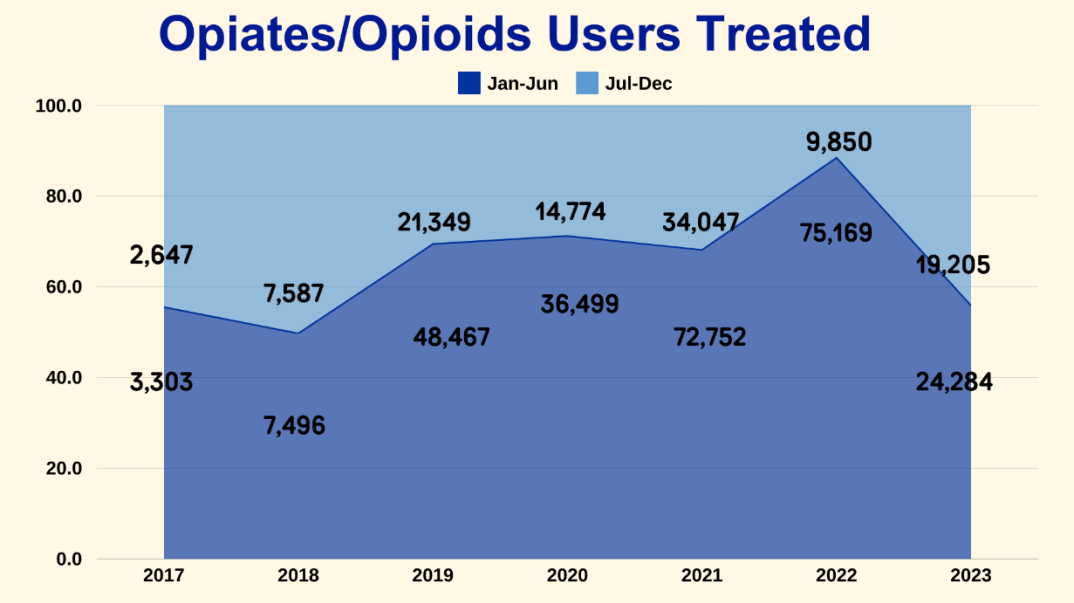


Figure 23: Opiates/Opioids users treated periodically

The issue of opiate and opioid use remains a significant public health concern in Southeast Asia, particularly within the ASEAN region. This explores the trends and implications of opiate and opioid use from 2017 to 2023 based on data covering various substances, including opium, heroin, methadone, morphine, and codeine. The analysis provides insights into the prevalence of these drugs and the effectiveness of regional efforts to combat drug abuse.

The data from 2017 to 2023 reveals dynamic trends in the use of opiates and opioids across the region. In 2017, the total number of users was relatively low, with 1,420 opium users and 1,814 heroin users in the first half of the year, followed by a slight decrease in the second half. In 2018, a significant increase was observed, particularly in heroin use, which surged to 5,887 users in the first half and 5,955 in the second half. In 2019, this year saw a dramatic spike in heroin use, with 45,944 users in the first half and 18,799 in the second half. Opium use also increased during this period. In 2020, the number of users began to decline slightly, with heroin use dropping to 34,263 in the first half and 12,980 in the second half. In 2021, the highest number of users was recorded, with 69,479 heroin users in the first half and 31,969 in the second half. Opium use also peaked this year. In 2022, there was a notable decline in the second half of the

year, particularly in heroin use, which dropped significantly from 73,464 in the first half to 7,965 in the second half. In 2023, the downward trend continued, with heroin use decreasing to 22,290 in the first half and 16,647 in the second half. Methadone use, however, saw a significant increase in the second half.

The semi-annual data highlights variations within each year. For the first half, the highest number of opium users was in 2021, with 3,082 users. Heroin use peaked in the first half of 2021 with 69,479 users, showing a consistent trend of higher usage in the first half of the year across most years. Methadone use remained relatively stable, with notable increases in 2022 and 2023. The second half of each year generally showed lower numbers compared to the first half, except for methadone in 2023, which saw a significant increase to 487 users. Heroin use in the second half of 2022 dropped drastically, indicating effective intervention measures during that period.

The data underscores several vital points:
1. Heroin consistently had the highest number of users, with a significant peak in 2021.
2. Opium user numbers fluctuated but remained relatively stable, peaking in the first half 2021.
3. Methadone usage varied significantly, with a notable increase in the second half of 2023, possibly due to its use in treatment programs.
4. These substances had lower user numbers, indicating lesser prevalence or specific medical usage.

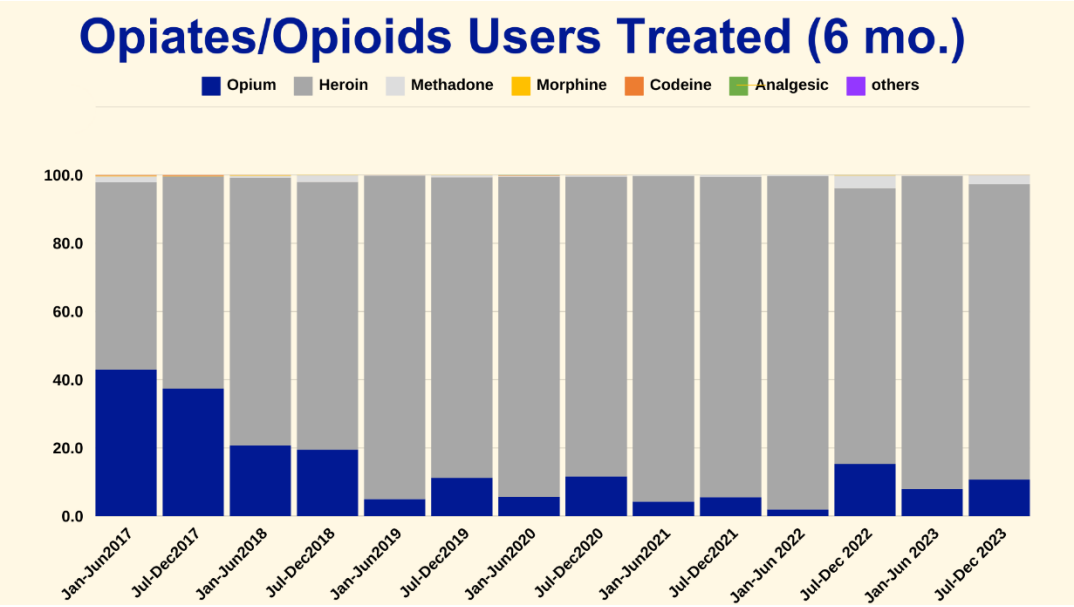


Figure 24: Opiates/Opioids users are treated periodically by drug types

The data for 2023 reveals substantial seizures of various drugs, indicating active trafficking networks and significant law enforcement activities. The total quantity of drugs seized is substantial, demonstrating the scale of drug trafficking in the region and the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts in intercepting these substances.

Raw opium constitutes the majority of the seizures, underscoring its prevalence in the region. The high volume suggests that Southeast Asia continues to be a significant producer and trafficker of raw opium, likely linked to the Golden Triangle area. Prepared opium, while significantly less in quantity compared to raw opium, still represents a portion of the trafficking activity. This preparation often makes opium easier to smuggle and distribute. Heroin is the second most seized drug, indicating its high demand and the extensive trafficking networks that support its distribution. The substantial quantity highlights the ongoing challenge of heroin abuse in the region. Methadone seizures are minimal compared to other drugs, suggesting it is less commonly trafficked. Methadone is typically used in medical settings for opioid replacement therapy, so its lower seizure rates may reflect its controlled use. Codeine, often used in cough syrups, shows significant seizure quantities. Its misuse for non-medical purposes is a concern, indicating that it is diverted from legitimate channels. The small amount of other analgesics seized suggests they are less prevalent in the illegal drug market compared to opium and heroin.

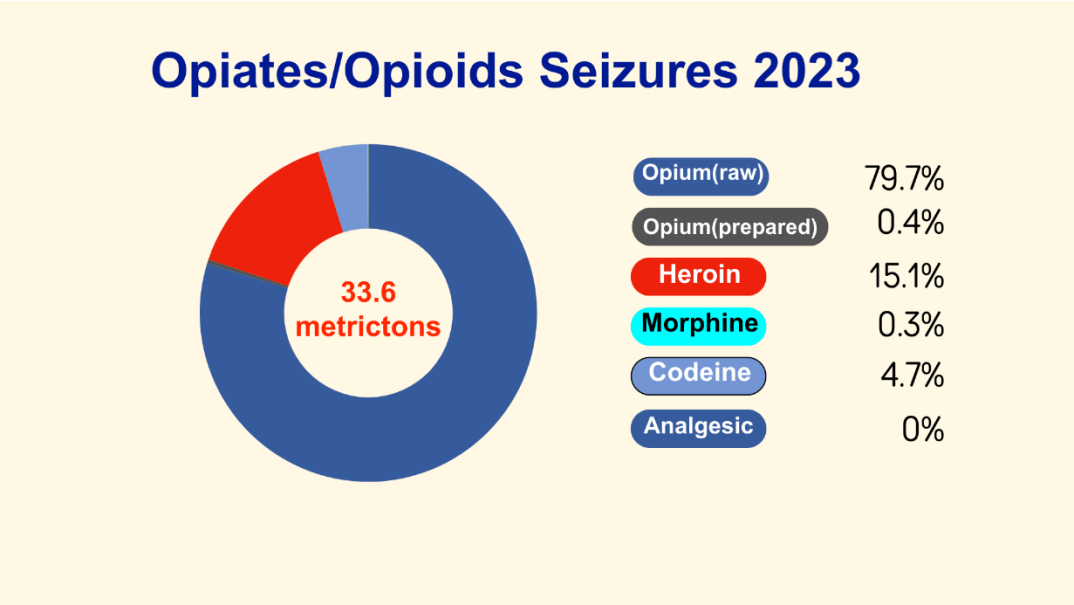


Figure 25: Opiates/Opioids seizures 2023

The data, segmented into semi-annual periods, highlights notable fluctuations and patterns in drug offenses and seizures. In 2017, the year began with a moderate level of cases and offenders, with a significant drop in the second half in the number of drugs seized, suggesting effective interdiction in the first half. A dramatic increase 2018 in both cases and quantities seized, particularly in the first half, indicates heightened trafficking activities or enhanced law enforcement efforts. In 2019, a significant spike in cases and offenders, especially in the second half, reflects

extensive trafficking operations and successful interdiction. In 2020, there was a slight reduction in cases and seizures compared to 2019, possibly due to the COVID-19 pandemic affecting trafficking routes and law enforcement activities. There was a further decline in cases and offenders in 2021, but a notable increase in the number of drugs seized in the first half indicates sporadic extensive trafficking attempts. In 2022, an increase in cases and offenders but a reduction in the number of drugs seized suggests improved interdiction efficiency or reduced trafficking volumes. In 2023, a significant seizure quantity in the first half indicated a major crackdown on trafficking operations, followed by a lower but steady rate in the second half.

The data underscores several vital points:

1. 2018 saw a dramatic rise in the number of cases and offenders, with an exceptional quantity of drugs seized, particularly in the first half. This could be due to increased trafficking or enhanced detection and interdiction efforts.
2. The number of offenders fluctuated significantly, peaking in the first half of 2019, suggesting periodic intensifications of trafficking or targeted law enforcement actions.
3. The first half of 2023 recorded an exceptionally high quantity of drugs seized, indicating a significant crackdown or large-scale trafficking attempt during this period.
4. Despite fluctuations, there is a noticeable trend of high numbers of cases and offenders, with substantial quantities of drugs being seized annually, indicating persistent and significant drug trafficking activities in the region.

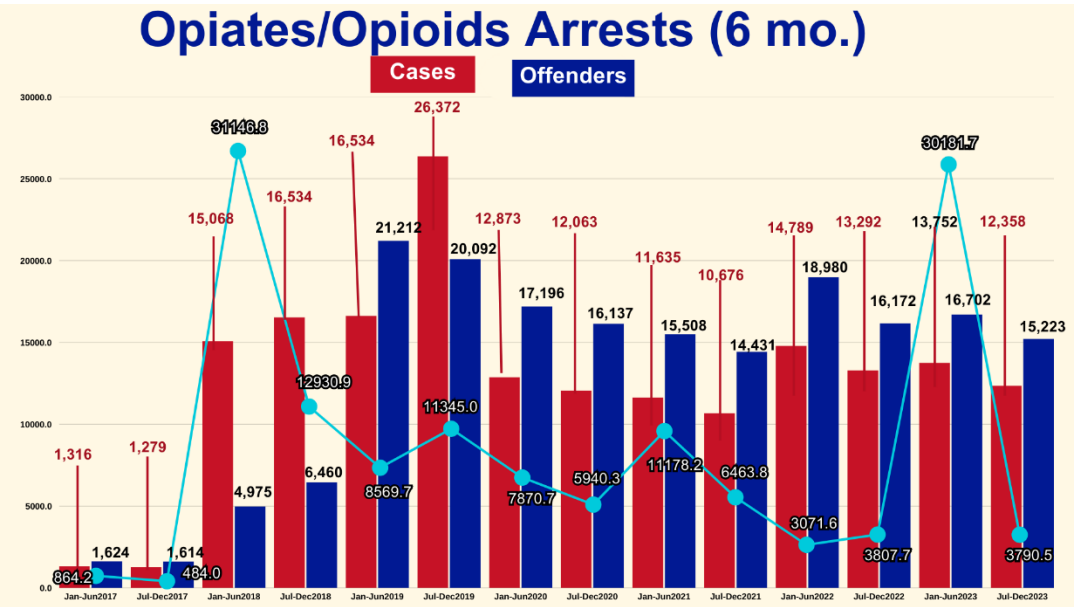


Figure 26: Opiates/Opioids arrested periodically

Drug trafficking is a persistent challenge in Southeast Asia, posing severe threats to public health and security. This delves into the trends and implications of drug seizures from 2017 to 2023, focusing on various substances such as raw opium, prepared opium, heroin, morphine, methadone, codeine, and other analgesics.

Raw opium constitutes the most considerable quantity seized, underscoring its significant presence and trafficking in Southeast Asia. The high volume indicates robust production and distribution networks, particularly in areas like the Golden Triangle. The quantity of prepared opium is much lower than raw opium, suggesting it is less commonly trafficked or more challenging to intercept in its processed form. Heroin is the second most seized drug, reflecting its high demand and extensive trafficking networks. The consistently high quantities highlight the ongoing struggle to control heroin distribution. Morphine seizures are relatively low, indicating it is less prevalent in the illegal drug market compared to opium and heroin. Methadone seizures are minimal, likely due to its controlled medical use and lower potential of unlawful trafficking. The high quantity of codeine seized points to significant issues with its diversion from legal sources and abuse. Codeine's availability in pharmaceutical products makes it a common target for illicit use. Seizures of other analgesics are relatively low, indicating limited illegal trafficking compared to other opiates and opioids.

The data underscores several vital points:

1. The data shows that raw opium and heroin are the most seized substances, highlighting their prevalence in the region's drug trafficking landscape. These drugs are significant contributors to the region's drug trade and public health issues.
2. The substantial quantities of codeine seized suggest significant problems with its diversion and abuse. Codeine's presence in over-the-counter medications makes it more accessible for misuse.
3. The data reveals significant fluctuations in the quantities seized across different periods, reflecting varying levels of trafficking activity and law enforcement success.

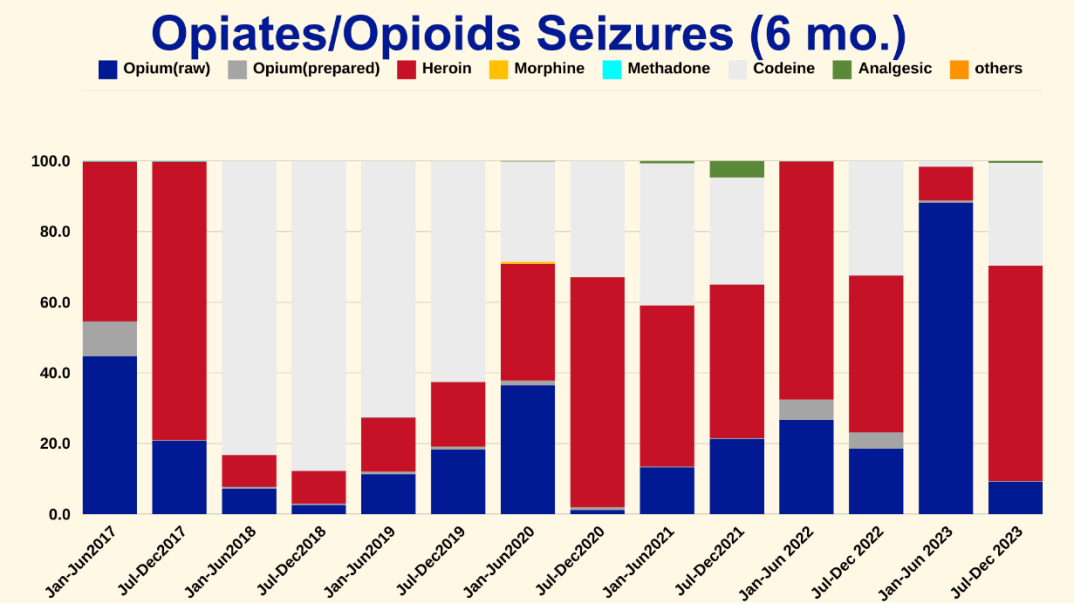


Figure 27: Opiates/Opioids seizures periodically by drug types

The fluctuating trends in opiates/opioids in Southeast Asia underscore the dynamic nature of the drug problem in the region. The peak and declining trend suggests that interventions might be effective but must be sustained and adapted to changing conditions. Continuous monitoring and accurate data collection are crucial for understanding trends and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions. Increasing access to rehabilitation and support services can help reduce the number of users and prevent relapse. Strengthening cross-border cooperation can help tackle the supply chains and trafficking networks that fuel the drug problem in the region. Educating the public about the dangers of drug use and promoting healthy lifestyles can contribute to reducing demand.

3 Cannabis

Various cultures have utilized cannabis for thousands of years for medicinal, recreational, and industrial purposes. Its usage has evolved significantly, influenced by legal, medical, and social developments.

Cannabis has a long history of use, dating back to ancient civilizations. It was used medicinally in ancient China around 2700 BCE and in India for religious and therapeutic purposes, as mentioned in the Vedas, Hindu sacred texts (Li, 1973). Ancient Greeks and Romans also recognized its medicinal properties, using it to treat pain and inflammation (Russo, 2007).

Today, cannabis is one of the most widely used psychoactive substances globally. Its usage patterns vary significantly across different regions and demographic groups. Cannabis is commonly used for its psychoactive effects, primarily due to tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), around 192 million people worldwide used cannabis in 2018 (UNODC, 2020). The use of cannabis for medical purposes has gained widespread acceptance, particularly in countries that have legalized it. Medical cannabis is used to treat a variety of conditions, including chronic pain, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, and nausea associated with chemotherapy (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017). Hemp, a variety of cannabis with low THC content, is used in the production of textiles, paper, biodegradable plastics, and construction materials. The industrial use of hemp is legal in many countries and is recognized for its environmental benefits due to its rapid growth and minimal need for pesticides.

The medical benefits of cannabis are attributed to its cannabinoids, primarily THC and cannabidiol (CBD). Research has shown that cannabis can be effective in managing several medical conditions. Cannabis has been found to reduce chronic pain, particularly neuropathic pain, which is often resistant to other treatments (Whiting et al., 2015). CBD, a non-psychoactive component of cannabis, has been shown to reduce the frequency of seizures in patients with certain types of epilepsy, such as Dravet syndrome and Lennox-Gastaut syndrome (Devinsky et al., 2017). Cannabis-based medicines can alleviate symptoms such as muscle spasticity and pain in patients with multiple sclerosis (Koppel et al., 2014). Cannabis can help control nausea and vomiting induced by chemotherapy, improving patients' quality of life (Abrams & Guzman, 2015).

While cannabis has potential benefits, it also carries risks, particularly with long-term and heavy use. Regular cannabis use, especially starting in adolescence, can impair cognitive development and functioning (Volkow et al., 2014). Heavy use of cannabis is associated with an increased risk of mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and psychosis, particularly in individuals predisposed to these conditions (Hall & Degenhardt, 2009). Cannabis use can lead

to dependency and withdrawal symptoms in some users, though the risk is lower compared to substances like alcohol and opioids (Budney et al., 2008).

The legal status of cannabis varies widely across the globe, reflecting differing cultural, political, and social attitudes. Some countries and states have legalized cannabis for medical and recreational use. For instance, Canada legalized recreational cannabis in 2018, and several U.S. states have followed suit. These changes reflect a shift towards viewing cannabis use as a public health issue rather than a criminal one. In contrast, many countries maintain strict prohibitions on cannabis use, often with severe penalties. This is particularly common in regions with stringent drug policies, such as Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Legalizing cannabis poses regulatory challenges, including ensuring product safety, preventing underage use, and managing public health implications. Effective regulation is essential to maximize benefits and minimize harms associated with cannabis use (Caulkins et al., 2015).

Cannabis has been used in traditional Thai medicine for centuries. Historical records indicate its use for treating various ailments, including 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 for possession and use.

The move towards cannabis legalization began in the late 2010s, driven by growing recognition of its medical benefits and economic potential. In December 2018, Thailand made a landmark decision by legalizing medical cannabis, becoming the first Southeast Asian country to do so (The Nation Thailand, 2018). The National Legislative Assembly amended the Narcotic Act, allowing the use of cannabis for medical and research purposes. The legalization process involved establishing a robust regulatory framework to ensure controlled cultivation, production, and distribution of medical cannabis. Licensed hospitals, clinics, and research institutions were authorized to prescribe and dispense cannabis products. The government also allowed farmers to form cooperatives and grow cannabis under strict regulations (Bangkok Post, 2019). In June 2022, Thailand took a further step by decriminalizing cannabis, removing it from the Category 5 narcotics list. This move aimed to boost the medical cannabis industry and promote its use for health and wellness purposes. However, the regulatory framework is evolving to address public health concerns and prevent misuse (Reuters, 2022).

The legalization of cannabis has unlocked significant economic opportunities for Thailand. The country aims to become a regional hub for medical cannabis, attracting investment and boosting the agricultural sector. The Thai government estimates that the cannabis market could generate up to $661 million annually by 2024 (Asia Times, 2020). Legalization has also spurred the development of cannabis-related businesses, including cultivation facilities, processing plants, and retail outlets. Additionally, the tourism industry is expected to benefit from cannabis legalization. The potential to attract medical tourists seeking cannabis-based treatments and wellness products could enhance Thailand's reputation as a leading destination for health and wellness tourism.

Cannabis legalization has brought about significant changes in societal attitudes and cultural practices in Thailand. There is a growing acceptance of cannabis for medical and wellness purposes, though recreational use remains a contentious issue. Public health guidelines emphasize responsible use and the importance of preventing cannabis use among minors and vulnerable populations. The legalization movement has also sparked interest in traditional Thai medicine, where cannabis has long been an integral component. This revival of conventional practices aligns with global trends towards holistic and alternative medicine.

The ADMN data covers cannabis use over seven years, segmented into two half-year periods (January to June and July to December) and the annual total for each year. Figure 28 reveals several critical insights into cannabis use over the analyzed period. 2019 was a peak year with the highest recorded usage, which then sharply declined in subsequent years. This peak might be attributed to increased social acceptance or availability of cannabis during that period. The sharp decline in 2020 and 2021 could be correlated with the COVID-19 pandemic, which imposed lockdowns and reduced social interactions, thereby impacting drug usage patterns. The slight increase in 2023 could indicate a rebound effect post-pandemic, where restrictions eased and social activities resumed, potentially leading to increased cannabis consumption.

Several factors could influence these trends. Changes in drug policies, legal frameworks, and law enforcement intensity can significantly affect cannabis usage rates. Awareness campaigns and public health interventions aimed at reducing drug use can lead to a decline in consumption. Economic downturns, unemployment rates, and social stressors can either increase or decrease drug use, depending on the context and available support systems. Changing societal attitudes towards cannabis, driven by global trends and media representation, can influence usage patterns.

The statistical data on cannabis users from 2017 to 2023 highlights significant fluctuations influenced by a myriad of factors, including public policy, socio-economic conditions, and global events. The peak in 2019, followed by a sharp decline in subsequent years and a slight resurgence in 2023, underscores the complex interplay of influences on drug consumption trends.

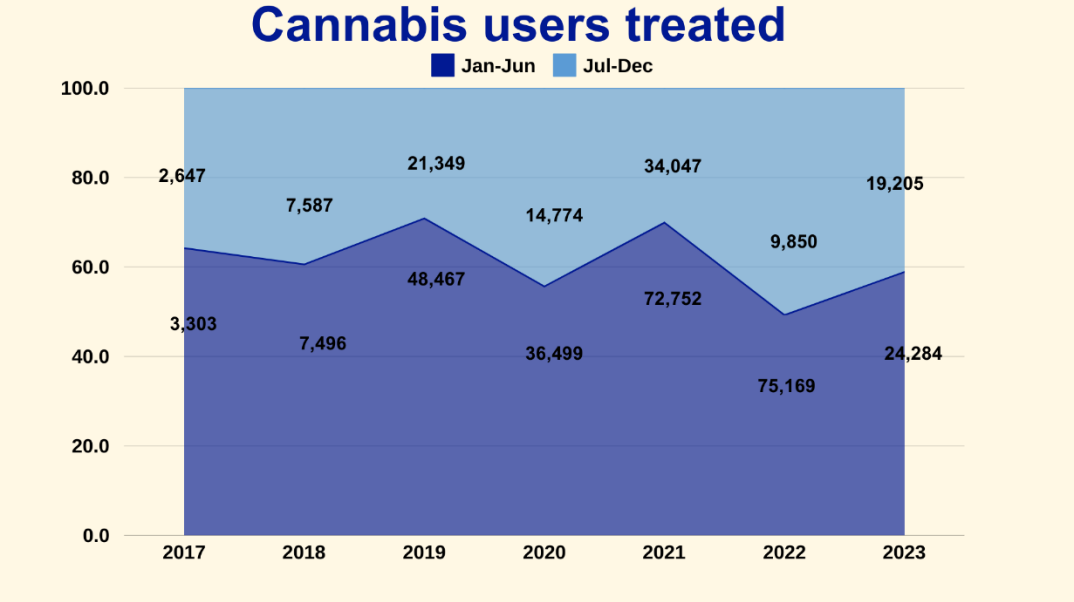


Figure 28: Cannabis users treated periodically

The patterns of cannabis use over the years have been influenced by various socio-economic, legislative, and health factors. The dataset comprises semi-annual records of cannabis users from 2017 to 2023. The data is segmented into two half-year periods each year: January to June and July to December. This segmentation allows for a detailed examination of trends over time. Consistently, the first half of each year recorded higher cannabis use compared to the second half. This pattern suggests seasonal or socio-economic factors that may influence higher consumption in the initial six months of the year. The first half of 2019 recorded the highest number of users (14,612), suggesting an unusual spike in cannabis use during this period.

Several factors can influence these observed trends. Changes in drug policies and the intensity of law enforcement activities significantly impact cannabis use. Regions that adopt more stringent laws and rigorous enforcement typically see lower usage rates. Effective public health campaigns aimed at reducing drug use can lead to a decline in consumption. Increased awareness about the adverse effects of cannabis use may contribute to these trends. Economic downturns, unemployment, and social stressors can either increase or decrease drug use, depending on the context and availability of support systems. Societal attitudes towards cannabis, influenced by global trends and media representation, can also affect usage patterns.

The sharp decline in cannabis use in 2020 and 2021 coincides with the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic imposed lockdowns, restricted social interactions, and changed lifestyle patterns, all of which likely contributed to the reduction in cannabis use. The data suggests that external factors such as global health crises can significantly impact drug consumption trends.

The analysis of cannabis use from 2017 to 2023 reveals significant fluctuations influenced by a combination of socio-economic, legislative, and external factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The peak in 2019, followed by a sharp decline in subsequent years, underscores the complex interplay of these influences.

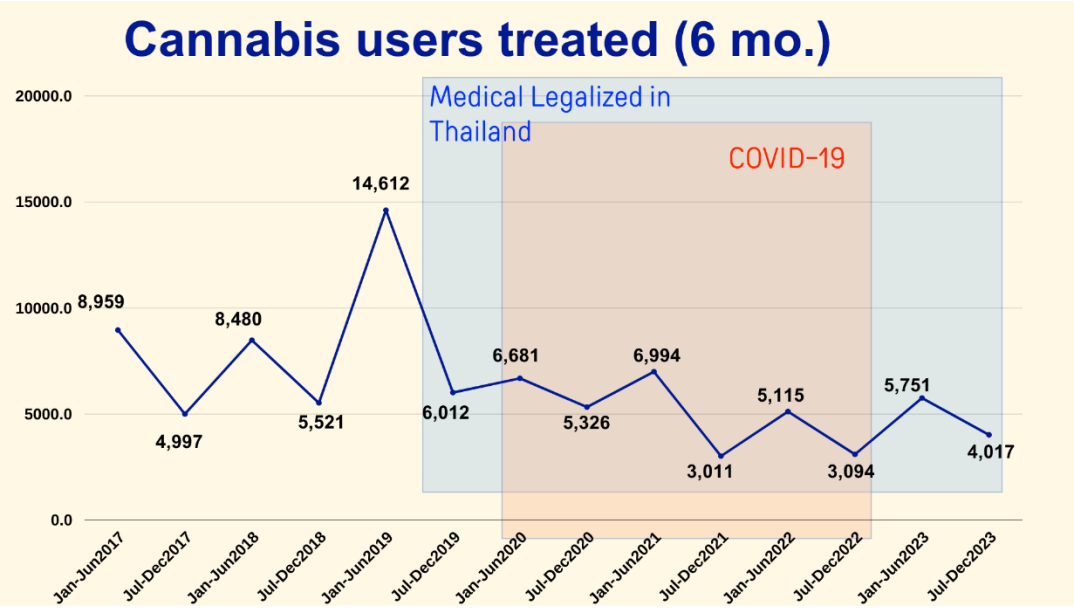


Figure 29: Cannabis users treated by 6 months period

Cannabis seizures are a critical indicator of the scale of illegal cannabis cultivation, production, and distribution. The dataset includes information on various forms of cannabis seizures in 2023, categorized into dried cannabis, cannabis plants, resin, liquid/jelly/oil, seeds/others, and the total amount seized. The data also includes the percentage of each category of the total seizures.

Cannabis plants constitute the overwhelming majority of seizures, accounting for 99.42% of the total. This indicates that large-scale cultivation remains a primary focus of law enforcement activities. The substantial volume of seized plants suggests extensive illegal cultivation operations, possibly indicating large plantations or widespread small-scale farming. Dried cannabis, representing 0.58% of total seizures, is significantly lower than plant seizures but still notable. This form is likely more commonly seized in smaller, processed quantities ready for distribution and consumption. Seizures of cannabis resin, liquid/jelly/oil, and seeds /others are minimal, collectively accounting for less than 0.001% of the total. These forms of cannabis may be less prevalent or more challenging to detect and seize compared to plants and dried cannabis.

Several factors could influence the patterns observed in the seizure data. The focus on eradicating large-scale cultivation operations likely drives many plant seizures. Efforts to identify and dismantle these

operations can result in significant hauls of cannabis plants. The lower seizure rates for processed forms like dried cannabis, resin, and oil may reflect different stages in the production and distribution chain. These forms are typically seized in smaller quantities, indicating targeted enforcement at distribution points. The ability to detect and accurately report seizures can vary across regions and enforcement agencies. Technological advancements and enhanced training may improve detection rates over time.

The analysis of cannabis seizure data for 2023 provides valuable insights into the scale and nature of illegal cannabis activities. The dominance of plant seizures underscores the prevalence of large-scale cultivation, while the relatively low levels of processed cannabis seizures highlight different challenges in enforcement.

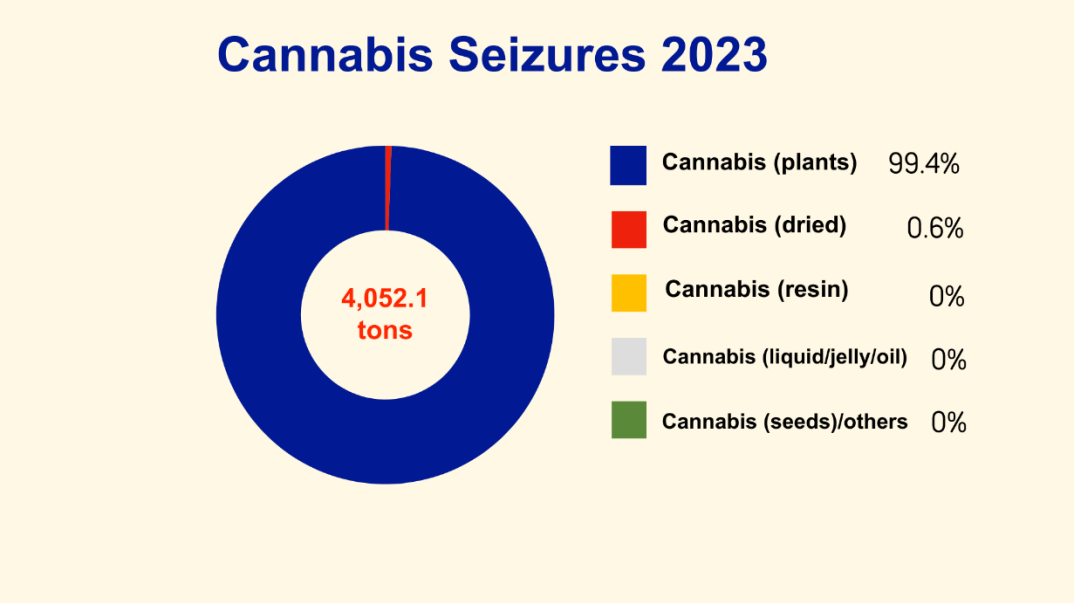


Figure 30: Cannabis seizures 2023

The illicit cannabis trade poses significant challenges for law enforcement and public health systems worldwide. Analyzing trends in cannabis-related cases, offenders, and seizures provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of enforcement strategies and the prevalence of illegal cannabis activities. The dataset includes semi-annual records of cannabis-related cases, offenders, and the amount of cannabis seized (in kilograms) from 2017 to 2023. The data is segmented into two half-year periods: January to June and July to December.

There is a notable increase in cases and offenders from 2017 to 2018. The first half of 2018 saw 10,413 cases and 9,628 offenders, compared to 6,128 cases and 6,601 offenders in the first half of 2017. This increase suggests intensified enforcement efforts or a rise in illegal cannabis activities during this period. The first half of 2019 shows an extraordinary spike in the number

of offenders, reaching 58,436. This surge could indicate a large-scale operation or crackdown, reflecting a significant law enforcement effort.

The amount of cannabis seized in the first half of 2018 (1,322,187.99 kg) was significantly higher than in previous periods, aligning with the increased number of cases and offenders. This trend suggests a successful crackdown on large-scale cannabis operations. The first half of 2019 saw 1,017,950.00 kg of cannabis seized, indicating continued efforts to curb illegal cannabis activities.

Several factors could influence these observed trends. The increase in cases, offenders, and seizures likely reflects intensified law enforcement activities, including targeted operations and improved detection techniques. The spike in offenders in 2019 suggests a significant crackdown on illegal activities. Changes in drug laws and penalties can significantly impact the number of recorded cases and offenders. Stricter laws may lead to more arrests and higher seizure volumes, as seen in the data from 2018 and 2019. Economic downturns and social stressors can contribute to increased illegal activities, including cannabis cultivation and distribution. These factors may have influenced the rise in cases and offenders during specific periods. Improved surveillance and detection technologies can enhance the ability of law enforcement to identify and intercept illegal cannabis activities. The significant seizures in 2018 and 2019 may be partially attributed to these advancements.

The analysis of cannabis-related cases, offenders, and seizures from 2017 to 2023 reveals significant fluctuations influenced by law enforcement activities, legislative changes, and socio-economic factors. The data underscores the importance of continuous monitoring and adaptive strategies to address the evolving dynamics of illegal cannabis activities effectively.

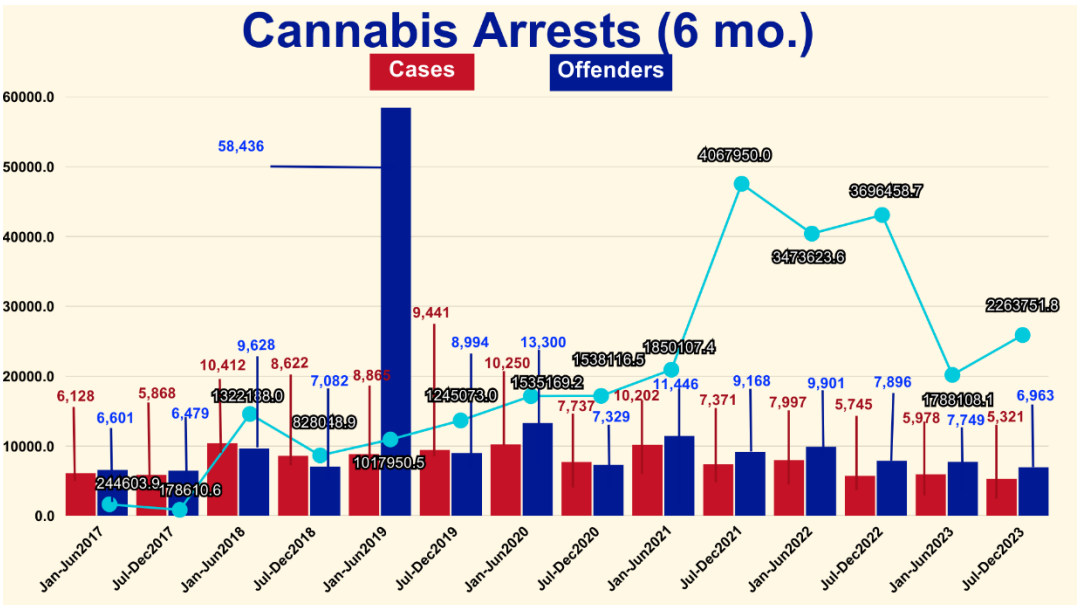


Figure 31: Cannabis arrested periodically

Cannabis seizures offer critical insights into the scale of illegal cannabis activities and the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts. By analyzing trends in seizures, we can better understand the dynamics of the illicit cannabis market and develop more effective strategies to combat it. The dataset includes semi-annual records of cannabis seizures from 2017 to 2023, segmented into dried cannabis, cannabis plants, resin, liquid/jelly/oil, and seeds/ others. This comprehensive breakdown provides insights into the different forms of cannabis intercepted by law enforcement.

The quantities of dried cannabis seized suggest consistent efforts by law enforcement to intercept processed cannabis ready for distribution. The relatively stable seizure amounts indicate that dried cannabis remains a prevalent form of illegal cannabis in circulation. The spike in cannabis plant seizures in 2018 highlights a significant crackdown on large-scale cultivation operations. This trend suggests that law enforcement focused significantly on eradicating large plantations or widespread small-scale farming during this period. The high seizure rates in subsequent years indicate sustained efforts to curb large-scale cultivation. The increase in resin seizures from 2019 onward suggests a shift in production or distribution patterns. This could reflect a growing market for resin-based cannabis products or improved detection capabilities by law enforcement. The minimal seizure amounts for these categories indicate that they are either less prevalent or more challenging to detect. However, the slight increase in seeds/others seizures from 2018 to 2023 suggests a growing focus on intercepting diverse forms of cannabis.

Several factors could influence these observed trends in cannabis seizures. The significant increase in plant seizures in 2018 and the steady seizure rates in subsequent years suggest sustained law enforcement efforts against large-scale cultivation sites. Changes in drug laws and enforcement policies can impact seizure volumes. Stricter regulations and enhanced penalties may lead to increased interceptions and seizures. Improvements in surveillance and detection technologies can improve the ability of law enforcement to identify and seize illegal cannabis. The spike in resin seizures 2019 may be partly attributed to such advancements. Changes in the demand for different forms of cannabis can influence production and distribution patterns, affecting the quantities intercepted by law enforcement.

The analysis of cannabis seizures from 2017 to 2023 provides valuable insights into the scale and nature of illegal cannabis activities. The data reveals significant fluctuations influenced by law enforcement strategies, legislative changes, and market dynamics.

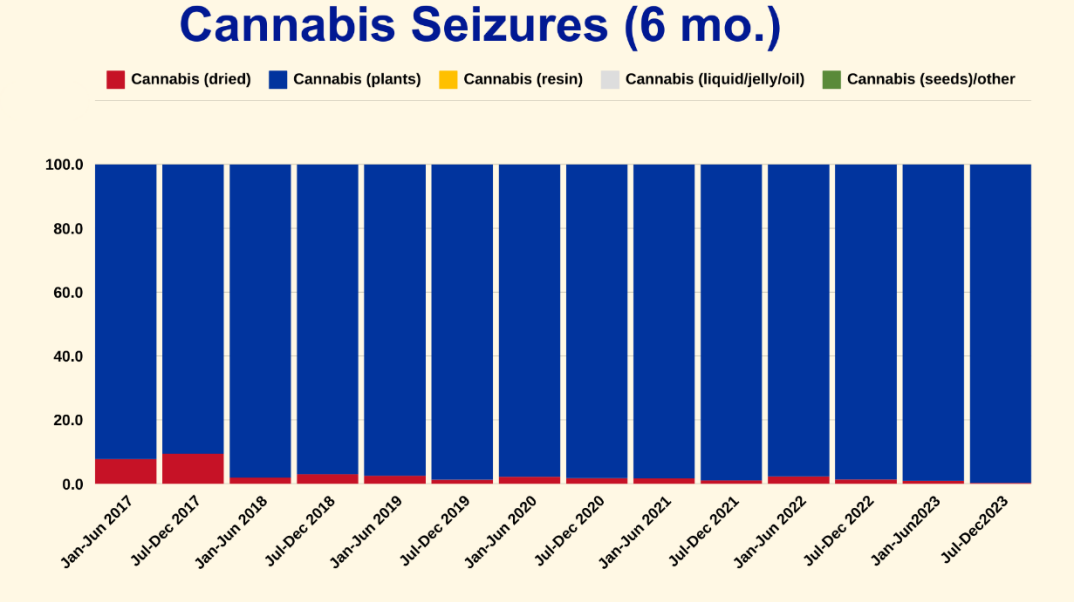


Figure 32: Cannabis seizures periodically by drug types

The data highlights the need for adaptive strategies in combating illegal cannabis activities. Continued focus on large-scale operations can disrupt significant supply chains and reduce the overall volume of illicit cannabis in circulation. The significant seizures in 2018 and 2019 demonstrate the effectiveness of such operations. Reviewing and adjusting drug policies to address emerging trends and challenges can enhance the effectiveness of enforcement efforts. Stricter laws and penalties can act as deterrents to illegal activities. Allocating resources to areas with higher incidences of cannabis-related activities can improve enforcement outcomes and reduce illegal activities. Data-driven resource allocation can maximize the impact of law enforcement efforts. Increasing public awareness about the legal consequences and health risks associated with cannabis use can complement enforcement efforts and deter illegal activities. Education campaigns can play a crucial role in reducing demand.

4 New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) are defined by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as substances of abuse, either in a pure form or a preparation, that are not controlled by the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs

or the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, but which may pose a public health threat. These substances are often marketed as legal alternatives to controlled drugs and can be found in various forms, including powders, pills, and liquids.

The classification of NPS is typically based on their chemical structure and pharmacological effects. Major categories include synthetic cannabinoids, synthetic cathinone, ketamine, phenethylamines, piperazines, tryptamines, and plant-based substances. Each class interacts with the brain and body in distinct ways, leading to a wide range of psychoactive effects. For instance, synthetic cannabinoids, which are often sold as "spice" or "K2," act on the same receptors as THC, the active ingredient in cannabis, but can be significantly more potent and unpredictable in their effects.

The prevalence of NPS use varies globally, with certain regions experiencing higher rates of consumption and new substance emergence. Europe, for example, has been identified as a significant market for NPS, with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) reporting over 900 different NPS detected in the region as of 2022. The rapid pace at which new substances are developed and introduced to the market poses significant challenges for monitoring and regulatory frameworks.

One notable trend in NPS use is the shift from recreational use to more problematic patterns, including the injection of synthetic cathinones and the use of synthetic cannabinoids among vulnerable populations such as people experiencing homelessness and incarcerated individuals. These patterns are associated with severe health risks, including acute toxicity, dependence, and an increased likelihood of engaging in risky 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 death. Chronic use of specific NPS has been linked to long-term health consequences, such as cognitive impairment, cardiovascular damage, and mental health disorders.

Emergency departments and poison control centers have reported increasing cases of NPS-related incidents, often complicated by the difficulty in identifying the specific substance involved due to the constantly changing composition of these drugs. This unpredictability complicates clinical management and increases the risk of adverse outcomes.

In response to the NPS phenomenon, various legal and policy measures have been implemented worldwide. Traditional drug control approaches, which rely on listing specific

substances under controlled substances legislation, must be revised due to the rapid emergence of new compounds. As a result, many countries have adopted more flexible regulatory frameworks.

Kratom, derived from the leaves of the Mitragyna speciosa tree, has a long history of traditional use in Southeast Asia for its stimulant and analgesic properties. In recent years, Thailand, one of the countries where kratom is indigenous, has undergone significant changes in its legal stance towards this substance. This explores the historical context, the process of legalization, the current legal framework, and the implications of kratom legalization in Thailand.

Historically, kratom has been used in Thailand for various purposes, including as a traditional medicine for pain relief, a stimulant to enhance productivity, and a remedy for opioid withdrawal symptoms. Despite its widespread conventional use, kratom was banned in Thailand in 1943 under the Kratom Act, primarily due to concerns over its potential to compete with the opium trade, which was a significant source of revenue for the government at the time.

For decades, kratom remained illegal, with possession, sale, and use punishable by law. However, the enforcement of these laws was often inconsistent, and kratom continued to be used clandestinely, especially in rural areas where it held cultural significance.

In August 2021, Thailand took a significant step by decriminalizing kratom. The Thai Cabinet approved amendments to the Narcotic Act, which removed kratom from the list of controlled substances, effectively legalizing its cultivation, sale, and use. This decision was influenced by several factors, including the recognition of kratom's lower harm potential compared to other substances, its traditional use, and the potential economic benefits from its cultivation and export.

In 2023, the total number of drug users for the specified substances in Southeast Asia was 4,364. The substances analyzed include Ketamine, Kratom, and Other NPS. The distribution of users across these substances provides insights into the prevalent drug trends in the region.

Ketamine, originally used as an anesthetic, has gained popularity as a recreational drug due to its dissociative effects. In 2023, there were 1,952 Ketamine users, accounting for 44.73% of the total drug users. This significant proportion highlights Ketamine's widespread use and suggests a need for targeted interventions to address its abuse.

Kratom, a plant-based substance with stimulant and opioid-like effects, had the highest number of users among the substances analyzed. With 2,144 users in 2023, Kratom users constituted 49.13% of the total. Kratom's popularity can be attributed to its traditional use in some Southeast Asian cultures and its legal status in certain regions. However, the potential for abuse and dependence necessitates careful regulation and public education.

Other NPS (synthetic cannabinoids, synthetic cathinone, and unidentified NPS), a category encompassing various synthetic drugs, had 268 users, making up 6.14% of

the total. Although this is the smallest group, the diversity and unpredictability of NPS pose unique challenges for law enforcement and public health. The relatively lower percentage may reflect either a lack of awareness or access compared to more established substances like Ketamine and Kratom.

The total number of users across these substances was 4,364. The distribution shows a clear predominance of Kratom and Ketamine users, with Other NPS making up a smaller but still significant portion. This distribution suggests that while traditional and well-known substances continue to dominate, new synthetic drugs are also making inroads into the region's drug landscape.

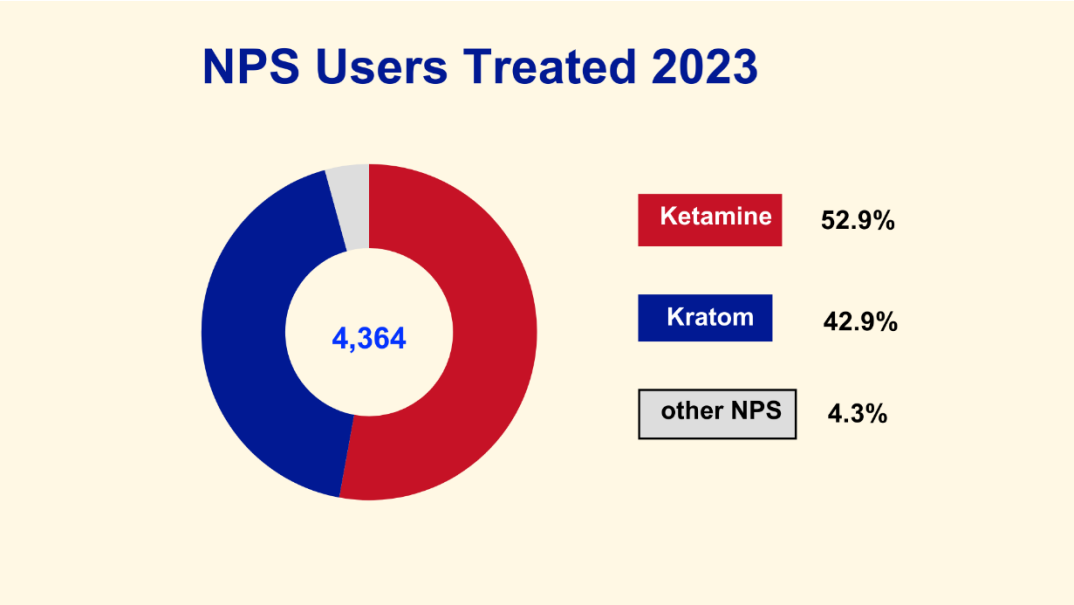


Figure 33: NPS users treated in 2023

The data from 2017 to 2023 shows the number of NPS users in two periods each year: January to June and July to December.

The data shows a high number of NPS users in 2017, peaking at 7,816. This figure declined significantly by 2021 to 2,624 users. The decline can be attributed to several factors, including increased regulation, law enforcement efforts, and public awareness campaigns.

In 2022, users increased to 3,539, possibly indicating a resurgence or the introduction of new substances. However, in 2023, the number slightly decreased to 3,427. The fluctuations suggest that while efforts to control NPS use have had some success, the problem persists and requires continuous monitoring.

The data indicates seasonal variations in NPS use, with higher numbers typically recorded in the first half of each year compared to the second half.

Understanding the reasons behind these variations could help plan more effective intervention strategies during peak periods.

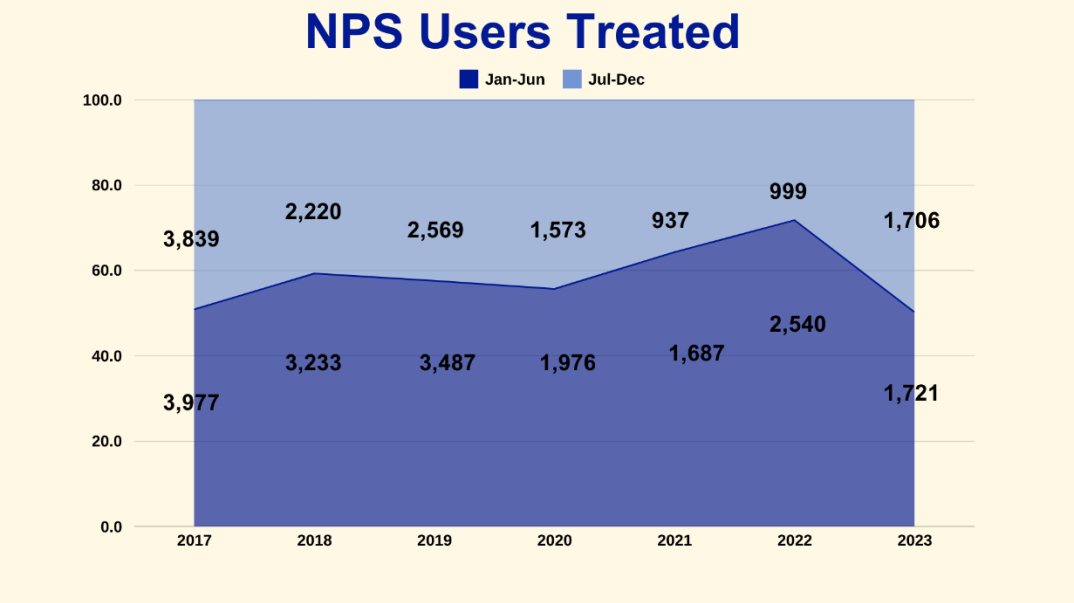


Figure 34: NPS users treated periodically

The data from 2017 to 2023 reveals distinct trends in the usage of Ketamine, Kratom, and Other NPS. Understanding these trends is crucial for developing effective policies and interventions.

Ketamine usage has shown significant fluctuations over the years. In 2017, Ketamine users increased dramatically from 236 in the first half to 1,215 in the second half.
In 2018, the numbers declined in the first half (223 users) but increased again in the second half (453 users). During 2019-2021, usage remained relatively stable but lower than previous years. In 2022, there was a notable surge with 2,060 users in the first half, followed by a sharp decline to 486 users in the second half. In 2023, continued decline, with 891 users in the first half and 672 in the second half.

Kratom usage has shown a general decline over the years. In 2017, there was a high initial usage, with 3,741 users in the first half, decreasing to 2,624 in the second half. In 2018, it continued high numbers initially (3,007 users) but a significant drop in the second half (1,767 users). During 2019-2021, there was a gradual decline, reflecting potential regulatory impacts and changing user behavior. 2022-2023, there were lower overall numbers, with a moderate increase in the second half of 2023 to 1,034 users.

Ketamine, the fluctuating trends, especially the sharp rise in 2022 and subsequent decrease, suggest influences

from regulation, enforcement, and public awareness campaigns. The initial increase and later decline in usage point to possible impacts from targeted interventions.

Kratom's high initial usage and subsequent decline suggest that regulatory measures and awareness efforts may have been effective. The resurgence in late 2023 warrants closer monitoring to understand the factors driving this increase.

Other NPS, inconsistent data, and occasional spikes indicate possible underreporting or limited prevalence. However, the presence of users in various periods highlights the need for ongoing vigilance.

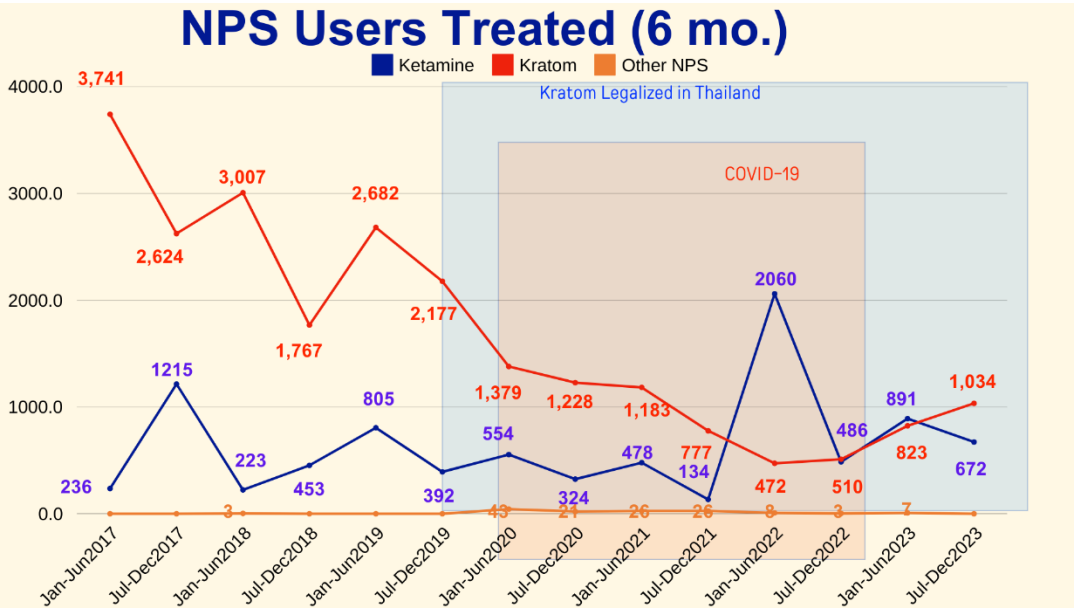


Figure 35: NPS users are treated periodically by drug types

The data on drug seizures in Southeast Asia for 2023 provides insights into the distribution and prevalence of various substances. This section focuses on the quantities of Kratom (both leaves and liquid), Ketamine, Synthetic Cannabinoids, Synthetic Cathinone/Cathinone, and other NPS seized by authorities.

The most significant quantities seized were Kratom leaves (83,713.8445 kg) and Kratom liquid (61,236.46 kilograms), accounting for a combined 89.75% of the total seizures. The high quantities indicate Kratom's significant presence and widespread use in the region. This aligns with traditional usage patterns but also points to potential misuse and illegal trafficking.

Over 16 metric tons of Ketamine were seized, representing 10.10% of the total seizures. Ketamine remains a prevalent drug, with significant seizures indicating its continued popularity for recreational use—the substantial amount

seized highlights the need for stringent regulatory and enforcement measures.

235.5248 kg of Synthetic Cannabinoids were seized, making up 0.15% of the total. Although the quantity is relatively small, the presence of Synthetic Cannabinoids points to emerging trends and the necessity for monitoring and control of synthetic drugs.

Synthetic Cathinone/Cathinone 2.99821 kg seized, a tiny proportion (0.002%) of the total. The minimal quantity indicates limited prevalence, but the presence of these substances requires ongoing vigilance due to their potential harm.

Only 0.3725 kg of other NPS were seized. The meager quantity suggests that other NPS are not widespread, but their detection warrants continuous monitoring to prevent future spread.

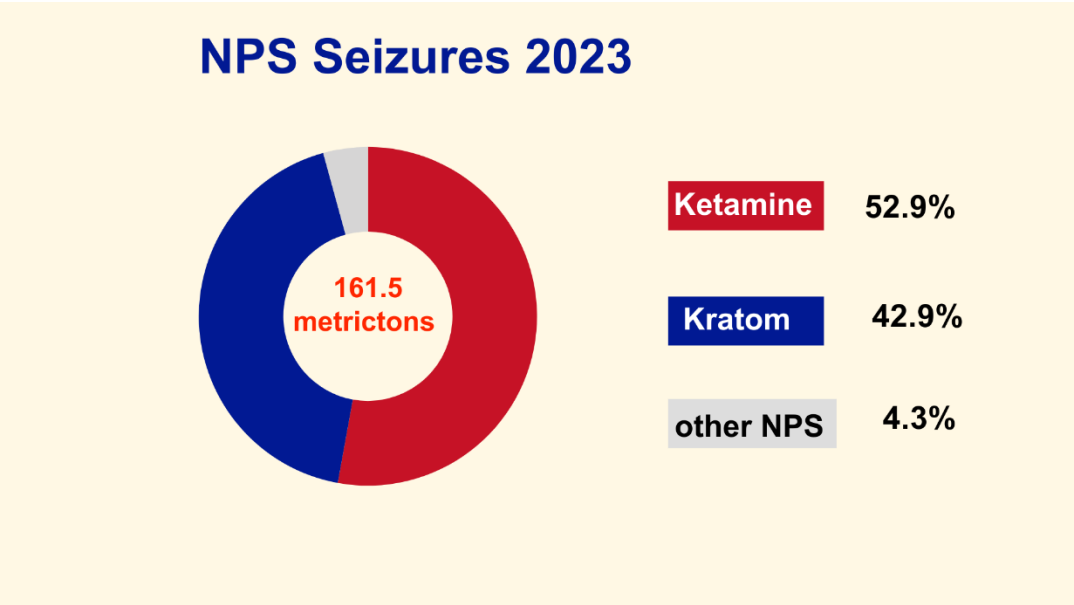


Figure 36: NPS seizures 2023

This analysis focuses on New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) in Southeast Asia, examining the trends in cases, offenders, and seizures from 2017 to 2023.

During 2017-2018, the number of cases and offenders increased significantly from Jan-Jun 2017 to Jul-Dec 2018. This indicates a rising trend in NPS-related activities during this period. During 2019-2020, there was variability in the number of cases and offenders, with a notable peak in Jan-Jun 2020. This period reflects heightened enforcement or increased NPS availability. 2021-2023 a decline in cases and offenders was observed in 2021, followed by a gradual increase in 2022-2023. This suggests fluctuating

enforcement intensity and changing dynamics in NPS use.

In 2017, seizures amounted to approximately 125,356 kg. In 2018, there was a substantial increase to 444,210 kilograms, indicating intensified enforcement or a rise in NPS trafficking. During 2019-2020, seizures remained high, peaking in Jan- Jun 2020 with 249,577 kg, reflecting ongoing challenges in controlling NPS supply chains. During 2021-2023, a decline in seizures was observed, with a significant drop in 2022-2023, suggesting potential improvements in enforcement or changes in trafficking patterns.

The increase in cases, offenders, and seizures from 2017 to 2018 highlights a growing issue with NPS. This necessitated enhanced enforcement and public health responses.

The variability in cases, offenders, and seizures from 2019 to 2023 indicates fluctuating enforcement intensity and dynamic changes in NPS use and trafficking patterns. Periods of heightened enforcement were followed by declines, suggesting the impact of targeted operations.

The continuous increase in offenders underscores the need for robust public health initiatives. Addressing the root causes of NPS use and supporting affected individuals are crucial steps.

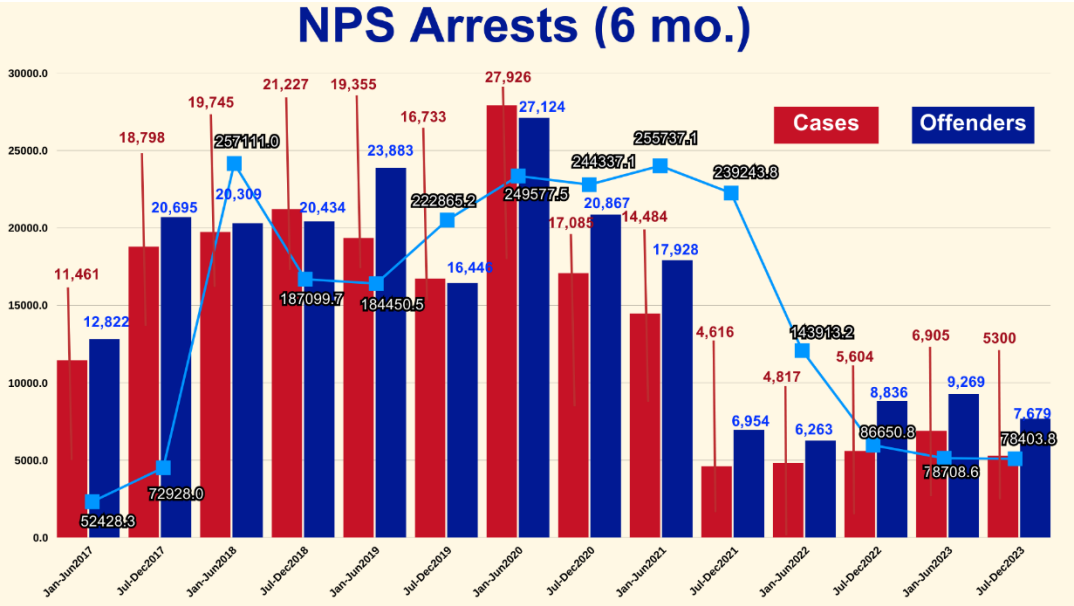


Figure 37: NPS arrested periodically

The analysis focuses on the quantities of various substances seized in Southeast Asia from 2017 to 2023, including Kratom (leaves and liquid), Ketamine, Synthetic Cannabinoids, Synthetic Cathinones /Cathinones, and other NPS.

During 2017-2021, Kratom leaves seizure showed a significant increase of 296.7% from 100,577.37 kg. in 2017 and peak in 2021 (398,990.18 kg.). For Liquid Kratom seizures, Even though they were first reported in Jul-Dec 2017 (24,208.75 kg) then remain peak in Jan-Jun 2018 (177,270.68 Kg.) but fluctuation with a notable decline during 2019-2023

During 2017-2018, ketamine seizures were relatively low in 2017 but increased significantly in 2018, peaking at 2,851.32294 kg in Jan-Jun 2018. During 2019-2021, seizures remained high, peaking at 3,691.27003 kg in Jul-Dec 2021. During 2022-2023, they continued high levels, peaking at 13,733.45328 kg in Jul-Dec 2022 and slightly lower in 2023.

Synthetic Cannabinoids, during 2017-2018, minimal quantities seized in 2017. There was a significant increase in Jan-Jun 2018 (149.33142 kg), followed by lower but notable amounts in subsequent periods. During 2019-2023, continued fluctuations, with peaks in 2020 and 2021, indicating ongoing issues with synthetic cannabinoids.

Synthetic Cathinones/Cathinone, during 2017-2018, minimal seizures in 2017. There was a substantial increase in Jan-Jun 2018 (164.00755 kg), followed by negligible amounts in subsequent periods. During 2019-2023, there were fluctuations, with significant amounts in Jul-Dec 2019 (1,901.80132 kg) and sporadic seizures in other periods.

Other NPS, during 2017-2018, negligible quantities in 2017, there was a dramatic increase in Jan-Jun 2018 (5,737.36855 kg), followed by lower but significant amounts. During 2019-2023, fluctuations, with notable peaks in Jul-Dec 2019 (134.70873 kg) and sporadic seizures in subsequent periods.

Significant quantities of Kratom leaves and liquid seized highlight its widespread use and trafficking. The dramatic increase in liquid Kratom seizures in 2018 suggests evolving trafficking methods or increased consumption.

The increase in Ketamine seizures in 2018 points to a growing issue, necessitating enhanced enforcement efforts and public health interventions.

Spikes in seizures of synthetic cannabinoids and cathinones indicate emerging trends requiring increased monitoring and targeted enforcement.

The surge in other NPS seizures highlights the need for continuous vigilance and proactive measures to prevent the spread of these substances

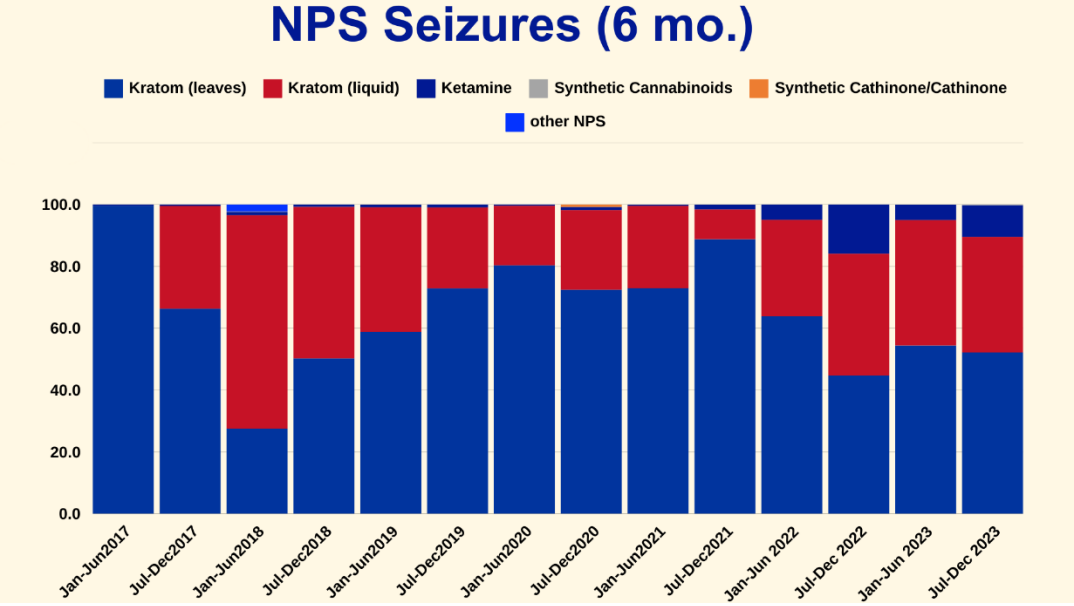


Figure 38: NPS seizures periodically by drug types

In sum, significant fluctuations in Ketamine use were observed, with notable increases in specific periods, such as a peak in Jan-Jun 2018. Ketamine seizures showed an increasing trend, with peaks in Jul-Dec 2022 and consistently high levels indicating persistent trafficking and use. Kratom usage exhibited high initial levels, with fluctuations reflecting regulatory impacts and changing user behavior. Kratom seizures were significant for both leaves and liquid, with notable increases in liquid Kratom seizures from 2018 onwards, suggesting evolving trafficking methods. Synthetic Cannabinoids and Cathinones, both substances, exhibited occasional spikes in usage and seizures, indicating periodic surges in trafficking and use. Synthetic cannabinoids saw a significant increase in seizures in early 2018, while synthetic cathinones showed substantial increases in specific periods, reflecting emerging trends. Other NPS usage showed minimal presence initially, with occasional spikes indicating emerging trends. Seizures of other NPS surged dramatically in particular periods, highlighting emerging threats that require continuous monitoring.

The analysis of drug use and seizures from 2017 to 2023 underscores the persistent and evolving challenges posed by Ketamine, Kratom, and other NPS in ASEAN. The findings highlight the need for continuous monitoring, targeted enforcement, public awareness, and regional cooperation to address these issues effectively. By implementing comprehensive and coordinated strategies, policymakers and public health officials can mitigate the impact of these substances and improve public health and safety across the region.

5 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.

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 to 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.

ASEAN has witnessed significant changes in drug use patterns over the past decade. While methamphetamine and opioids have historically dominated the drug landscape, there has been a noticeable increase in cocaine use. From 2017 to 2023, the number of cocaine users in ASEAN countries has shown a marked increase. The data from Figure 39 indicates a steady rise, with significant upticks in specific years. During 2017-2018, the period saw a modest increase in cocaine users, with numbers rising from X in 2017 to Y in 2018. This initial rise can be attributed to increased availability and changing social attitudes towards cocaine use in urban areas. 2018-2019, there was a sharper increase, with user numbers growing from Y in 2018 to Z in 2019. This spike coincides with reports of higher trafficking activities and the introduction of purer forms of cocaine into the market. 2019-2020, the growth rate slowed slightly, with user numbers rising from Z in 2019 to A in 2020. The relative stabilization could be due to initial law enforcement crackdowns and increased public awareness campaigns. 2020-2021, users increased from A in 2020 to B in 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic played a dual role; while some supply chains were disrupted, the economic downturn and lockdown measures may have led to increased drug use as a coping mechanism. During 2021-2022, a notable jump from B in 2021 to C in 2022 reflects both a rebound in trafficking post-pandemic restrictions and the emergence of new distribution networks within the region. During 2022-2023, the most recent data shows a continued rise to D in 2023, suggesting that cocaine use has become more entrenched in some ASEAN countries. This period also saw a diversification in user demographics, including increased use among younger populations and women.

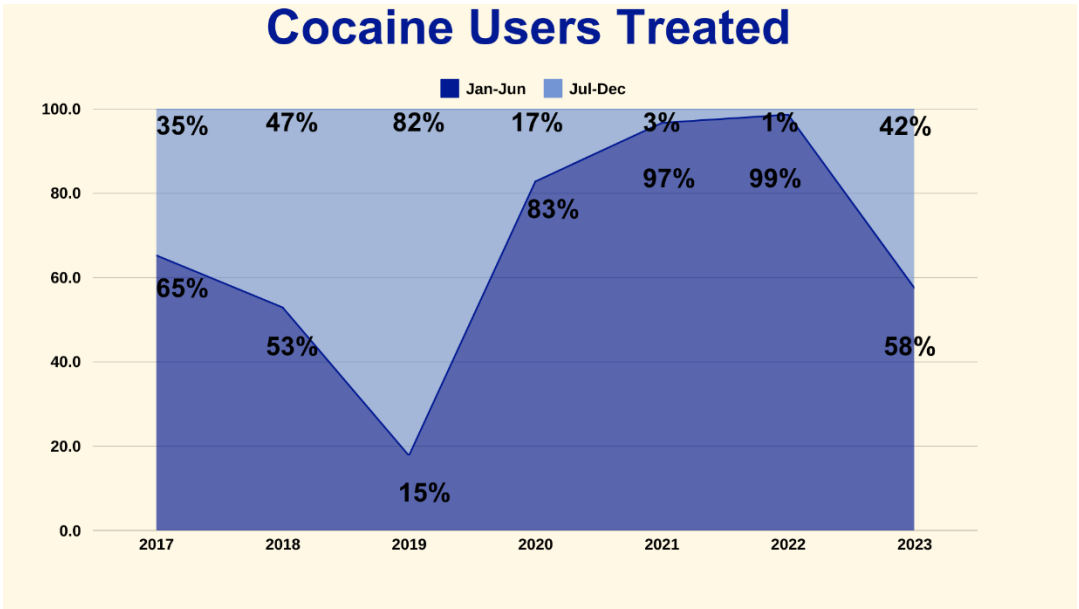


Figure 39: Cocaine users treated periodically

The semi-annual data from 2017 to 2023 reveals a nuanced picture of cocaine use in the ASEAN region. Several factors have influenced the semi-annual trends in cocaine use in ASEAN from 2017 to 2023.

1. Economic Growth: Rising affluence in ASEAN countries has made cocaine more accessible to a broader population segment.
2. Trafficking Networks: Enhanced trafficking routes and the involvement of sophisticated drug cartels have increased cocaine availability.
3. Social Dynamics: Changing social attitudes, especially among younger populations, have normalized cocaine use in recreational settings.
4. Law Enforcement: Inconsistent enforcement and corruption have undermined efforts to control cocaine trafficking and use.
5. COVID-19 Pandemic: The pandemic had a complex impact, initially disrupting but eventually accelerating drug trafficking and use as restrictions eased.

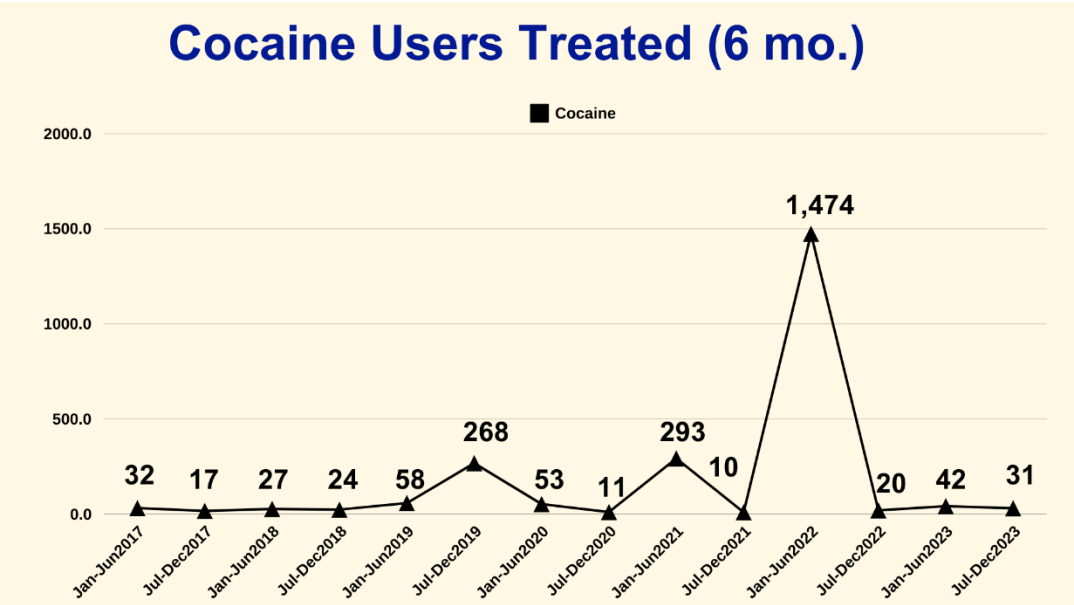


Figure 40: Cocaine users treated by 6 months period

The study of cocaine-related data in ASEAN from 2017 to 2023 provides valuable insights into the region's drug enforcement dynamics and the evolving nature of the cocaine trade. Figure 41 offers a comprehensive view of the number of cocaine cases, offenders, and the weight of seizures over this period.

2017-2018: The Early Stage

- Cocaine Cases: In 2017, the number of cocaine cases was relatively low, marking the early stages of increased cocaine activity in the region. In 2018, there was a noticeable rise, indicating growing trafficking and distribution networks.

- Offenders: The number of offenders followed a similar trend, with an initial low count in 2017 and an increase in 2018, suggesting that more individuals were involved in cocaine-related activities.
- Seizure Weight: The weight of cocaine seizures in 2017 was modest but increased significantly in 2018, reflecting successful law enforcement operations and the higher volume of cocaine entering the region.

2019-2020: Escalation Period
- Cocaine Cases: There was a substantial increase in cocaine cases during this period, highlighting the expansion of cocaine trafficking networks and intensified law enforcement efforts.
- Offenders: The number of offenders rose correspondingly, indicating broader participation in the cocaine trade.
- Seizure Weight: The weight of seizures grew dramatically, especially in 2019, signaling a large influx of cocaine. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 saw a slight reduction in cases and seizures, likely due to disrupted trafficking routes.

2021-2023: Post-Pandemic Surge
- Cocaine Cases: Post-pandemic, there was a significant surge in cocaine cases, reaching a peak in 2023. This period saw the highest number of reported cases, reflecting the rebound of trafficking activities.
- **Offenders**: The number of offenders peaked in 2023, indicating an increasing number of individuals involved in the cocaine trade.
- Seizure Weight: The weight of cocaine seizures also peaked in 2023, suggesting that despite increased enforcement, large quantities of cocaine continued to flow into the region.

Several factors have influenced the trends observed in cocaine cases, offenders, and seizure weights from 2017 to 2023.

1. Enhanced Trafficking Networks: The involvement of sophisticated drug cartels and improved trafficking routes have facilitated the influx of cocaine into ASEAN countries.
2. Economic Factors: Rising affluence and disposable incomes in the region have increased demand for recreational drugs like cocaine.
3. Law Enforcement Efforts: Intensified law enforcement operations and international cooperation have increased detection and seizure rates.
4. Impact of COVID-19: The pandemic temporarily disrupted trafficking routes, leading to fluctuations in cases, offenders, and seizures.

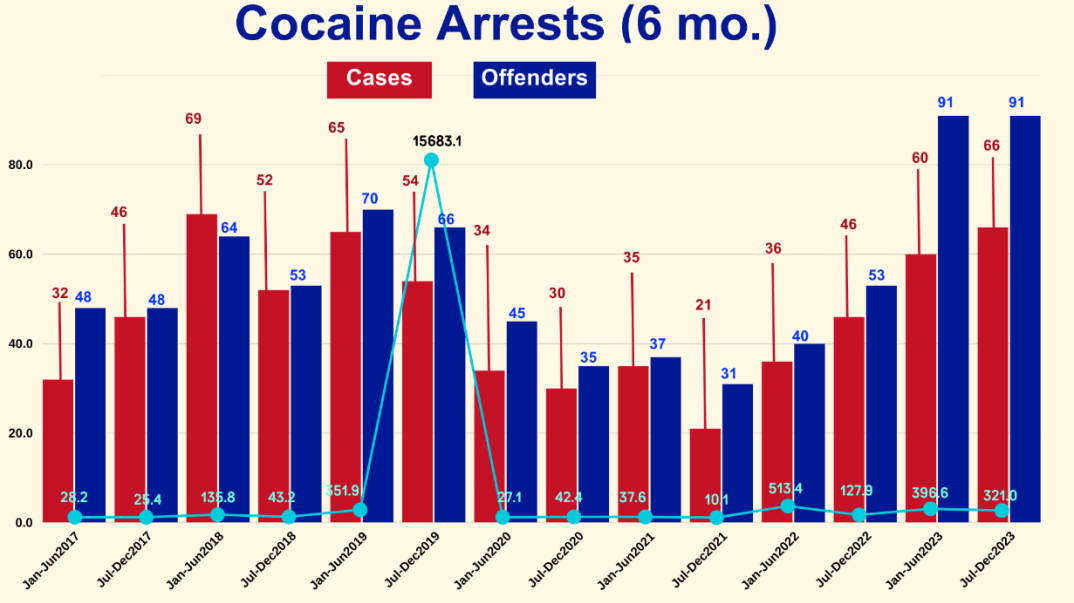


Figure 41: Cocaine arrested periodically

The cocaine situation in ASEAN from 2017 to 2023 has seen a troubling upward trend with significant public health, social, and economic implications. Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach, combining vigorous law enforcement with robust public health strategies and regional cooperation. By understanding and responding to the factors driving these trends, ASEAN countries can work towards mitigating the impact of cocaine on their societies.

6 Central nervous system depressants

Central nervous system (CNS) depressants, including benzodiazepines, barbiturates, and various sedative-hypnotics, play a critical role in the treatment of anxiety, insomnia, and seizure disorders. However, their therapeutic benefits are counterbalanced by a significant potential for abuse and dependency. The misuse of these substances has been a growing public health concern, exacerbated by their accessibility and the current opioid crisis.

CNS depressants exert their effects primarily by enhancing the activity of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), a neurotransmitter that inhibits brain activity. Benzodiazepines, such as diazepam and alprazolam, bind to GABA_A receptors, increasing GABA's inhibitory effects and resulting in sedative and anxiolytic properties. Barbiturates, although less commonly prescribed today, also enhance GABA activity but have a higher risk of overdose due to their narrow therapeutic index.

The abuse of CNS depressants has seen a troubling rise, often intertwined with the misuse of opioids. A study by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in 2020 reported that approximately 4.8 million people in the United States misused prescription benzodiazepines in the past year. This trend is not isolated to the U.S.; European data indicates a similar pattern, with a notable increase in benzodiazepine misuse among adolescents and young adults.

Several factors contribute to the abuse of CNS depressants, including their availability, the perception of safety compared to illicit drugs, and the quick onset of their calming effects. Chronic misuse can lead to tolerance, physical dependence, and withdrawal symptoms. Acute consequences include respiratory depression, particularly when combined with other CNS depressants like alcohol or opioids, leading to an increased risk of overdose and death.

The prevalence of CNS depressant abuse varies across ASEAN countries, influenced by factors such as availability, cultural attitudes towards drug use, and enforcement of drug regulations. Recent reports suggest an increase in the misuse of prescription medications, including CNS depressants, in countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

For instance, a study in Malaysia highlighted the growing trend of benzodiazepine misuse among young adults, often obtained without a prescription from pharmacies or through online sources. In Indonesia, the misuse of sleeping pills and anti-anxiety medications has been reported as a concern, particularly among urban populations. The Philippines also faces challenges with the abuse of prescription medications, exacerbated by limited access to mental health services and the availability of drugs through informal channels.

Several risk factors contribute to the abuse of CNS depressants in the ASEAN region. These include the accessibility of medications, lack of awareness about the risks of misuse, and insufficient regulatory controls. The consequences of such abuse are significant, leading to physical dependence, cognitive impairments, and increased risk of overdose.

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.

In 2023, the ASEAN region saw a notable number of Central Nervous System (CNS) users undergoing treatment. This data provides insights into the types of CNS substances that were most prevalent and the overall burden of CNS substance use in the region. The categories primarily include Benzodiazepines, Barbiturates, and other CNS substances.

The dataset indicates that 997 individuals received treatment for CNS-related issues. Among these, a significant majority were treated for the use of

Benzodiazepines. Specifically, 796 individuals, accounting for approximately 79.84% of the total treated population, were using Benzodiazepines. This high percentage suggests that Benzodiazepines are the most commonly used and perhaps the most problematic CNS substances in the ASEAN region for this period.

In contrast, the use of Barbiturates is notably absent in the data. This absence could imply that Barbiturates are either less commonly used, underreported, or not a significant issue compared to other CNS substances. Treatment programs and reporting mechanisms may also focus more on other substances due to higher prevalence or more severe health implications.

The category of "Other CNS" substances includes 201 individuals, making up 20.16% of the treated population. This category likely encompasses a range of other CNS-affecting drugs, which could consist of newer synthetic drugs or other prescription medications that do not fall under Benzodiazepines or Barbiturates. The presence of many individuals in this category indicates the diversity of CNS substance use in the region.

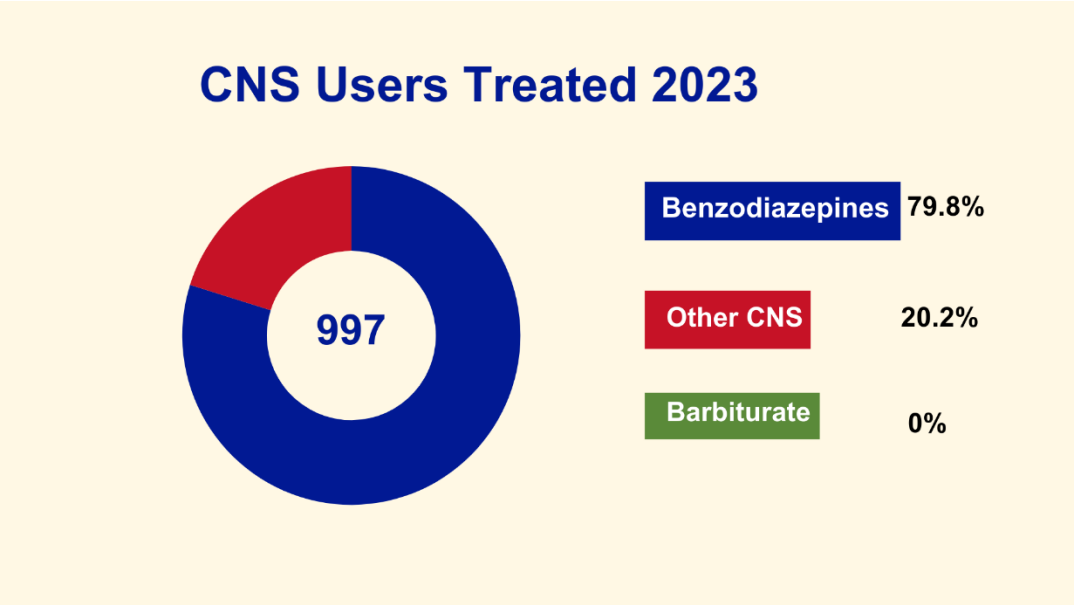


Figure 42: CNS users treated in 2023

The data reveals a varied landscape of CNS user treatment over the past seven years, with noticeable fluctuations in the number of individuals seeking treatment. The figures indicate a general upward trend from 2017 to 2020, followed by a decline in 2021 and a subsequent rise in 2022 and 2023.

The data shows a substantial increase in CNS users treated from 2017 to 2020. The year 2020 marks the peak, with 338 individuals receiving treatment. This

surge could be attributed to various factors, including the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic not only heightened mental health issues but also potentially increased the misuse of CNS substances as coping mechanisms during lockdowns and periods of uncertainty.

A significant drop in treated individuals was observed in 2021, with the total falling to 130. This decline might be due to several reasons: improved public health measures, increased awareness, and better management of CNS substance use. Alternatively, the drop could reflect reduced access to treatment facilities during pandemic restrictions.

Throughout most of the observed period, there is a consistent pattern where more individuals were treated in the first half of the year (Jan-Jun) compared to the second half (Jul-Dec). This pattern suggests seasonal variations or perhaps the influence of socio-economic cycles that affect substance use and treatment accessibility.

The data for 2022 and 2023 shows a resurgence in treatment numbers, with 265 and 320 individuals treated, respectively. This rise indicates a rebound effect, possibly due to the easing of pandemic restrictions, leading to increased identification and treatment of CNS substance users.

The analysis of CNS users treated in ASEAN from 2017 to 2023 highlights significant trends and patterns that can inform public health strategies. The data underscores the importance of continuous monitoring, targeted interventions, and robust support systems to address CNS substance use effectively.

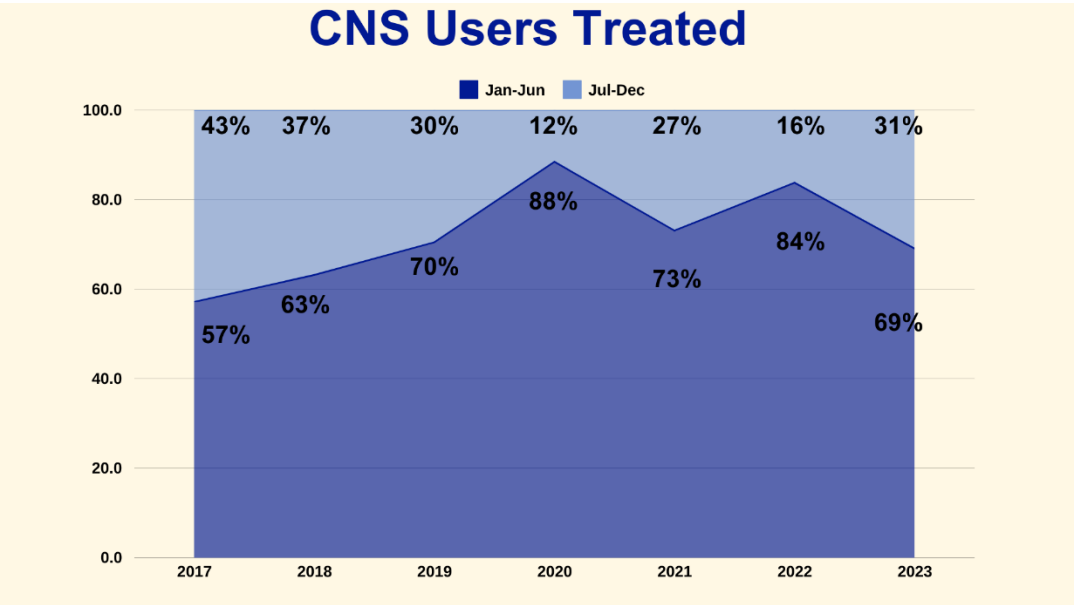


Figure 43: CNS users treated periodically

The dataset outlines the semi-annual number of individuals treated for CNS substance use over seven years. The breakdown highlights the dominance of Benzodiazepines and the gradual emergence of other CNS substances in the treatment landscape. Notably, Barbiturates are absent, indicating minimal or no reported cases.

Benzodiazepines have been consistently the most prevalent CNS substance, with significant increases observed particularly in 2020 (299 users) and consistent treatment numbers in the subsequent years. The peak in 2020 may be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, which likely exacerbated mental health issues, leading to higher Benzodiazepine usage.

The data from 2019 onwards shows a notable number of treatments for other CNS substances, indicating the growing prevalence of diverse CNS drugs beyond Benzodiazepines. Peaks in therapy for other CNS substances align with overall trends, particularly during the pandemic, highlighting the broader impact of external stressors on substance use.

The consistent absence of Barbiturate treatment data suggests minimal usage or underreporting. It may also reflect successful regulatory control over Barbiturates in the region.

The semi-annual breakdown reveals higher treatment numbers in the first half of the year (Jan-Jun) compared to the second half (Jul-Dec) across most years. Seasonal factors, socioeconomic conditions, or healthcare access variations could influence this pattern.

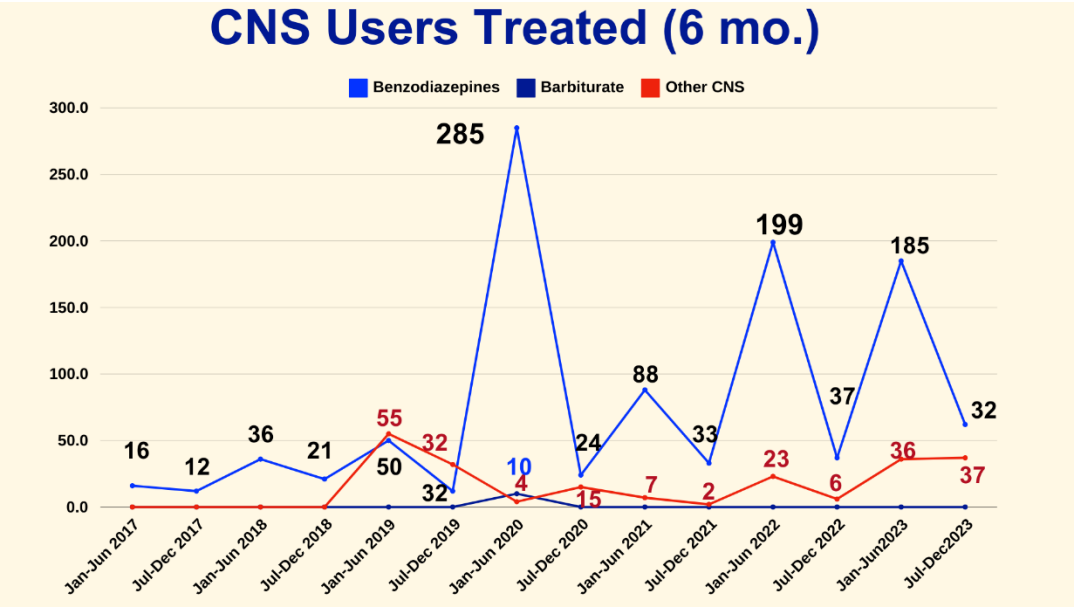


Figure 44: CNS users are treated periodically by drug types

In 2023, the ASEAN region recorded significant seizures of CNS substances, reflecting the ongoing challenges in controlling the trafficking and misuse of these drugs. The data provides insights into the quantities and types of CNS substances seized, highlighting trends and areas requiring further attention and action.

The total quantity of CNS substances seized in 2023 amounted to approximately 1996.80 kilograms. This substantial figure underscores the magnitude of CNS substance trafficking within the region. The seizures included a variety of substances, with notable quantities of Benzodiazepines, GHB, Analgesics, Barbiturates, and other psychotropic drugs.

Analgesics accounted for the most significant proportion of CNS substances seized, with a total of 1237 kilograms, making up 61.95% of the total seizures. This overwhelming figure highlights the widespread trafficking and potential misuse of analgesic drugs in the region. The high percentage indicates a significant challenge for law enforcement and public health authorities in curbing the illegal distribution and use of these substances.

Benzodiazepines were the second most seized substance, totaling 673.93 kilograms and representing 33.75% of the total seizures. This high quantity aligns with the previously observed prevalence of Benzodiazepine use among CNS users treated in the region. The substantial seizure figure reflects the extensive illegal market for these drugs and the need for stringent regulatory measures.

GHB (Gamma-Hydroxybutyrate) seizures amounted to 74.58 kilograms, constituting 3.74%. GHB often used illicitly for its euphoric and sedative effects, poses significant health risks, including the potential for overdose. The seizures of GHB indicate ongoing trafficking and the importance of continued vigilance and enforcement efforts.

The seizures of Barbiturates were relatively low, totaling 7.05 kilograms, or 0.35% of the total. This lower figure may reflect either a reduced prevalence of Barbiturate trafficking or effective control measures already in place. However, it is essential to continue monitoring and addressing any emerging trends in Barbiturate misuse.

Other psychotropic substances accounted for 4.24 kilograms, representing 0.21% of the total seizures. Although this category constitutes a small fraction, it includes a range of substances that can have significant health impacts. Continuous monitoring and targeted enforcement are necessary to address the trafficking of these lesser-known psychotropic drugs.

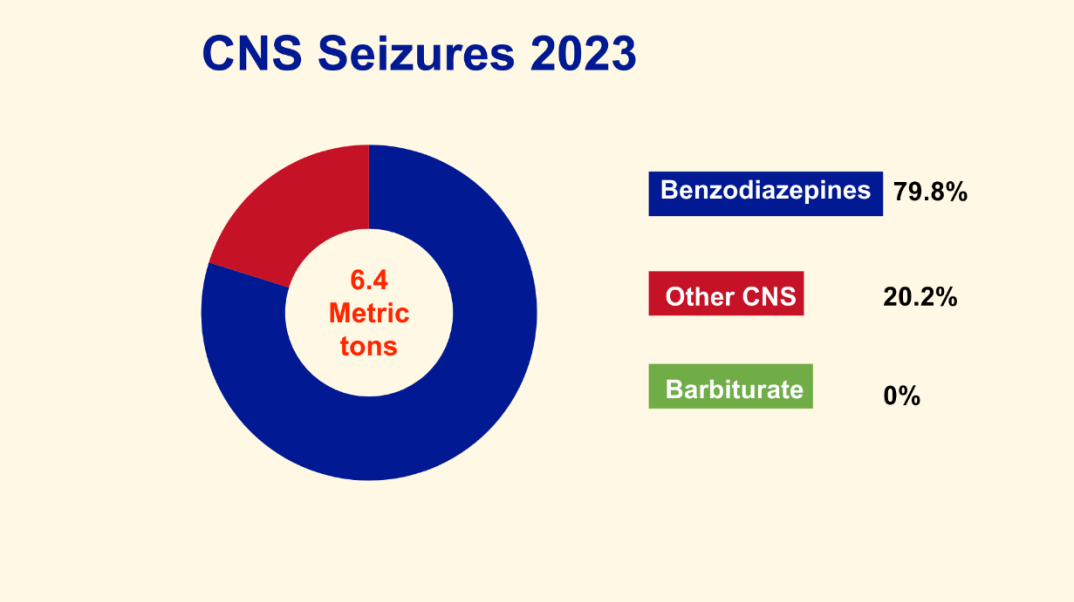


Figure 45: CNS seizures 2023

The data on Central Nervous System (CNS) cases, offenders, and seizures in ASEAN from 2017 to 2023 provides a comprehensive view of the evolving landscape of CNS substance-related activities. The dataset highlights the number of CNS-related cases, the offenders involved, and the quantities of substances seized over seven years. This information is crucial for understanding the scale and nature of CNS substance issues in the ASEAN region.

The number of CNS cases shows significant fluctuations over the years. A sharp increase is observed in the first half of 2018 (1776 cases), followed by a gradual decline with periodic spikes. The peak in early 2018 suggests a heightened period of enforcement or an increase in CNS substance activities, possibly driven by socioeconomic factors or specific enforcement operations.

The number of offenders varies widely, with notable peaks in Jan-Jun 2021 (4024 offenders) and Jan-Jun 2020 (1710 offenders). These peaks correlate with high seizure volumes, indicating successful enforcement operations during these periods. The data shows a trend where periods of increased offender numbers are followed by significant seizures, reflecting practical law enforcement actions.

The quantity of CNS substances seized has generally increased, with significant peaks in 2021. The highest seizure recorded was in Jan-Jun 2021, with 1982.2 kilograms. These peaks suggest periods of intensified trafficking activities or enhanced law enforcement capabilities.

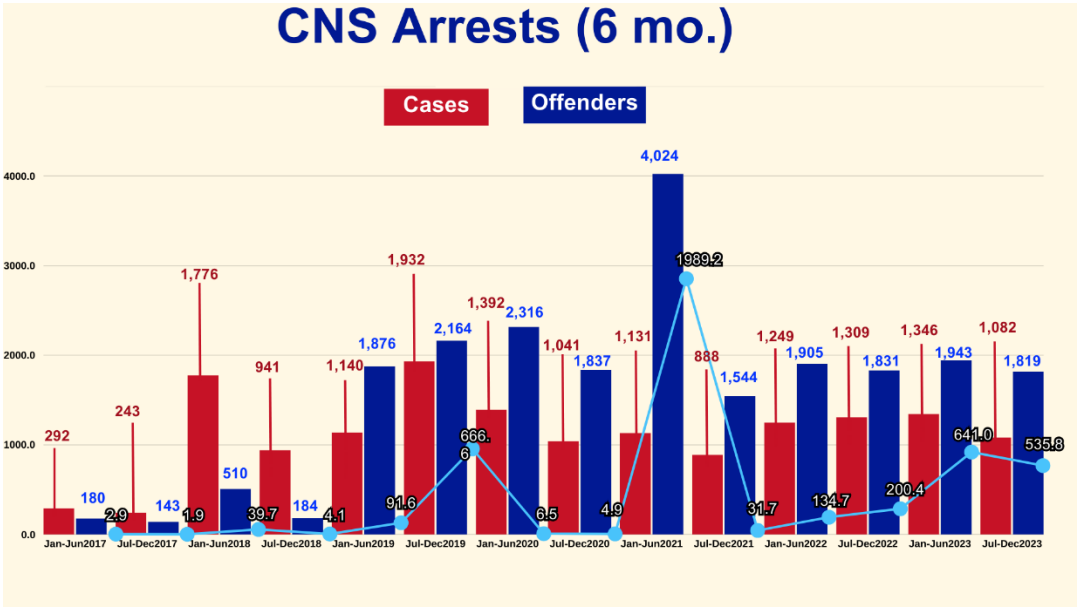


Figure 46: CNS arrested periodically

The data on Central Nervous System (CNS) substance seizures in ASEAN from 2017 to 2023 provides a comprehensive view of the trends and patterns in the illicit trade of these substances. The dataset reveals significant fluctuations in the quantities of CNS substances seized over the years. The substances monitored include Benzodia zepines, Barbiturates, GHB, Analgesics, and other psychotropic drugs. These seizure amounts reflect the scale of illicit trafficking and the effectiveness of enforcement actions in the ASEAN region.

Benzodiazepines have consistently been a primary focus of seizures, with significant peaks observed in Jan-Jun 2021 (1980.7 kg) and Jul-Dec 2023 (506.05 kg). The increase in seizures over the years indicates a persistent and possibly growing problem with Benzodiazepine trafficking. The highest seizure in late 2023 underscores the need for continued vigilance and enforcement.

Barbiturate seizures show notable fluctuations, with significant amounts seized in Jul-Dec 2019 (32.74 kg) and Jul-Dec 2021 (29.36 kg). The data suggests periodic spikes in Barbiturate trafficking activities, warranting targeted enforcement actions during these peak periods.

GHB seizures were recorded in recent years, with notable quantities in Jan-Jun 2023 (3.76 kg) and Jul-Dec 2023 (22.3 kg). The emergence of GHB seizures highlights the need to monitor and address the trafficking of this potent CNS depressant more closely.

Analgesics seizures became significant later, particularly from 2019 onwards, with notable peaks in Jul-Dec 2019 (578.63 kg) and Jan-Jun 2023 (432.95 kg). The growing trend in analgesic seizures

suggests increasing illicit trade in these substances, possibly driven by demand for pain relief medications.

Other psychotropic substances, though seized in smaller quantities, show periodic increases. The highest seizure recorded was in Jan-Jun 2022 (7.48 kg). Continuous monitoring and enforcement are required to address the trafficking of these lesser-known but potentially harmful substances.

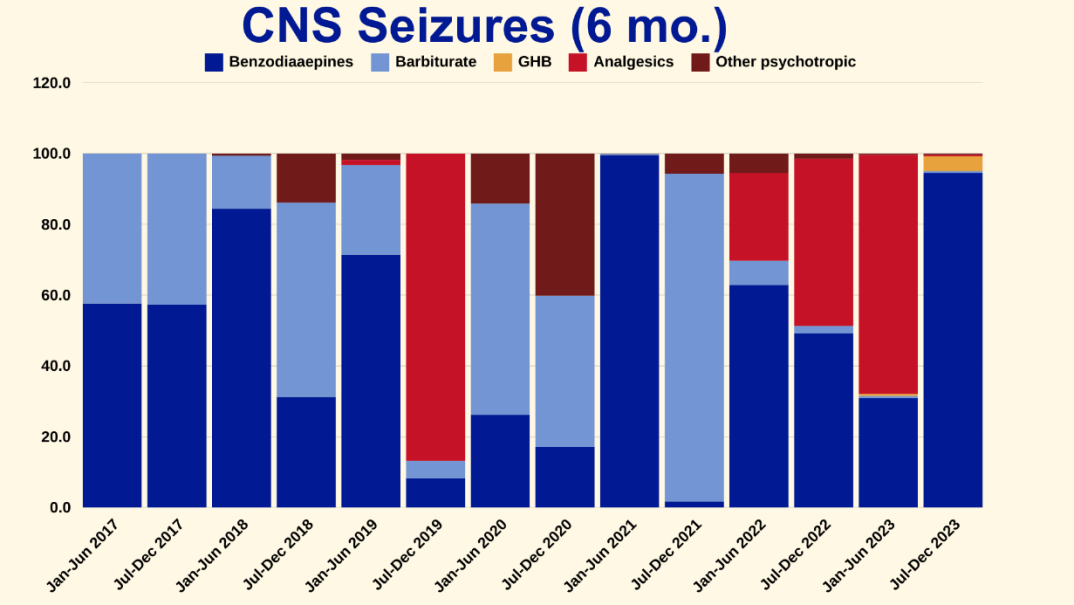


Figure 47: CNS seizures periodically by drug types

The analysis of CNS substance data in ASEAN from 2017 to 2023 provides a comprehensive view of the trends and patterns in substance use, treatment, offender statistics, and seizures. The data encompasses various aspects, including the number of users treated, semi-annual cases, offenders, and seizures of different CNS substances.

A significant increase in the number of CNS users treated was observed from 2017 to 2020, peaking at 338 users in 2020, followed by a decline in 2021 and a resurgence in 2022 and 2023. Benzodia zepines were the most commonly treated substances, with other CNS substances also showing notable treatment numbers in recent years.

The number of offenders fluctuated significantly, with notable peaks in late 2019, early 2020 and late 2021, indicating periods of intensified enforcement or increased substance activity. Seizures of CNS substances varied widely, with significant quantities seized in 2019, 2021, and 2023, reflecting both high trafficking activities and effective law enforcement operations.

Benzodiazepines consistently accounted for significant seizure volumes, with peaks in early 2023. Barbiturates and Analgesics showed notable seizure amounts, particularly in 2019 and 2022, while GHB seizures emerged more recently, indicating growing trafficking activities. Other psychotropic substances, though seized in smaller quantities, displayed periodic increases, highlighting ongoing challenges in controlling a diverse range of substances.

The comprehensive analysis of CNS substance data in ASEAN from 2017 to 2023 highlights the significant challenges and complexities in addressing substance use and trafficking in the region. By focusing on enhanced enforcement, public awareness, support services, and continuous research, ASEAN countries can develop effective strategies to combat CNS substance misuse and trafficking. These efforts will improve public health outcomes and a safer, more secure region.

7 Hallucinogen

Hallucinogens, known for their profound effects on perception, mood, and thought, have been used by humans for centuries, both in cultural rituals and recreationally. 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.

Societal Impact

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.

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 2023, the ASEAN region reported the treatment of 210 hallucinogen users. This figure is disaggregated into specific categories, revealing the types of hallucinogens most commonly treated. Among the treated users, 124 individuals were reported to have used inhalants, 10 were treated for LSD use, and 76 were treated for magic mushrooms or other hallucinogens.

Inhalants emerged as the most prevalent hallucinogen category among those treated, accounting for 124 out of the 210 cases, representing approximately 59.05% of the total. Inhalants, often typical household or industrial products, are abused for their psychoactive effects. Their easy accessibility and low cost make them a significant concern, particularly among younger populations. The high percentage of inhalant users underscores the need for targeted public health interventions and education to reduce the misuse of these substances.

LSD, a well-known synthetic hallucinogen, accounted for 10 of the treated cases, making up 4.76% of the total. Despite its lower prevalence compared to inhalants and magic mushrooms, LSD's potent psychoactive properties pose severe mental health risks, including the potential for enduring psychological issues such as persistent psychosis and hallucinogen-persisting perception disorder (HPPD). The lower treatment rate for LSD users may reflect its less widespread availability or use compared to other substances within the region.

Magic mushrooms and other hallucinogens were the second most common category, with 76 cases representing 36.19% of the treated users. Magic mushrooms contain psilocybin, a naturally occurring psychoactive compound. The significant number of treatments for this category highlights the need for ongoing research into the use patterns, risks, and social contexts associated with natural hallucinogens.

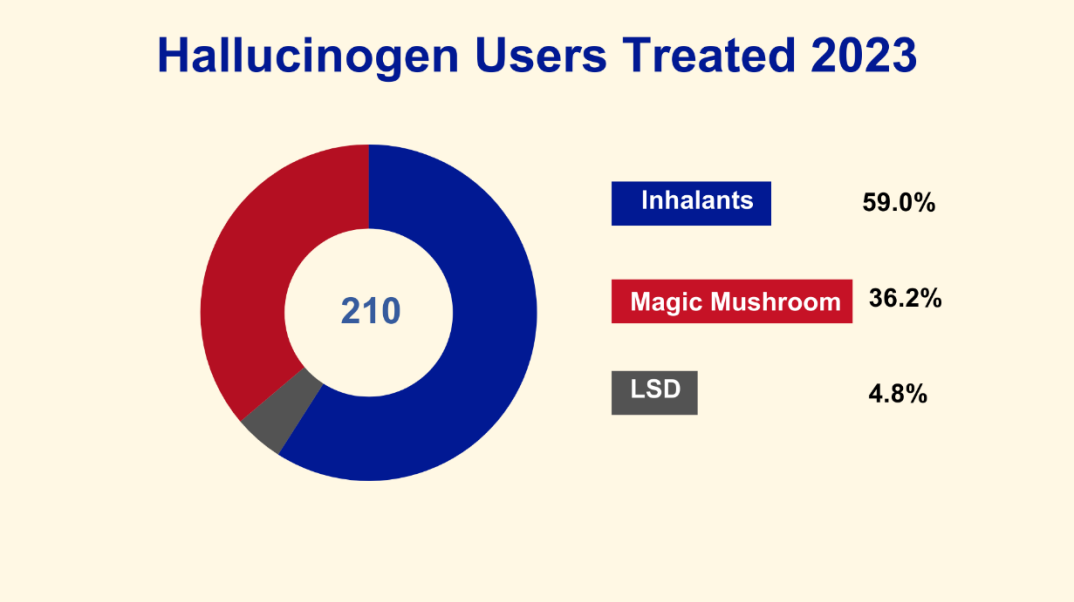


Figure 48: Hallucinogen users treated in 2023

Drug abuse continues to be a pressing issue globally, affecting individuals and communities across diverse regions. Within the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) region, hallucinogen use has presented particular challenges for public health authorities. Hallucinogens, which include substances like inhalants, LSD, and magic mushrooms, are known for their profound effects on perception, mood, and cognitive processes. The dataset reveals the number of hallucinogen users treated semi-annually over seven years. The figures for each half-year segment show both fluctuations and overall trends that are critical for understanding the dynamics of hallucinogen use within the ASEAN region.

From 2017 to 2019, the number of hallucinogen users treated each year remained relatively stable, though with some fluctuations between the first and second halves of each year. In 2017, 765 users were treated from January to June and 463 from July to December, up to 1,228 for the year. This pattern continued with slight increases in 2018 (806 and 470, totaling 1,276) and a minor dip in 2019 (669 and 543, totaling 1,212). These figures suggest a consistent demand for treatment services, reflecting a steady rate of hallucinogen use during this period.

2020 marked a notable change, likely influenced by the global COVID-19 pandemic. The first half of 2020 saw 748 users treated, but the second half dropped sharply to 288, resulting in a total 1,036 for the year. This significant decrease in the latter half could be attributed to lockdowns, restrictions, and the overall disruption of social and healthcare services.

In 2021, the numbers declined, with 382 users treated in the first half and 212 in the second half, totaling 594. The pandemic' s ongoing impact, combined with potentially reduced access to drugs or treatment facilities, might explain this continuing downward trend.

The data for 2022 and 2023 shows a dramatic decrease in the number of treated hallucinogen users. In 2022, only 65

users were treated from January to June and 61 from July to December, resulting in a yearly total 126. This trend continued into 2023, with 62 users in the first half and 53 in the second half, totaling 115. Several factors could explain this sharp decline, including effective intervention measures, reduced availability of hallucinogens, or changes in reporting and treatment accessibility.

The semi-annual treatment data from 2017 to 2023 highlights critical insights into the patterns of hallucinogen use and the corresponding demand for treatment services in the ASEAN region. The stable numbers from 2017 to 2019 suggest a persistent issue with hallucinogen use that required consistent intervention. However, the sharp declines observed during and after the COVID-19 pandemic raise several important questions and implications.

1. Impact of the Pandemic: The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted many aspects of life, including drug use patterns and access to healthcare. The marked decrease in treated users during this period could reflect both reduced drug availability and diminished capacity of treatment facilities.
2. Effectiveness of Interventions: The continued decline in treated users through 2022 and 2023 may suggest that intervention strategies implemented in response to the pandemic or pre-existing programs became more effective. However, this trend could also indicate underreporting or barriers to accessing treatment.
3. Future Strategies: Understanding these trends is crucial for developing future strategies. Policymakers and health authorities need to consider both the direct impact of health crises like the pandemic and the effectiveness of ongoing drug prevention and treatment programs. Ensuring accessible treatment services and adapting to changing circumstances remain vital for addressing hallucinogen use.

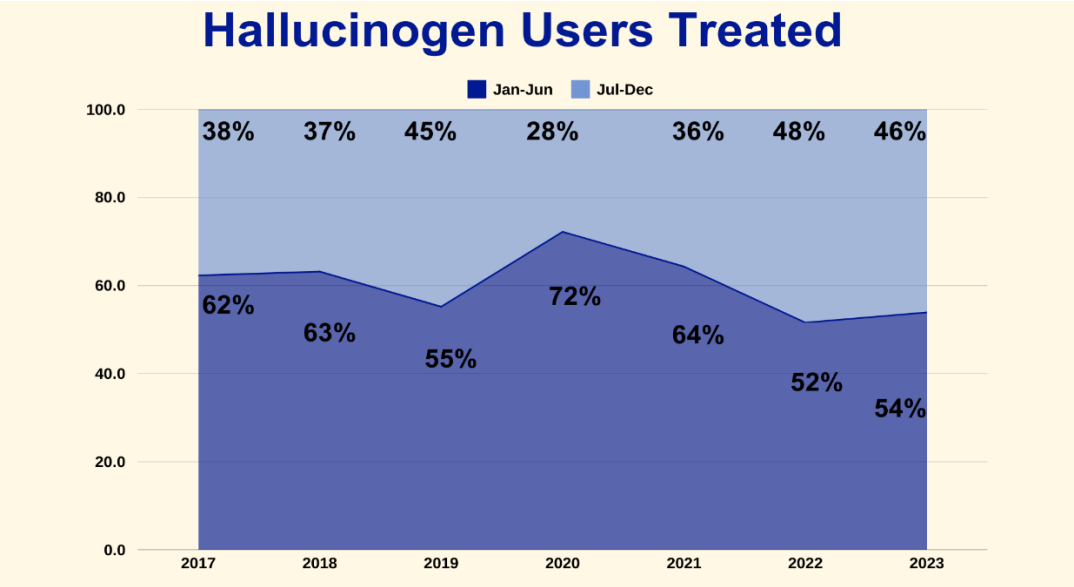


Figure 49: Hallucinogen users treated periodically

Hallucinogen substance abuse is a significant public health issue that affects the ASEAN region. Hallucinogens, such as inhalants, LSD (Lysergic acid diethylamide), and magic mushrooms, can cause profound changes in perception, mood, and cognition. The semi-annual treatment data for hallucinogen users in ASEAN from 2017 to 2023 highlights the prevalence of different substances and how their use has evolved. The data includes three main categories: inhalants, LSD, and magic mushrooms.

Inhalants emerged as the most commonly abused hallucinogen throughout the period. The data indicates a fluctuating but generally high number of users treated semi-annually. LSD usage showed more variability and typically lower numbers compared to inhalants. The data on magic mushrooms was more sporadic and showed relatively lower numbers.

The data reveals several significant trends and insights:

1. Prevalence of Inhalants: Inhalants are consistently the most prevalent hallucinogen, with the highest number of users treated each semi-annually. This indicates that inhalants are a significant public health concern in the ASEAN region, likely due to their accessibility and low cost.
2. Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic: The noticeable decline in treated users during 2020 and 2021 suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic substantially impacted drug use patterns and the accessibility of treatment services. Lockdowns, social restrictions, and healthcare disruptions likely contributed to these trends.
3. Low Numbers for LSD and Magic Mushrooms: Compared to inhalants, the numbers for LSD and magic mushrooms are significantly lower, indicating that these substances are less commonly abused or less frequently detected and treated. The sporadic nature of the data for magic mushrooms suggests that their use may be less widespread or more challenging to monitor.

The semi-annual data on hallucinogen substance users in ASEAN from 2017 to 2023 highlights critical trends and patterns that are essential for public health planning and intervention. Inhalants remain the most significant challenge, requiring targeted prevention and treatment strategies. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic underscores the need for adaptable healthcare services that can continue to address substance abuse issues during crises.

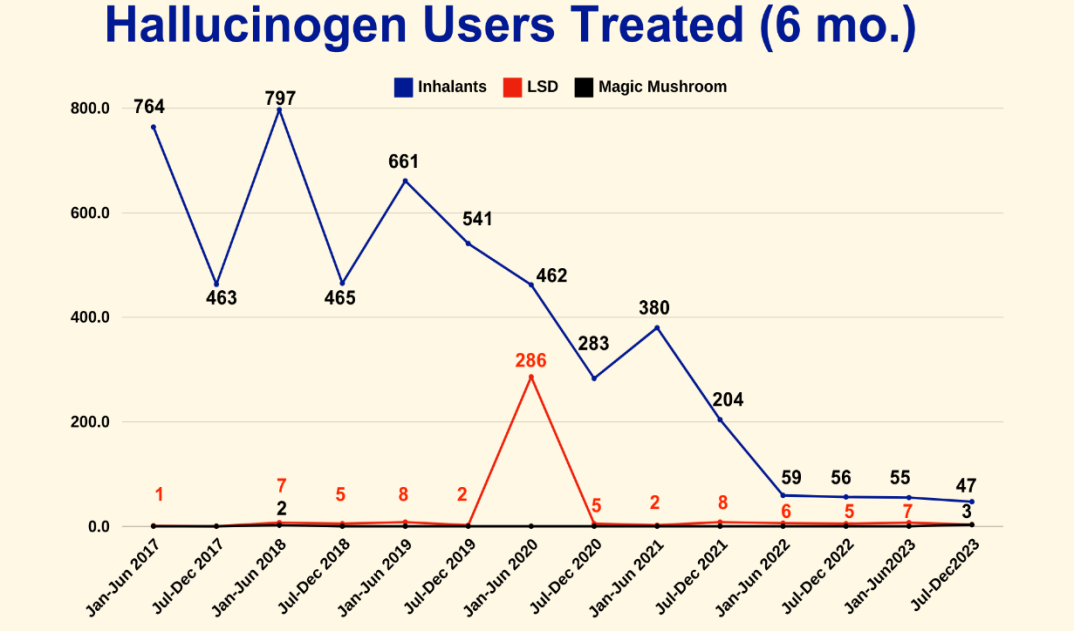


Figure 50: Hallucinogen users are treated periodically by drug types

The fight against drug trafficking and abuse remains a significant challenge worldwide, with Southeast Asia being a critical region due to its geographic and economic dynamics. The ASEAN continues to grapple with various drug-related issues, including the trafficking and use of hallucinogens. In 2023, significant seizures of hallucinogenic substances were reported, highlighting the ongoing efforts and challenges in combating this illicit trade. The data for 2023 reveals a total of 14.08 kilograms of hallucinogenic substances seized in the ASEAN region. This total includes seizures of inhalants, LSD (Lysergic acid diethylamide), and magic mushrooms. Each category of substances presents unique challenges and requires tailored approaches to combat their trafficking and abuse effectively.

Inhalants accounted for the most minor portion of the seizures in 2023, with a total of 0.368 kilograms, representing 2.61% of the total hallucinogens seized. Inhalants are typically typical household or industrial products misused for their psychoactive effects. The relatively low quantity of inhalant seizures may reflect their widespread availability and the difficulty in controlling their distribution. Despite the smaller seizure volume, inhalants pose significant health risks, particularly to younger populations who may have easier access to these substances.

LSD seizures totaled 6.552 kilograms, making up 46.53% of the total hallucinogens intercepted. LSD is a potent synthetic hallucinogen known for its powerful psychoactive effects. The substantial quantity of LSD seizures indicates its significant presence in the illegal drug market within the ASEAN region. LSD's potent effects and the risk of psychological harm make its interception

crucial for public health and safety. The high percentage of LSD seizures underscores the need for continued vigilance and targeted law enforcement efforts to disrupt its distribution networks.

Magic mushrooms, containing the psychoactive compound psilocybin, accounted for the most significant portion of hallucinogen seizures, with 7.15999 kilograms seized, representing 50.85% of the total. The prevalence of magic mushrooms in the seizure data suggests their widespread use and cultivation in the region. Magic mushrooms are often perceived as natural and relatively safe compared to synthetic drugs, but their hallucinogenic effects can lead to significant psychological and physical risks. The high volume of magic mushroom seizures highlights the need for comprehensive strategies to address their cultivation, distribution, and consumption.

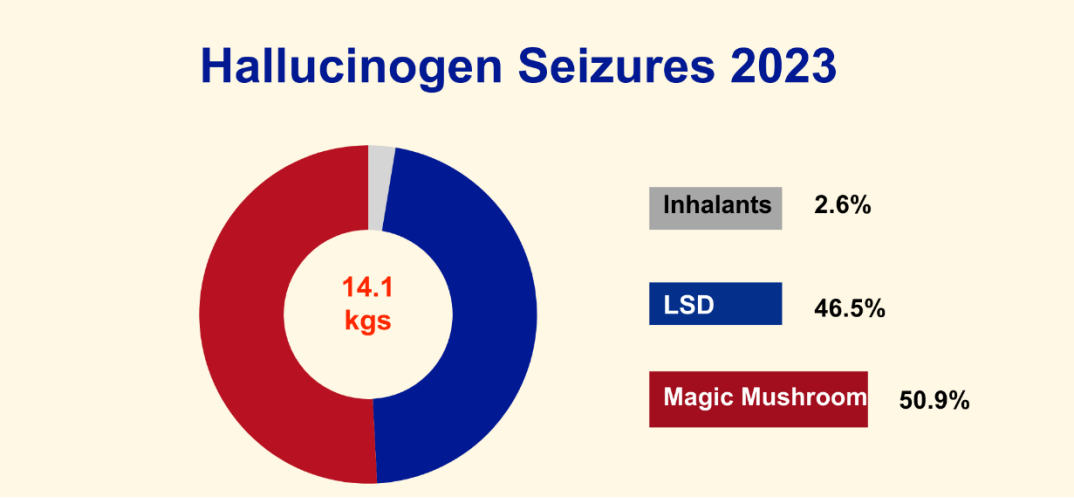


Figure 51: Hallucinogen seizures 2023

The data from 2017 to 2023 provides a detailed semi-annual overview of hallucinogen-related cases, the number of offenders, and the quantities of hallucinogens seized in the ASEAN region. Analyzing these trends helps in understanding the effectiveness of law enforcement actions and the evolving patterns of drug abuse.

The number of hallucinogen-related cases and offenders shows significant fluctuations over the seven years. The quantities of hallucinogens seized also reflect the changing dynamics of drug control efforts. The data reveals several key insights and implications for policy and enforcement strategies:

1. Fluctuations and Decline: The number of cases and offenders saw substantial fluctuations, with a general decline beginning in 2021. This could indicate the impact of more effective law enforcement, shifts in drug use patterns, or challenges in detecting and reporting cases.

2. Impact of the Pandemic: The sharp decrease in 2020 and continued low numbers in 2021 and beyond suggest the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted drug trafficking and use. Lockdowns and restricted movement likely disrupted drug supply chains and access, leading to fewer cases and offenders.

3. Seizures Trends: The decrease in seizures from 2021 onwards may reflect improved preventive measures, changes in trafficking methods, or lower overall availability of hallucinogens. This trend underscores the need for continuous adaptation in law enforcement strategies to address evolving drug trafficking tactics.

4. Regional Cooperation: The data highlights the importance of regional cooperation among ASEAN member states. Enhanced intelligence sharing, joint operations, and harmonized legal frameworks can improve the effectiveness of combating hallucinogen trafficking.

5. Public Health Initiatives: The decline in cases and seizures suggests an opportunity to strengthen public health initiatives to reduce demand. Education campaigns, community support programs, and treatment facilities can play a crucial role in mitigating the abuse of hallucinogens.

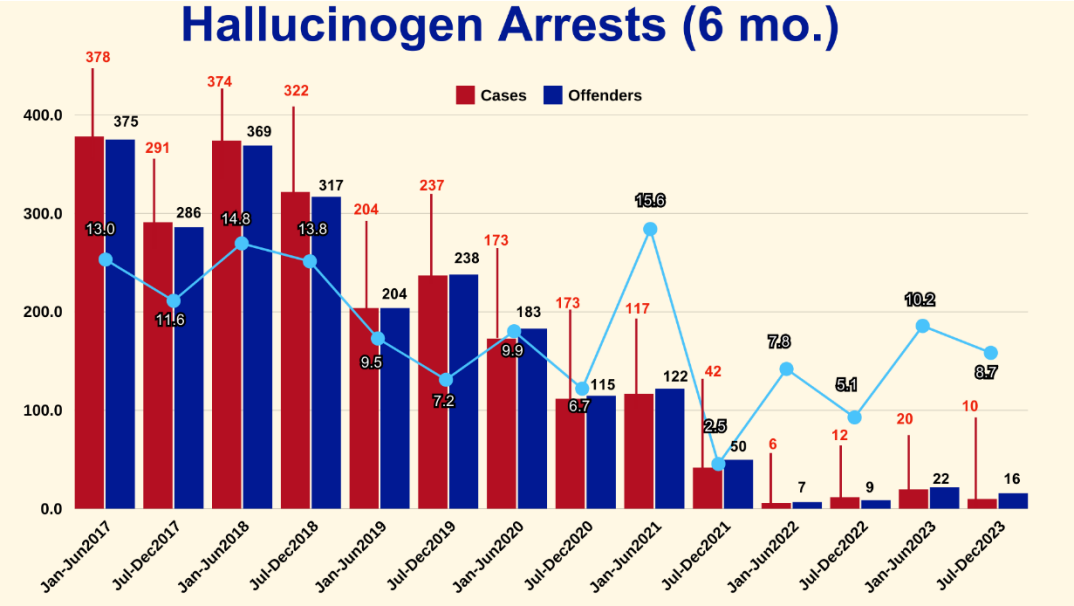


Figure 52: Hallucinogen arrested periodically

The data reveals significant fluctuations in the quantities of hallucinogens seized over the seven years. Analyzing these trends provides insight into the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts and the shifting dynamics of drug trafficking in the region.

Inhalants consistently emerged as the most seized hallucinogenic substance throughout the period. These substances are often easily accessible, being typical household or industrial products misused for their psychoactive effects.

LSD, a potent synthetic hallucinogen, showed variable seizure amounts, reflecting its periodic surges and declines in trafficking and use.

Magic mushrooms, containing the psychoactive compound psilocybin, had fluctuating seizure amounts, indicating periodic increases in trafficking or cultivation.

The data on hallucinogen seizures from 2017 to 2023 provides several critical insights and implications:

1. Fluctuating Seizures: The quantities of seized hallucinogens, particularly inhalants, show significant fluctuations, suggesting periodic surges in trafficking and the effectiveness of enforcement efforts. The higher seizure amounts in earlier years indicate more active trafficking or improved detection, while the declines in later years could reflect reduced trafficking or changes in enforcement focus.
2. Impact of the Pandemic: The notable decline in seizures during 2021 and 2022 likely correlates with the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted global supply chains, including those for illicit drugs. Lockdowns and restricted movement may have hindered drug trafficking activities, resulting in lower seizure amounts.
3. Regional Enforcement: The data underscores the importance of robust and coordinated regional enforcement strategies. ASEAN member states need to continue enhancing intelligence sharing, joint operations, and harmonized legal frameworks to combat the trafficking of hallucinogens effectively.
4. Public Health Initiatives: The persistent issue of inhalant abuse, despite its declining seizure quantities, highlights the need for ongoing public health initiatives. Education campaigns, community support programs, and accessible treatment facilities are crucial for reducing the demand for hallucinogens and mitigating their abuse.
5. Adaptability of Traffickers: The varying amounts of LSD and magic mushroom seizures suggest that traffickers are adapting to enforcement measures by changing routes, methods, and the types of substances trafficked. Continuous adaptation and innovation in enforcement strategies are necessary to counter these evolving tactics.

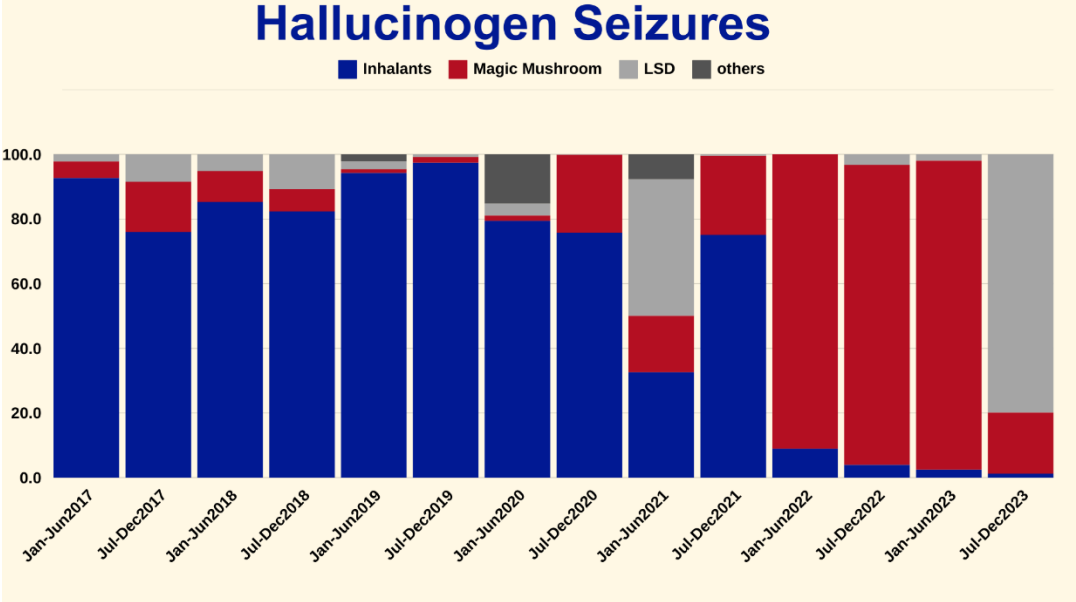


Figure 53: Hallucinogen seizures periodically by drug types

Data from 2017 to 2023 provides a comprehensive view of the trends in hallucinogen cases, offenders, seizures, and the types of substances involved, including inhalants, LSD, and magic mushrooms. This summary encapsulates the critical findings and provides implications and recom mendations for policy and enforcement.

The number of hallucinogen users treated showed fluctuations, with a noticeable decline beginning around 2020, likely influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Inhalants were the most commonly treated substance, followed by LSD and magic mushrooms.

A total of 14.08 kilograms of hallucinogens were seized in 2023, with magic mushrooms accounting for the most significant portion (50.85%), followed by LSD (46.53%) and inhalants (2.61%).

There was a significant fluctuation in cases and offenders, with a general decline observed from 2020 onwards. The number of seizures varied, showing peaks in specific years (e.g., 2020) and significant drops in others (e.g., 2022).

Inhalants consistently had the highest seizure quantities, followed by LSD and magic mushrooms. There was a general downward trend in the seizure quantities for all substances from 2021 to 2023.

8 Others

In 2023, the ASEAN region reported 10 cases of polydrug users and 1,659 cases involving unclassified or unidentified substances. This data highlights the prevalence and potential dangers of polydrug use and unidentified substance abuse.

Polydrug use refers to the simultaneous or sequential use of multiple drugs. This practice significantly increases the risk of adverse health effects, including overdose, because of the unpredictable interactions between different substances. Despite the relatively low number of reported polydrug users (10 cases), this category remains a critical concern for public health and safety due to the heightened risks involved.

The larger category of unclassified or unidentified substance users, with 1,659 reported cases, underscores a significant challenge in the realm of drug abuse. These cases involve substances not readily identified or classified during reporting. The high number of these cases suggests widespread use of novel or poorly understood substances, complicating treatment and intervention efforts.

Implications

1. Health Risks: Polydrug and unidentified substance use carry significant health risks. The combination of multiple drugs can lead to severe, unpredictable health outcomes. At the same time, unidentified substances may include new psychoactive substances (NPS) that are often more potent and dangerous than traditional drugs.

2. Treatment Challenges: The complexity of treating polydrug users is significantly higher due to the interactions between different substances. For unidentified substance users, healthcare providers face the additional challenge of not knowing the exact substances involved, which complicates diagnosis and treatment.

3. Law Enforcement and Monitoring: The high number of unclassified substance cases highlights the need for improved drug monitoring and identification capabilities. Law enforcement agencies must have advanced tools and training to detect and classify new and emerging substances.

4. Public Health Strategies: Effective public health strategies are crucial to address the issues of polydrug and unidentified substance use. These strategies must include education, prevention, and targeted interventions tailored to the unique challenges posed by these forms of drug abuse.

The data on polydrug and unidentified substance users in the ASEAN region for 2023 highlights significant public health and safety challenges. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach that includes enhanced monitoring, integrated treatment, public awareness, and robust policy frameworks. By implementing these strategies, ASEAN member states can more effectively combat the dangers of polydrug use and unidentified substances, ensuring a safer and healthier future for their populations.

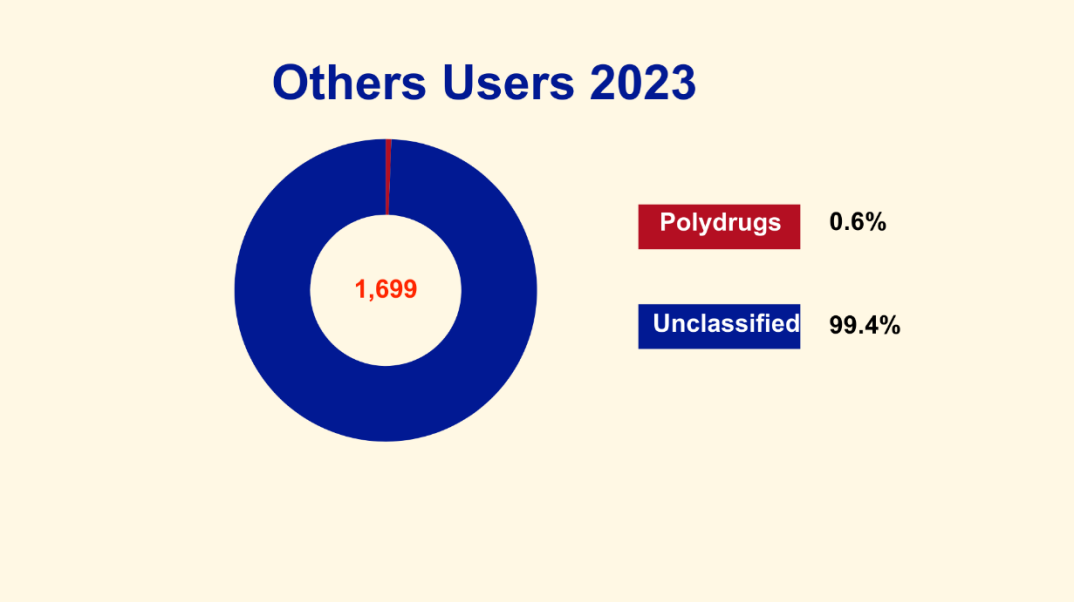


Figure 54: Other substances/Poly drug users treated in 2023

In 2023, significant quantities of unidentified substances were seized in the ASEAN region. The data categorizes these seizures into precursors, caffeine, multiple drugs, and unclassified substances.

Precursors are chemicals used in the production of illicit drugs. The seizure of 6.669 kilograms of precursors indicates ongoing efforts to intercept the production of drugs at their source. Controlling these substances is crucial to preventing the manufacture of various illicit drugs.

While caffeine is a legal and widely consumed substance, its seizure in the context of drug trafficking suggests its use in combination with other drugs or as a cutting agent. The seizure of 28.22 kilograms of caffeine highlights the need for vigilance in monitoring legal substances that may be repurposed for illicit activities.

The category of multiple drugs, totaling 269.1612 kilograms, includes seizures involving various substances combined in one form or another. This significant quantity underscores the complexity of modern drug trafficking, where multiple substances are often trafficked together, making detection and classification more challenging.

The largest category, unclassified substances, amounts to a staggering 26,248.4 kilograms. This category includes substances not readily identified or classified during the seizure. The vast quantity of unclassified substances points to the emergence of new psychoactive substances (NPS) and other chemicals that fall outside traditional drug classifications.

Implications

1. Emerging Drug Trends: The large volume of unclassified substances indicates the rise

of new and emerging drugs that evade existing detection and classification frameworks. This trend complicates enforcement efforts and poses significant risks to public health.

2. Complexity of Drug Trafficking: The seizure of multiple drugs together reflects the increasingly sophisticated methods used by traffickers to distribute various substances simultaneously. This complexity requires advanced detection and analytical capabilities.

3. Public Health Risks: Unidentified substances, particularly those in the unclassified category, pose severe health risks as their effects, toxicity, and interactions with other drugs are often unknown. This uncertainty makes it challenging to provide adequate medical treatment in cases of overdose or adverse reactions.

4. Need for Advanced Monitoring: The substantial quantities of precursors and caffeine seized indicate that traffickers continue to exploit legal substances for illicit purposes. Enhanced monitoring and regulation of these substances are essential to prevent their misuse.

The data on unidentified substance seizures in ASEAN for 2023 highlights the significant challenges posed by emerging drug trends and the complexity of modern drug trafficking. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach, including enhanced analytical capabilities, robust regulatory frameworks, improved data collection, public awareness campaigns, and strengthened regional cooperation. By implementing these strategies, ASEAN member states can more effectively combat the threats posed by unidentified substances, ensuring a safer and healthier future for their populations.

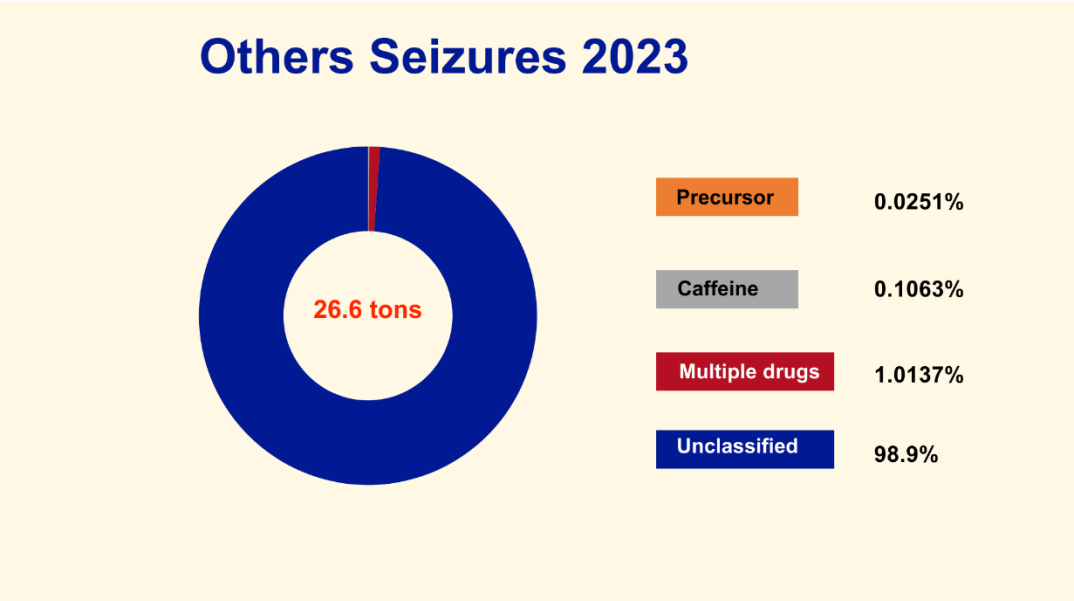


Figure 55: Other substances/Precursor seizures 2023

Implications of 2023 situation in ASEAN

1. **Regional Hub for ATS**:
The substantial seizures of Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS) underscore ASEAN's critical role in the global production and trafficking of synthetic stimulants. This phenomenon highlights the urgent need for robust regional cooperation and enhanced enforcement measures. ASEAN's position as a significant hub for ATS production and distribution necessitates collective action to dismantle trafficking networks and curb the flow of these substances. This can be achieved through shared intelligence, joint operations, and harmonized legal frameworks among member states.

2. **Persistent Opiate/Opioid Challenge**:
The significant quantity of opiates and opioids seized within the region points to an ongoing struggle against these substances. The persistent challenge of opiate and opioid abuse calls for comprehensive strategies that include harm reduction and treatment programs. By focusing on prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation, ASEAN can address the root causes of addiction and reduce the demand for these drugs. Additionally, improving access to medical treatments and support services for individuals struggling with addiction is essential.

3. **Widespread Cannabis Cultivation**:
The massive volume of cannabis seizures indicates its extensive cultivation and usage in the region. This widespread cultivation necessitates a balanced regulatory approach that considers both the medicinal benefits and the potential risks associated with recreational use. Developing a regulatory framework that supports medicinal cannabis while controlling recreational use can help mitigate the negative impacts and harness the therapeutic potential of cannabis.

4. **NPS Threats**:
The large amount of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) seized reflects the evolving nature of drug trafficking. This underscores the need for adaptive legal frameworks and continuous monitoring to keep pace with the rapid emergence of new substances. Effective legal responses must be flexible and capable of addressing the novel challenges posed by NPS, ensuring that laws and enforcement strategies can adapt swiftly to new threats.

5. **Global Trafficking Networks**:
The seizure of cocaine, although relatively small, signals ASEAN's involvement in global drug trafficking networks. Vigilant monitoring and international cooperation are vital to managing this aspect of drug trafficking. Strengthening partnerships with global agencies and neighboring regions can enhance ASEAN's ability to intercept and disrupt international drug trafficking operations.

6. **Prescription Drug Abuse**:
The seizure of Central Nervous System (CNS) depressants highlights the growing issue of prescription drug abuse. Stricter regulation and oversight of prescription medications are necessary to prevent misuse and diversion. Ensuring that prescription practices are monitored and controlled can help reduce the abuse of these drugs and protect public health.

7. **Hallucinogen Risks**:
Despite the smaller quantities seized, the unique psychological effects of hallucinogens require ongoing vigilance and appropriate health responses. Public health initiatives should include education on the risks associated with hallucinogen use and support for individuals experiencing adverse effects. Monitoring and addressing the use

of hallucinogens are critical to mitigating their impact on mental health.

8. **Control of Precursor Chemicals**:
The seizure of precursor chemicals, which are essential for synthetic drug production, is crucial for disrupting the supply chain of synthetic drugs. Targeted enforcement and regulation of these chemicals can significantly impact the production capabilities of drug traffickers. Ensuring that precursor chemicals are tightly controlled and monitored can help prevent their diversion into illicit drug manufacturing.

Recommendations for Addressing Drug Trafficking and Abuse in ASEAN

1. **Strengthen Regional Cooperation**:
Enhancing collaboration among ASEAN countries is vital for effectively combating drug trafficking. This can be achieved through intelligence sharing, joint operations, and the development of harmonized legal frameworks. By working together, member states can create a united front against drug traffickers and dismantle their networks.

2. **Public Awareness Campaigns**:
Implementing comprehensive public education campaigns can inform communities about the risks associated with drug use, mainly focusing on synthetic drugs and NPS. Raising awareness about the dangers of drug abuse and the importance of prevention can help reduce demand and protect vulnerable populations.

3. **Enhance Treatment and Rehabilitation**:
Investing in accessible treatment and rehabilitation programs is crucial for addressing addiction, especially for ATS and opioid users. By providing support for recovery and reducing demand, these programs can play a significant role in combating the drug problem in the region.

4. **Adaptive Legal Frameworks**:
Ensuring that legal systems are flexible and capable of quickly addressing the emergence of new psychoactive substances is essential. Rapid responses to new trafficking methods and substances can prevent the spread of these drugs and protect public health.

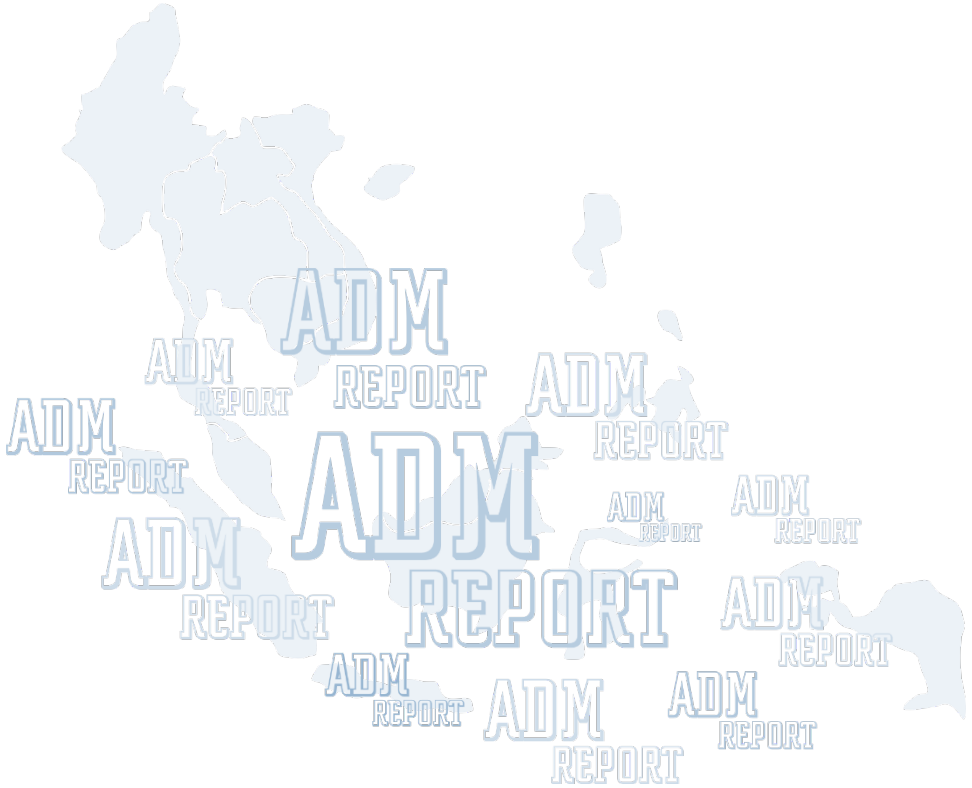
5. **Preventive Measures**:
Strengthening preventive measures, such as early intervention programs and community support initiatives, can reduce the initiation of drug use. Focusing on vulnerable populations and providing support before drug use begins can help prevent addiction and its associated harms.

6. **Robust Enforcement Strategies**:
Continuing to invest in law enforcement capabilities, including training, technology, and resources, is necessary for intercepting drug trafficking and dismantling organized crime networks. Effective enforcement can disrupt the supply of drugs and hold traffickers accountable.

7. **Monitor Trends**:
Analyzing seasonal and geographical trends in drug seizures can help allocate resources effectively. Targeting high-risk periods and areas for interventions can enhance the efficiency and impact of enforcement efforts.
By implementing these strategies, ASEAN can address the complex challenges of drug trafficking and abuse more effectively, ensuring a safer and healthier region.

CHAPTER 3

ASEAN Country Report 2023



Brunei Darussalam

Drug arrest

Narcotics Control Bureau as the leading law enforcement agency in combating illicit drug related crimes in Brunei Darussalam had made 711 drug arrests in 2023 for various offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act, Chapter 27 which constitute to 0.16 % of the population of Brunei Darussalam .

Out of the total arrests, 591 were males and 120 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 Person
14 years and below	0
15 – 19 years	07
20 – 29 years	152
30 – 39 years	263
40 - 49 years	216
50 – 59 years	64
60 years and above	09

The following are the different types of drug offences committed under the Misuse of Drug Act (MDA), Chapter 27 in the year 2023

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	22
Section 6(a)	Possession of controlled drugs	162
Section 6(b)	Consumption of controlled drugs	693
Section 7	Possession of pipes and utensils	237

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

Population of Brunei Darussalam in 2023 was 450,500 persons.

Drug seizures

Methylamphetamine remains the most commonly abused drugs in Brunei Darussalam, followed by Cannabis. Drug seizures made in 2023 are tabulated below:

Type of Drugs	Gross weight
Methylamphetamine	4,422.62 gram
Cannabis	6,291.70 gram 01 plant
Ketamine	29.44 gram
Erimin 5 (Nimetazepam)	662 tablets 0.36 gram
Ecstasy	06 tablets 1.24 gram
Mitragyna speciose (Ketum)	5,000 ml

Major Operations

13 major operations were conducted in 2023 targeting drug trafficking syndicates in Brunei Darussalam resulting to a total of 177 arrest and the following drug seizures:

- 5,490.57 gm Cannabis
- 01 Cannabis Plant
- 3,624.77 Methylamphetamine
- 624 pills Erimin 5
- 0.36 gm Erimin 5

Drug cases at the borders

In its effort to intercept the trafficking of drugs through the border, NCB 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 2023, 36 were arrested at various border control posts for drug related offences. Out of the total arrests, 20 were Bruneians, 01 permanent resident and 15 foreigners.

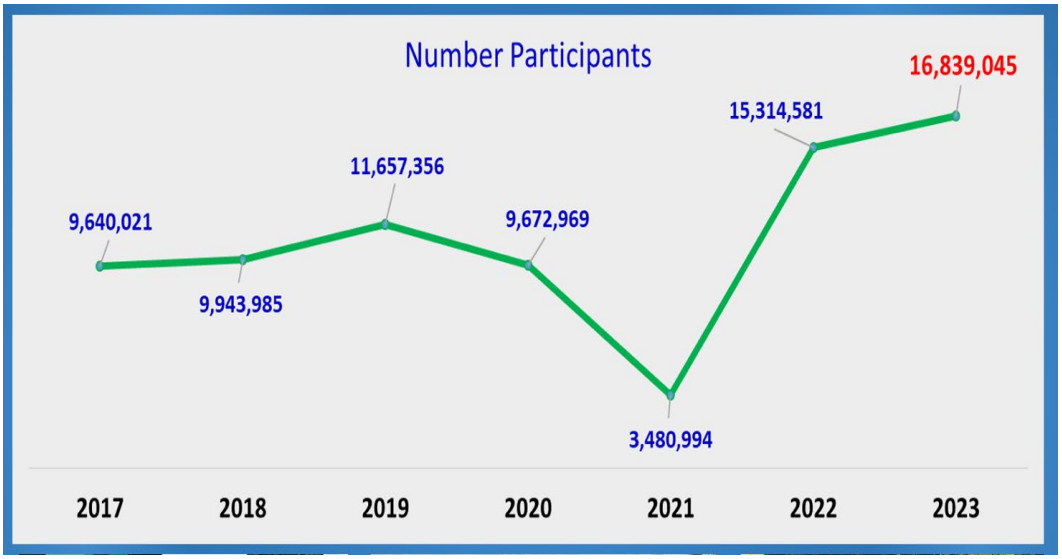
Cambodia

A. Overview on Drug Situation:

- Drug trafficking activities have increased significantly, with domestic and international networks becoming more sophisticated.
- New technologies and online platforms are being utilized for drug distribution, making it more challenging to control and intercept illegal activities
- The production of methamphetamines and other synthetic drugs has increased, with evidence of local manufacturing and distribution networks.
- Cambodia's geographical location makes it a strategic transit and destination point for drug trafficking, particularly for methamphetamines
- The significant seizures of narcotics, including large quantities of methamphetamines, heroin, and other illicit substances.
- The Cambodian Law enforcement have intensified efforts to combat drug trafficking, resulting in numerous arrests and dismantling of drug networks

B. Drug Control Mechanism:

- The Royal Government of Cambodia keeping attention by putting more collectively actions from concern agencies to overcome the drug related problem.
- Fostering the existing drug control mechanism, Law enforcement agencies from national down to the local levels respectively responsibilities.
- Closely cooperate with foreign partners, particularly with law enforcement of neighboring countries to prevent the cross-border crimes including drugs.



(Graph 1: Number of attendants in receiving drug's messages activities)

C. Combating Drugs' Achievement:

In 2023, law enforcement officers have been significantly strengthened through enhanced collaboration with international and regional organizations. The focus has been on joint operations and information sharing to effectively combat drug trafficking networks. This approach has resulted in in combating drugs achievement as following:

- **Demand Reduction**:

a) Public awareness on drugs' harmful is one of priority work to be focused. The number of participants receiving drugs harmful messages is accounted for **16,839,045** personals.

b) TV, Radio, Mobile phones and Social Medias become one of the favor channels for public drugs harmful messages to their clients.

c) All public agencies and other concern agencies is actively responsible for their duties related to drugs problem.

d) The **3NOs and 1Report Slogan** for law enforcement is widely published and distributed.

(Picture: June 26, 2023, Cambodian Authorities had burnt out of 374.33 Ton of Narcotic Substances)

- **Treatment and Rehabilitation:**

1) Fostering and enhancing treatment and rehabilitation services of the temporary rehabilitation centers.

2) Inauguration of the **National Center of Voluntary and Community-based Treatment and Rehabilitation for Drug Addicts** in Preah Sihanouk Province and welcome for service of drug addicts. Even the campus facilities are not yet fully completed.

3) We had expanded our service in public health facilities under community base treatment program.

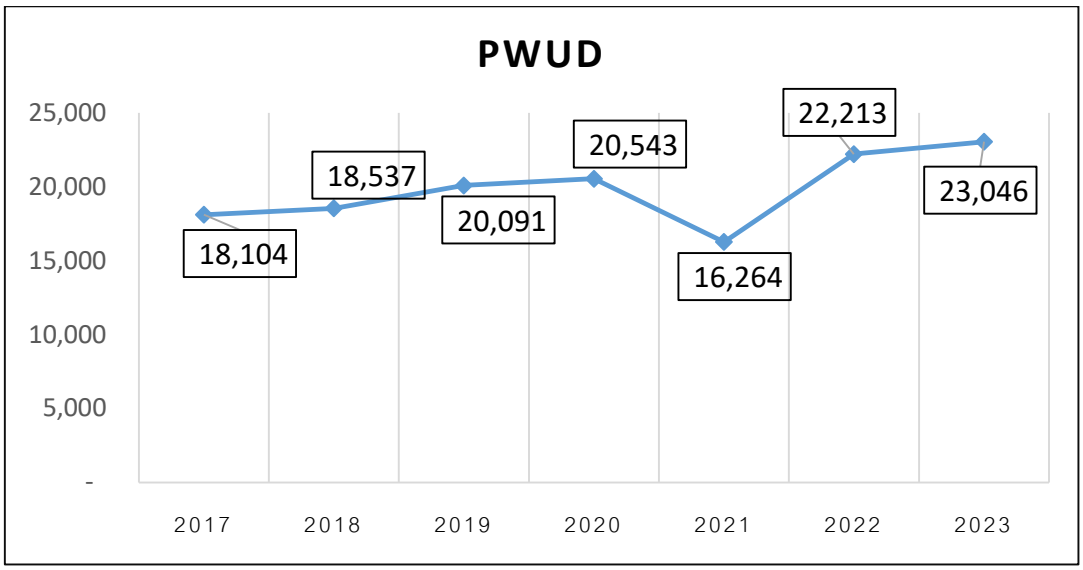
4) The number of drug addicts or PWUD is officially recorded in year of 2023 is 23,046 individuals (833 is increase compared to same period of last year). Demographic of drug addicts as follow:

a) Age group: the main dominant is between 18-35 years old accounted as 39.7%

b) ATS is the most drug of choices, especially Methamphetamine Crystal (ICE) accounted for 98%, follow by methamphetamine powder (tablets/WY)

c) Workers or mobile workers is main group among the occupation of the drug addicts, follow by unclassified jobs

d) Drug addicts enrolled for Community-based Treatment (CBTx) under the public health services accounted for 1,152 out of the total drug addict's population (new enrollment is 12,311 individuals).



(Graph 2: Number of People who used drugs population)

- **Supply Reduction**

1) The effectively enhancing of law enforcement capacity to encounter the drugs' related crimes by closely cooperated with foreign and neighboring countries. BLOs is one of the effective existing mechanisms in the region among GMS.

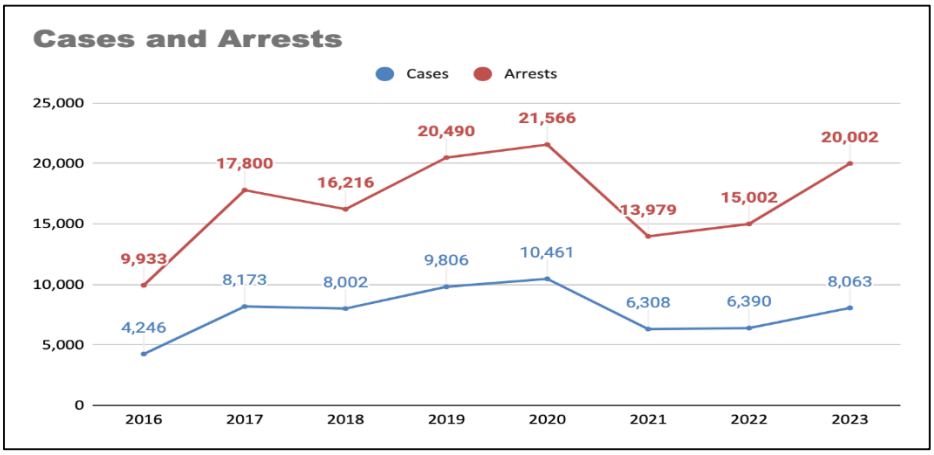
2) Investigation and operation techniques including financial investigation is effectively functioned with more practical skills under clearly defined order and responsibilities.

3) As results, in year of 2023, Cambodian Law Enforcement had successfully interdicted drug related crimes of **8,063** cases with **20,002** arrests (586 foreigners had been arrested with 16 nationalities). This figure is included:

- Drug Trafficking Crimes is 1,069 cases with 2,555 arrests
- Drug Possession and Trafficking is 4,076 cases with 7,567 arrests
- Drug Consuming Crimes is 2,836 cases with 9,657 arrests
- Narcotic Plantation Crimes is 18 cases with 12 arrests
- Illicit Narcotic Processing Crimes is 14 cases with 54 arrests.

4) Total Drug Seizures are:

Methamphetamine Tablets (WY)	= 5.33 Kgs
Methamphetamine Crystal (ICE)	= 1,436.75 Kgs
Ecstasy (MDMA)	= 324.26 Kgs
Ketamine	= 1,040.30 Kgs
Heroin	= 166.60 Kgs
Cocaine	= 8.74 Kgs
Nimetazepam	= 6.90 Kgs
Dried Cannabis	= 45.15 Kgs
Cannabis Herbs	= 37,535 Plants
Chemical Substances	= 1,469.00 Kgs



(Graph 3: Number of drugs' cases and Arrestees)

(Picture: Successful Interdiction of major case in 2023)

International Cooperation

- Real time cooperation with all Law Enforcement partners (sharing information) across the globe, regional and sub-regional
- Strengthening the BLOs Mechanism, particularly with neighboring among GMS countries.
- Internal LE capacity building via training and seminars
- Strengthening the Chemical Management and Monitoring Mechanism.

D. Way Forward

Base on the conclusion drawn for them evaluation and the results of the Drug Control in 2023 as stipulated in the National Plan of Drug Control and Phase 8th of Anti -Illicit Drug Campaign to ensure the consistency of outreach education to raise the public awareness on drug harm; Continuously enhance the function of Sub - committee on Treatment and Rehabilitation; Enhance capability building, commitment, morality and professionalism of the Law Enforcement officers abide to the 3 Nos and

1 Report Slogan of Samdach Krolahorm SAR KHENG; Continuously enhance the Precursor and Chemical controls; enhance and expand the international cooperation with neighboring countries in region and all development partners as well as legitimate documents development as guidelines, policies and laws related to drug control.. NACD with all competent entities had laid down number of activities, to get effective in combating drug related crimes with clearly defined practical works as follow:

Demand Reduction:

- Publication and distribution **the 3NOs and 1Report Slogan** of Interior Minister
- Enhance the demand reduction activities: public awareness on drug harm via Medias and others; distribution of drug related harmful documents; high-risk groups (mobile workers, drivers, and disordered accommodation.
- Encourage the Printing on Packaging of Drug harmful message on Consumer Products and others. Increasing number of distributions on Drug harmful messages of mobile phone and media services.
- Drug harmful document designed and guideline for public entities' agenda **Training for Trainees** both civilian and arm forces for their respective distribution.

Supply Reduction:

- Enhance Law Enforcement Cooperation with concern parties and neighboring countries in the globe, region, and sub region in preventing drug smuggling.
- Expand Investigation Procedures and interdiction forces for drug related crimes, chemical diversion, and financial investigation.
- Monitor and Evaluation to the Management and Mechanism for Effective BLOs Functioning and Capacity Building.
- Continuous to the inspection and risk assessment to Industries and Enterprises on Chemical Substances Management
- Continuous to Implement the National Campaign on Anti-Illicit Drugs Phase 6; and Overloaded drug related documents in courts.

Treatment and Rehabilitation:

- Develop the Technical Guideline on Management, Monitoring and Functioning of the **National Center of Voluntary and Community-based Treatment and Rehabilitation for Drug Addicts** in Preah Sihanouk Province
- Advocate with Ministry of Interior for new Construction of Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Center in Porsat Province.
- Encouragement on Community-based Treatment and Services. Capacity Building and Training on Treatment and Rehabilitation Services.
- Enhance the Data Collection and Updating on Drug Addicts Population

Drug Control Mechanism:

- Fostering the Effectiveness of Provincial Drug Control Committees
- Continuous to Promulgate the National Policy on DRUG TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION FOR DRUG ADDICTS.
- Fostering the Procedure on Drafting the Drug Control Law Amendment and National Strategic Policy on Establishment of Drug Free Villages.
- Practice the Safety Precaution Measures and Social Distancing in the Temporary Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers during the Covid-19 outbreak
- Randomly on site monitoring and inspection of the industrial premises on related chemical management.

International Cooperation:

- Real time cooperation with all LE partners (sharing information) across the globe, regional and sub-regional
- Strengthening the BLOs Mechanism, particularly with neighboring among GMS countries.
- Internal LE capacity building
- Strengthening the Chemical Management and Monitoring Mechanism
- Online forum for exchange information.

Indonesia

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.

Based on the results of research measuring the prevalence of drug abuse conducted by BNN together with the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) and the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2023, the prevalence rate of drug abuse has decreased from 1.95% to 1.73% for the “past year used” category, and decreased from 2.47% to 2.20% for the “ever used” category.

PREVENTION, COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND REHABILITATION

In dealing with narcotics problems, BNN Indonesia carried out its strategies through Prevention, Community Empowerment and Rehabilitation efforts. In order to increase public awareness about the dangers of narcotics and encourage active participation in prevention efforts, advocacy programs through coordination meetings, networking, assistance, intervention, supervision, monitoring and evaluation, as well as providing technical guidance have been carried out throughout Indonesia with the total of 3,718 prevention activities involving 108,921 people. Prevention efforts are also carried out by providing information as a form of education to the public through both electronic and non-electronic media at the national and provincial levels.

To increase community responsiveness to the threat of narcotics abuse and illicit trafficking about 20,500 activists has been recruited to carried out prevention program. As an early detection of narcotics abuse, 3,095 urine tests also incidentally carried out in community, educational, government and private environments. From the total of 202,813 people who took the urine test, 1,268 of them tested positive.

In order to form an independent and drug-free society, community empowerment through providing technical life skills guidance has been implemented in drug-prone areas in the form of entrepreneurship training such as handicrafts, culinary arts, agricultural crop cultivation, hairdressing, sewing, and many more with the participation of 1,447 people from 72 drug-prone villages/sub-districts.

Independence Participation Index used to measure the independence of community participation in narcotics prevention and eradication efforts, in work environments, education and communities in drug-prone areas. With the results of the cumulative Index value reached 3.5 or "*very independent*", exceeding the set target of 3.2. This can be seen from the decrease number of drug-prone areas from 8,002 in 2022 to 7,426 in 2023. The Performance Indicators of some districts/cities in the Drug Threat Responsiveness category has also been measured in 2023. From 122 municipals responsive to drug threats, 23 of them are in the "*Very Responsive*" category, and 99 others are in the "*Responsive*" category. This number exceeds the target of 120 municipals responsive to drug threats from 173 municipals.

Through rehabilitation programs, rehabilitation institutions in Indonesia have provided rehabilitation services to 23,825 clients. Quality of life percentage measurement for narcotics abusers were calculated using WHO Quality of Life (WHOQoL), with the results as follows: 79.59% in the physical domain, 78.20% in the psychological domain, 75.63% in the social domain, and 80.10% in the environmental domain. The measurement results exceeded the set target, 62%. In other words, it can be concluded that the rehabilitation efforts provided have a significant impact in improving the quality of life and skills of clients, thereby minimizing the potential for relapse.

To optimize the rehabilitation program Community Based Interventions (CBI) were continually established by the involvement of the community as active partners in the efforts to prevent and handle narcotics abuse. 469 CBI units have been formed in 34 provinces with a total of 2,659 recovery agents. These recovery agents are tasked with outreach, assistance, and providing guidance to narcotics abusers.

Rehabilitation Capability Index used to evaluate the capability of rehabiltation services with the result of 0.10 increased in rehabilitation capabilities in 2023, from 3.31 in 2022 become 3.41 (good category) on a scale of 1-4.

DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Along with the development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and digitalization, in overcoming narcotics problems, smart power approach implemented by focusing on the use of

technology, such as: identifying cannabis fields through remote sensing carried out by BNN in collaboration with the Geospatial Information Agency, Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT) in collaboration with the National Cyber and Crypto Agency in the electronic security system and recovery of services affected by cyberattacks, as well as Early Warning (NPS Alert System) as a cross-institutional early warning system where BNN is become the focal point.

Moreover, BNN also utilizes advances in information and communication technology to improve integrated services, such as: BNN One Stop Service (BOSS) which can be accessed by the public anytime and anywhere, the SIRENA and SIRATU applications which make it easier to obtain integrated rehabilitation data, as well as "*e-Mindik*" application used in the electronic investigation process.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Throughout 2023, about 37 narcotics syndicate networks has been disclosed, consist of 15 domestic narcotics syndicate networks and 22 international narcotics syndicate networks. Through firm and measured actions by the law enforcements consists of BNN, Indonesian National Police (INP), Indonesian Armed Force, Customs and Excise, and related stakeholders, about 39,312 cases of narcotics, psychotropics and NPS crimes has been uncovered alongside 51,709 suspects. The evidence seized are 9.3 tons of crystal methamphetamine, 61,200 methamphetamine pills (Yaba), 9.9 tons of dried cannabis, 2 millions of ecstasy tablets, 1.2 millions of pills containing carisoprodol and 223.42 kgs of synthetic Cannabinoids, and others. Aside from drug seizures, about 91.5 hectares of cannabis fields also eradicated.

One of the narcotics cases with a new modus operandi that was successfully dismantled by BNN in collaboration with Customs and Excise was the smuggling of 1,114 grams of heroin by the Karachi-Indonesia syndicate. This smuggling method involves inserting heroin powder into the thread fibers of carpet. This mode was difficult to detect by x-ray machines or K9 because the heroin powder is fused with the thread fibers.

In breaking the chain of narcotics syndicate networks, money laundering related to drug crimes also investigated as an effort to impoverish the dealers so that they cannot return to the illicit narcotics business. In 2023, law enforcement succeeded in disclosing 21 money laundering cases involving 22 suspects by confiscating evidence in the form of assets worth a total of Rp. 162,244,526,644.86,-.

COOPERATION

Strong collaboration between government institutions and components of society at the national, regional and international levels is one of many crucial component in the success 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 illcit trafficking in Indonesia has signed 40 cooperation documents at the national level, consist of: 16 cooperation documents with government institutions, 7 documents with state owned companies, 7 documents with the educational institutions, and 10 documents with private sector institutions.

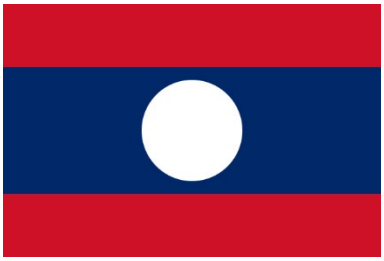
At the international level, BNN actualizes cooperation through various activities such as: joint training in collaboration with the Drugs Enforcement Administration (US-DEA) and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), Technical Working Group Meeting for Outcome Drugs Problem UNODC Indonesia, meeting of the 66th Commission on Narcotics Drugs (CND) in Austria, The 45th Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies ASIA and the Pacific (HONLAP), The 14th ASEAN Drug Monitoring Network (ADMN), International Drug Enforcement Conference (IDEC XXXVII) in Jamaica, and through working visits to several countries including Spain, the Netherlands, France, Jamaica, Venezuela, Colombia, Cuba, the United States, South Korea, and many more.

THE CHALLENGE OF NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES (NPS)

The modus operandi of narcotics crime continues to develop. One of them is

the distribution of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) carried out by narcotics syndicate to avoid legal traps. Until late 2023, 93 types of NPS have been detected in Indonesia, whereas 90 types of them have been regulated by Minister of Health Regulations Regulation.

As an effort to anticipate the developments in NPS trafficking, BNN strengthen its narcotics laboratories in Indonesia. Up to 2023, BNN has 1 Narcotics Laboratory Center in Lido, West Java, and 4 Narcotics Laboratories located in Deli Serdang, North Sumatra; Baddoka, South Sulawesi; Tanah Merah, East Kalimantan; and Bangkalan, East Java. In 2023, the BNN Narcotics Laboratories have tested 22,183 samples, of which 21,531 are positive for narcotics, 9 psychotropics, 5 precursors, and 638 other samples are negative.



Lao People's Democratic Republic.

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 Drug Control Master Plan. The Lao National Commission for Drug Control and Supervision (LCDC) has effectively strengthened its monitoring efforts during the past several years.

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. The National Agenda for Drug and Precursor Chemical Control 2021 to 2023.

This Drug Control Master Plan was officially approved by the Lao National Assembly on 10 August 2021. National Agenda for Drug and Precursor Chemical Control 2021-2023 composes of 6 programmes: (1) Program re-education and dissemination of legal information and adverse consequences due to drug abuse; (2) Program of the formulation and improvement of drug law and regulation; (3) Program on data collection, law enforcement; (4) Enhance supervision for implementing the Drug Control program; (5) Streamlining the organization for Drug control at Centre and Local levels; (6) 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. Since 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the opium survey team from China could not come to Lao PDR, so we don't have data opium survey since that year. By the Year 2020, we received only reports from 9 provinces out of 11 provinces that have been ever opium poppy cultivation and sent reports to LCDC. In the year 2023 opium poppy cultivation in Laos was 725 hectares, and opium poppy eradication in Laos was 620 hectares. In 2023, LCDC in collaboration with UNODC, we join in conducting the opium poppy recultivation again after it had been stopped since 2015 due to the budget constraint. LCDC is 2 implementing an Alternative Development program in Houaphan Province, the Northern part of Lao PDR. Actually, our local authorities in the Northern part of the country have supported ex-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 2023: 4,663 cases, arrests of 7,170 suspects of which 786 females and 171 foreigners, seizures of 95,970,387 Tablets of Methamphetamine (ATS), 487.64 Kg of Heroin, 131.74 Kg of raw Opium, 5,628.20 Kg of dry Cannabis, 4,043.10 Kg of Crystal Methamphetamine (Ice), 26,248.40 Kg of Powder for mixing, and producing drugs, 1,044.78 Kg of Ketamine, 114,488 Tablets of Ecstasy. 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 2023, the effects of drugs were advertised in colleges, schools, and villages along the border with a total of 5,616 participants (1,114 females).

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 nonstandard 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 3,000 to 4,000 patients/times were also provided with basic vocational training. This is to provide them with 3 job opportunities after reintegrating to their families.

International relation and cooperation

The Lao PDR pays high attention to 3 single United Nations Convention and UNGASS 2016 outcomes 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.

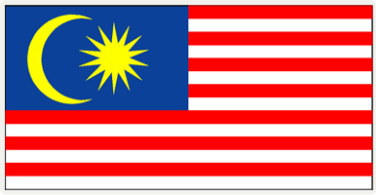
Lao PDR has implemented existing bilateral and multilateral agreements on drug control cooperation, exchange of information and intelligence and against drug trafficking with ASEAN countries, friendly countries and with international organizations. Regional cooperation such as the joint operation "Safe 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

After the Lao government organized the implementation of The National Agenda for Drug and Precursor Chemical Control 2021 to 2023 to solve the drug problem observed that the results have been fruitful since the implementation of the agenda, making the dealer and trafficker of drugs feared, and law enforcement officers can arrest and seize any kinds of drugs and precursor chemicals have been lost in large quantities.

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 the only 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 program 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

Malaysia remains steadfast in protecting its nation particularly the youth and vulnerable communities from illicit drug trafficking and drug abuse. A comprehensive, integrated and a well - balanced approach is carried out to curb the menace of drug abuse with various involvement of government agencies, sectoral bodies and non-governmental organizations.

PREVALENCE OF DRUG ABUSE

The National Drug and Substance Abuse Data Collection Taskforce reported that in 2023, a total of 145,526 individuals have been identified as substance abusers and drug addicts in Malaysia. The collected data are divided into four categories as follows:

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

Compared to 2022, there was a significant increase in substance abusers and drug addicts who were identified in the country by 6.1 per cent. In 2023, there was an increase drug addict detection operation carried out by NADA Enforcement Division and Narcotic Crime Investigation Department, Royal Malaysia Police. Thus, enforcement activities were aggressively carried out. On top of that, there was an increase number of people who use drug also have sought voluntary treatment in the drug rehabilitation centres. From this statistic, the prevalence of substance abusers and drug addicts in 2023 was 436 out of 100,000 population with a ratio of one person for every 229 per population. Table 1 shows the number of Drug & Substance Abusers and Addicts in Malaysia.

Table 1: Number of Drug & Substance Abusers and Addicts, 2019 - 2023

Year	Total
2019	142,199
2020	128,325
2021	123,139
2022	137,176
2023	145,526

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

The task force also reported that Youth between the age of 19 to 39 years old were recorded as the highest group of people who used drugs in 2023, with 90,520 individuals or 62.2 per cent. It showed an increase of 4.6 per cent as compared to 2022. It was followed by the adult category (40 years and above) as the second largest by 53,554 individuals or 36.8 per cent. Meanwhile, the adolescent category (13-18 years old) was the third with 1,451 individuals or 1.0 per cent. Table 2 showed that the number of Drug & Substance Abusers and Addicts categorised by age category in 2023.

Table 2: Number of Drug & Substance Abusers and Addicts categorised by Age Category, 2019 – 2023

Age Category	Age range (years old)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Child	≤ 12	10	5	0	2	2	1
Adolescent	13-18	4,918	3,289	2,556	1,961	1,671	1,451
Youth	19-39	90,660	96,772	83,401	81,112	86,567	90,520
Adult	≥ 40	34,987	41,939	42,211	39,959	48,936	53,554
No Information	-	213	194	157	105	-	-
Total		**130,788**	**142,199**	**128,325**	**123,139**	**137,176**	**145,526**

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

In 2023, there were 104,122 individuals or 71.5 per cent have used Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS). Then followed by 33,779 individuals or 23.2 per cent have used opiates. In the ATS category, Methamphetamine (Crystalline) was the highest abuse with 74.9 per cent, followed by Methamphetamine (tablets) and Amphetamine at 17.2 per cent and 7.9 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, 2019 – 2023

Year	Opiate [1]	Opium	Marijuana	Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS)[2]	Psychotropic Group[3]	Others[4]	Total
2018	41,323	14	4,327	84,439	75	610	**130,788**
2019	43,545	33	4,497	91,684	614	1,826	**142,199**
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**

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, Malays dominated with 76.4 per cent, followed by Chinese with 7.3 per cent, Indians at 6.6 per cent, Sabah Indigenous at 5.4 per cent, Sarawak Indigenous at 3.2 per cent, and other ethnicities at 1.1 per cent.

According to Academic Background, the data showed that 22.7 per cent were school dropouts. Out of 145,526 substance abusers and drug addicts in 2023, 8.8 per cent have completed Primary School, followed by 64.5 per cent have completed Secondary School and 4.0 per cent went to Tertiary Qualifications.

This data also showed a significant increase in poly-drug users in 2023 as compared to 2022 by 11.5 per cent. The non-poly-drug users were also increased by 5.8 per cent.

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 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 2023, as shown in Table 4, a total number of 167,619 individuals were arrested under the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952. It showed an increase by 9.4 per cent compared to the previous year, 2022 (153,259 individuals). There were 6,225 arrested cases under Section 39B for trafficking, 1,535 cases under Section 39A(2) for major possession and 17,726 cases under Section 39A(1) for minor possession. There were 57,129 individuals were arrested under other Section [Sec.6 /Sec. 6B/ Sec.9/Sec.12(2)] the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952, and 85,004 cases under Section 15(1)(a) for self-administration.

Table 4: The Number of People Arrested for Various Offences Under the Dangerous Drugs Act (DDA) 1952 in 2019 – 2023

YEAR / SECTION	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Sec. 39B – Trafficking	6,829	6,694	7,250	6,687	6,225
Sec. 39A(2) – Major Possession	3,986	3,427	3,336	3,389	1,535
Sec. 39A(1) - Minor Possession	16,044	13,441	14,664	17,267	17,726
Other sec. (under DDA 1952) [Sec.6 /Sec. 6B/ Sec.9/Sec.12(2)]	58,623	48,309	44,853	56,824	57,129
Sec.15(1)(a) – self-administration	80,386	65,724	52,631	69,122	85,004
TOTAL	**165,868**	**137,595**	**122,743**	**153,259**	**167,619**

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

Table 5: Drug Seizures in 2019 – 2023

DRUGS/ SUBSTANCE	UNIT	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
CANNABIS						
Marijuana (Herb)	kg	649.58	5,728.26	3,728.28	8,120.89	4,800.45
Plant	plant	87.00	57.00	64.00	185.00	39.00
ILLICIT OPIOIDS						
Heroin	kg	708.26	930.21	2,166.49	717.72	950.06
Opium (Raw And Prepared)	kg	0.39	0.00	0.08	1.38	10.21
Codeine	litres	8,723.07	4,187.78	6,451.86	3,255.40	1,582.59
COCAINE						
Salt (Cocaine HCl, Powder Cocaine)	kg	15,247.12	10.40	5.84	20.07	293.66
AMPHETAMINE-TYPE STIMULANTS						
Methamphetamine (crystalline)	kg	5,302.38	7,644.47	9,682.07	8,298.41	10,345.72
"Ecstasy" – Type Substances	kg	706.91	1,966.52	1,033.65	335.77	6,863.33
Methamphetamine (Tablet)	kg	198.75	207.44	357.45	383.63	245.88
Methamphetamine (Liquid)	kg	308.40	5,959.95	188.52	49.59	585.75
SEDATIVES AND TRANQUILIZERS						
Erimine 5	kg	683.18	925.40	2,030.65	158.72	573.25
Psychotropic Pill	kg	2.61	1.98	3.31	10.49	4.24
DRUGS UNDER NATIONAL BUT NOT INTERNATIONAL CONTROL						
Ketamine	kg	84,068.66	3,018.28	474.61	3,000.27	1,540.74
Kratom (Leaf)	kg	161,233.60	296,023.70	368,040.39	128,285.88	80,508.61
Kratom (Liquids)	Litres	64,860.97	139,162.62	76,212.79	78,909.89	61,236.46

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].

Table 6 showed the property seized in Malaysia. The number of cases investigated a decrease in 2023 about 9.8 per cent. The value of properties seized and value of properties forfeited have a decrease about 15.4 per cent and 42.5 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.

The value of confiscation and forfeiture shows the perseverance of officers and members of the NCID division who work hard to ensure that their properties involved in drug trafficking activities are successfully forfeited.

Table 6: Value of Property Seized Under Dangerous Drugs Act (Forfeiture Of Property) Act 1988 in 2019-2023

Year	Number of Cases Investigated	Value of Properties Seized (RM)	Value of Properties Forfeited (RM)
2019	5,570	99,450,227.50	5,112,069.20
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

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.

Table 7: Clandestine Laboratories Dismantled in 2019 - 2023

YEAR	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cases	23	20	19	15	22
Arrests	81	71	85	50	64

Notes:
Source of information: Royal Malaysian Police (RMP)

Table 8: Number of illicit drug manufacturing facilities dismantled in Malaysia by drug type in 2019 - 2023

Drug type	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Methamphetamine	7	4	3	3	4
Heroin	12	10	7	5	12
Ecstasy	1	3	4	3	4
Benzodiazepines	1	0	1	0	1
Ketamine	1	3	4	4	1
Other drugs*	0	0	0	1	1

Notes:
Source of information: Royal Malaysian Police (RMP)
*Other drugs : Oil Cannabis
Benzodiazepines includes Erimine 5

Drug Trafficking Threats

Drug trafficking and abuse are serious issues confronting Malaysia. The illicit drug use has been well thought-out as major social intimidation in Malaysia and has been declared as a threat to national security i.e. Malaysia's number ONE enemy. Malaysia's geographical location has long made it a transit country for traffickers of illegal narcotics.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on drug trafficking and smuggling in Malaysia, as well as other countries around the world. The disruption of global trade and travel caused by the pandemic has made it more difficult for traffickers to move drugs across borders. As a result, there has been a decrease in the amount of drug seized by law enforcement agencies in Malaysia.

However, it is expected that the post-pandemic recovery of the global economy and trade will also lead to a resurgence in drug trafficking and smuggling in Malaysia. This is because trafficker will likely take advantage of the increased movement of goods and people to smuggle drugs into the country. Additionally, the economic downturn caused by the pandemic may have led to an increase in demand for drugs as people turn to them as a way to cope with financial stress and other related issues. In addition, active enforcement actions have resulted in various successes in operations that have contributed to an increase in the number of cases in 2023.

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 using 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.

From 2010 until 2023, a total of 898 Malaysian citizens were detained in foreign countries for their involvement in the drug trade. In 2023, a total of 28 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 smuggling and trafficking syndicates are always trying to smuggle drugs in and out of the country in various ways. This trend has been the concern of NCID for a long time, and enforcement actions are often carried out to combat smuggling activities. NCID also often collaborates with courier service companies to share information related to drug smuggling.

Having porous borders, Malaysia remains vulnerable to the drug threat due to its close proximity to the drug-producing region of the Golden Triangle. As a result, the IDTS has taken this opportunity to exploit Malaysia as a transhipment point to transport drugs to other countries. Trafficking methods by air routes using cargo and parcels as well as sea routes using cargo and vessels.

Enforcement at airports (domestic and international) is enhanced in an effort to combat drug smuggling by strengthening checks and controls at entry and exit gates and cargo gates. Security checks also need to be emphasised to identify drug mules so they don't escape. As a result of the investigation, there have been many cases of smuggling from domestic airports (Peninsula to Sabah and Sarawak) as well as through cargo or packages sent abroad. Accordingly, periodic inspections should be scheduled for the shipment of suspicious packages abroad.

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 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.

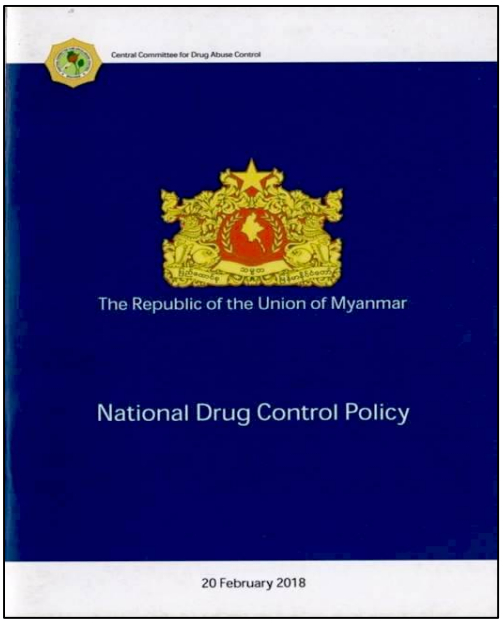
In Malaysia, abuse through social media and communication services can be dealt with appropriately based on the law as provided under the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998. This concern needs to be addressed considering that the use of the internet by Malaysians covers various ages and is feared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

Myanmar

Introduction

1) The government of Myanmar is taking measures to address the drug problem by interdicting drug trafficking and production, preventing drug abuse within the community, and providing treatment for drug addiction and its related health issues. Additionally, the government is implementing measures for rehabilitation and vocational training to ensure the reintegration of recovering drug users into society.
2) International policies have been put in place to address the global drug problem. The successive state governments have prioritized drug elimination activities as a national duty by adopting strategic plans and operational plans to address this issue in the country. With the aim of promoting a safe and healthy community, the measures are taking in line with the following priority areas of the national drug control policy:

- Supply Reduction and Alternative Development
- Demand and Harm Reduction
- International Cooperation
- Research and Analysis (a strong evidence base)
- Compliance with Human rights



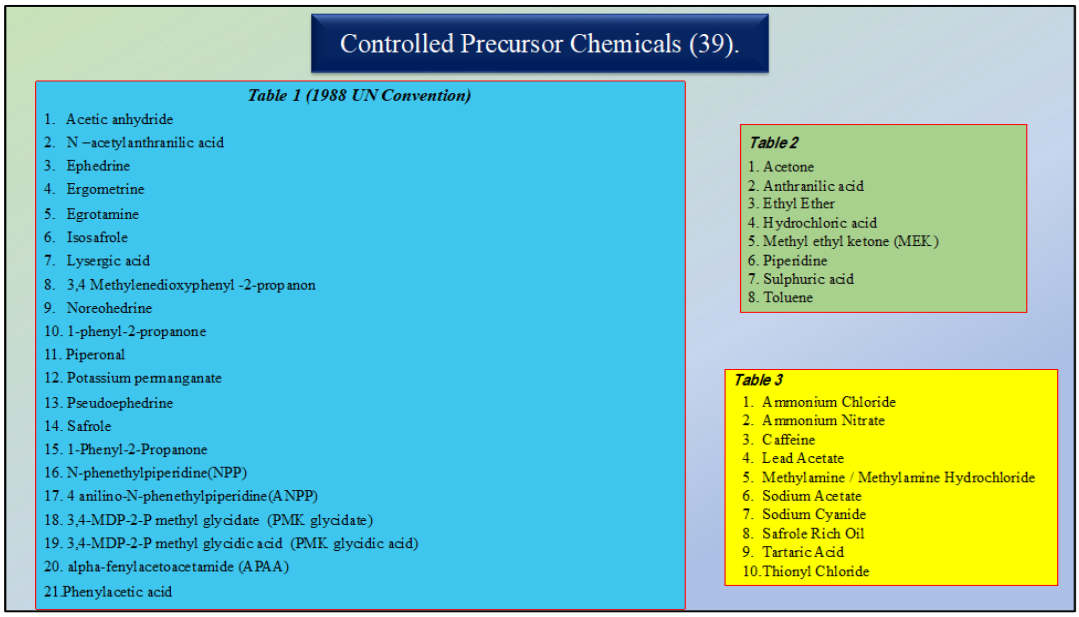
Supply Reduction

3) With the support of UNODC, the Opium Survey on the illicit crop cultivation in Myanmar shows that opium production, which was at 795 metric tons in 2022, and 1080 metric tons in 2023, so that it was increased 36% more than in 2022. In 2023, the opium yield increases, which was in 2022 (19.8 kg/ha) and in 2023 (22.9kg/ha), at 16% more than 2022. The socio-economic survey was conducted in Shan State from 1 May to 31 July 2023, and the opium survey for 2024 was implemented from 25 December 2023 to 25 March 2024

4) Shan State continues to be the main production area for opium cultivation in Myanmar. According to a survey, there was increase of 18% in opium cultivation, from 40100 hectares in 2022 to 47,100 hectares in 2023.

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Cultivated (Hectares)	57600	55500	-	41000	37300	33100	29500	30200	40100	47100
Production (Mt)	670	647	-	550	520	508	405	423	795	1080
Destroyed (Hectares)	15188.49	13274.97	7562.79	3536.96	2578.52	2459.91	2026.58	4632.97	1403.27	2357.71

5) 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 39 substances under the national controlled list.



6) 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:

Types of Precursors	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Caffeine (kg)	19847 .48	5885	20759 .49	19226	11371 .9	9355	9036 .01	25592 .5
Ephedrine (kg)	534.204	0.0015	139.71	4.02	630	-	1	-
Pseudoephed rine (kg)	61.55	31	7.6	-	2.7	-	-	-
Pseudoephed rine (kg)	11.92	39.01	4.5	-	15	-	30.5	0.8
Acetic anhydride (lt)	16.00	1318.34	40	4140.11	12240	-	-	1710
Hydrochloric acid(lt)	3494.8	106720	181657	106411 .46	53827	20	9200	71400
Sulphuric acid (lt)	28476.8	11034.9	62135	77883 .08	15104.8	18340	22550	47260
Ethyl Ether (lt)	250	-	203794 .25	26674	6180	-	360	80

7) In order to prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals into the illicit activities, the Pre-Export Notification System is being utilized to ensure the exchange of information regarding the export and import of controlled precursor chemicals. In 2023, a total of 147 PEN notices were received, of which 57 objections were issued due to incomplete information, and 90 approvals were issued for import/ export. During the period of January to June 2024, there were a total of 34 communications, of which 13 were approved and 21 were objected due to incomplete information.

Alternative Development

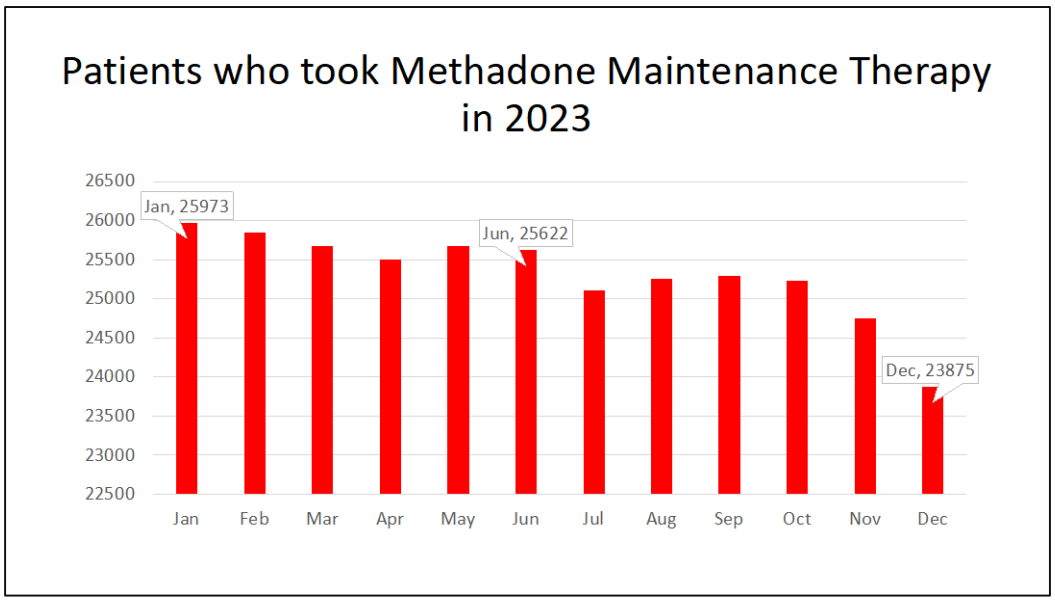
8) In accordance with the Myanmar-Thailand Alternative Development program, and with a financial support of 350 million Baht from Mae Fah Luang Foundation, Crop Substitution Programs were implemented in the Tachileik and Mai Sat townships of Eastern Shan State during 2012 to 2017. The programs included health care services, Agricultural and livestock breeding programs, socio-economic initiatives for forest ranching, income enhancement services, socio-eco analyses, study visits to AD project areas, and capacity building training. In February 2022, a bilateral MoU was signed by the two agencies to implement a sustainable alternative development program along Myanmar-Thailand border. 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).

9) Following its implementation, 60 villages from Loi Lin and Ho Poin townships of Southern Shan State embarked on Alternative Development Program with the financial support of $ 5.9 million from Germany and Finland for a period of three years from 2016 to 2018. In order to export coffee from the Alternative Development Programme area to the Foreign country under the close cooperation of UNODC, the signing ceremony of MoU between the farmers of Illicit Crop substitution from Myanmar and Malongo coffee company was conducted in Kempinski Hotel, on 7 December 2017, and the MoU for five years programme between Green Gold coffee farmers and Malango company has been signed at its ceremony. Since its establishment, 9 tons were exported in 2018, followed by 75 tons in 2019 and 100 tons in 2020 with the assistance of Malongo Company. Furthermore, as a new market opened up in Japan, 0.6 tons of coffee were exported in 2020. Thereafter 160.8 tons in 2021, 180.9 tons in 2022 and 140.7 tons of coffee in 2023 were exported respectively.

Demand Reduction

10) As drug addiction considered a chronic disease requiring public services, 29 treatment centers and 56 clinics have been established to provide treatment services. Community Based Treatment has also been expanded and methadone substitution treatments for the drug disorders has also been utilized since 2006. In 2023, a total of 26595 drug addicts accessed healthcare services at drug treatment centers. Furthermore, 90 methadone substitution treatment centers have been established up to 2023, and in the year of 2023, a total of 23875 drug users were receiving treatment through methadone substitution.



Rehabilitation

11) Under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, there are 14 rehabilitation centers across the country that help drug users who have undergone treatment to be reintegrate back into society. Campaigns are being launched to encourage drug users to receive treatment at drug treatment centers. While receiving treatment, they and their families can receive necessary support, undergo physical and mental rehabilitation, participate in vocational training programs, and take part in reintegration programs.

12) In cooperation with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement, the Rehabilitation Department was established on January 30th, 2018, in order to effectively carry out its treatment services.

Awareness Campaign

13) The Ministry of Education, as the Committee for Education Students and Youths under the CCDAC, is carrying out an education campaign to increase awareness among students and youths about the risk of drug abuse and psychoactive substances. The understanding of drug abuse and psychoactive substances is also integrated as a separate lesson in the life skills curriculum for Basic Education students, as well as for out-of-school children in Non-Formal Primary Education and Non-Formal Middle Education programs.

14) A total of 622 educational talks were conducted, reaching 57,697 individuals in 2023. In addition, 12 talks at 10,776 schools were conducted, and a total of 2,324,498 students participated in these talks.

Drug Abuse Prevention Activities in the schools

15) Furthermore, Public Awareness Education Committee under the guidelines of CCDAC is also carrying out its awareness campaign with 5 sectors of information and Public Relations Department, Myanmar Radio and Television, News and Periodicals Enterprise, Printing and Publishing Department and Public Relations and psychological Welfare Directorate Office, especially bonding partnership with youth awareness sector and MANA in carrying out its drug awareness campaign.

16) To raise awareness of the dangers of drug use, the Public Relations and Psychological Welfare Directorate Office is carrying out monthly activities such as broadcasting short programs, and songs at Military Television centers, Myawaddy and Yadanar Bone Information centers. In 2023, 452 news items, 797 TV spots, 27 programmes, 69 articles, 6 poems, 6 editorials, and 1 interview are also conducted.

17) The Ministry of Information is responsible for raising public awareness about the dangers of narcotic drugs and the importance of avoiding their abuse. Educational programs addressing this menace are disseminated nationwide through various forms of media including radio, television, newspapers, journals, articles, cartoons, and posters. Myanmar Anti-Narcotic Association (MANA) members travel throughout the country to hold preventive education talks and distribute monthly educational booklets.

18) In 2023, the Ministry of Information conducted 1070 poster competitions, 186 photography competitions, 517 awareness talks, and 380 Talk show (website TV). Additionally, 360 news articles, 5 headline news piece, 387 photos, 7 articles, and 194 slogans were published in newspapers such as New Light of Myanmar, Kyay Mone, and the Global New Light of Myanmar

Enacting Laws

19) In order to align with the UN Conventions, international standards and norms, as well as policies, and to create greater opportunities for treatment services, the 1993 Illicit Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law was officially amended and announced on February 14th, 2018.

20) To fully implement the amended drug law, the draft of the 1995 Rules Relating to Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Rule is currently being processed for

introduction and finally, it was provisioned on 13 December 2023.

21) A five-year new National Strategic Plan for the period 2020-2024 has been adopted, and a two-year action plan for the states and regions is in progress to implement the new national drug policy that was approved on 20th February, 2018.

မူးယစ်ဆေးဝါးနှင့်စိတ်ကိုပြောင်းလဲစေသောဆေးဝါးများအန္တရာယ် တားဆီးကာကွယ်ရေးဗဟိုအဖွဲ့

ကန့်သတ်

ပြည်ထောင်စုသမ္မတမြန်မာနိုင်ငံတော်

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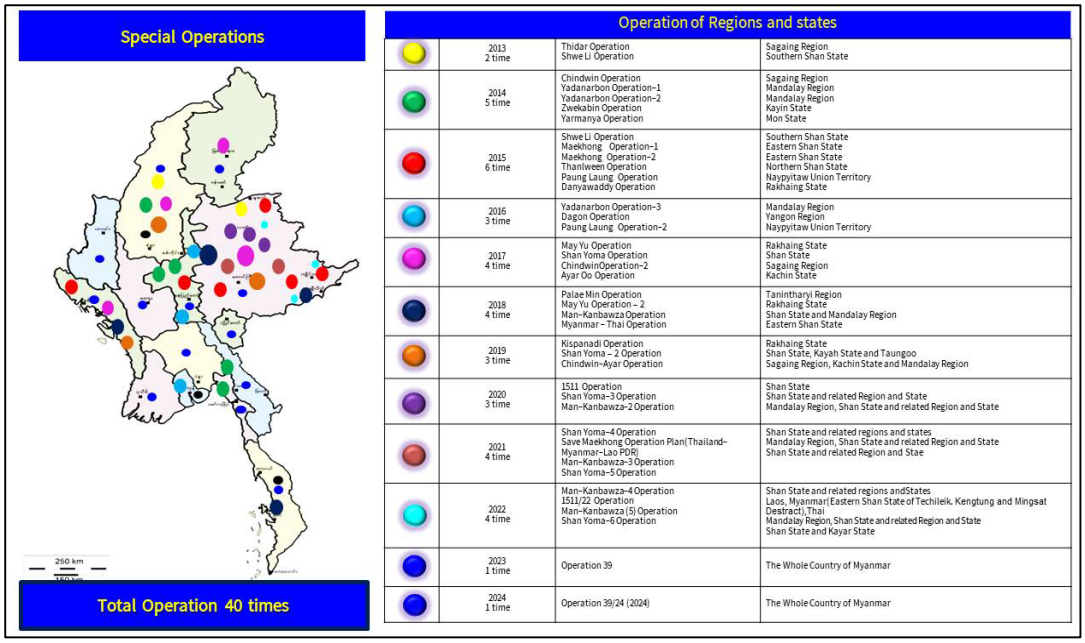
ကန့်သတ်

Enforcement Measures

22) The Tatmadaw (Myanmar Military), Myanmar Police Force and the Customs Department play the main roles in combating narcotic drugs in Myanmar. The Drug Enforcement Division is being formed under Myanmar Police Force, and its Divisions and units are deployed throughout the country. From 2013 to 15 June 2024, the Drug Enforcement Division conducted 40 operations to interdict the drug smuggling activities.



Operation of Regions and states			
	2013 2 time	Thidar Operation Shwe Li Operation	Sagaing Region Southern Shan State
	2014 5 time	Chindwin Operation Yadanarbon Operation-1 Yadanarbon Operation-2 Zwekabin Operation Yarmanya Operation	Sagaing Region Mandalay Region Mandalay Region Kayin State Mon State
	2015 6 time	Shwe Li Operation Maekhong Operation-1 Maekhong Operation-2 Thanlween Operation Paung Laung Operation Danyawaddy Operation	Southern Shan State Eastern Shan State Eastern Shan State Northern Shan State Naypyitaw Union Territory Rakhaing State
	2016 3 time	Yadanarbon Operation-3 Dagon Operation Paung Laung Operation-2	Mandalay Region Yangon Region Naypyitaw Union Territory
	2017 4 time	May Yu Operation Shan Yoma Operation ChindwinOperation-2 Ayar Oo Operation	Rakhaing State Shan State Sagaing Region Kachin State
	2018 4 time	Palae Min Operation May Yu Operation – 2 Man-Kanbawza Operation Myanmar – Thai Operation	Tanintharyi Region Rakhaing State Shan State and Mandalay Region Eastern Shan State
	2019 3 time	Kispanadi Operation Shan Yoma – 2 Operation Chindwin-Ayar Operation	Rakhaing State Shan State, Kayah State and Taungoo Sagaing Region, Kachin State and Mandalay Region
	2020 3 time	1511 Operation Shan Yoma-3 Operation Man-Kanbawza-2 Operation	Shan State Shan State and related Region and State Mandalay Region, Shan State and related Region and State
	2021 4 time	Shan Yoma-4 Operation Save Maekhong Operation Plan(Thailand-Myanmar-Lao PDR) Man-Kanbawza-3 Operation Shan Yoma-5 Operation	Shan State and related regions and states Mandalay Region, Shan State and related Region and State Shan State and related Region and Stae
	2022 4 time	Man-Kanbawza-4 Operation 1511/22 Operation Man-Kanbawza (5) Operation Shan Yoma-6 Operation	Shan State and related regions andStates Laos, Myanmar(Eastern Shan State of Techileik, Kengtung and Mingsat Destract), Thai Mandalay Region, Shan State and related Region and State Shan State and Kayar State
	2023 1 time	Operation 39	The Whole Country of Myanmar
	2024 1 time	Operation 39/24 (2024)	The Whole Country of Myanmar

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

Types of drugs	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Opium (Kg)	945.709	1256.168	2829.039	1552.692	3882.908	2632.009	1209.77	581.25
Heroin (Kg)	769.258	570.622	1099.123	690.240	1853.363	2526.109	1345.49	1873.36
ATS Pill (Millions)	98.35	72.81	106.70	108.71	382.41	198.18	169.07	253.34
ICE (Kg)	2464.083	1107.494	2827.537	9426.193	17363.877	13815.775	23401.92	17829.34
Speciosa	1409.432	651.126	1833.886	2542.599	2632.723	1058.480	766.48	1769.94
Cannabis (Kg)	188.780	198.826	142.381	364.819	737.597	503.715	929.43	686.74
Case	**8800**	**9544**	**13037**	**13000**	**13960**	**6990**	**6759**	**6539**
Suspect	**13591**	**14000**	**18681**	**18407**	**19994**	**10063**	**9600**	**8853**

24) The follow Chart illustrates the number of heroin refineries and ATS tablet manufacturing machines seized between 2008 and 2023.

Types	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Heroin Refineries	1	-	-	3	3	-	3	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
ATS Refineries	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	6	8	1	1	2	7
Tablet Machines	-	2	6	3	2	3	2	2	2	15	27	1	7	15

International Cooperation

25) 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.

26) 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. Furthermore, Myanmar is currently in the process of signing an MOU with Indonesia.

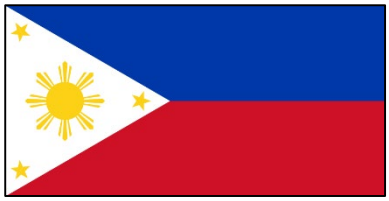
Cooperation on Capacity Building

27) In 2023, to strengthen the capacity building for drug law enforcement activities, there were a total of a bilateral meeting attended by 18 officers. In addition, in 2023, we have participated 35 online meetings/trainings/session/workshops with 7 officers, in addition, a total of 18 meetings/study visit attended by 110 officers.

Conclusion

28) The problem of narcotic drugs is intrinsically linked to ethnic armed conflicts. Therefore, in order to obtain peace within the country by reducing armed conflicts, the Myanmar Government is striving to secure a nationwide ceasefire agreement. This will be achieved by holding Peace Conference with all concerned parties regarding the ceased fire agreement throughout the entire country.

29) Although Myanmar has made all-out efforts to combat narcotic drugs using its own resources as well as through cooperation with the international community, the country still faces constraints and challenges in these endeavors. However, we would like to reiterate that Myanmar is trying its best to overcome these constraints and challenges by adopting plans and programs that align with the country's reality.



The Philippines

Drug Situation and Anti-Drug Accomplishment

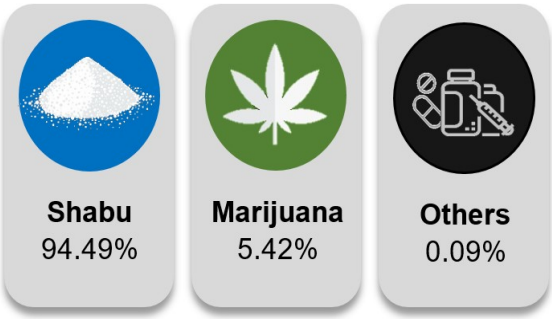
Amid the pandemic, the Philippines remains steadfast in implementing both drug supply and drug demand reduction programs guided by the Philippine Anti-Illegal Drugs Strategy. The drug problem remains a persistent challenge for the Philippines.

With the relentless effort of the government to eradicate illegal drugs, PDEA and other law enforcement agencies conducted 36,803 operations that resulted in the arrest of 49,700 drug personalities and the seizure of PhP16.24 billion worth of dangerous drug

Dangerous Drugs Seized in 2023	
Dangerous Drugs	**Volume**
Shabu	2,186.19 kilograms
Cocaine	40.56 kilograms
Ecstasy	35,125 pieces
Marijuana	
Kush	50.59 kilograms
Dried Leaves and Bricks	1,301.04 kilograms
Plants	3,894,111 pieces
Stalks	727.19 kilograms
Fruiting Tops	43.17 kilograms
Seedlings	134,246 pieces
Seeds	1.29 kilograms
Hashish	1.73 kilograms

Based on arrested drug personalities in 2023, the majority of arrested drug personalities involved seizure of Methamphetamine hydrochloride locally known as Shabu at 94.49% and of Marijuana at 5.42%.

Drug of Concern



Drug Affectation

To measure the magnitude of the country's drug problem, PDEA, together with the local government units, monitors the status of the barangays nationwide wherein the presence of illegal drug activities and drug personalities are the factors considered in measuring the affectation.

Barangay Drug Clearing Program

As of December 31, 2023, out of 42,001 barangays nationwide, 28,243 or 67.24% barangays were declared as drug-cleared, 6,127 or 14.59% as drug-free, and 363 or 0.86% as drug-affected. A total of 7,268 or 17.30% barangays are yet to be cleared by the government.

Moreover, out of 7,268 affected barangays, 264, or 4% are seriously affected barangays, 5,031, or 69% are moderately affected, and 1,973, or 27% remain slightly affected barangays.

Drug Entry Points

As an archipelagic country with vast coastline, the Philippines is vulnerable to illegal drugs smuggling due to multiple entries and exit points. The four prevalent avenues utilized are airports, seaports, coast or shipside, and mail and parcel system.

Moreover, the resurgence of utilization of drug couriers to carry illegal drugs through airports has been observed in the airport interdiction operations conducted by law enforcement agencies. In previous years, due to travel restrictions, the use of drug couriers through international airports significantly dropped. However, in 2023, thirteen (13) drug personalities were arrested at the NAIA indicating the re-emergence of drug trafficking through airports.

High-Impact Operations

Aligned with the thrust of the Agency to conduct intelligence-driven operations, PDEA and other law enforcement agencies conducted a total of 856 high-impact operations that aimed to disrupt the supply of illegal drugs.

High-Impact Operations Conducted in 2023	
Dismantled Drug Dens	498
High-Volume Seizure	257
Marijuana Eradication	101
Total	**856**

High-Value Targets Arrested

As a result of the intensified arrest of top-level drug personalities, a total of 3,284 high- value targets were arrested in 2023, which is vital in disrupting the illegal activities of drug syndicates and the proliferation of illegal drugs in the communities.

High-Value Targets Arrested in 2023	
Arrest from HIOs	1,799
Drug Den Maintainer	576
Target-Listed Personality	323
Government Employee	187
Foreign National	68
Elected Official	39
Leader/Member of a Drug Group	39
Uniformed Personnel	23
Wanted-Listed Personality	12
Resurgent	6
Leader/Member of an Armed Group	3
Other HVTs	209
Total	**3,284**

Foreign Nationals Arrested

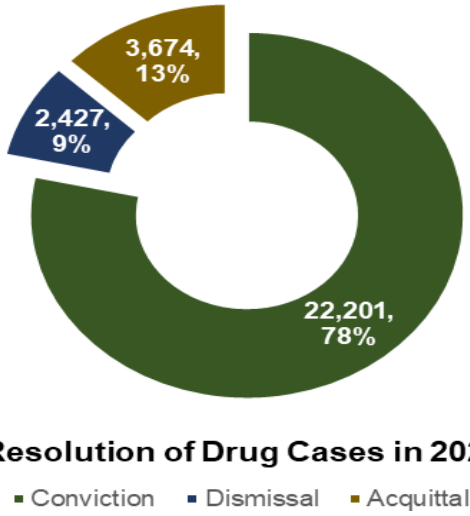
A total of 63 foreign nationals were arrested for violation of RA 9165.

Nationality	No. of Arrested Personalities
American	6
Bolivian	1
British	1
Canadian	1
Chinese	15
Dutch	1
Indian	4
Iranian	2
Korean	4
Liberian	1
Malagasy	1
Malaysian	4
Nigerian	11
Salvadoran	1
Singaporean	2
South African	1
Surinamese	1
Syrian	1
Taiwanese	4
Turkish	1
Ugandan	1
Vietnamese	4
Total	**68**

Drug Cases Filed

PDEA remains committed to sustaininganti-illegal drug operations beyond the apprehension of drug offenders. The Agency ensures prompt filing of drug cases and strengthens the presentation of case folders to the prosecutors.

In 2023, PDEA and other law enforcement agencies filed 47,516 drug cases against arrested drug personalities nationwide. Further, out of 28,302 resolved cases in 2023, 22,201 or 78.44% resulted in conviction, 2,427 or 8.58% in dismissal, and 3,674 or 12.98% in acquittal.



Minors Rescued

For this year, PDEA and other law enforcement agencies rescued 694 minors during the conduct of anti-illegal drug operations. They were subsequently turned-over to the local social welfare and development offices to undergo intervention and rehabilitation programs.

Major Drug Hauls

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

574.80 kilograms of Shabu were seized and one (1) Chinese national was arrested during the implementation of search warrant conducted by elements of PNP, PDEA and NBI on March 29, 2023 in Barangay Irisan, Baguio City.

574.80 kilograms of Shabu were seized and one (1) Chinese national was arrested during the implementation of search warrant conducted by elements of PNP, PDEA and NBI on March 29, 2023 in Barangay Irisan, Baguio City.

274.59 kilograms of Shabu concealed in cling and carbon wrap placed in a cardboard box were seized during the interdiction operation conducted by joint elements of PDEA, BOC, and PNP on October 5, 2023 at the Manila International Container Port (MICP), Tondo, Manila.

80.79 kilograms of Shabu were seized and two (2) drug personalities including one (1) Chinese national were arrested during buy-bust operation conducted by joint elements of PDEA and PNP on February 19, 2023 at Unit A, Timog Hills Townhouse, Barangay Pampang, Angeles City, Pampanga.

58.44 kilograms of Shabu were seized and two (2) drug personalities were arrested during the conduct of interdiction operation by NAIA-IADITG on March 20, 2023 at NAIA Complex, Pasay City.

19.98 kilograms of Shabu were seized and two (2) drug personalities were arrested during buy-bust operation conducted by PDEA on September 12, 2023 at #35 McDonnell Street, Concorde Subdivision, Tambo, Parañaque City.

16.85 kilograms of Shabu were seized and one (1) South African national was arrested during interdiction operation conducted by elements of PDEA RO VII Airport Interdiction Unit on February 1, 2023 at Customs Examination Area, Mactan Cebu International Airport Terminal 2, Lapu-Lapu City.

12.63 kilograms of Shabu were seized and one (1) drug personality was arrested during controlled delivery operation conducted by elements of NAIA-IADITG on January 11, 2023 along Lotus Street, TS Cruz Subdivision, Almanza Dos, Las Piñas City.

Advocacy Campaigns

Demand reduction is pivotal in the anti-illegal drug campaign. Following are the Agency's efforts in the drug abuse prevention, community engagement, and drug rehabilitation and reformation.

Demand Reduction Activities

In 2023, PDEA conducted a total of 13,875 Preventive Education and Community In- volvement (PECI) activities that include lectures, symposia, seminars, meetings, multi- media and social media efforts, civic awareness activities, and efforts from our stake-

holders/partners to different sectors of the society nationwide.

Implementation of ALAB Program

As part of PDEA's demand reduction strategy, the Agency initiated the PDEA Adbokasiya LABan sa Iligal na Droga (ALAB) Program. The program aims to empower advocates, through training and capacity building, who will serve as the Agency's force multipliers in the conduct of PECI activities nationwide. In 2023, a total of 98 Trainings of Trainers were conducted in all provinces and highly urbanized cities nationwide.

NAGKAKAISANG ADBOKASIYA LABAN SA ILIGAL NA DROGA

Launching of PDEA Virtual Museum and E-Library

To further enhance public engagement in the government's anti-illegal drug campaign, the Agency officially launched the PDEA Virtual Gallery Museum on February 28, 2023 via PDEA Cares Facebook live

Launching of PDEA Virtual Museum.

Moreover, the Agency endeavored to make useful resources about illegal drugs accessible to the public by launching the PDEA Academy E-Library on January 26, 2023. A total of 530 e-books are available in the e-library.

Reformation of Drug Offenders

In 2023, PDEA, in collaboration with local government units, continued implementing the Balay Silangan Reformation Program, an intervention program to reform drug offenders.

During the year, 105 Balay Silangan Reformation Centers were established that produced 1,854 graduates. Since the launching of the program in 2018, 535 Balay Silangan Reformation Centers were established that graduated 7,526 reformists and aided the employment of 2,123 individuals.

In the same period, PDEA recorded the following rehabilitative interventions for Persons Who Use Drugs (PWUDs) through the program:

Intervention	No. of Ongoing Clients/ Graduates *As of December 31, 2023*
Community-Based Drug Rehabilitation Program	314,917 *Graduates*
Rehabilitation (Facility-Based)	3,146 *Ongoing/Graduates*
General Intervention	73,428 *Graduates*

As a priority of the government in the anti-illegal drug campaign, the Agency also enhanced the implementation of treatment and rehabilitation programs for Persons Who Use Drugs and drug offenders. In line with that, PDEA issued Memorandum Circular No 2023-042 or the Protocol for Providing Assistance for Voluntary Rehabilitation and Intervention and the Creation of Regional Public Assistance Desk which institutionalized the procedure in assisting PWUDs to gain access to appropriate intervention.

In 2023, 116 individuals who sought access to drug treatment and rehabilitation programs were assisted by the Desk.

Support Initiatives and Accomplishments

The Agency highlights the following initiatives and accomplishments that support the anti- illegal drug campaign.

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

Pursuant to the provision of RA 9165 and the order of the courts, the Agency conducted 22 destruction activities nationwide and destroyed PhP31.54 billion worth of dangerous drugs, CPECs, and laboratory equipment, including the following:

Types of Dangerous Drugs and CPECs Destroyed	Quantity
Methamphetamine HCl	3,883.6583 kilograms
Marijuana	1858.0876 kilograms
Cocaine	8.8687 kilograms
MDMA	23.7178 kilograms
Diazepam	4.6588 kilograms
Ephedrine	669.8516 kilograms
Ketamine	12.2024 grams
Codeine	343.441 grams
GBL	252 milliliters
Liquid Marijuana	1208.282 milliliters
Liquid Meth HCl	716.5437 liters
Amphetamine	393.3004 grams
Toluene	47.75 milliliters
Nitrazepam	5158.7488 grams
MDA	704.38 grams
Meth + MDMA	95.6 grams
Psiloscin	13.1555 grams
N-Dimethylamphetamine	33625.93 grams
Ephedrine+Meth HCl	40 liters
Meth + Ephedrine (g)	32.52 grams
Meth + Cocaine (g)	3.4781 grams
Phentermine (g)	0.35 grams
Oxycodone (g)	0.42 grams
Dimythyl Sulfone (g)	208.909 kilograms
piperonal	7.9 grams
Nabuphine HCl	98 milliliters
Fentanyl	36 milliliters
Morphine	16 milliliters
Marijuana Cigarettes (Roaches)	11 pieces
Marijuana Plant	136.7 pieces
Midazolam	42.9859 grams 144 milliliters
Surrendered Expired Medicines	57.178 kilograms 6,804 amp 9,802 pieces

International Cooperation

As one of the Agency's efforts to intensify intelligence gathering and investigation and border control, PDEA strengthens its international cooperation.

PDEA also fortified its cooperation with internation counterparts against drug threats by actively participating in internatonal meetings and engaging in bilateral meetings.

International Meetings			
No	**Organization**	**Date**	**Venue**
1	66th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs UNODC	March 13-17, 2023	Vienna, Austria
2	International Law Enforcement Academy of Bangkok	March 30, 2023	Novotel, Philippines
3	Transnational Crime Information Center, Embassy of Republic of Korea	April 14, 2023	Quezon City, Philippines
4	U.S. Government	July 7, 2023	Virtual
5	Transnational Crime Information Center, Embassy of Republic of Korea	July 12, 2023	Quezon City, Philippines
6	Embassy of the People's Republic of China	July 14, 2023	Quezon City, Philippines
7	Royal Canadian Mounted Police	July 18, 2023	Quezon City, Philippines
8	Embassy of Canada		
9	Australian Federal Police		
10	National Narcotics Control Commission	July 19, 2023	Quezon City, Philippines
11	Colombo Plan Drug Advisory Program	August 1, 2023	Quezon City, Philippines

12	Philippines-Australia Joint Declaration of Strategic Partnership (JDSP)	August 17, 2023	Virtual
13	2023 International Forum on Police Cooperation Combating Transnational Crime	September 5-6, 2023	Taipei, Taiwan
14	Transnational Crime Information Center, Embassy of Republic of Korea	October 20, 2023	Quezon City, Philippines
15	Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)	October 23-25, 2023	Virtual
16	45th HONLAP at Bali, Indonesia	October 24-28, 2023	Bali, Indonesia
17	Colombo Plan Drug Advisory Program	November 14-16, 2023	Quezon City, Philippines
18	German Federal Criminal Police	November 16, 2023	Quezon City, Philippines

Bilateral Meetings			
No	**Organization**	**Date**	**Venue**
1	4th China-Philippines Bilateral Meeting on Drug Control Cooperation	July 10-14, 2023	Quanzhou, China
2	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)	July 18, 2023	Quezon City, Philippines
3	4th Badan Narkotika Nasional (BNN)-PDEA Bilateral Meeting	November 24-26, 2023	Bali, Indonesia
4	3rd Bilateral Meeting between the PDEA and Transnational Crime Information Center, Republic of Korea	December 4-7, 2023	Manila, Philippines

Treatment and Rehabilitation

Consolidated data from Treatment and Rehabilitation facilities nationwide recorded a total of 5,546 admissions. Below is the profile of drug users in the country based from this data.

PROFILE OF DRUG USERS (Facility Based)

Demographic Indicator (Admissions = 5,546 as of December 2023)	
Mean Age	35 years old
Sex Ratio (Male to Female)	12:1
Civil Status	Single (52.07%)
Status of Employment	Employed (57.90%) (Workers/Employees, Businessman and Self-Employed)
Educational Attainment	High School Level (26.96%)
Economic Status	Average Monthly Family Income Php13,201.05 or US$237.60
Place of Residence	Urban Core (Specifically NCR 26.11%)
Duration of Drug-Taking	More than six (6) years
Nature of Drug-Taking	Mono Drug-Use
Drugs/Substance of Abuse	Methamphetamine Hydrochloride (Shabu),
	Cannabis (Marijuana)
	Cocaine

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

CY 2023

For 2023, a total of eighty-two (82) Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers (DATRCs) are reporting to the Treatment and Rehabilitation Admission Information System (TRAIS). Of this, seventy-five (75) are residential, and seven (7) are outpatient.

Five thousand five hundred forty-six (5,546) admissions were recorded from these reporting facilities. Of these numbers, four thousand four twenty-five (4,425) are new admissions, eighty-five (85) are readmitted, or relapse cases, and one thousand thirty-six (1,036) are outpatient.

Compared with the previous year's cases, a forty-three percent (43.49%) increase in admission was noted. The rise in admission can be attributed to the enhanced implementation of programs for Persons Who Use Drugs (PWUDs), assisting them to gain access to appropriate intervention, referral to treatment and rehabilitation, and the different advocacy programs being implemented nationwide that encourage PWUDs to undergo treatment and rehabilitation, as evidenced by thirty-five percent (35.05%) of voluntary submission and around twenty-eight percent (27.71%) cases who availed of plea bargaining.

Demographic profile

The center admissions consist of ninety-two percent (91.74%) males, around eight percent (7.70%) females, and less than one percent (0.56%) LGBT. With the increase in admission, the ratio also changed from 11:1 to a male-to-female ratio of 12:1. The higher number of males in rehabilitation centers may be attributable to societal expectations and gender stereotypes in the Philippines, where men are expected to be the primary breadwinners and providers for their families. This can lead to high levels of stress and pressure, making them vulnerable to drug use. Men may also be driven to engage in risky behaviors to prove their masculinity or toughness. These factors could contribute to an increased likelihood of substance abuse and addiction among men.

Given the government's efforts on creating awareness, emphasizing drug treatment and rehabilitation program, to include after-care and social reintegration, more and more male PWUDs are now seeking treatment. However, a heightened advocacy campaign should be undertaken to urge more female PWUDs to go for the appropriate treatment interventions.

For the year under review, the youngest admission is 12 while the most senior is 68. Most of the admissions belong to the age group of 40 and above, with thirty percent (30.49%) of the reported cases. The computed mean and median are 35 years old.

More than half (52.07%) are single, and about a fourth (23.26%) are married; those who have live-in partners comprised twenty percent (19.87%), and the rest, nearly five percent (4.80%) are either widow/er, separated, divorced, or annulled. As to educational attainment, almost a third (26.96%) have attained high school. On the second spot are those who have reached college, with nineteen percent (19.49%) followed by those who have graduated high school, with about eighteen percent (17.53%).

The monthly family income is approximately thirteen thousand pesos (Php 13,201.05) or about two hundred thirty-seven US dollars (US$237.60).

Regarding the status of employment, those employed (either workers/employees or people in business and self-employed) comprised fifty-eight percent (57.90%) while unemployed comprised thirty-eight percent (37.88%). Three percent (3.46%) of the admission constitute students, and less than one percent (0.58%) are out-of-school youth while a few (0.18%) were pensioners. With the consistent trend of drug use among the employed, a greater emphasis on the promotion of drug-free workplace is imperative.

Twenty-six percent (26.11%) of reported cases are residents of the National Capital Region, while thirteen percent (12.93%) are from Region IV-A.

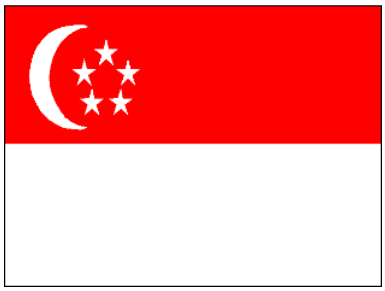
Considering the age at first drug use, forty-two percent (41.96%) belong to ages 15 to 19 years old. Thirty-nine percent (39.04%) admitted to having taken drugs two (2) to five (5) times a week, twenty-six percent (26.27%) monthly, and almost nineteen percent (18.73%) weekly.

Most Commonly Abused Drugs

Methamphetamine Hydrochloride or "Shabu" remains the leading drug of abuse, comprising around ninety-three percent (92.77%) of the total admissions. This is followed by Cannabis (Marijuana) at twenty-eight percent (28.25%) and on the third by Cocaine at less than one percent (0.61%). It seems that cocaine, as a local drug of abuse, is gaining popularity, as evidenced by the increase in seizures by or drug law enforcers, which tends to show that there is a demand within the illicit local market.

According to the 2023 WDR by the United Nations on Drugs and Crime, the global community is experiencing a persistent surge in both the supply and demand of cocaine; this is being felt across the globe and is likely to hasten the development of new markets. However, the same report shows a very low build-up in the Asian Region compared to the other regions.

Mono-drug use is still the nature of drug-taking; the administration routes are inhalation/sniffing and oral ingestion.



Singapore

Overview

In 2023, CNB arrested 3,122 drug abusers. This was a 10% increase from the 2,826 drug abusers arrested in 2022.

The number of repeat drug abusers arrested increased by 7% from 2,024 in 2022 to 2,170 in 2023. The number of new drug abusers arrested increased by 19% from 802 in 2022 to 952 in 2023. 51% of new abusers arrested in 2023 were under 30 years old.

Methamphetamine, heroin, and cannabis were the three most commonly abused drugs in 2023, with 94% 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 91% of new drug abusers arrested abusing at least one of these three drugs. Out of the 3,122 drug abusers arrested in 2023, 717 abusers (23%) 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 Team[1] agencies to deter and detect the flow of drugs into and within Singapore.

In 2023, 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 945 operations at our checkpoints to intercept attempts to smuggle drugs into Singapore. CNB also carried out major operations that crippled 25 drug syndicates.

[1] 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 2023 were estimated to have a street value of about S$15.58 million. There was a 22% increase in seizures of heroin to 83.00kg in 2023, from 68.22kg in 2022. Cannabis seizures saw a 47% decrease to 70.19kg in 2023, from 133.41kg in 2022. Seizures of crystalline methamphetamine (more commonly known as 'Ice') saw a 13% decrease to 24.38kg in 2023, from 28.15kg in 2022.

Drug type	2022	2023	% change in seizure	Estimated market value 2022	Estimated market value 2023
Heroin No.3	68.22kg	83.00kg	+21.7%	≈ S$16.66 million	≈ S$15.58 million
Methamphetamine ('Ice')	28.15kg	24.38kg	-13.4%		
Cannabis	133.41kg	70.19kg	-47.4%		
Cocaine	405.22g	117.37g	-71.0%		
'Ecstasy'	8,024 tablets + 1,082.48g	7,899 tablets + 3,082.48g	-1.56% (tablets) +184.8% (weight)		
Methamphetamine tablets ('Yaba')	2,313 tablets	197 tablets	-91.5%		
Ketamine	3.97kg + 641 tablets	5.96kg + 1,247 tablets	+50.1% (weight) +94.5% (tablets)		
Erimin-5	10,906 tablets	8,260 tablets	-24.3%		
Buprenorphine ('Subutex')	NIL	NIL	-		
New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) (e.g. synthetic cannabinoids and synthetic cathinones)	171 tablets + 571.11g + 57 bottles	3,289 tablets + 616.21g + 57 bottles	+1823.4% (tablets) +7.9% (weight)		

Thailand

Overview

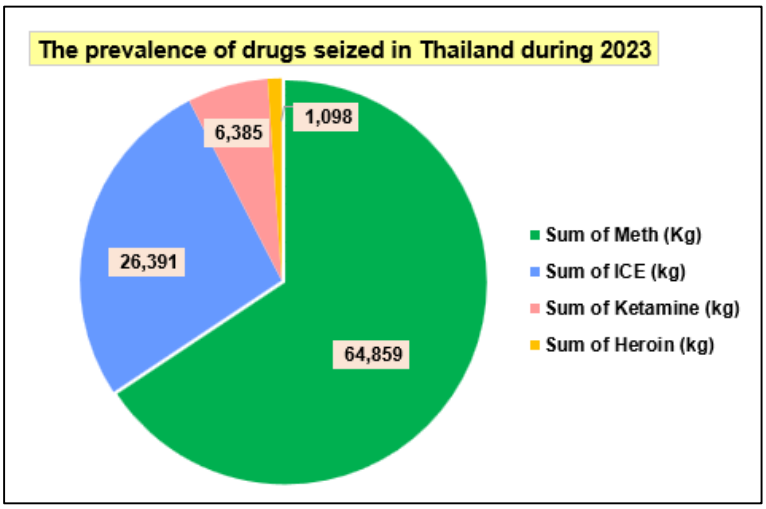
Transnational crimes are significant threats which have affected Southeast Asia and neighboring countries, especially ASEAN Member States. Such crimes have become challenges to cooperation at all levels and led to a decline in people's quality of life by restricting access to necessary opportunities. As a result, many vulnerable groups have played a major role in committing transnational criminal activities, such as illicit drug trafficking; manufacturing of synthetic drugs and other dangerous substances.

The Golden Triangle is one of the world's largest illicit drug producing areas located in Southeast Asia. Active drug syndicates in the area have mainly produced synthetic drugs such as Methamphetamine (Yaba and ICE), ketamine and also plant-based drugs like heroin and opium. They have also smuggled the precursor chemicals into the Golden Triangle for illicit drug manufacture. During the past few years up to now, the unrest in a neighboring country has affected the influx of illicit drugs, particularly crossing the border areas into Thailand and the Greater Mekong sub-region countries. Drug traffickers have diverted their smuggling methods from using drug couriers to parcel post, express mail, freight forwarders, and air cargo services to avoid authorities' detection.

Drug Trafficking & Epidemic Situations

Thailand has been exploited as a transit country by drug trafficking syndicates to export drugs to the third countries. The expansion and potential production of synthetic drugs in the Golden Triangle and the smuggling of precursor chemicals into the drug production sites have a tendency to rise, as shown by the increasing arrest statistics not only in Thailand but also in various countries in the region. The most commonly abused drugs in Thailand are tablet methamphetamine, known as Yaba, followed by ICE, ketamine, and heroin, Moreover, Thailand has faced problem of synthetic drugs containing compounds of drugs and dangerous substances called designer drugs such as Happy Water. Such designer drugs cause serious health consequences for those who knowingly or unknowingly consume them. Drug smuggling has been detected along the border areas,

particularly in the northern and northeastern provinces of Thailand. Recently, the western provinces have also become a new drug route. Apart from the land route smuggling across the border areas, drug syndicates have also used other routes and methods to smuggle drugs for example, via seaports, airports and parcel posts. In 2023, drug syndicates took advantage from those channels especially airports and seaports, Thailand's Airport Interdiction Task Force arrested 159 drug cases comprising 140 parcel posts and 19 human couriers while the Seaport Interdiction Task Force arrested 15 drug cases. During COVID-19 pandemic, illicit drug activities temporarily dropped off, but drug traffickers quickly adapted by exploiting online marketing and delivery services. As a result, the number of drug seizures via those mentioned channels have significantly increased in both quantity and number of cases. Moreover, drug dealers have taken advantage of online platforms such as X and Facebook to reach more drug abusers.

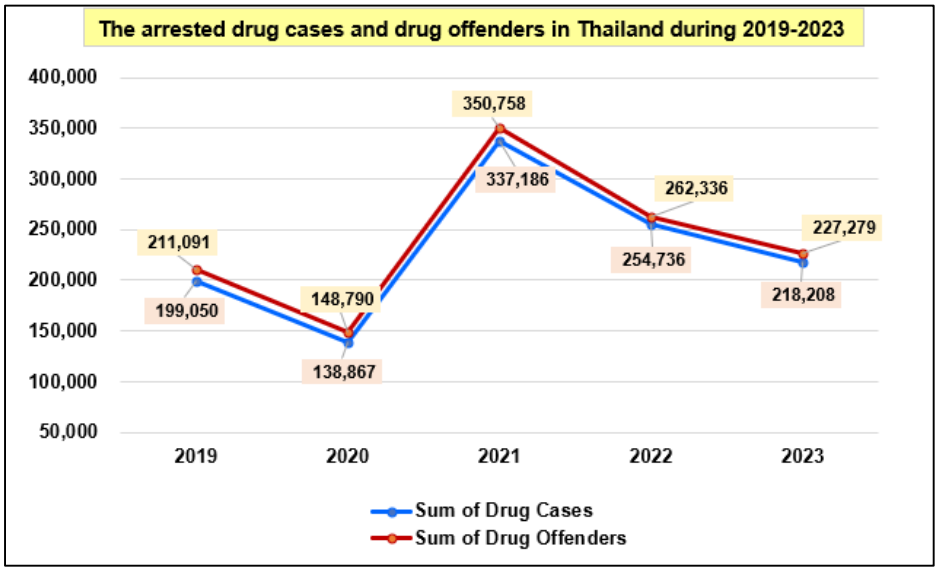


Graph: The prevalence of drugs seized in Thailand during 2023

Law Enforcement

There were two important measures taken in Thailand for drug suppression, which were (1) illicit drug interdiction; the primary objective of this measure was to prevent the smuggling of precursor chemicals into drug producing sites in the Golden Triangle, to stop illicit drugs from entering Thailand, and to deter traffickers not to deploy Thailand as a transit point. For trafficking syndicates, Thailand was very attractive to them, especially in terms of both domestic and international transportation via land, sea, and air routes. Hence, the drug interdiction was focused on these routes to intercept such illicit drug activities, so no drugs were trafficked through the region. Drug law enforcement officers also used advance technology to counter and track down the sophisticated modus operandi of the drug traffickers. (2) Suppression of drug

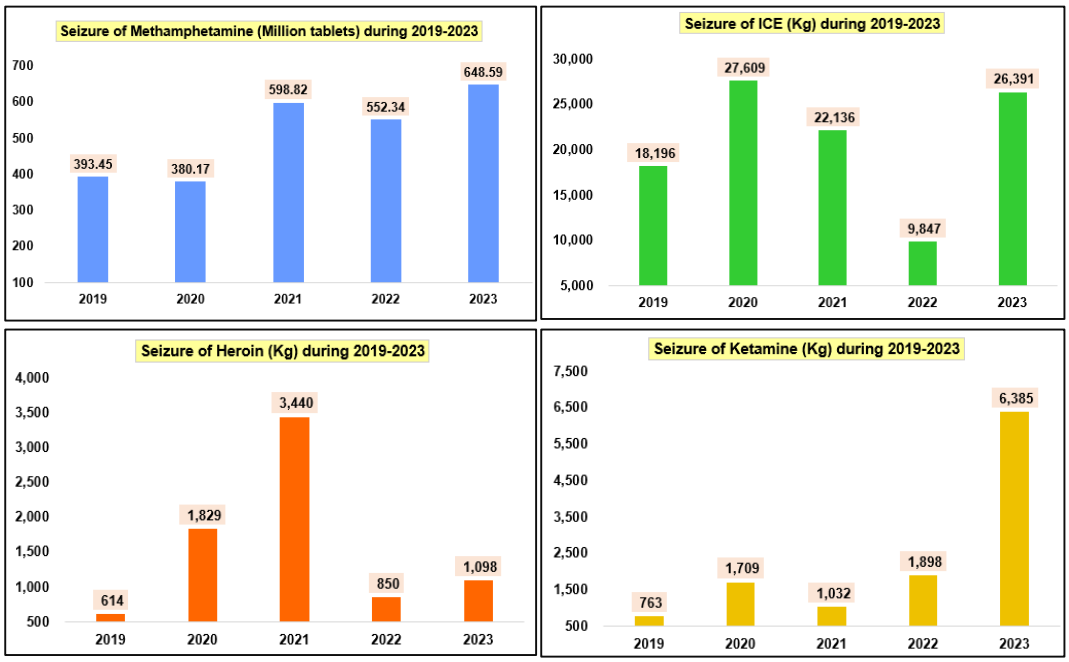
syndicates; this measure aimed at dismantling both domestic and international drug trafficking networks through investigation, law enforcement, and property confiscation. As a result, in 2023, there were 218,208 drug cases and 227,279 drug offenders were arrested. Additionally, 648 million tablets of Methamphetamine, 26,390 kilograms of ICE, 1,098 kilograms of heroin, 160,000 tablets of ecstasy, 6,385 kilograms of ketamine, and 34 kilograms of cocaine were seized.



Graph: The arrested drug cases and drug offenders in Thailand during 2019-2023

Year	Meth (Million tablets)	Heroin (Kilogram)	ICE (Kilogram)	Ecstasy (Tablet)	Ketamine (Kilogram)	Cocaine (Kilogram)	Dried Cannabis (Kilogram)	Kratom (Kilogram)
2019	393.45	614.22	18,196.34	340,000	762.83	31.95	13,300.79	108,352.12
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	-	-

Table: The statistics on the drugs seized during 2019-2023



Graph: The statistics on the drugs seized by types of drugs during 2019-2023

Furthermore, Thailand has been putting efforts to combat illicit drug production and intercept many suspicious shipments of precursor chemicals smuggled through the

country to drug producing sites in the Golden Triangle. In June 2023, Thailand, as a member of the ASEAN Seaport Interdiction Task Force (ASITF), intercepted a suspicious shipment destined for Lao PDR through Thailand, containing 510 tons of Aniline, a hazardous substance in Category 3. This large quantity of the substance could possibly be produced around 85 tons of Fentanyl.

In terms of combating illicit drug trafficking syndicates, asset confiscation measure according to relevant laws such as the Anti-Money Laundering Act and tax measures under the Revenue Code were commonly enforced to suppress drug syndicates. During 2019-2020, drug cased with offenders were arrested and investigated, and their properties from drug business were seized by applying property-based confiscation. Since the Narcotics Code came into force in 2021, a combination of value-based and property-based confiscation has been imposed to combat illicit drug trafficking syndicates. This approach has led to a significant increase in the number of seized properties in the following years, particularly in 2023, it reached 21,524 million Baht, or threefold increase in the value than in 2021 due to the arrest of major drug syndicates.

Value of Seizures/Assets	
Year	Million Baht
2019	949.59
2020	790.57
2021	7,346.82
2022	11,003.02
2023	21,524.74

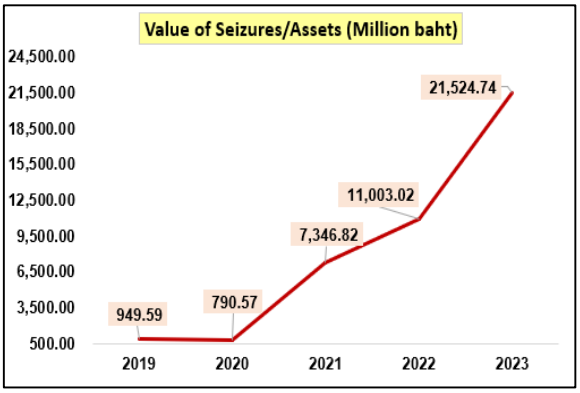
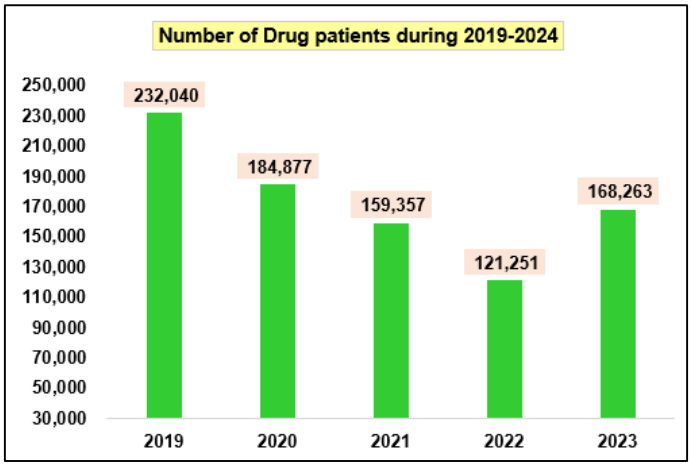


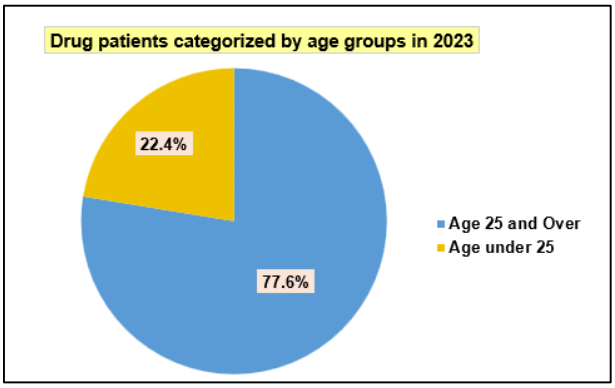
Table & Graph: Value of Seizures/Assets (Million Baht) during 2019-2023

Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation

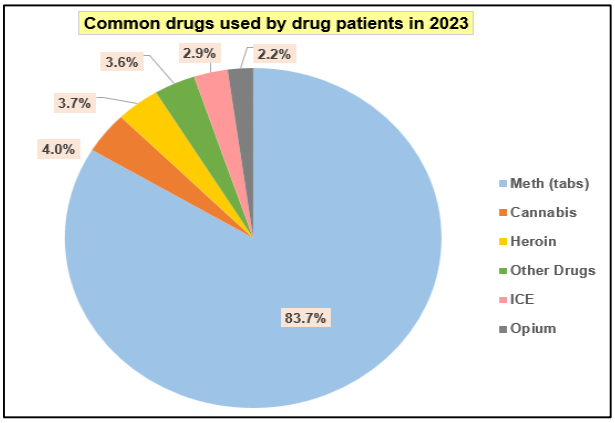
In 2023, there were 168,263 drug patients applied for treatment; 50.1% were new drug patients. Most of them were at the age of 25 and over (77.6%) and the rest were under 25 (22.4%). Tablet Methamphetamine (Yaba) (83.7%), Cannabis (4%), and Heroin (3.7%) were the most commonly abused drugs. Besides treatment and rehabilitation run by medical services, Thailand has also conducted Community-based Treatment (CBTx) to take care of drug users in communities by providing them with psychosocial therapy and counseling. The authorities concerned promoted rehabilitation and social reintegration by supporting them to improve their quality of life in terms of education, occupation, coupled with monitoring them until they were completely ready to reintegrate into society.



Graph: Number of Drug patients during 2019-2023



Graph: Drug patients categorized by age groups in 2023



Graph: Common drug used by drug patients in 2023

Drug Prevention

Thailand has comprehensively conducted drug prevention measures against drugs in target groups. Each target group is encouraged and enhanced drug resistance skills to prevent themselves from being involved in dangerous drugs and substances. In 2023, drug prevention measures were implemented with over 36 million people in all target groups. They were divided into three main groups and applied measures; (1) over six million people were put into in and out-of-school children and youth group, (2) over 800 thousand people in the labor group, and (3) over 28 million people in the general public group. Apart from those target groups, Thailand has also focused on implementing drug prevention measures in over 19 thousand villages/communities.

For each target group, methods and tools were differently designed to fit with them. The children and youth group were educated about the consequences of drug abuse and drug abuse prevention through manuals and tools such as storybooks and board games to improve the brain executive function skills in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. Moreover, groups of military/police and university students were also encouraged by arranging drug prevention curriculums. For the labor group, the efforts were focused on raising awareness among workers in workplaces by collaborating with a network of entrepreneurs and employers. They were encouraged to improve their working skills and job opportunities, including quality of lives to prevent them from getting involved with drug trafficking. Enhancing the participation of the general public, particularly in families and communities, is very crucial. Thailand has given the importance of the people in the group to participate in the prevention of drug problems in their areas, especially by taking care of the risk groups. Thailand ran campaigns and activities to raise drug awareness and contribute to drug prevention through social media such as Facebook, YouTube and TikTok. To prevent drug relapse of risk groups, Thailand provided ex-drug users with job opportunities and improve their working skills through training and workshop. The drug prevention measures applied in families were focused on improving parenting skills to keep their children away from being involved with drugs. Moreover, Thailand has also built the power of communities against drugs by promoting community participation and encouraging the community leaders' capacity for problem analysis and drug monitoring in the communities. Beyond those groups, Thailand has tried to eliminate the risk factors and control drug prevalence in other risk areas and groups, for example, a campaign against drug use for public drivers to reduce and prevent crime and harm during long weekends.

Picture: Storybooks for improving brain's executive function skills

Picture: Prevention curriculums for university and military

Picture: Drug prevention Infographics in workplace

Picture: Drug prevention campaigns for General public

Picture: Drug prevention measures for preventing relapse in risk groups

Picture: A campaign against drug use for public drivers

Illicit Crop Cultivation

The area of illicit opium cultivation in Thailand during 2018-2022 had continuously decreased but it increased in 2023 from 111 rai of the previous year to 134 rai, accounted for 20.62%. The most growing areas founded were in northern provinces of Thailand such as Chiang Mai, Tak, and Chiang Rai. The main reason of the increasing cultivation was the dramatic decline in the opium cultivation in Afghanistan, which is the world's largest opium-producing areas. In April 2022, the authorities of Afghanistan announced policy to prohibit the opium cultivation and all types of narcotics. Consequently, the opium cultivation was dramatically decreased from 6,200 tons in 2022 to 333 tons in 2023, accounted for 95% and resulting in the increasing demand and the price of raw opium. In addition, the poppy-growing villagers were attracted to divert to grow opium poppy instead of general cash crops by advanced purchase agreement and being equipped with modern agricultural technology that allowed them to boost their poppy yields. Therefore, it was predicted that the situation of illicit opium cultivation in Thailand would tend to increase in the same way of the neighboring countries or would become worsening. As a result, the situation of heroin widespread, which is an extract product from opium, has tended to increase in Thailand as shown in the statistic of drug patients registered in the treatment system. There are two survey methods used in opium cultivation in Thailand; aerial survey and ground survey. The survey data are collected and analyzed along with topographic maps, satellite image maps, and GPS in order to identify locations and estimate sizes of the opium cultivation fields for the opium eradication units to take further actions.

Drug Analysis

Thailand by the Narcotics Analysis and Technical Service Institute (NATSI) of the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) was a department which was responsible for analyzing the seized drugs, and supporting the investigation and the above-mentioned confiscation measures. NATSI analyzed and studied composition of seized drugs for tracking back the spot of origins and spreading areas as well as developing and supporting drug analysis techniques nationally, regionally and internationally along with giving advice on drug analysis standard to the neighboring countries for jointly monitoring drug problems in the region. The institute reported the information on drug characteristic both physical data such as packaging and tool marks on drugs, and chemical data such as the purity of drugs and types of precursor chemicals used for producing drugs. Drug analysis results of the most commonly abused drugs in Thailand are as followed:

1. **Tablet Methamphetamine (Yaba)**

   NATSI focused on studying and analyzing the major cases of Yaba (10,000 tablets up) that most of seized Yaba in Thailand were round, flat and orange/green tablets. Each Yaba tablet was impressed 'WY' (99.8%) and other impression such as Y1/A apple R A and 999 were occasionally found about 0.18%

Picture: Stamps and colors of Yaba found in Thailand

Picture: Brand marks on packaging of Yaba found in Thailand

In terms of chemical analysis of Yaba seized in Thailand, they were mostly produced from various precursor chemicals namely Ephedrine/Pseudoephedrine (73%) followed by Phenyl-2-Propanone (P2P) (23%) and others (4%). The main active psychoactive substance in Yaba was Methamphetamine Hydrochloride. The majority purity of Methamphetamine Hydrochloride in seized Yaba was at range 15.01-20.00% (77%). Moreover, Caffeine was also found as one of main ingredients of Yaba tablet or about 70.00-80.00% of its purity (77%).

2. Crystalline Methamphetamine (Ice)

While considering the analysis of seized Ice, Ice was normally hidden in Chinese tea bags with different brands. Four out of nine brands of seized Ice in Thailand were Alphabet (37%), GUANYINWANG (25%), YUSHAN (12%), and GUARYUNWANG (10%), respectively. Ice also has a main active ingredient as Yaba which was Methamphetamine Hydro chloride with 96-98% purity (41%) by weight. Besides, Ice was produced from the same precursor chemicals as Yaba.

3. Ecstasy

Ecstasy has still been used as a club drug in nightclubs and drug hangout places spreading throughout Thailand. It was mostly smuggled into Thailand via air route by postal services from Europe as a main origin. 3,4-Methylenedioxy Methamphetamine Hydrochloride of MDMA was a main active ingredient of Ecstasy. In past few years, Thailand seized designer drugs containing a mixture of MDMA, other drugs, and various psychoactive substances in order to get strong effects for drug users. In 2023, Thailand found Candy Fun was sold through online platforms and was popular among drug users, particularly at nightclubs. After taking such drugs, the symptoms were similar to taking Ecstasy or Ketamine. The findings of Candy Fun analysis by NATSI, there were drugs and psychoactive substances such as Ketamine Hydrochloride, Nimetazepam, Tramadol, and Flunitrazepam were found as main ingredients.

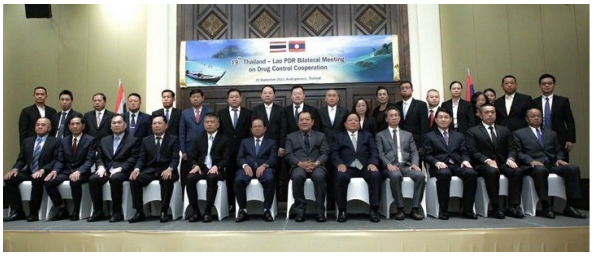
International Cooperation

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 has a drug control mechanism with many countries for jointly solving drug problems through bilateral cooperation, especially the countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region comprising Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam. In 2023, Thailand hosted a bilateral meeting with Lao PDR and attended the bilateral meetings hosted by Viet Nam, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The main objectives of the bilateral mechanism are to jointly control and interdict narcotic drugs and precursor chemicals smuggling in and out of the drug producing areas as well as eradicating drug syndicates and their networks. In addition, a joint patrol along the joint border areas between Thailand and some Greater Mekong countries was conducted.

Picture: The 15th Thailand-Vietnam Bilateral Meeting on Drug Control Cooperation in Da Nang, Viet Nam



Picture: The 19th Thailand-Lao PDR Bilateral Meeting on Drug Control Cooperation in Krabi, Thailand

Picture: The 41st Bilateral Meeting on Narcotics Law Enforcement Cooperation in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Picture: The 2nd Thailand-Indonesia Bilateral Meeting on Drug Control Cooperation in Bali, Indonesia

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 symbolic regional cooperation on drug control. On 6th April 2023, Thailand took a major role in drafting the 5-year Safe Mekong Operation Plan on Drug Control among 6 countries (2023-2027) endorsed in the Summary Meeting Safe Mekong Coordination Center hosted by the Counter Narcotics Police Department of Viet Nam (CND) in Hanoi, Viet Nam. The regional cooperation represents an institutional mechanism with common interests to jointly fight against drugs through coordinated operations and task forces, intelligence sharing as well as assistance in capacity building. With joint operations under SMCC, huge amounts of illicit drugs and precursor chemicals were seized during the past years.

Picture: Summary Meeting Safe Mekong Coordination Center in Viet Nam

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. 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 44th ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Drug Matters (ASOD) hosted by Myanmar (Online)

Picture: The 15th ASEAN Drug Monitoring Network Meeting (ADMN) hosted by Thailand (Online)

Picture: The 8th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters in Vientiane, Lao PDR

Picture: The 8th ASEAN Seaport Interdiction Task Force Meeting hosted by Lao PDR (Online)

3. Global cooperation

Besides, 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 66th CND held 13-17 March 2023 at Vienna International Center, in Vienna, Austria, Thai delegation led by Secretary-General, NCB attended the meeting. Thailand played active roles in voting for seven narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances under the international drug conventions.

Picture: The 66th Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in Vienna, Austria

Viet Nam

Overview of the Drug Situation

1. Drug Use Situation:

In 2023, Vietnam had approximately 229,265 drug addicts and illegal drug users under post-rehabilitation management. The illegal use of synthetic drugs severely affects the physical, mental, and psychological health of addicts. Many synthetic drug users experience mental disorders, lose control of their behavior, and commit crimes such as intentional homicides and traffic accidents, leading to fatalities and seriously impacting social order and public safety. The simultaneous use of multiple drugs is increasingly common, with most users consuming synthetic drugs.

2. Drug Crime Situation:

The drug crime situation in Vietnam continues to be complex. Drugs entering Vietnam mainly come from abroad, particularly from the Golden Triangle region. In Vietnam, drug activity along the four main road routes - Northwest, Northeast, North Central - Central Highlands, and Southwest - remains complex, with recent increases along the Southwest route. Smuggling tactics include trafficking drugs from the Golden Triangle through Laos and Cambodia into Vietnam or other countries for consumption. There is also an emerging trend of using express delivery services to traffic drugs via air cargo and postal routes from some European countries to Vietnam for either local consumption or re-exportation to third countries. The maritime route presents many unpredictable and complex factors, turning into a venue for trafficking large quantities of drugs from abroad into Vietnam or through Vietnam to other countries. In addition, drug criminals increasingly use international bank cards and cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin and Ethereum for transactions, and communicate through social networks like Zalo, Facebook, Viber, Telegram, and the dark web (DeepWeb) to commit crimes, making detection, investigation, and handling more difficult.

Drug Prevention and Control Results in 2023

1. Law Enforcement

Vietnam's drug control forces have executed operations to identify key areas and targets, and conducted several intensive campaigns against drug crimes along border routes. In 2023, the anti-drug police successfully handled 26,469 cases and arrested 41,419 drug criminals, including 26

foreigners. Confiscated evidence included 51,176 kg of heroin, 4.10695 kg plus 1,515,207 synthetic drug pills, 49,377 kg of marijuana, and 330 kg of cocaine. Compared to the same period in 2022, the number of cases increased by 105%, the number of individuals involved increased by 146%. Seized evidence: heroin decreased by 31%; synthetic drugs increased by 121% in kilograms but decreased by 588% in pills; marijuana increased by 842%.

2. International Cooperation

Vietnam actively strengthens cooperation in drug prevention and control with countries, especially those sharing borders, signatories of agreements, and international organizations, to enhance law enforcement and improve the capacity of law enforcement personnel.

In multilateral cooperation, the Drug Crime Investigation Police have advised the Government and the Ministry of Public Security to effectively implement international agreements in which Vietnam participates, such as CND, MOU, ASEAN, etc. In 2023, Vietnam sent delegations to attend online conferences and seminars on regional and global drug prevention and control, including the 8th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters, chaired by Laos, the 44th ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Drug Matters (ASOD 44), the CND66 Conference, the AAITF, ASITF, ADMN workshops, and others. Under the 1993 MOU framework, Vietnam actively collaborated with regional countries and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to complete and adopt the 12th Sub-Regional Action Plan (SAP) for the 2023–2025 period and committed to closely coordinating with other countries in drug prevention and control. In cooperation with UNODC, Vietnam continued to effectively operate 22 Border Liaison Offices (BLOs) across 14 border provinces adjacent to China, Laos, and Cambodia. These BLOs serve as focal points for exchanging information on drug-related crimes with neighboring countries, supporting domestic drug prevention efforts.

In bilateral cooperation, Vietnam continues to deepen and enhance effective cooperation, particularly with countries sharing borders and with partners actively supporting Vietnam's efforts in combating drug crimes. In 2021, Vietnam signed cooperation plans between the Ministry of Public Security of Vietnam and the Ministries of Public Security of China and Laos, and the Ministry of Interior of Cambodia, focusing on cross-border drug crime prevention. Along border routes, the Drug Crime Investigation Police proactively developed intensive programs and plans for communication and combatting drug crimes.

In addition, Vietnam organized 24 outbound delegations and received 15 inbound delegations, including 1 government-level and 3 ministry-level delegations, to attend conferences and meetings on drug prevention with partners from China, Laos, and Cambodia. It organized 7 bilateral conferences and seminars (with Cambodia, Thailand, Australia), 1 multilateral conference (SMCC), and 8 training courses. In information exchange efforts, 28 pieces of information were processed, and 12 requests were made for information regarding drug crime suspects. Cooperation on investigating transnational drug crime networks was carried out with partners from China, the USA, Australia, Thailand, Japan, France, South Korea, and Taiwan (China).

3. Drug treatment and rehabilitation

In 2023, Vietnam continued reviewing, compiling statistics, and organizing management measures for illegal drug users and drug addicts nationwide in a coordinated and consistent manner. Currently, there are 43,748 illegal drug users and 170,521 drug addicts nationwide, of whom 71,647 are living in society, and 14,996 are under post-rehabilitation management. According to statistics, approximately 987 illegal drug users and addicts show signs of drug-induced psychosis ("ice-induced insanity").

4. Precusor control

The Ministry of Public Security has proactively coordinated with relevant units from the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and provincial and municipal People's Committees to strengthen control over legal activities related to drugs. Key tasks include reviewing, compiling statistics, and listing agencies and organizations engaged in legal activities related to drugs; promoting the application of information technology in controlling legal drug-related activities; and regularly exchanging information, conducting inspections, verifying, and clarifying any relevant information regarding legal drug-related activities to recommend solutions to difficulties and violations.

As the focal point agency, the Drug Crime Investigation Police Department continues to effectively implement programs such as PENonline, IONICS, PICS, and I2ES from the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). In particular, the department responded to 565 pre-export notifications and suspended 68 shipments of precursor chemicals that did not comply with regulations through the PENonline system.

5. Alternative Development

Various ministries and sectors, in cooperation with localities, especially mountainous provinces, continue to implement and innovate measures to prevent the cultivation and re-cultivation of plants containing narcotic substances. Several campaigns have been launched to encourage people not to grow plants containing narcotic substances. Professional measures have been employed to detect areas where these plants are grown, and task forces have been established to survey, inspect, and eradicate all areas of cultivation or re-cultivation of plants containing narcotic substances. As a result, the cultivation of drug-containing plants has been kept under control.

6. Preventive Education

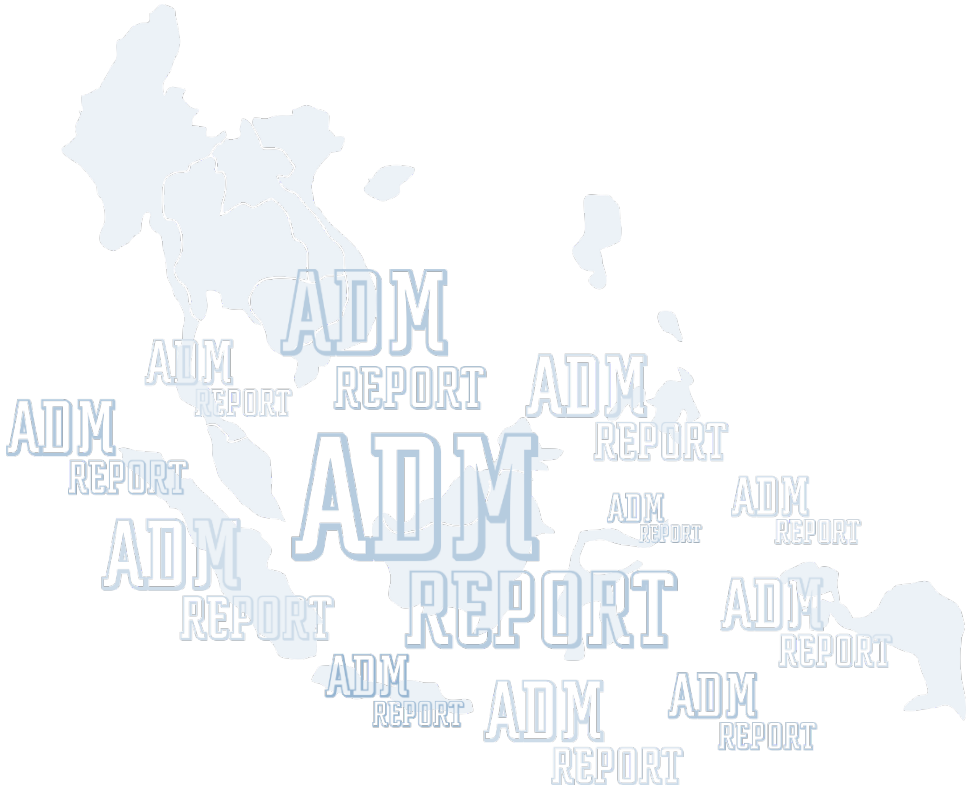
Public education and awareness campaigns continue to be prioritized, focusing on key areas and high-risk groups, particularly youth, students, and pupils. The Ministry of Public Security, in coordination with news and media agencies, has produced news articles and reports to raise awareness about drug prevention and control during the "Month of Action for Drug Prevention," the "International Day Against Drug Abuse," and the "National Day for Drug Prevention" (June 26). The Ministry also maintains an active information portal at the website: pcmatuy.bocongan.gov.vn, which provides updates on drug crime prevention efforts and international cooperation activities in drug prevention and control.

The Drug Crime Investigation Police Department of the Ministry of Public Security also successfully organized a competition to promote knowledge of the

Law on Drug Prevention, creating widespread impact across society. Various units and localities have organized diverse, rich legal education and awareness campaigns, directly educating the public, compiling, printing, and distributing leaflets, producing video reports, and coordinating with television stations and news agencies to edit and publish news articles. These efforts aim to promote the Law on Drug Prevention and related legal documents.

CHAPTER 4

Research Knowledge And Innovation



Indonesia

Drug abuse and illicit trafficking are complex threats to Indonesia and cannot be addressed only by the government. The challenges faced by Indonesia are increasingly severe, not to mention the geographical conditions as an archipelago country, making it one of the main locations for drug smugglers. The current drug situation in Indonesia requires a comprehensive and multi-sectoral response in the fields of security, health, and multidimensional social policies. A community-oriented approach is a crucial foundation in formulating policies to address drug problems.

Actual research data which can describe the increasingly complex drug problems is an important element in formulating a more appropriate strategy in addressing drug abuse. One of the research data is the prevalence rate obtained from a survey carried out by BNN in collaboration with the Community and Cultural Research Center of the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN). The prevalence rate of drug abuse measured periodically describes the development of drug abuse in Indonesia to be used as evidence-based in addressing drug phenomenon.

Objectives

The general objective of this research is to analyze drug abuse in Indonesia at the national level. The specific objectives of this research include:

1) Analyze the prevalence rate of drug abuse in Indonesia at the national level, and compare it with the prevalence rate of the previous two years
2) Analyze the pattern of drug abuse in the community
3) Analyze the influence of individual, family, and social environmental factors directly and indirectly through risky behavior on drug abuse

Conceptual Framework

This research focuses on analyzing illegal and unlawful drug abuse, seen from the status of "ever used" and "past year use". The characteristics of drug abusers in this study are also analyzed, including their socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, education, marital status, place of residence, and activities) as well as the experience of drug abusers having been caught in legal cases, having undergone treatment/rehabilitation, and having received social sanctions. Meanwhile, the pattern of drug abuse is seen from: the type of drug used, age of first use, reasons for first use, frequency of use, sources and methods of obtaining drugs, internet and social media access, places to use drugs, and the price of drugs (money spent).

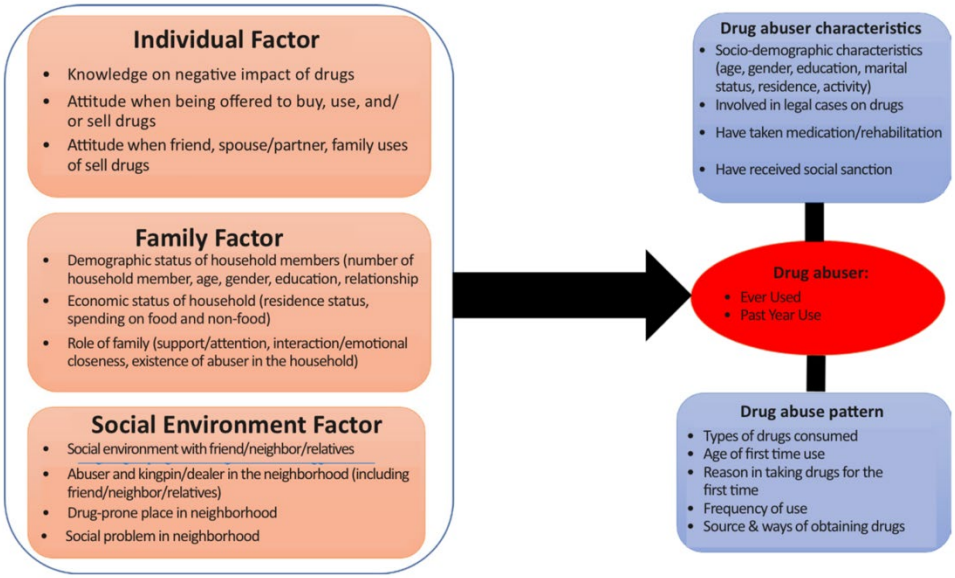


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

Based on the three theories in this research, the influencing factors in drug abuse are grouped into four, namely: 1) Individual factors, 2) Family background factors, 3) Socio-environmental factors, and 4) Other risky behavioral factors. The first three factors (individual, family, socio-environment) can directly influence drug abuse behavior; however, the relationship between the two can also be bridged through the influence of intermediate variables, namely other risky behavioral factors.

Research Methodology

This study uses a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design in the form of a survey. The quantitative approach was carried out to obtain prevalence rate and estimated number of drug abusers in Indonesia. Referring to UNODC (2020), that the productive age is the population aged 15 to 64 years, the population in this study is the entire population of Indonesian citizen aged 15–64 years. Households as a sample unit of the study are defined as the smallest unit in society, where a group of people live together and eat from the same kitchen, both members who are related and those who are not. The observation and analysis units of this study are individuals or household members aged 15 to 64 years who live in sample households. In contrast to previous years, the 2023 prevalence measurement increases the participation of the 15-24 years-old population considering that this group is a vulnerable group compared to other age groups. The increase in participation of the 15- 24 years- old population is taken into account in the sampling method while still paying attention to the scientifically permitted sampling rules, so that the quality of the data produced remains high and allows for comparison with previous years, provided that the quality of the data collected previously is also high.

Referring to the prevalence survey conducted in 2021, this research uses a sample size of 59,020 individuals spread across 34 provinces. The results of the 2021 survey with a sample size of 64,348

individuals, obtained an estimated prevalence of drug abuse in the past year of 1.95% with a relative standard error of 9.45%, and the prevalence of drug abuse ever used of 2.57% with a relative standard error of 8.34%. Based on these results, the relative standard error value (National RSE) and the precision of the survey implementation in 2023 are estimated. To estimate the precision measure, the research refers to the 2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Table 1.1. Estimated Relative Standard Error

No	Number of Respondent Sample	Estimated Relative Standard Error (%)	$\frac{SE(\hat{p})/\hat{p}}{-ln\ (\hat{p})}$
		National estimation	National estimation
1	Past year abuser	10.70	0.024
2	Ever used abuser	9.45	0.023

Considering the availability of resources and/or budget, the number of samples for the 2023 drug abuse survey is 59,020 individuals from 29,510 households, spread across 130 regencies/cities. Individual samples will be spread across 2,951 census blocks (BS), with each province selected using power allocation, with a size of the number of families in each regency/city and an alpha of 0.3. This study uses census blocks (BS) sourced from the results of updating the 2020 Population Census Longform data.

Sampling Technique

In general, the sampling in this research uses the Stratified Multistage Random Sampling method. The stratification carried out includes explicit and implicit stratification.

Explicit stratification includes:

- Province
- Urban/rural classification
- Presence of household members aged 15-24 years
- Respondent aged 15-24 and 25-64 years

The implicit stratification includes:

- Primary sampling: regency/city
- Secondary sampling: census block
- Tertiary sampling: household
- Ultimate sampling: household members aged 15-24 year

Data Collection

Quantitative data was collected by means of interviews using a structured questionnaire using the CAPI system. Respondents were selected randomly using a random table system based on a list of eligible household members (aged 15 – 64 years) in the selected household. The interviewers or enumerators are tasked to conduct interviews with respondents for filling out questionnaires

In order for data collection to run according to established procedures, the following is field data collection management, namely:

1. Each province has several Coordinators, and each Coordinator is responsible for collecting data in one regency/ city which is carried out by interviewers (enumerators).
2. The number of Field Coordinator is adjusted to the location of the selected regency/city. Each Field Coordinator is responsible for the process of collecting quantitative data carried out by enumerators. One Field Coordinator will supervise 5 - 7 enumerators,
3. In each province there will be two Local Partners, each from the Provincial National Narcotics Agency (BNNP) and the university. Local partner is responsible for smooth data collection, namely administration and licensing and assisting researchers in smooth qualitative data collection. Before collecting data in the field, local partner and field coordinator have first received supplies and training related to data collection process methods,
4. The enumerator is tasked with interviewing selected respondents and filling out the questionnaire using CAPI. Before the filled-out questionnaire is sent to the IT administration, the enumerator first ensures that the questionnaire is completely filled out.
5. The IT team in Jakarta carried out cross- checks and data consistency to ensure that the questionnaire was correctly asked and the answers were filled in based on the respondents' confessions. If there are errors in filling out the questionnaire or inconsistencies or irregularities in the data, the IT team contacts the researcher and the field coordinator who is responsible for repeating data collection by repeating the interview.

There are two categories of variables in this study, namely independent variables and dependent variables. Independent variables include three aspects, namely: within the scope of individuals, household scope, and social environment scope. The following are aspects and indicators that are seen in independent variables:

1. Individual factors, consisting of:
   a. Individual characteristics (age, gender, marital status, education level, activities in the past week).

   b. Knowledge about the negative impacts of drugs on health.
   c. Attitudes towards drug abuse (attitudes when offered to buy and use drugs, and attitudes towards friends or family who use drugs).
   d. risky behavior (smoking, drinking alcohol, and habits of visiting drug-prone areas).
2. Family factors, including:
   a. Demographic status of household members, consisting of variables: number of household members and relationship with the head of the household).
   b. Residence status of household members.
   c. Family Role (emotional closeness in the household and mutual advice between household members).
3. Social environmental factors, including:
   a. Social environment with friends/ neighbors/relatives.
   b. The presence of drug abusers and dealers in the residential environment.
   c. The residential environment is prone to drug trafficking and abuse.
   d. Social problems in the residential environment.

The dependent variables are drug abuse (ever used drugs, and used drugs in the past year) and the accompanying information, namely drug abuse patterns (type of drugs used, age of first use, reasons for first use, frequency of use, source and method of obtaining drugs, and place of drug use).

Results

Some conclusions of this research are:

1. The prevalence rate of drug abuse decreases in 2023, from 1.95% in 2021 to 1.73% for past year use. In the category of ever used, there is a decrease from 2.47% to 2.20%. The decrease also occurs in both men and women. However, compared to 2019, there is an increase in the prevalence rate in women
2. The decrease in the prevalence rate of past year use occurs in: a) men and women in urban and rural areas; b) all age groups in rural and urban areas; c) all types of main activities in rural areas and residents whose main activities are working, taking care of the household and unemployed/others in urban areas.
3. The decrease in the prevalence rate of ever-used occurs in: a) men and women in rural and urban areas; b) all age groups in rural areas and the 25-49 age group in urban areas; d) residents in all types of main activities in rural areas and residents whose main activity is working in urban areas.
4. The increase in the prevalence rate of past year use occurs in those whose main activity is attending school in urban areas. The increase in the prevalence rate of ever used occurs in:

a) the age group of 15-24 years and 50-64 years in urban areas; b) residents whose main activities are attending school, taking care of the household and unemployed/others in urban areas.

5. The types of drugs that are widely consumed are: (1) marijuana, hashish (2) crystal meth, ecstasy, amphetamine, dexamphetamine/dex Adderall (3) nipam, lexotan, rohypnol, mogadon, valium, Xanax, alprazolam, Riklona, koplo pills, BK. The types of drugs that are widely consumed for the first time are: a) marijuana, b) crystal meth, ecstasy, amphetamine, and c) nipam. The average age in first-time use is 19 years (rural) and 18 years (urban).
6. Friendship is the main source of drug acquisition, both in urban and rural areas, and is obtained for free. First drug use is due to experiment and invitation / persuasion from friends. Places that are often used for drug use are houses/ rooms/ apartments/ boarding houses, streets / alleys, empty houses/ buildings, school / campus, markets/ stalls,parks/ gardens/ cemeteries, nightclubs.
7. Drug abusers who have a high level of knowledge about the impact of drug abuse tend to stop using drugs. However, in the age groups of 15-24 years and 25-49 years in urban areas, there are still many who use drugs even though they have a high level of knowledge. In urban areas, men and women with high levels of knowledge tend to remain using drugs.
8. Closeness to a partner or parents does not guarantee someone not to be exposed to drug abuse because the first reason for abusing drugs or the first source of obtaining drugs is more due to friendship factors.
9. The majority of drug abusers have the habit of smoking (tobacco / electric) , drinking alcohol, and hanging out outside the house. They also live in an environment where there are social problems: alcohol, drugs, theft, gambling and brawls.

Source :

https://puslitdatin.bnn.go.id/konten/unggahan/2024/07/National-Survey-on-Drug-Abuse-2023.pdf

Malaysia

Research on The National Anti-Drugs Index (Malaysia)

This research explores current drug abuse landscape, the index's objectives and methodology, key indicators, trends, and recommendations for future improvement. This chapter will shed light on the crucial role that National Anti-Drugs Index plays in combating drug abuse and promoting a healthier society in Malaysia.

About the Research

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia has been bestowed with research grant from National Anti-drugs Agency of Malaysia (NADA Malaysia) for developing an anti-drugs index. This study had been conducted for 15 months (2022 – 2023) and the National Anti-Drug Index was developed based on a combination of self-assessment data and perceptions of the five pillars of the National Drug Policy with administrative report data, namely the Annual Report Questionnaire (ARQ) for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Importance of the Study

Drug abuse and misuse in Malaysia is a complex and multifaceted issue with significant social, economic, and health implications. The country faces a persistent challenge in tackling the illicit drug trade and its associated consequences. The prevalence of drug abuse varies across different regions, demographics, and drug types, necessitating a multi-pronged approach in addressing this critical issue. According to NADA Malaysia, the number of drug abusers in Malaysia has been gradually increasing in recent years, with a significant proportion of users being young adults. The most commonly abused drugs include methamphetamine, heroin, and cannabis. The widespread availability of illicit drugs, coupled with socioeconomic factors such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of educational opportunities, contributes to the vulnerability of individuals to drug abuse.

The National Anti-Drugs Index was introduced by the Malaysian government as a comprehensive tool to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of drug abuse in Prevention Education, Treatment and Rehabilitation, Enforcement, Harm Reduction and International Cooperation. The key objectives of this indexes are as follows:

- **Prevalence of drug use**: This indicator measures the proportion of the population that has used drugs in the past year.
- **Drug- related offenses**: This indicator tracks the number of arrests and convictions related to drug offenses, providing insights into the scale of illicit drug trade.
- **Drug abuse treatment admissions**: This indicator monitors the number of individuals seeking treatment for drug addiction, reflecting the demand for rehabilitation services.
- **Public perception of drug abuse**: This indicator gauges public awareness and attitudes towards drug abuse, highlighting the need for education and prevention programs.

By achieving these objectives, NADI aims to create a more effective and targeted approach to addressing the drug abuse challenge in Malaysia.

This Index is important to the government's efforts in combatting the drug problem. It gives a true picture of the success that has been achieved based on the service and delivery system, particularly in relation to the five main cores of the National Drug Policy (Prevention Education, Treatment and Rehabilitation, Enforcement, Harm Reduction and International Cooperation).

This index also displayed things that should be improved apart from the routine programs implemented by the government to prevent the increase in the number of cases of drug addiction, manufacturing, smuggling and even drug trafficking. In short, It is able to provide various positive and negative indications which are all very important to AADK, stakeholders and the country in eradicating drugs up to the grassroots.

Methodology

Official statistics: Data from law enforcement agencies, rehabilitation centers, and healthcare institutions are analyzed to track drug- related offenses, admissions for drug abuse treatment, and drug-related deaths.

Surveys: Regular surveys are conducted among different population groups to assess drug use prevalence, attitudes towards drug abuse, and awareness of anti-drug programs.

Qualitative research: In-depth interviews and focus groups are conducted to understand the social and economic factors contributing to drug abuse and the impact of anti-drug initiatives.

The collected data are meticulously analyzed using statistical methods to generate various indicators and metrics, which provide insights into the overall drug abuse situation in Malaysia. This comprehensive approach ensures that this index offers a holistic view of the country's drug abuse landscape.

Key Findings

Based on this study, involving a total of 1,333 respondents across the country, the combined results of field study data and administrative report data found that the value of this Index at the national level is **68.3 percent** which is in a **good position**. However, the value of this score needs to be increased, so that the

government's target of developing a society free from drug addiction can be achieved.

Recommendations

According to this study, **three (3) important factors** are critical successes that need to be paid attention to by AADK, stakeholders and the government in efforts to comprehensively eradicate drugs, namely **enforcement, prevention education and synergy** of various parties. These three factors, if they can be improved comprehensively, will be able to have an impact on large-scale drug eradication, especially in relation to the control of distribution, smuggling, misuse and drug manufacturing.

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The Philippines

Research Fora

The Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB), as the lead agency on policy formulation and strategy making, conducts studies and research on various aspects of drug abuse prevention and control. For 2023, the Board launched quarterly Policy and Research Forums that afforded the participants an avenue for cooperative research and exchange of evidence-based information. These initiatives, delivered through a blended platform, brought together researchers, experts, program planners, and policymakers involved in drug abuse prevention and control.

The research fora highlighted the studies submitted and presented by the members of the academe, while the speakers of the policy forums were from the partner agencies of the DDB. The featured papers were published to form part of the information dissemination efforts of the Board.

The following Research and Policy Forum conducted were as follows:

1. Launch of the 2023 Policy and Research Forum Series on Drug Abuse Prevention and Control on 16 March 2023 with 1,297 participants
2. Featured Policy: Board Regulation No. 4, Series of 2021: Sustaining the Implementation of Barangay Drug Clearing Programs (BDCP) and Repealing for Such Purpose Board Regulation No. 3, Series of 2017
3. Featured Research: Substance Use Prevention Policies and Programs in the ASEAN: Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic conducted 17 March 2023 with 1,147 participants.
4. Featured Policy: Board Regulation No. 3 Series of 2022: Enhancing the Balay Silangan Reformation Program (BSRP) Repealing for such Purpose Board Regulation No. 2, Series of 2018 on 29 June 2023 with 139 participants
5. Featured Research: Development Validation of a Community Reintegration Assessment Scale for Persons Who Use Drugs (CRAS-PWUDs) on 30 June 2024 with 114 participants.
6. Featured Policy: Board Regulation No. 2, Series of 2023: Amending Board

Regulation No. 6, Series of 2019, Protocol When Handling Children Allegedly Involved in Dangerous Drugs on 26 October 2023 with 82 participants.

7. Featured Study: Pagbabago (Recovery): Deconstructing Social Alienation from the Stories and Narratives of Meanings and Life Experiences of Rehabilitated Illegal Drug Dependents through the Lens of Restorative Justice on 27 October 2024 with 54 participants.
8. Featured Policy Forum: Republic Act No. 10640, An Act to Further Strengthen the Anti-Drug Campaign of the Government, amending for the Purpose Section 21 of Republic Act no. 9165, otherwise known as "The Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 on 6 December 2023 with 100 participants.

Publication of the 2023 DDB Policy and Research Bulletin

The Board, through the Policy Studies, Research, and Statistics Division (PSRSD), released the fourth issue of the DDB Policy and Research Bulletin series of 2023, 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

Studies and Research

The studies for CY 2023 consisted of the following:

- **Development and Validation of a Plastic-Based Microfluidic POCT-Device (E-Tax) Used to Detect Intoxication with Selected New Psychoactive Substances and Pharmaceuticals (a study to be conducted by the University of the Philippines- Drug Abuse Research Laboratory (UP-DARL), Manila, and funded by DDB) (Ongoing)**

This study aims to develop, optimize, and validate a plastic- based microfluidic screening device for intoxication with selected New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) , such as cathinone, ketamine, a synthetic cannabinoid, and other pharmaceuticals, like paracetamol, salicylates, and isoniazid, which are commonly associated in poisoning based on UP- PGH National Poison Management and Control Center (NPMCC) statistics.

The study demonstrates that next-generation technologies will be the key to developing affordable and accessible point-of-care testing (POCT) devices. Unfortunately, the commercial rapid urine analysis tests that exist today can only go so far since these drug testing kits are only limited to common drugs of abuse or the traditional illicit drugs

(TIDs) and, in some countries, to selected new psychoactive substances. This is where the promise of microfluidic devices lies for having a proven record of being an effective analytical

device capable of controlling the flow of fluid samples (Lepowsky et al., 2017).

Thus, this project developed, optimized, and validated a plastic-based microfluidic screening device for intoxication with selected new psychoactive substances. This research established the applicability of microfluidics for presumptive testing of drugs in urine and potentially in other types of specimens.

This project benefits poison centers, hospitals, clinical laboratories in the Philippines, and privately practicing clinical toxicologists, aiding them in diagnosing and managing poisoned patients early. Moreover, this device can also be validated for other types of specimens, such as seized products.

The potential solution is proposed as the Etox-NPS point-of-care testing (POCT) device. It can screen for specific NPS types like synthetic cathinones, synthetic cannabinoids, and ketamine using seized materials and urine specimens. The device offers timely results, which can be crucial for early diagnosis and management of intoxicated patients.

Furthermore, it holds promise for public health and socio-economic impact by enhancing surveillance and monitoring of NPS use in the country, complementing efforts to address TIDs.

For ways forward, the salient recommendations by the UP-DARL are (1) the process involves further clinical validation of Etox-NPS using urine samples through a DOST-funded project. Clinical validation of Etox-PHx using patient urine samples is also being pursued for funding. The plan is to use Etox-NPS and Etox-PHx in UP-PGH NPMCC and other Poison Centers to diagnose and manage patients. (2) Field validation with seized materials is proposed for potential funding and collaboration with the Dangerous Drugs Board. (3) A proposal to include NPS in workplace drug testing policies alongside TIDs. (4) Law enforcement agencies may use the Etox-NPS for screening seized materials, contributing to a comprehensive and timely approach to addressing the issue of psychoactive substances in the Philippines.

The study will be presented at the first board meeting of 2024. UP-DARL also awaits approval for the Etox-NPS and Etox-PHx POCT device patent application.

Conduct of the 2023 National Household Survey on the Patterns and Trends of Drug Abuse in the Philippines

Pursuant to Section 7 of Executive Order No. 66, Series of 2018, which mandates the DDB to conduct a nationwide survey every three (3) years, the 2023 National Household Survey on the Patterns and Trends of Drug Abuse in the Philippines was undertaken. The main objective of which was to determine the magnitude of the drug problem nationwide and estimate the number of lifetime and current drug users. It was also intended to determine the prevalence patterns and trends of drug abuse in the country along with the public perception about the government's anti-drug programs and projects, the drug-

related problems experienced, and subsequent actions taken.

The following were the activities conducted in 2023 in furtherance of the survey:

1. Project Kick-off Ceremony on 11 April;
2. Training for Field Interviewers and Supervisors in Luzon on 19-21 April, Visayas on 24-28 April and Mindanao on 2-6 May;
3. Nationwide Data-Gathering Activities from 15 May to 31 July 2023;
4. Back-Checking Activities in Various Areas in the Philippines (Phase 1);
5. Back-Checking Activities in Various Areas in the Philippines (Phase 2); and
6. Coordinative meetings and communication/ coordination with internal and external stakeholders.

The release of the technical report of the 2023 National Household Survey is currently underway.

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 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 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) F-97 regional project on Amphetamine Type Stimulants (ATS). In 2006, Board Regulation No. 7 was issued, institutionalizing the IDADIN. Thirteen (13) forms were then developed for uniformity and clarity of reporting. These forms were intended to be automated for better data collection to aid policy formulation and program development.

The first system developed was IDADIN Form 6-06, renamed the Treatment and Rehabilitation Admission Information System (TRAIS). It was enhanced and fully implemented in July 2018. Its continuing activity involves the updating by the accredited drug abuse treatment and rehabilitation centers (DATRCs) of their admission reports.

Department of Health (DOH) Accredited Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers

(as of 31 December 2023)

Classification	Residential	Non-Residential	Residential with Out-Patient Services	Total
Government	14	5	14	33
Non-Government Organizations	60	1	0	61
Total	74	6	14	94

A series of end-user training and orientation sessions was conducted after the enhancement of the TRAIS to familiarize the authorized and alternate personnel of the drug abuse treatment and rehabilitation centers (DATRCs) with its improvements and additional features. Likewise, focus group discussions (FGDs) with selected DATRCs were also conducted for those encountering difficulties in reporting to the system.

To improve data collection, monitoring DATRCs with identified problems is imperative. The monitoring activities aim to identify the gaps/problems encountered by the authorized and alternate personnel in the use of the system, guide them in the system's navigation, and elicit comments and suggestions on how to improve the use of the system. The results will serve as the basis for inclusion in the system's enhancement.

In line with the DDB's effort to automate other forms, a series of meetings and workshops were conducted for Drug Analysis and Profiling Information System - DAPIS (Form 7-06) and Drug Test Result Reporting System - DTRRS (Form 8-06).

The DDB through the Policy Studies, Research and Statistics Division also maintains the Anti-Drug Abuse Council Reporting System (ADAC-RS). This is a reporting system of the local government units (LGUs) nationwide and serves as a database for persons who use drugs (PWUDs). It was developed to capture the number of drug surrenderers and those undergoing the community-based drug rehabilitation program (CBDRP). The Anti-Drug Abuse Councils (ADACs) of the cities and municipalities have utilized the system since 2016.

The following activities were also conducted during the year:

1. Monitoring Activities of Selected Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers (DATRCs) in some regions in the Philippines;
2. End-User Training on the Treatment and Rehabilitation Admission Information System (TRAIS) for the Authorized and

Alternate Personnel of the different DATRCs nationwide;

3. Orientation Training for Newly Accredited and Existing Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers (DATRCs), New Authorized and Alternate Personnel on the Enhanced Treatment and Rehabilitation Admission Information System (TRAIS);
4. Consultative Meeting Re: Status report on the plans and activities for the Drug Analysis and Profiling Information System (DAPIS);
5. Pos Consultative Meeting Re: Drug Analysis and Profiling Information System (DAPIS);
6. Post Consultative Meeting Re: Drug Test Results Reporting System (DTRRS);
7. Consultative Meeting Re: Updates on the plans and activities for the development of the Drug Test Results Reporting System (DTRRS);
8. Policy and system presentation for the Anti- Drug Abuse Council Reporting System (ADAC-RS);
9. Status update meeting of the conduct of End-user Training of the enhanced Anti-Drug Abuse Council Reporting System (ADAC-RS);
10. Status update meeting for the monitoring system of the Anti-Drug Abuse Council Reporting System (ADAC-RS).

The Board endeavors to continue the smooth operation and maintenance of these systems in order to ensure prompt and secure drug-related data management and storage.

Singapore

Prevalence of consumption of illicit drugs and associated factors from a nationwide epidemiological survey: The Singapore Health and Lifestyle Survey

by the Institute of Mental Health

Mythily Subramaniam PHD, Yen Sin Koh MPH, Rajeswari Sambasivan BSc, Edimansyah Abdin PhD, PV Asharani PhD, Janhavi Ajit Vaingakar MSc, Boon Yiang Chua MSc, Hong Choon Chua MMed, Cheng Lee MMed, Wai Leng Chow GDFM, Stefan Ma PhD, Siow Ann Chong MMed

Background / Aims

In 2021 and 2022, IMH conducted the first nationwide study to establish the lifetime and 12-month prevalence of illicit drug consumption in Singapore, and its correlates in the general population.

Methodology

A representative sample of 6509 Singapore residents (Singapore citizens and permanent residents) aged between 15 and 65 years were randomly selected for participation. Questionnaires were administered to assess the consumption of illicit drugs and collect information on correlates. All analyses were weighted to produce prevalence estimates for the consumption of drugs and other measured outcomes. Rao-Scott chi-square test and logistic regression analyses were performed to determine the association of sociodemographic and clinical characteristics with lifetime consumption of illicit drugs.

Findings

- Those belonging to the **younger age group, current and ex-smokers, and those with hazardous alcohol use** were at higher risk of lifetime consumption of drugs.

- Compared to individuals aged 50-65, individuals aged 15-34 had higher odds of lifetime consumption.
- Among those who consumed illicit drugs in their lifetime, the mean age of onset was 19.6 years, with 28.9% consuming illegal drugs before reaching 18 years of age.
- Current smokers and ex-smokers had significantly higher odds of lifetime drug consumption than non-smokers (odds ratio 4.7 and 5.9 respectively).
- Individual with hazardous alcohol use had higher odds of lifetime drug consumption than those without hazardous alcohol use (odds ratio 3.3).
- While causality cannot be established, illicit drug consumption was found to be **associated with poor health outcomes**.

- Those with lifetime drug consumption were more likely to have clinical anxiety, self-reported and doctor-diagnosed depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder and psychosis / schizophrenia.
- **The overall lifetime prevalence of consuming illegal drugs is 2.3%.**
- **The 12-month prevalence of consuming illegal drugs is 0.7%.**

Implications

- The results highlight the need to increase awareness of illicit drug consumption in Singapore, especially among parents, teachers, healthcare workers and others who work with young people.
- Doing so would further enhance prevention and early detection of illicit drug consumption in the population.

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Thailand

Lesson learned from 14-year intensive technical assistance for psycho-social counselling services to substance use offenders under Thailand's Court of Justice

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[1]Thailand International Technology Transfer Center, Faculty of Medicine, Chiang Mai University, [2]Thai Health Promotion Foundation, [3]Department of Mental Health, Ministry of Public Health, [4]Thailand Office of the Court of Justice

Abstract

In terms of drug demand reduction, when responsible agencies operate in isolation, several disadvantages can arise, hindering the effectiveness of the overall efforts. Drug demand reduction is a complex and multifaceted challenge that involves a combination of interconnected systems working collaboratively to prevent, treat, and reduce the demand for illicit substances.

Psychosocial counselling in criminal justice system of Thailand is an example of an integrated approach to reduce drug use and recidivism. Since 2009 as a pilot project in 5 criminal courts scaling up to an alternative- to- incarceration intervention in 165 courts both adult and juvenile nationwide in 2023, psychosocial counselling fosters a seamless collaboration among various stakeholders and systems.

This initiative spans various players including judges, lay judges, trained volunteer counsellors, court officers, psychologists, psychiatrists, health care providers, social workers, and families of defendants. To conclude, psychosocial counselling in court premises bridges across organizational silos; continues judicial education on the science of addiction; trains and mentors qualified volunteer counsellors; promotes a positive lifestyle among people with substance use disorders; and destigmatizes addiction that undermine care and root cause of drug abuse. Thailand ITTC is grateful to the Office of the Narcotics Control Board, Office of the Judiciary, The Criminal Court Region 1, Department of Mental Health, Galya Rajanagarindra Institute (Psychiatric Hospital) , and Thai Health Promotion Foundation. Thailand ITTC continues to expand collaboration with civil society and community allies to enhance drug demand reduction in Thailand.

Keywords: Psychosocial Counseling in Criminal Court System, Health Approach Diversion, Drug Demand Reduction, Alternative to Incarceration

Background

Before 2002, drug user = criminal

After 2002, drug user = patient

Year 2009
initiated by Thonburi Criminal Court, Bangkok

Year 2010-2013
sponsored by Thai Health Promotion Foundation

Year 2014-2016 MOU#1 – 3 pilot courts
established by ONCB in collaboration with justice – public health – social welfare - academic

Year 2017-2019 MOU#2 – 5 pilot courts
focused on counseling system development

Year 2020-2022 MOU#3 – 25 to 102 courts
focused on capacity building for scaling-up

Year 2023-2025 MOU#4 – 165 courts
covered 70% of total courts of first instance

Introduction

Muli-agency collaborative approach has been applied through the 4 MOUs from 2012 to 2025 between:

- Office of the Narcotics Control Board
- Office of the Judiciary
- Department of Mental Health
- Thai Health Promotion Foundation
- Galya Rajanagarindra Institute
- Faculty of Medicine, Chiang Mai University
  Southeast Asia HIV ATTC (SEA-HATTC) and
  Thailand International Technology Transfer Center

At the start of this diversion, prison punishment has been overused for people who use drug. Not only often less effective, but it also leads to prison overcrowding while their addiction problems remain unsolved. Decades ago, at the time of war on drug, drug users were classified as criminals and overly punished. As a result, Thailand faced extreme overcrowding prisons problem.

Until 2002, Thailand's Narcotic Act reclassified people who use drugs as "patients" rather than "criminals". Still, drugs consumption and possession remained illegal causing Thailand's prison population rose up to the sixth largest in the world, mostly related to drug use offences.

In 2009, the Thonburi Criminal Court in Bangkok piloted a project diverting persons charged with drug use offences to outpatient psychosocial counselling instead of imprisonment. This pilot project is a multisector collaboration between criminal courts, public health, social service, and academic agencies.

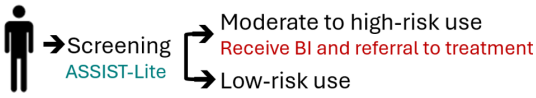
Faculty of Medicine, Chiang Mai University (Thailand ITTC and Southeast Asia HIV Addiction Technology Transfer Center) has taken part in this diversion initiative as an academic partner for capacity building in psychosocial counselling and drug demand reduction.

Memorandum of Understanding is used as a mechanism of operation between the Office of Narcotic Control Board of Thailand, the Office of the Judiciary, Department of Mental Health, Galya Rajanagarindra Institute which is the Forensic *Psychiatric* Hospital, and Thai Health Promotion Foundation.

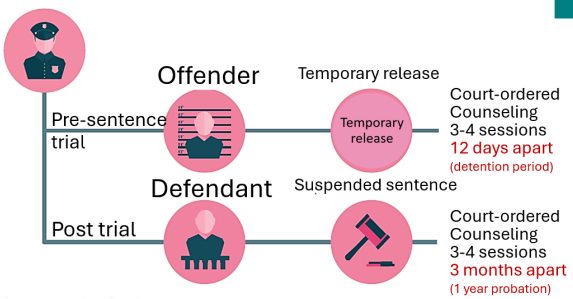
To be specific, the psychosocial counselling in court system is (1) court ordered service in the premises of the court (2) free of charge for offenders/defendants also their family members (3) one-on-one session, each session lasts 45 minutes to one hour and (4) provide in two stages of criminal proceedings both pre-sentence trial and post-trial.

Methods

SBIRT is used to keep low risk offenders/ defendants in the counselling.



Psychosocial counseling in criminal court is
- ✓ court ordered service
- ✓ free of charge for drug users & families
- ✓ one-on-one session, 3-4 sessions total
- ✓ staffed by psychologists, social workers and trained volunteer counselors



Counseling Roadmap

1. Acute phase
   Goal: to survive stress/prevent bail jumping
2. Intermediate phase
   Goal: to maintain healthy behavior
3. Long term/recovery phase
   Goal: to prevent recidivism

Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) model has been introduced and implemented. Using ASSIST-Lite and standard mental health screening tools suitable for non-healthcare professionals to screen and keep only low risk drug users for ongoing counseling in the court premises. Other capacity building methods include counseling capacity, counseling process, and counseling roadmap that aligned with the stages of criminal proceedings.

Psychosocial counselling in the court system is staffed by one or two psychologists and/or social worker per clinic per court. Employment is sponsored by the Office of the Narcotics Control Board. While most of the counselors are volunteers. They are non-healthcare professionals trained to provide basic counseling and counseling for substance abuse for drug users with criminal charges sent by judges.

Providing psychosocial counselling in two stages of criminal proceedings matches well with the counseling roadmap which typically consists of three key phases: the acute, the intermediate, and the long-term or recovery phases.

Each phase of the counseling roadmap supports individuals through their behavior change. The goal of the acute phase at the pre-sentence trial means to survive stress after being charged with a crime also to prevent bail jumping and ensuring court appearances. While the goal of the long-term phase at the post-trial stage is to prevent recidivism which is one of the key performance indicators of this initiative.

Because capacity building is one of the key success factors of the psychosocial counseling in court system. So, in terms of intensive technical assistance, training workshops, mentoring, coaching, case supervision, and case conferences have been delivered to volunteer counsellors, court staff, and judges.

Methods

The core curriculum has 4 learning modules:
2 basic courses + 2 advanced courses
at total of 48 hours of lectures and practices

1. Basic psychosocial counseling
2. Management of substance abuse
3. Family counseling (advanced course)
4. Group counseling (advanced course)

Intensive Technical Assistance

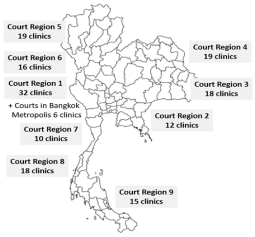
Ongoing training, coaching, mentoring, refreshing, case formulation, and case conferences

- Non-judgmental attitude
- Active listening
- Questioning
- Stage of change
- Motivational interviewing
- Addiction counseling
- Counseling in court system
- Counseling ethics

The core curriculums of basic counseling and counseling for substance abuse plus two advanced courses of family counseling and group counseling have been developed and delivered which were certified by the Office of the Judiciary, Ministry of Justice. Key learning topics include non- judgmental attitude, active listening, open-ended questioning, stage of change, motivational interviewing, counseling in court system, and counseling ethics. It can therefore be said that the volunteer counselors at the psychosocial clinics also play the role of life coach and psycho educator for drug users receiving counseling as well.

Results

2022	105 court psychosocial clinics nationwide 524 trained judges 1,751 trained volunteer counsellors 60 trained trainers 25,791 drug users received counseling 212 recidivists (0.82%) 1 year follow-up
2023	165 court psychosocial clinics nationwide



UNODC UNAIDS

Compulsory Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation in East and Southeast Asia

Voluntary Community-based Alternatives

Discussion Paper of the UNAIDS–UNODC Asia–Pacific Expert Advisory Group on Compulsory Facilities for People Who Use Drugs

Results in 2022 were that 105 court psychosocial clinics established nationwide; 524 trained judges; 1,751 trained volunteer counsellors; 60 trained trainers; 25,791 drug users received counseling; and 212 recidivists (0.82%) 1 year follow-up. In 2023 psychosocial counselling had been scaled up to 165 out of the total 227 courts now available in adult, municipal, and juvenile courts countrywide. This health approach diversion initiative gives benefits to both low-risk drug users and their families. The service addresses drug use at its cause, reducing drug demand and promoting a drug-free lifestyle.

It is important to note that psychosocial counselling in court system has been piloted 7 years before UNGASS world drug policy reform in 2016 promoting public health and human rights approaches for new drug policy development.

Later in 2022, UNODC and UNAIDS endorsed psychosocial counselling in court system as a transition from compulsory drug treatment to voluntary community-based treatment, harm reduction, complementary health, and social support services. Scan the QR code to download the full booklet of this 14-year lesson learned at ITTC Network Resources.

In conclusion, psychosocial counseling in court system is an example of multisector collaboration for health approach diversion and drug demand reduction. While team effort is indeed a critical success factor, there are several other key factors that contribute to success. These include (1) sense of ownership from the court system and strong judicial support (2) judge training on science of addiction (3) ongoing intensive technical assistance (4) de-criminalization policy and new more humane drug laws and (5) data collection for program evaluation and improvement.

Conclusion

Psychosocial counselling in criminal court system = multisector collaboration

Key Success Factors:

- Sense of ownership from the court system and strong judicial support
- Judge training on science of addiction
- Ongoing intensive TA
- De-criminalization policy and new more humane drug laws
- Data collection for program evaluation and improvement

Acknowledgement

- Office of the Narcotics Control Board
- Office of the Judiciary
- Department of Mental Health
- Thai Health Promotion Foundation
- Galya Rajanagarindra Institute
- Faculty of Medicine, Chiang Mai University (Thailand ITTC and SEA-HATTC)

Sincere gratitude to judges, lay judges, court administrators, volunteer counsellors, clinic staff, psychologists, social workers, trainers, mentors, and project staff.

In conclusion, psychosocial counseling in court system is an example of multisector collaboration for health approach diversion and drug demand reduction. While team effort is indeed a critical success factor, there are several other key factors that contribute to success. These include (1) sense of ownership from the court system and strong judicial support (2) judge training on science of addiction (3) ongoing intensive technical assistance (4) de- criminalization policy and new more humane drug laws and (5) data collection for program evaluation and improvement.

This initiative would not have been possible without the funding and support from the partner organizations. They are Office of the Narcotics Control Board, Office of the Judiciary, Department of Mental Health, Galya Rajanagarindra Institute, and Thai Health Promotion Foundation.

Sincere gratitude goes to senior judge Vacharin Patjekvinyusakul who piloted this diversion in Thonburi Criminal Court since the year 2009 also judges, lay judges, court administrators, volunteer counsellors, clinic staff, psychologists, social workers, trainers, mentors, and colleagues for their contribution to the development of the psychosocial counseling/ clinic in the criminal justice system through the 14-year journey.

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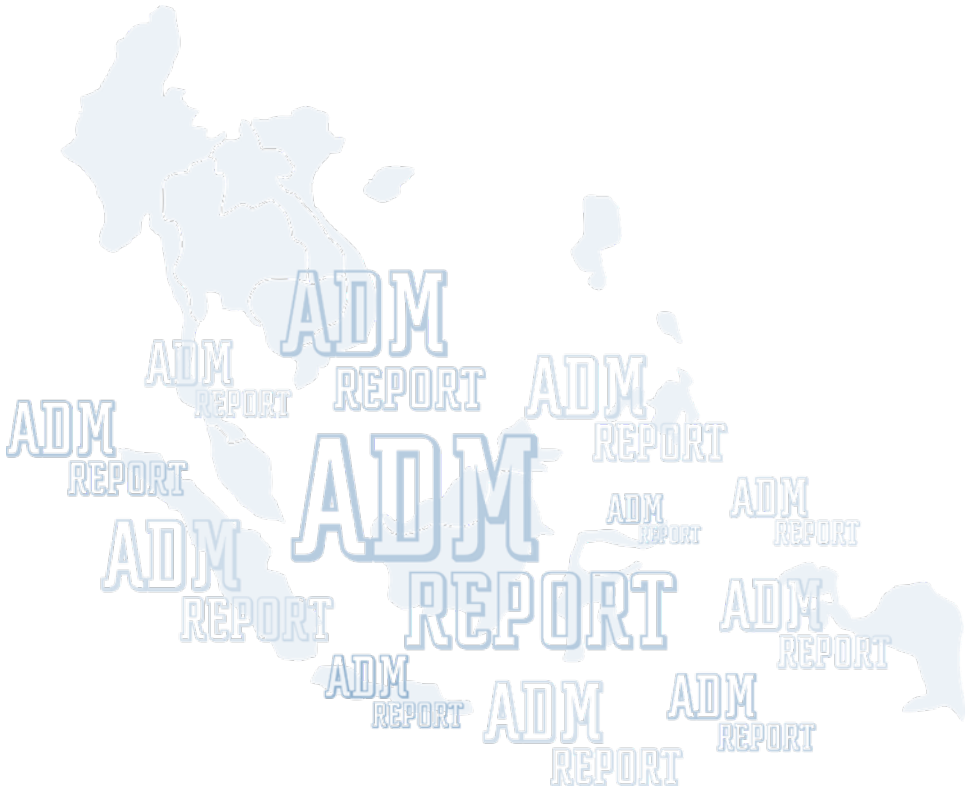
CHAPTER 5

Policy and Implementation Programme



Brunei Darussalam

POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME PREVENTIVE DRUG EDUCATION DIVISION, NARCOTICS CONTROL BUREAU BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Brunei Darussalam has a zero-tolerance approach towards drugs and develop a balanced and holistic strategy between the drug supply and drug demand reduction strategy. These are aligned with the national aspirational objectives set forth by Brunei Vision 2035 for holistic development and progress.

Narcotics Control Bureau 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

Preventive Drug Education Division, Narcotics Control Bureau actively conducts talks and lectures for students and the communities through school-based and community-based activities.

❖ SCHOOL-BASED

School-based activities target students at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

- Primary: students of Year 4, 5 and 6.
- Secondary: students of Year 7 until 11.
- Tertiary level: Students from Higher Institutions and Universities.

Students at all levels are able to participate in anti-drug activities giving them the opportunity to learn more about the danger of drugs while having fun in interactive ways.

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 promoting drug awareness programmes through Public Road shows by participating in public events organized by other ministries or departments; organising events at public places such as shopping complexes / malls and the distribution of drug awareness pamphlets at the borders particularly during school holidays as well as visual displays of anti-drug messages in places of interest.

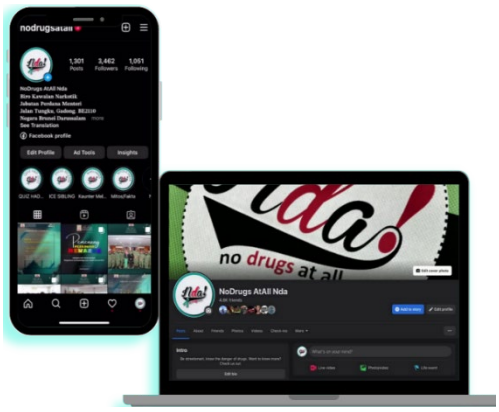
Narcotics Control Bureau actively collaborate with other relevant agencies to curb drugs issues amongst the employees at the workplace. This is an on-going programme to aid respective agencies or companies in ensuring a drug- free workplace through preventive drug education, s lectures and exhibitions.

PUBLICITY

Narcotics Control Bureau utilizes social media platform such as Instagram and Facebook to advertise preventive drug education programmes and promote awareness on drugs. Such platforms attract larger audiences in spreading anti- drug messages, materials and information. Short music videos with anti-drug themes and anti-drug messages clips and video are also uploaded in social media platforms.

Narcotics Control Bureau collaborate with local radio and TV station namely Radio Televisyen Brunei (RTB) in hosting anti-drug quizzes with amazing prizes to encourage

public' s participation simultaneously providing knowledge and awareness on the negative effects of drugs.



INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING, 2023

With the theme "Visionary Youth Without Illegal Drugs", a number of events had taken place to commemorate this auspicious day.

FRIDAY SERMON

– Anti drugs messages was delivered through a Friday Prayer Sermon on 23 June 2024 which addressed the concern on drug use amongst youth, the difficulties faced by youth and the importance of making informed decisions leading to a drug-free lifestyle.

LEGAL BRIEFING & DISTRIBUTION OF AWARENESS LEAFLETS

–On 09 September 2023 at V-Plaza, Kuala Belait, as an effort to increase public's awareness on drug offences and its penalties and to further strengthen cooperation with the respective strategic partners, several representatives from Attorney General Chambers, Brunei Darussalam were invited to share information on drug offences and its penalties with the audiences. Representatives from selected ministries and departments, guests from private sectors, students from government and private schools were invited to the event. Thereafter, drug awareness leaflets were also distributed to the public at Control Posts in Kuala Belait.

SYMPOSIUM

– On 26 September 2023 at Mulia Hotel, Bandar Seri Begawan, a symposium was held to provide knowledge on the effects and consequences of drug abuse, especially amongst the youths. The event acted as a platform or channel to share and provide knowledge and information to the community about the dangers of drug abuse and its consequences. Several panelists from Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and Singapore were invited to share their knowledge on matters related to youths, particularly in the efforts to build youths with high vision without drugs. Additionally, this event hopes to increase awareness about drugs as well as its threats to the society, especially for students and youths as their generation are our future leaders.

POSTER COMPETITIONS

– In collaboration with the Department of Co-Curriculum Education, Ministry of Education, a Poster Drawing contest was organized and received an encouraging and positive participation from students in Government, private and Islamic Studies (Arabic) schools. This contest aimed to inspire youth and students to understand the danger of drug abuse and to express their knowledge on drug awareness through artistic expression based on the theme "Drug- Free Visionary Youth". A total of 70 students from 11 different schools participated in the contest but only ten contestants were selected as the winners. The prize-giving ceremony for the winners of the contest was held on 11 November 2023. A total of five winners from the Upper Secondary Category and five winners from the Lower Secondary Category received prizes and were presented by the guest of honor of the ceremony

- **RUNNING AND CYCLING EVENT**

  – On 19 November 2023, a running and cycling event was held at Waterfront of Bumi Putera Utama Complex, Temburong District. This event aimed to instill and encourage healthy lifestyle and drug-free community

Malaysia

Introduction

Illicit drug use is complex, hidden, and often highly stigmatized behavior, which brings a vast challenge for drug surveillance systems. Drug abuse had become the main concern of the Malaysian government since 1983. National Anti-Drugs Agency (NADA) is a focal agency under the Ministry of Home Affairs responsible for handling drug problems encompassing preventive education and public awareness, law enforcement, treatment and rehabilitation as well as international cooperation. Malaysia is committed addressing the drug issues as sharing and exchanging information on current and effective efforts in reducing drug abuse based on best-practice and evident-based practices.

Treatment and Rehabilitation

- ### National Anti-Drugs Agency Strengthens its Mobile Recovery Treatment Service (MRT AADK)

The Mobile Recovery Treatment (MRT) service, provided by the National Anti-Drugs Agency (NADA), has been offering essential drug addiction treatment and rehabilitation services to specific groups since 2022. In 2023, the service has reached 8,814 clients, demonstrating its successful and widespread implementation, especially in reaching marginalized and hard-to-access groups. This achievement highlights NADA's commitment to inclusivity and expanding the reach of its services.

In addition, NADA has successfully registered the MRT logo as a service trademark with the Intellectual Property Corporation of Malaysia (myIPO) for 10 years. This legal recognition gives the agency exclusive rights to the MRT logo, signifying its value, quality, and certified asset status.

These developments reflect NADA's proactive efforts and impactful innitiative to expand its service reach and solidify its commitment to serving diverse client groups. The MRT service has been implemented at 14 State NADA offices nationwide, with a total of 176 NADA expert groups dedicated to delivering the best service to the community.

MRT's Team delivering services to clients in prison (psychoeducation session) and visitors who come to the booth for advice and advocation

- ## SUKA: Product Line to Support Drug Treatment & Rehabilitation Measures

In May 2023, Regent of Perlis, Tuanku Syed Faizuddin Putra Jamalullail, launched SUKA, a brand of products produced by the Narcotics Addiction Rehabilitation Centres (PUSPEN). The SUKA brand, which stands for 'Sokongan Untuk Kepulihan Anda' (Support for Your Recovery), being use by NADA to market products produced by clients (PUSPEN trainees). The SUKA product branding reflects the skills and vocational training in one of the nine components of NADA's i-Pulih Model during the clients' treatment and rehabilitation process. This effort is one of the forms of support and lifelong recovery maintenance therapy for approximately 6,000 NADA clients in 30 PUSPEN nationwide. More than 10 types of items have been produced by 30 PUSPEN nationwide based on four fields, namely agriculture, services, manufacturing, and animal husbandry.

SUKA, a brand of products produced by the Narcotics Addiction Rehabilitation Centre (PUSPEN)

- **Mental Health Seminar**

The Mental Health Seminar 2023 brought together 250 NADA officers from across the nation. The primary objective of the seminar was to enhance understanding and expertise in mental health care and the early identification of mental health conditions among clients. The agenda included comprehensive presentations on topics such as mental disorders, case management, and insightful case study analyses. Moreover, participants engaged in meaningful dialogues with esteemed guest speakers, discussing the complexities of mental health management. The active involvement and dedication of the attendees made a significant contribution to NADA's endeavors to promote awareness about mental health and substance abuse, which in turn facilitates comprehensive and efficacious treatment.

Preventive Drug Education

There are two (2) main pillars implied in NADA's prevention programme, specifically Preventive Drug Education (PDE) and Public Awareness Programme. PDE focuses on four (4) strategies / programs such as below:

i) Drug-Free Family Program;
ii) Drug-Free Education Institution Program;
iii) Drug-Free Workplace Program; and
iv) Drug-Free Community Program.

Malaysia has been implementing evidence-based and best practices prevention programs to ensure the quality, efficacy and effectiveness of the program that can contribute to drug demand reduction especially among new drug abuser/addict and cases in the country. One of the practices based on evidence-based is Community Empowerment (CE).

CE has been used in NADA as one of the Prevention Education strategies to eradicate drug and substance abuse in the community. The objective of the CE is to enable the community ownership to all programs and activities that require comprehensive and holistic efforts at all levels of the community itself by targeting groups such as Community Leaders, Non-Government Organization (NGOs), volunteers as well as community itself.

CE is also implemented to provide knowledge and understanding on the dangers of drugs to all levels of the community, to provide basic skills in

preventive education and drug treatment and rehabilitation to selected community leaders and to establish engagement with community members in planning, mobilization and implementing preventive education and drug treatment and rehabilitation activities in the community.

Implementation of CE has been focused on the 155 High-Risk Areas (KBT) initiatives since 2021. The KBT program is aim to prevent the emergence of new addicts, increase the recovery rate of clients, improve the detection of drug addicts, increase cooperation and community / agency involvement and restrict the entry of drugs. The implementation of the program in 155 KBT comprises of these KBTs divided in 5 years towards achieving "Drug Control Policy 2025" starting with 16 KBTs in 2021. Among programs implemented in these areas including prevention, rehabilitative treatment, enforcement and harm reduction by involving 4 phases of action namely cleaning, intervention, strengthening and retention. As of 2023, 50 percent of 155 KBT areas are now Low-Risk area (KBR).

NADA also focuses on expanding the Drug-Free Workplace Programs. In March 2023, NADA and Petroliam Nasional Bhd. (Petronas) had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the implementation of the Drug-Free Workplace program. The drug prevention program at workplaces was in line with the International Standard on Drug Use Prevention that involves seven main steps, including higher management commitment, policy and authority on drug prevention control, the implementation of training for supervisors, education and awareness programs, training for providers of the education and awareness programs for workers, drug prevention programs in the community, treatment and rehabilitation programs as well as reintegration into the workforce. Through this program, the company will be able to further strengthen its position and achievements through the implementation of the program as it is able of creating a healthy, safe and prosperous environment. Aside that, the trained employees can become information disseminating agents on the dangers of drugs to friends, neighbours, families and the entire community.

National Anti-Drugs Agency (NADA) and PETRONAS signed MoU for Workplace Program

Workplace program for preventive drug education initiatives

One million Anti-Drugs SQUAD campaign was initiated to implement awareness and to establish a drug-free community. It is an effort to raise awareness to all parties regarding the effects of drug abuse and prohibited substances to the community. NADA aims to increase the membership of the Anti-Drugs SQUAD by 10 percent of the total number of youths in Malaysia. Anti-Drug SQUAD was formed to protect youth from the threat of drugs through the membership and activities of the Anti-Drugs SQUAD. The SQUAD also promote and practice of a healthy drug-free lifestyle and act as an agent of change for families in delivering the message 'Drug Prevention Starts at Home'

Public Awareness Program emphasizes on campaign focuses on the public community through various medium such as radio, billboards, mobile games, commercial videos and also posters of anti-drug message or campaign which has been uploaded in media social on daily basis. In 2023, NADA has introduced various mobile phone application including anti-drugs e-games and anti-drugs e-comic as an awareness campaign to all target groups especially teenagers and youth.

The Strong Families Training of Trainer (TOT) was attended by 30 National Anti-Drugs Agency (NADA) officials from all states, including those from the Prevention Division, at the Mercure Hotel in Putrajaya. The TOT was held for three days to train and prepare NADA officials as a pioneer group for the Strong Families module, which has been implemented in countries including Indonesia, Philippines, Zanzibar, Serbia, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, the Dominican Republic, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, and the United States.

NADA's officers attended Training of Trainers on Strong Families Module organized by UNODC at Putrajaya, Malaysia

Enforcement Initiatives

The National Anti-Drugs Agency enforces and performs functions as set out in Section 6 of the National Anti-Drugs Agency Act 2004 pertaining to the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952, Dangerous Drugs (Special Preventive Measures) Act 1985 and the Dangerous Drugs (Forfeiture of Property) Act 1988.

In the enforcement of the Drug Dependants (Treatment and Rehabilitation) Act 1983, emphasis is placed on the Section 3(1), Section 6(3), Section 16, Section 18, Section 19(3) and Section 20 which are responsible as follows:

i) To handle complaints related to drugs problems
ii) To carry out operations to detect and detain suspected drug addicts
iii) To carry out prosecution for investigation papers given the order for charge by the Deputy Public Prosecutor
iv) To manage persons under surveillance
v) To open the investigation papers on person under surveillance who have violated the surveillance conditions
vi) To consolidate compliance of security management and drug rehabilitation institutions

In 2023 has carved a history for the Enforcement and Security Division of AADK. A successful law course for agency officers was conducted in collaboration with Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM). This program is held for the first time involving a total of 40 participants from all over the country for three weeks. This course has been delivered by lecturers from the Faculty of Law, UiTM.

The main objective of this program is to strengthen the fundamental knowledge of law among agency officers. Besides, it provides theoretical and practical legal training to agency personnel, and produce a legal training module that can be used periodically. Besides that, it can also enhance participant's knowledge and skills in conducting prosecution and related procedures, as well as fostering self-confidence and professionalism as a Prosecuting Officers. It is hope that this course could be held yearly as the main course to empower agency personnel.

Simulation in the courtroom conducted by participants

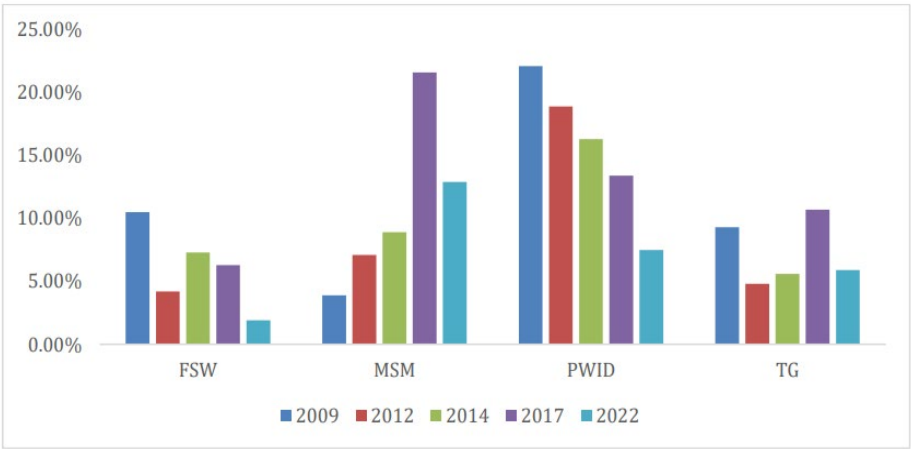
Participants attending the Cooperation Law Training Course UiTM and NADA

Harm Reduction

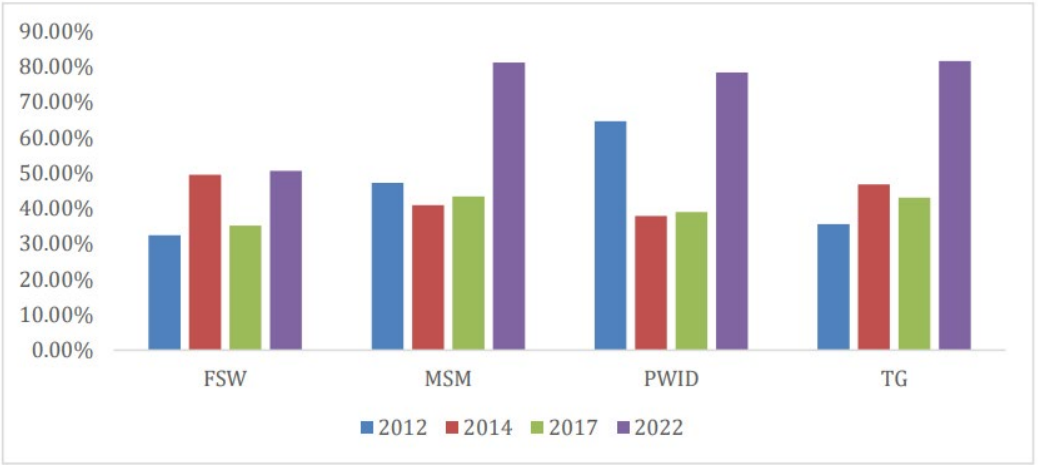
Prevention of HIV transmission among key populations is prioritized as one of the key strategies in the NSPEA (National Strategic Plan Ending Aids) 2016 – 2030. As such, HIV prevention outcomes hinge heavily on various outreach programs conducted online and offline, which are also supplemented by internet-based campaigns. Trained HIV outreach workers, who are members of key population-led organizations, will deliver a defined package of preventions services to key populations. The prevention package will be tailored for each population with regard to types of prevention commodity distributed and frequency of contact. Outreach workers will also provide referrals for key population members to further health services, social and legal support.

In general, HIV prevalence among key population groups had reduced among the respondents of IBBS 2022 in comparison with earlier IBBS surveys. This finding was encouraging, especially given the increased number of key populations who had been tested in the past 12 months.

HIV prevalence among key populations, Malaysia (2009-2022)



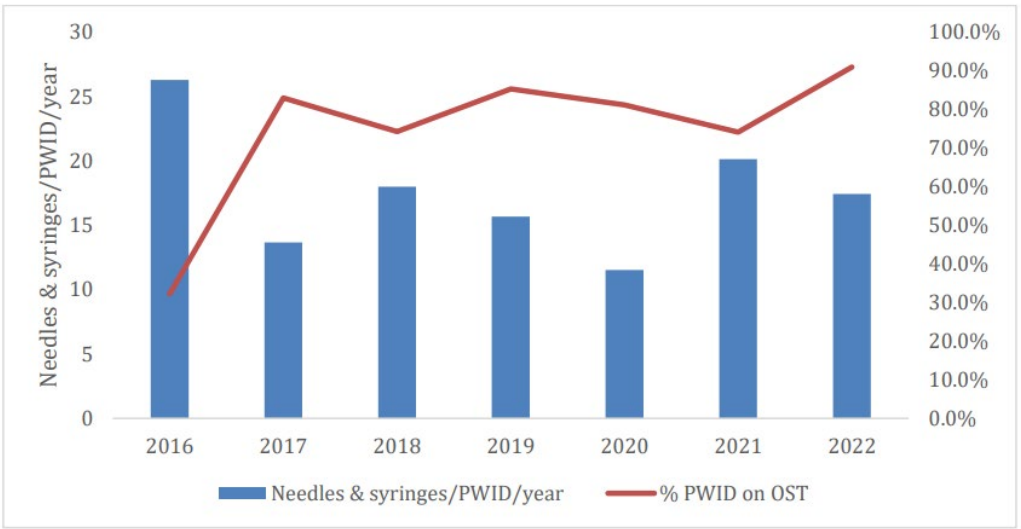
HIV testing among key populations, Malaysia (2012-2022)



Source: IBBS, Global AIDS Monitoring 2023, Ministry of Health Malaysia

Opioid substitution therapy (OST) programme had been implemented at selected government and private health facilities since 2006. By 2022, 91% of PWID were enrolled in OST.

Needle-syringe exchange programme (NSEP) and Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST) Coverage among PWID, 2016 – 2022



Source: IBBS, Global AIDS Monitoring 2023, Ministry of Health Malaysia

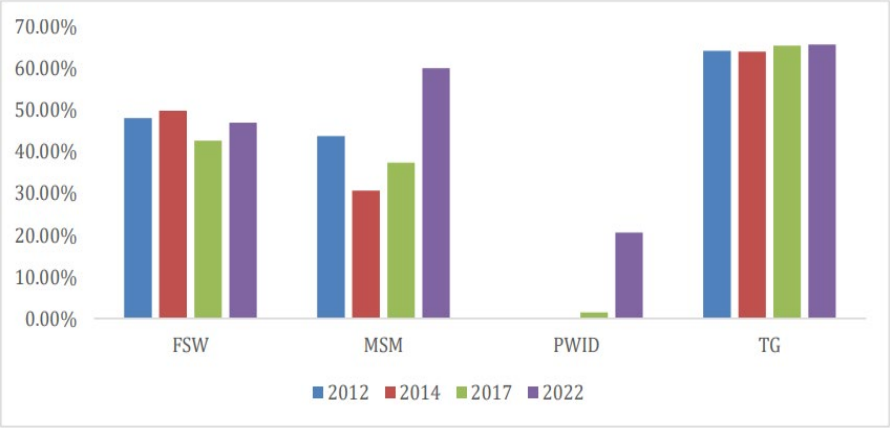
Harm reduction strategies in Malaysia had transformed with the rise of OST, gradually replacing the Needle-Syringe Exchange Program (NSEP). The demand for NSEP experienced a 15% reduction in needle-syringes distributed from 2019 to 2020. This decline can be attributed not only to the actual decrease in demand, owing 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. C0VID-19 restrictions were subsequently lifted in stages since 2021, resulting in a modest recovery in the number of needles and syringes distributed to PWID by 16% in 2022 compared to 2020.

This is in line with the National Strategic Plan for Ending AIDS that encourage opioid injectors to shift to OST to ensure better ART uptake.

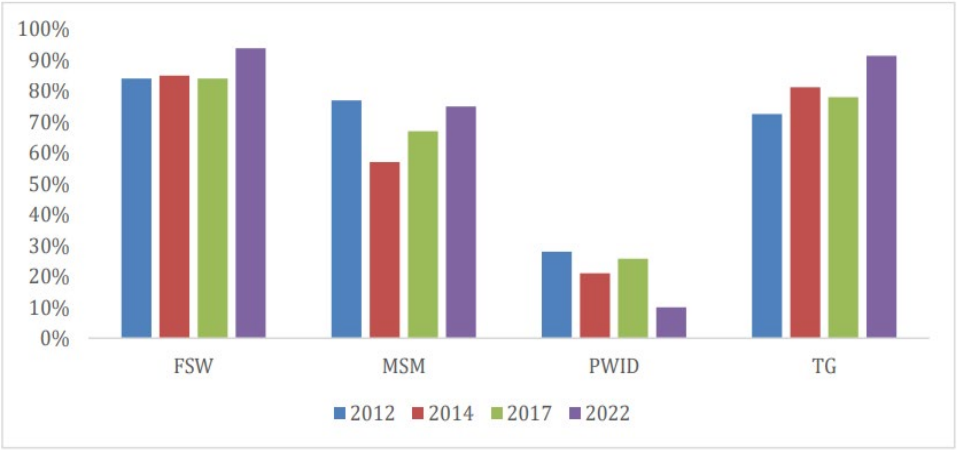
Other findings of IBBS, that indirectly reflect the success of community-driven prevention efforts were: improved antiretroviral treatment coverage among key populations living with HIV, increased condom use as well as proportion of key populations reporting having received a combined set of HIV prevention interventions. Contrary to other key populations, responses from PWID showed reduced uptake of condom, emphasizing the urgent need for targeted interventions to promote safe sexual practices among PWID, ensuring that no group is left behind in our collective efforts to curb the spread of HIV

Coverage of Prevention Programmes Among Key Populations, Malaysia, IBBS 2012-2022



Antiretroviral therapy coverage among people living with HIV in key populations, Malaysia (2017–2022)

Condom use among key populations, Malaysia (2012-2022)

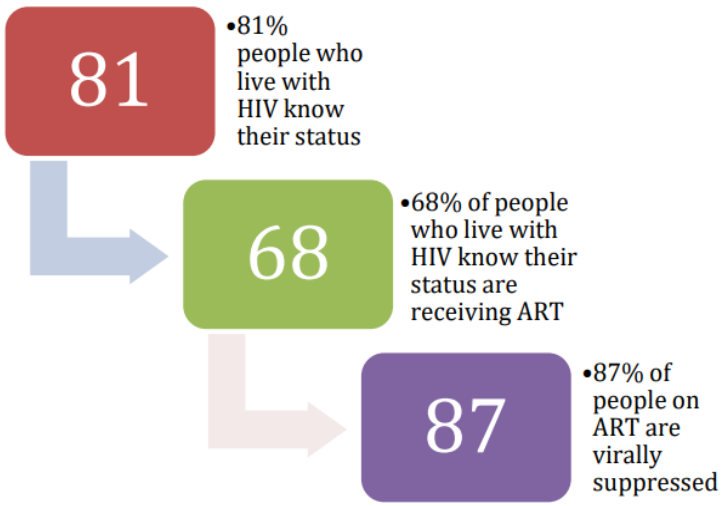


Source: Global AIDS Monitoring 2023, Ministry of Health Malaysia

The NSPEA (National Strategic Plan Ending Aids) highlighted testing and treatment as one of the main national responses towards the aim of ending AIDS. This was to ensure that all PLHIV (People Live with HIV) in Malaysia have access to treatment through meeting the 95-95-95 targets by 2030. In 2017, Malaysia implemented the WHO recommendation for initiation of ART regardless of CD4 cell count. In addition, routine viral load testing for monitoring of ARV therapy in government treatment sites had been implemented.

In regard to Malaysia's progress on the 95-95-95 treatment cascade target, by the end of 2022, 81% of the PLHIV were diagnosed to be HIV and knew their results. The treatment uptake among people diagnosed with HIV was 68% which indicated a gap in treatment and care, and out of those already on treatment, 87% became virally suppressed.

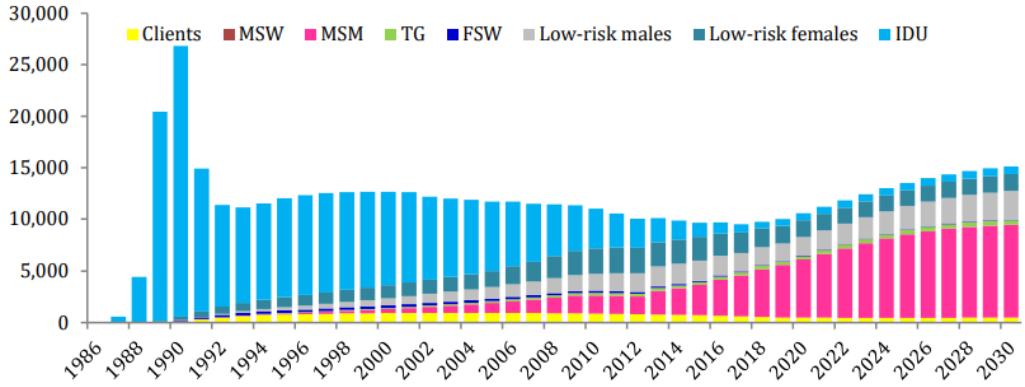
Progress towards 95-95-95 target, Malaysia (2022)



Source: Global AIDS Monitoring 2023, Ministry of Health Malaysia

As mentioned previously, the initial driving force of HIV epidemic in Malaysia had been PWID followed by FSW, TG and MSM. In the last decade, sexual transmission became the main mode of transmission, and MSM is expected to become the main key population in Malaysia in year 2030 as projected using the Asian Epidemic Modelling (AEM).

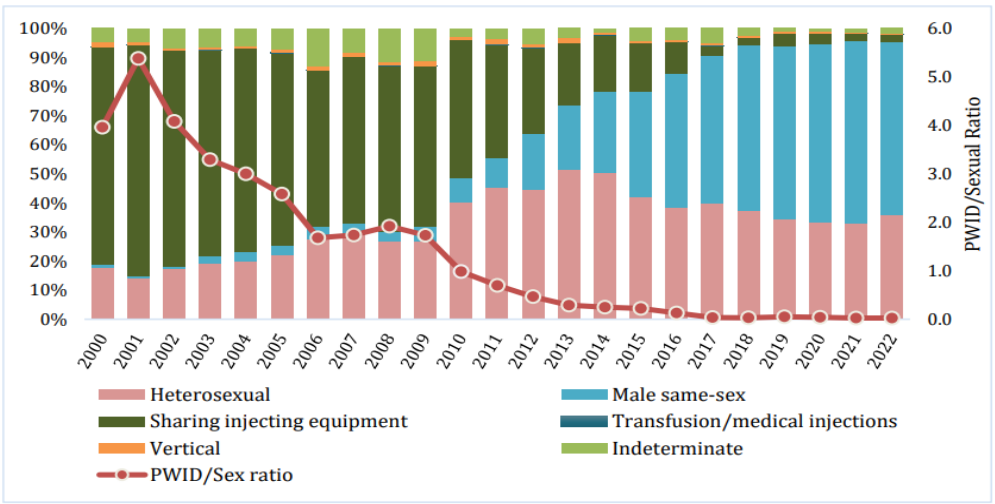
HIV infection trend by key population (projection using AEM), Malaysia 1986 – 2030



Source: Global AIDS Monitoring 2023, Ministry of Health Malaysia

Consistent with the projection, Figure below also shows trend of HIV transmission mode in Malaysia according to surveillance data, with PWID/sexual transmission ratio declining from 3.95 in 2000 to 0.02 in 2022.

Trend of HIV infection by mode of transmission, Malaysia 2000 – 2022



Source: Global AIDS Monitoring 2023, Ministry of Health Malaysia

International and Regional Cooperation

In ensuring that the fifth core of the National Drug Policy, which is International Cooperation, is strengthened through bilateral and multilateral relation with foreign countries and international organization, approaches and strategies aligned with current drug situation developments have been implemented. The National Anti-Drug Agency (NADA) has been actively involved in organizing and participating in international programs, workshops, meetings, conferences and forums as well as engaging the courses and training offered for the capacity building of officers. Additionally, NADA maintains a good cooperative network with international anti-drugs organizations in the development of a holistic, integrated and balanced strategy of reducing drug demand and supply.

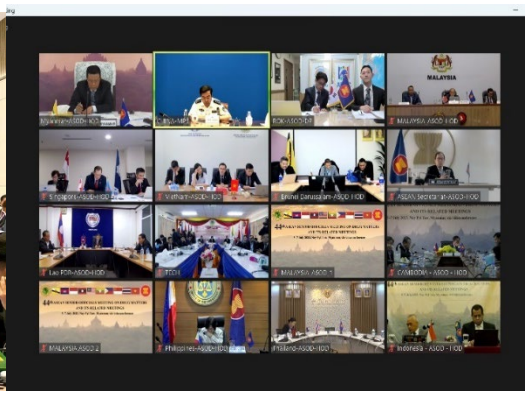
The approach Malaysia takes to address drug problems through international cooperation are:

- Active involvement in prominent international meetings such as ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Drug Matters (ASOD) Meetings, ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Drug Issues (AMMD), and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) for the purpose of exchanging views, voicing Malaysia's stand and strengthening community-based collaboration among members of the meeting.

- Participation in regional or international training programs and dispatch of officers for temporary attachment programs for the purpose of sharing experiences and best practices, and acquiring new knowledge and skills from multinational participants as well as acquiring new skills or expertise. The inputs can be adjusted internally.
- Signing of agreements or memorandum of understanding with other countries in particular deals with the interests of both countries.
- Sharing of information on evidence-based studies and best practices from various sources from around the world to be adapted and implemented in Malaysia.

Working visits to other organizations abroad for the purpose of establishing cooperation and learning about their experiences in addressing drug issues in their respective countrie

44th ASOD Meeting hosted by Myanmar via teleconference



8th AMMD Meeting at Vientiane, Lao PDR

Malaysia also supports the regional cooperative mechanisms under ASEAN, such as the ASEAN Airport Interdiction Task Force (AAITF), ASEAN Seaport Interdiction Task Force (ASITF), ASEAN Narcotics Cooperation Centre (ASEAN-NARCO) and ASEAN Drug Monitoring Network (ADMN). Most recently, Malaysia has become a member of the Asia Pacific Information Coordination Centre for Combatting Drug Crimes (APICC), which is a cooperation platform between ASEAN and the Republic of Korea.

Meanwhile, in 2023 Malaysia has also coordinated the demand and supply reduction training such as National Consultative Dialogue on Early Warning System, training on SINCB GRIDS Intelligence Tools, Awareness Raising and Safe Handling of Dangerous Substances for Drug Law Enforcement Officers, UNODC Training of Trainers on the Strong Families Module and the UNODC Global Smart Program Regional Workshop under the sponsorship of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). More than 80 officers successfully participated in these training from various ministries and agencies. This is seen as a positive development as Malaysia through cooperation platform provides opportunities for the officers in international capacity building.

International cooperation is crucial in the fight against illicit drugs due to the transnational nature of drug trafficking and its associated harms. The global drug trade operates across borders, and as such, effective strategies to combat it require collaboration among countries. The exchange of information and expertise plays a pivotal role in this cooperation. By sharing intelligence on drug trafficking routes, methods and criminal networks, countries can better target their efforts and disrupt these operations more effectively. Joins training programs and the sharing of best practices enhance the capacity of law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders, leading to more efficient and coordinated responses.

The importance of international cooperation is underscored by the fact that drug trafficking networks often exploit legal and jurisdictional gaps between countries. Thus, a collaborative strategy ensures that countries can address these gaps, standardize practices and create a more cohesive global responses to drug-related issues.

Malaysia Delegates attended International and Regional Meeting, trainings and received courtesy call from the embassy representatives

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

Policies

To fulfill the mandate of the Dangerous Drugs Board, it formulates policies to address new and emerging issues on drug abuse prevention and control. From January to December 2023, the following eight (8) Board Regulations and eight (8) Board Resolutions have been adopted and promulgated:

Board Regulations

Board Regulation No. 1, Series of 2023

Extending the Grant of the Provisional Removal of Lianhua Qingwen from the List of Dangerous Drugs for another One (1) Year

On February 4, 2021, the Board promulgated Regulation No. 1, Series of 2021 approving the provisional removal of Lianhua Qingwen from the list of dangerous drugs for a period of one year, pursuant to Section 93 of RA 9165. It provides that before the one-year period expires, the Committee on Reclassification shall evaluate and recommend to the Board whether to shorten or extend the said period given the prevailing circumstances.

Since the introduction of Lianhua Qingwen capsules in the Philippine market, there had been no reports of adverse drug reactions, nor of abuse despite the product having trace/negligible amounts of ephedra, a known dangerous drug under Philippine laws, as an active component. Lianhua Qingwen is an alternative affordable option for most Filipinos with mild COVID-19 symptoms.

Board Regulation No. 2, Series of 2023

Amending Board Regulation No. 6 Series of 2019, Protocol When Handling Children Allegedly Involved in Dangerous Drugs

The Implementation of PNP's Oplan Tokhang in July 2016 combined with an intensification of Barangay Drug- Clearing Operations resulted to a considerable number of "surrenderers" who were alleged to be users or pushers of dangerous drugs. Out of the total number for July 2016 to October 2018, around 27,000 were below 18 years old. This number of child "surrenderers" gave rise to challenges on the proper application of guidelines and regulations issued by different government agencies, which were intended for adult surrenderers. The amendments aimed to reinforce the framework governing the treatment of juvenile offenders, prioritizing restorative, and rehabilitative methodologies.

Board Regulation No. 3, Series of 2023

Converting the Committee on Reclassification, Addition or Removal of Any Drugs Substances from the List of Dangerous Drugs/Controlled Precursors to a Technical Working Group (TWG)

In accordance with Sec. 93 of Republic Act No. 9165, or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2022 (the "Act"), as amended, the Board reverted the Committee

on Reclassification, Addition or Removal of Any Drugs Substances from the List of Dangerous Drugs/ Controlled Precursors to a Technical Working Group (TWG). This move seeks to enhance the committee's expertise and flexibility, ensuring a more informed and comprehensive decision-making approach.

Board Regulation No. 4, Series of 2023

Guidelines for Drug Profiling

The policy provides a comprehensive and standardized approach to drug profiling. These guidelines are created to meet the practical requirements of law enforcement agencies in establishing connections between different drug samples, pinpointing the source of seized, confiscated, and surrendered drugs, recognizing patterns in drug distribution, and uncovering potential techniques employed in illicit drug production. By effectively profiling drugs, law enforcement agencies can strengthen their domestic and international intelligence networks, ultimately aiding in the fight against drug trafficking and bolstering public safety.

Board Regulation No. 5, Series of 2023

Amending Board Regulation No. 1, Series of 2016, and No. 3, Series of 2021 Re: Guidelines in the Implementation of "Operation: Lawmen"

The amendment was made to conform with the government's anti- drug campaign and enhance the efficiency of the reward program for law enforcement units engaged in anti-drug operations.

Board Regulation No. 6, Series of 2023

Amending Board Regulation No. 5, Series of 2003, Guidelines in the Implementation of Operation: "Private Eye"

The amendment seeks to make the Operation "Private Eye" Reward Committee to be more responsive to the evolving national and international drug landscape and the government's drug prevention and control campaign. This focuses on three main aspects. Firstly, the restructuring of the operation's Reward Committee to incorporate new measures addressing term limits and implementing a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) to maintain confidentiality and operational effectiveness. Secondly, amendments outlining the authority and responsibilities of the reward committee. Lastly, adjustments aimed at aligning the functions of the "Private Eye" Secretariat with its existing capacities. These alterations aim to enhance the efficiency of the "Private Eye" system.

Board Resolutions

Board Resolution No. 1, Series of 2023

Authorizing the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency to Implement the Cease-and-Desist Order Against B.O.S.S. Amazing Grace Rehabilitation Center Located in Amedeo, Cavite; and

Board Resolution No. 2, Series of 2023

Authorizing the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency to Implement the Cease-and-Desist Order Against Revived and Redeem Recovery Treatment and

Rehabilitation Center Located in Amadeo, Cavit

These resolutions underscore the importance of maintaining the standards in drug treatment and rehabilitation, thereby promoting its safety and effectiveness. The action action was due to non-compliance with the Department of Health's Manual of Operations for the Accreditation of Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers and

Board Resolution No. 3 and No. 8, Series of 2023

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 2023

These issuances formalize the provision of funding support for the construction of residential, outpatient, and community-based drug treatment and rehabilitation centers in different cities, municipalities, and provinces in the country.

Board Resolution No. 4, Series of 2023

Approval of the Amendment of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) Between the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) and the City Government of Batac (CGB), Ilocos Norte

This is to grant approval for the Government of Batac's request to amend the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), including changes such as renaming the rehabilitation center and extending the project's implementation period by one (1) year from the effectivity date of the amended MOA.

Board Resolution No. 5, Series of 2023

Adoption of Playbook on Community-Driven Response to Substance Abuse

This resolution was issued to recognize the DOH Playbook for Community-Driven Response to Substance Abuse, as a valuable reference for policies, guidelines, and evidence- based interventions. This resource empowers local government units to effectively address health and substance use issues within their communities, schools, and workplaces.

Board Resolution No. 6, Series of 2023

Adoption of NPOC Resolution No. 3 Series of 2023, entitled "A Resolution Enjoining the Institutionalization of the DILG's Buhay Ingatan, Droga'y Ayawan (BIDA) Program

This resolution signifies the commitment to support the Department of the Interior and Local Government's (DILG) Buhay Ingatan, Droga'y Ayawan or BIDA Program as an integral initiative of the agency aimed at promoting drug awareness and prevention efforts.

Board Resolution No. 7, Series of 2023

Granting of Moratorium on the Implementation of Certain Barangay Drug Clearing Program (BDCP) Activities During the Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan Election Period

This resolution intends to temporarily suspend specific activities of the Barangay Drug Clearing Program (BDCP) during the 2023 Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan election period. It aims to safeguard the integrity and impartiality of the BDCP, ensuring that it is not manipulated or exploited by incumbent officials or individuals aspiring to hold public office for their political campaigns.

The Dangerous Drugs Board effectively fulfills its mandate by engaging in various constructive activities and events aimed at tackling the issue of illegal drugs.

Preventive Education and Capacity-Building Programs

The Philippines, with the DDB at the helm, has pursued several capability- building and advocacy programs for multi- sectors. These include the following:

For the Youth:

1. Training of Trainers on Life Skills Enhancement on Drug Abuse Prevention

The training is designed to strengthen the participants' abilities and understanding of drug abuse prevention. It covered essential strategies in facing life's pressure and ways on how to build resilience against dangerous drugs.

2. 3rd National Barkada Kontra Droga (BKD) Convention

A program for the in and out-of-school youth designed to maximize youth empowerment in the fight against the drug problem and develop a new generation of youth leaders with a strong sense of responsibility and commitment.

3. Training of Trainers on Enhancing Personal and Interpersonal Skills Against Drug Use

A program designed to strengthen the will power and wise discernment of youth learners in keeping them away from the lures of dangerous drugs. This training is an evidence-based primary prevention strategy which would enhance the skills necessary to make young people productive and contributing members of the family, school and community.

4. Drug Abuse Prevention Awareness Seminar

A seminar specifically tailored for students to provide them the right information and awareness on the dangers of illegal drug abuse.

5. "Kumustahan" Mental Health Youth Camp

A one-day activity designed to create an avenue to discuss pressing concerns regarding mental health and drug abuse among the youth participants

6. Anti-Drug Symposium and "Barkada Kontra Droga" (BKD) Launching

A one-day program which aims to encourage the students to remain drug-free and use their knowledge to educate their fellow peers about the government's anti-drug advocacy.

7. Campus Tour for Kids

Campus Tour for Kids Against Drugs is an early prevention education program that aims to instill to young children the importance of "Saying No to Drugs" through the use of puppetry. A program aims to expose children to positive and productive activities to help them understand the importance of living a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

For Legal and Law Enforcement Personnel:

1. Online Continuing Seminar on Anti-Illegal Drug Operations and Investigation

This seminar aims to enhance the knowledge and skills of the participants in the efficient conduct of anti-illegal drug operations.

2. Write-Shop on the Draft Guidelines for, and Establishment of the Early Warning System (EWS) for New Psychoactive Substance (NPS) in the Philippines

The writeshop is a follow-up activity of a previous two- day meeting regarding the Guidelines for, and Establishment of the Early Warning System (EWS) for New Psychoactive Substance (NPS) in the Philippines. The training aims to discuss the requirements needed for the establishments needed for the EWS by coming up with the draft guidelines and an EWS tool.

3. Seminar-Workshop on Dangerous Drugs Law for Judges, Prosecutors and Law Enforcers

A seminar that aims to provide current development and programs of the Board pertinent to its campaign against dangerous drugs and its scientific researches on dangerous drugs,its prevention and control measures.

4. Webinar on the DDB Authorized Representatives for the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA)

A half day online seminar for the PDEA Lawyers designed to orient & brief them relative to voluntary and compulsory confinement cases pursuant to Article VIII of RA 9165.

For Stakeholders and Partners:

1. Stakeholders' Consultative Workshop with the Dangerous Drugs Board

This aims to orient and update key stakeholders on the recent policies and processes for handling drug cases, sharing of best practices, and discuss issues and concerns to come up with recommendations and action to harmonize multi- agency coordination in handling & managing drug cases from relevant agencies to better intensify the anti-illegal drugs campaign.

2. Seminar on Drug Abuse Prevention and Control (DAPC) for the At-Risk Population and Indigenous People

3. Seminar on Capacitating Faith-Based Groups on Drug Abuse Prevention Education (DAPE)

This program aims to capacitate the members of Inter-Groups on DAPE and their respective congregations in the implementation of intervention programs.

4. Development of Culture-Sensitive IEC Materials for 11 Tribes of Davao Province

This event prioritized the development of cultural-sensitive IEC materials for the 11 tribes of Davao Province and was joined by 50 collaborators consisting of writers, evaluators, illustrators, DepEd Technical Working Group members, and Elders of the Indigenous People.

5. Seminar on Drug Abuse Prevention Program for the Transport Groups

A primary prevention activity involving the public transport groups to ensure the safety, well-being of the commuters and pedestrians by having drug-free transport personnel.

6. Trainer's Training of Yeshua Change Agents (YCA)

A one-day program aims to increase the level of awareness of the participants on the Republic Act 9165, or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

7. Drug Abuse Prevention Program for Senior Citizens

The Dangerous Drugs Board recognizes the important role of senior citizens in nation-building. Hence, the DDB organized a one-day program to orient the senior citizens on their roles in drug abuse prevention.

For Partners in Rehabilitation:

1. Training on Provisional Accreditation of Physicians on Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment and Assessment (SBIRTA) for Persons Who Use Drugs (PWUDs)

This training program aims to promote drug abuse prevention education initiatives and strategies for medical practitioners to become active anti-drug advocates to their community and the general public.

2. Training-Seminar on the Provisional Accreditation of Physicians

This program aims to provide Medical Officers and/or Municipal Health Officers a training course on the Provisional Accreditation of Physicians with an end goal of making Drug Dependency Examination accessible to Persons Who Used Drugs (PWUDs) and to ensure the delivery of timely rehabilitation intervention.

3. National Orientation on "Yakap Bayan" Program

This program is part of the commitments of the Department of Social Welfare and Development to the Philippine Anti-Illegal Drugs Strategy (PADS) which aims to orient participants on the "Yakap Bayan" Program's process and documentation and present a model for its implementation.

4. Training on Motivational Interviewing

The training course is designed for Community-Based Drug Rehabilitation Service Providers to enhance their skills in motivational interviewing.

5. Trainer's Training for Universal Prevention Curricula (UPC) for Substance Use for Guidance Counselors Curriculum 5: School-Based Prevention Interventions

This program is designed to train a group of Media Practitioners/Information Officers on the science of effective media-based substance use prevention interventions with a focus on developing persuasive communication.

6. Training on Universal Prevention Curriculum (UPC) Monitoring and Evaluation Track

This training aims to capacitate Monitoring and Evaluation Workers in developing logic models, data gathering tools M & E plan, and impact evaluation design of preventive drug education programs.

7. Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP)

The training covers discussions on responsible and proactive parenting, communication, and proper handling and molding of children's behavior. The program

aims to provide the necessary knowledge to hone parenting skills and strengthen their roles in the prevention and control of drug abuse within their families.

Advocacy Activities

1. Workshop on Genderizing Various DDB IEC Materials

2. "Buhay Ingatan, Droga' y Ayawan (BIDA)" Program Fun Run and Serbisyo Caravan

The event intensified the holistic campaign against illegal drugs to reduce the drug demand in the communities.

3. Drug-Free Workplace Program

This activity aims to enrich the participant's knowledge of the government's campaign against illegal drugs and to increase awareness of the detrimental effects of drug abuse, signs and symptoms, and ill effects & provide them tips on how to discourage drug use in the workplace.

On Regional and International Cooperation:

- **Write-Shop on the Development of ASEAN Projects for ASOD Focal Persons**

This one- day workshop aimed to provide knowledge on the process and main elements of developing and implementing the ASEAN Cooperation Project (ACP) including

the availability of funds and resources from various partners to support ACP, its stage, ACP cycle, and result-based approach in the ACP

- **44th Meeting of the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD) and its Related Meetings (Online)**

This Meeting sought to consolidate and strengthen collaborative efforts in the prevention and control of drug problems in the region. It also reviewed the implementation of decisions and recommendations and shared the significant development efforts of ASEAN member countries in drug abuse prevention and control. The meeting was successfully held last 05-07 June 2023 via Zoom platform.

- **66th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)**

Chair Catalino Cuy of the Dangerous Drugs Board led the Philippine Delegation to the 66th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in Vienna, Austria from March 13 to 17, 2023.

As the country's policy-making and strategy-formulating body on drug prevention and control, the presence of DDB representatives at the meeting is deemed important. Representatives from the Department of Health and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) also formed part of the Philippine Delegation to the Meeting.

The CND serves as the central drug policy-making body within the United Nations system. It was established by a resolution of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations purposely to assist in supervising the application of international drug control treaties such as the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

- **2023 SMART Forensics Programme Regional Workshop for East and Southeast Asia, 29-31 August 2023**

- **14th and 15th ASEAN Drug Monitoring Network (ADMN) Meeting**
- **Bilateral Meeting on Results Framework - HRBA- Drugs TWG**

Special Events:

1. Observance of the 2023 International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Traffickicking

The theme for 2023 was, "PEOPLE FIRST: Stop stigma and discrimination, strengthen prevention." In collaboration with the National Capital Region's (NCR) Local Government Unit Anti-Drug Abuse Councils (LGU-ADACs), the DDB conducted the **"Inter-LGU Friendly Mini Olympics Towards Drug-Free Lifestyles,"** which brought together 1,500 various stakeholders from the local government and non-government agencies at the Amoranto Sports Complex, Quezon City on June 26, 2023

Promoting an active and healthy lifestyle away from drug abuse, the inter-agency sports event afforded the Persons Who Used Drugs enrolled in the Community Based Drug Rehabilitation Program (CBDRP) to engage in friendly games like three-point basketball shootouts, sprint relays, badminton matches, table tennis competitions, and dart games. An exhibition match between basketball players from the PDEA and DDB capped the day's activities.

Simultaneous to the sports event in the NCR, the DDB and National Youth Commission (NYC) held "**Kumustahan: Mental Health Youth Camp**" in Paete, Laguna. This camp was intended to foster mental health awareness in young people improving their self-awareness, resiliency, and well-being amid challenges that will enable them to deal with pressure, discrimination, and stigma that they may experience as they go through their everyday lives. This program also aimed to address the increasing number of youths who experience anxiety and other mental health problems about the COVID-19 pandemic, thus resorting to drug use and other vices. The camp had three major sessions: Education on Mental Health, Drug Use Prevention Program, and Empowerment Among the Youth.

2. Observance of the 2023 Drug Abuse Prevention and Control (DAPC) Week

The 2023 DAPC celebration held on the 3rd week of November maintained the theme: "PEOPLE FIRST: Stop stigma and discrimination, strengthen prevention. The whole country commemorated the nationwide celebration as this commitment is anchored on Presidential Proclamation No. 1192 issued in 1973 which designates the third week of November of every year as DAPC Week.

Continuing the advocacy and encouraging participation of various sectors,

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. officially spearheaded the call to support this year's DAPC Week celebration from November 12 to 19, 2023.

Implementing a whole-of-government approach to prevent and control illegal drug use and abuse, the DDB organized various activities in collaboration with several Local Government Units (LGUs) around the country. This year's DAPC activities also celebrate the youth's critical involvement in embracing a healthy, productive, and drug-free lifestyle

- . Kicking off the advocacy, DDB's flagship program Barkada Kontra Droga entitled " TalenTODA, Barkadahan ng mga Drivers, Riders at Barangay Kontra Droga" was launched on 12 November. This program was participated in by members of public transport groups in Ilocos Norte to reinforce their role as advocates of public safety and drug-free communities.
- On November 13, a nationwide Pledge of Commitment to Remain Drug-Free took place among national government agencies, LGUs, schools, and universities. The City of Pasig hosted a sports event called "Palarong Pinoy Laban sa Droga" to promote athletics and camaraderie among its citizens, groups, and stakeholders who are supporting anti-drug advocates.

- On November 15, Taguig City sponsored the Seminar on Addressing the Threats of Cyber Crime Against Drug Use and Illicit Trafficking and the Drug-Free Workplace Program Seminar for Anti-Drug Abuse Councils or Office (ADAC-ADAO).

- On November 17, the City of San Juan headed the opening of a sports clinic participated in by the out-of-school youth and persons undergoing appropriate treatment and rehabilitation interventions.

- On November 18, Magdalena, Laguna LGU hosted a Music and Arts Festival entitled "Malaya Kabataan ng Magdalena Konta Droga, Musika at Singing Festival" to emphasize the importance of involving the youth and providing them with activities that discouraged them from engaging in drug and substances use.

- On November 19, the Quezon City Anti-Drug Abuse Advisory Council spearheaded the Barkada Kontra Droga Fun Run for grades 9 to 12 enthusiasts.

- An Anti-Drug Summit was also held by the Quezon City LGU and was attended by focal persons of the 17 LGU-ADACs where various relevant topics on the drug problem were discussed.

Singapore

AMENDMENTS TO MISUSE OF DRUGS ACT

Controlled Drugs

As part of CNB's regular drug review, the penalties for the possession of eight specific controlled drugs have increased if the quantities are above defined weight thresholds. The eight controlled drugs are morphine, diamorphine, opium, cocaine, cannabis, cannabis resin, cannabis mixture, and methamphetamine. The punishment is tiered based on the weight of the controlled drugs. For the first tier, the punishment is a minimum sentence of 10 years and 5 strokes upon conviction, whereas for the second tier, the punishment is a minimum sentence of 20 years and 10 strokes upon conviction.

NPS

The NPS situation remains an area of concern, with new NPS being identified across the world every year. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Early Warning Advisory on New Psychoactive Substances, there were at least 1,230 NPS reported from 141 countries and territories as of November 2023. Many of these NPS have been reported in overseas journals to have no licit use. Their abuse has been linked to adverse physical and psychological reactions, including paranoia, seizures, hallucinations and even death. CNB regularly reviews its strategies to improve the detection of NPS, and enforcement against its illicit use, including the listing of new NPS in the First Schedule. In 2023, CNB has identified and listed an additional 10 NPS as Class A controlled drugs. A new statutory framework to deal with unlisted NPS based on their capacity to produce psychoactive effect and offences relating to them, would also come into effect from June 2024.

PREVENTIVE DRUG EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023

Preventive Drug Education (PDE) remains a key tenet in CNB's mission to enforce, educate and engage our people for a drug-free Singapore. In 2023, Singapore set up an Inter-Ministry Committee (IMC) on Drug Prevention for Youths to tackle the issue of youth drug abuse with a whole-of-government approach. In addition to the formation of the IMC, CNB continues to educate the community on PDE through school-based education and engagement, social media campaigns, and public events. CNB also provides ongoing support to its key partners to expand advocacy. These efforts were informed by insights from national surveys which revealed a growing permissive attitude towards drug abuse among the younger population in Singapore. The following are the highlights of Singapore's education and advocacy initiatives in 2023:

Setting up of the IMC

In 2023, an IMC was set up to focus on drug prevention for youths. The IMC comprises representatives from the ministries of Home Affairs, Education, Social and Family Development, Culture, Community and Youth, Defence, Communications and Information, and Health, and aims to tackle the youth drug abuse problem more holistically. Examples of the workplan initiatives by the IMC include integrating PDE messages into the primary to post-secondary school curricula and leveraging persons of influence such as parents, National Service (NS) commanders, social workers, and youth leaders to reinforce these messages within homes, communities and during NS. The IMC will set the direction for Singapore's PDE efforts in the next three years.

School - based education and engagement

In 2023, CNB maintained a strong presence in school- based education and engagement through anti- drug talks, sharing sessions, interactive skits, and exhibitions. CNB also ran regular PDE advertorials and comic strips in school publications, distributed to primary and secondary school students. In collaboration with a local radio station, CNB conducted radio roadshows in schools to build students' confidence in public speaking and resilience against drugs. CNB also distributed the Anti-drug Ambassador Activity booklets to all primary schools and organised the annual Anti- drug Montage Competition for primary school students. The DrugFreeSG Video Competition is another initiative that CNB organises annually to engage older youths interested in video production to articulate their understanding of drug abuse through producing short videos.

Caption: PDE advertorials and comic strips in school publications

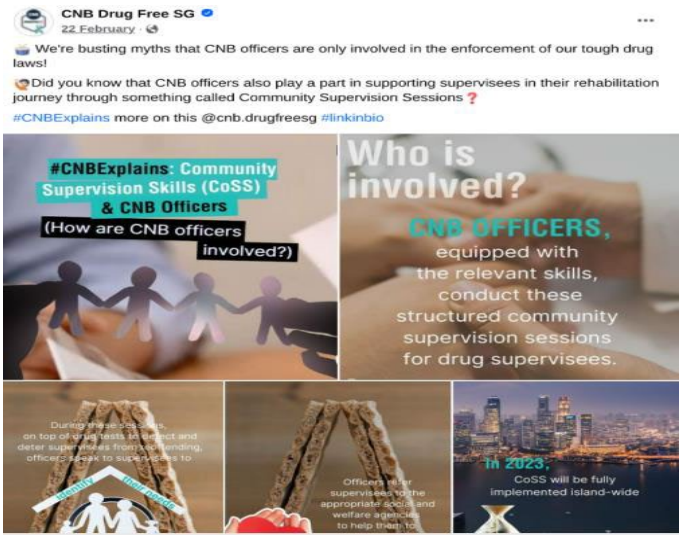
Caption: Students recording anti-drug advertisement at radio station

Caption: Anti-drug Montage Competition in Primary Schools

Caption: Winning still from DrugFreeSG Video Competition

Social media campaigns

Beyond school-based PDE efforts, CNB continued to hold various social media campaigns to build and sustain general awareness of the public, including youths, on PDE. For example, #CNBPerspectives discusses drug issues concerning legalisation, global drug trends and scientific studies in easily digestible formats. #CNBExplains touches on the drug enforcement and supervision and rehabilitation processes and other aspects of CNB's work, while #InTheNews is a curation of the latest local and global news stories related to drug issues.



Caption: #CNBExplains

Public events

Public events continued to be the mainstays in CNB's PDE efforts. The DrugFreeSG Campaign was CNB's largest scale public event in 2023 that centered around the theme 'Creating Memories' to inspire Singaporeans to lead a drug-free life to create memories and enjoy shared experiences with their loved ones. The campaign comprised a DrugFreeSG Carnival over a weekend in June in a public space with carnival games, movie screenings, snack booths and exhibits. To bring anti-drug messages to a broader community, there was a roving DrugFreeSG Pop-Up Booth across Singapore from July to August. There was also the DrugFreeSG Light-Up on 26 June where iconic landmarks islandwide lit up in green and/or white to commemorate the World Drug Day.

Caption: DrugFreeSG Carnival on 24 and 25 June 2023

CNB continued to organise culturally-nuanced campaigns – the Dadah Itu Haram ('Drugs Are Forbidden') Campaign to engage the Malay-Muslim community, and the Bothaiporulai Ethirthu Nirpom ('We Stand United Against Drugs') Campaign to engage the Indian community in 2023.

Activating our partners for community and international advocacy

To activate circles of influence for wider advocacy, CNB also supported key partners in their outreach activities. One key campaign was the *What's Your Fix?* 2022-2023 media campaign by the National Council Against Drug Abuse (NCADA) that aimed to inspire youths to become advocates against drug abuse. *What's Your Fix?* was rolled out with a TikTok-exclusive narrative series, a documentary-series launched across different social media platforms, and a youth film programme and dialogue. The programme not only empowered young people to advocate for the drug-free cause through film and content co-creation, but also engaged dialogue participants on the urgency of issues pertaining to drug abuse, and their relevance to the youths in Singapore today.

Caption: What's Your Fix? Youth Film Programme and Dialogue

The international front saw CNB's support for the NCADA and the Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA) in co-organising the Asia Pacific Forum Against Drugs (APFAD) 2023 on 26 May. Themed "From Prevention to Aftercare – Integrated Community Action for a Drug-Free Society", APFAD 2023 aimed to rally local and regional anti-drug advocates and Non-Governmental Organisations to discuss holistic harm prevention and aftercare approaches, to better address the complex and increasingly challenging drug problem.

Caption: APFAD 2023 Guest of Honour, Mrs Josephine Teo, Minister for Communications and Information & Second Minister for Home Affairs (in pink) and Forum Speakers

Thailand

KRATOM PLANT ACT 2022

As the world continues to develop and social conditions change, global approaches to addressing drug problems have also evolved. Many countries around the world have recognized that harsh penalties for drug suppression have not eradicated the problem. In fact, it has tended to increase, along with other issues resulting from drug suppression such as overcrowded prisons, recidivism, and other crimes. However, these issues are not unique to Thailand, as many countries face similar challenges. This led to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS) in 2016, which concluded that harsh drug suppression is not an effective solution and that new approaches must be found to better address the problem. Consequently, drug laws were amended to make penalties for offenders more reasonable such as reducing sentences or repealing certain punishments.

In 2021, the Narcotic Act (No. 8) was enacted to remove Kratom from the list of Category 5 narcotics. This allowed the public to legally cultivate, sell, and use kratom for medical and therapeutic purposes. The House of Representatives approved the legislation, and it came into effect on 24 August 2021.

With the removal of Kratom from the list of narcotics, it is necessary to have specific legislation to regulate its use to ensure social order, economic benefits, and to prevent excessive consumption that could harm consumers. Therefore, a law was enacted to regulate the appropriate use of Kratom which came into effect on 27 August 2022. The Minister of Justice and the Minister of Public Health shall have charge and control over the execution of this act.

The Kratom Plant Act includes key measures for regulating the cultivation and production of Kratom, as well as its import and export, to benefit the economy. It also establishes regulations on sales, advertising, and restricts access to prevent misuse by minors.

General Information on Kratom Plant

Properties of Kratom Plant

Kratom contains various alkaloid compounds but the chemical that the medical field considers highly significant is mitragynine. Pharmacological studies in experimental animals and traditional knowledge on the use of Kratom have shown that it has properties for treating pain, reducing inflammation, swelling, redness, heat, and affects skeletal muscles by relaxing them allowing for prolonged activity due to pain relief. It also affects the brain and behavior by reducing appetite and thirst acting as an antidepressant that improves mood. Additionally, it has properties for treating diarrhea, reducing contractions of the duodenum, slowing food movement in the

small intestine, protecting against gastric ulcers, affecting blood sugar levels, and increasing glucose uptake into muscle cells aligning with traditional medicine that uses Kratom leaves to treat diabetes.

In Thailand, Kratom is used as an herbal remedy for treating illnesses. Traditional healers often include it as an ingredient in medicinal formulas and use it as a single herb to treat conditions such as diarrhea, diabetes, body aches, cough, and to expel parasites. Villagers commonly chew fresh leaves (removing leaves from the stem, chewing the leaf, spit out the residue, and drinking water afterwards) to increase endurance and ability to work for longer periods.

Side Effects of Kratom Plant

The use of Kratom leaves may cause both short- term and long- term side effects. In the short term, it may cause mild symptoms such as dry mouth, numb tongue, nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, frequent urination, and constipation as the body cannot digest the stems and leaves of Kratom. Excessive use or failure to remove the stems may lead to residues of Kratom remaining in the intestines which could cause fibrous tissue to form around the residue leading to intestinal blockage. Other symptoms include drowsiness, headache, dizziness, hallucinations, anxiety, or restlessness.

In the long term, regular use of Kratom leaves over an extended period may cause pigmentation changes leading to dry and darkened skin particularly on the cheeks and lips, emaciation, loss of appetite, weight loss, trembling, feelings of fatigue and weakness, inability to work, twitching in the limbs, muscle pain, mental illness, and if usage is abruptly stopped or reduced, severe symptoms similar to those experienced by methamphetamine tablet users may occur including aggressive behavior, sleep problems, insomnia due to constant nervous stimulation, depression, irritability, and in some cases, hallucinations. There may also be a risk of severe side effects such as heart attack, high blood pressure, abnormal heart rate, and worsening conditions for those with heart problems.

Therefore, the use of Kratom can lead to criminal problems or accidents. These effects mainly impact the user or those addicted to Kratom. However, if Kratom is used during pregnancy, it can also affect the newborn who will need appropriate treatment or care.

Key Points about the Kratom Plant Law

Kratom Plant Cultivation

- Encourage citizens to cultivate, grow, or process Kratom for community use and to develop it as an economically valuable plant. Cultivation can be done without obtaining permission from the Ministry of Justice allowing people to freely grow Kratom without any quantity restrictions.
- Promote and support research to develop technology in various areas including cultivation, processing, breeding, production, management, and marketing of Kratom aiming to maximize its benefits and mitigate its risks to protect the individual health.

Kratom Plant Consumption

The general public is allowed to freely consume Kratom leaves and use them by chewing, boiling into Kratom tea, or drinking boiled Kratom leaf water according to local traditions. However, mixing Kratom with other 4 ingredients to create a drink known as "4x100" which consists of boiled Kratom leaf water, Coke, cough medicine, and mosquito repellent leading to intoxication, is prohibited under the Kratom Plant Act. The law prohibits the consumption of Kratom mixed with narcotics or psychoactive substances as defined in the Narcotics Code and shall be liable to a fine not exceeding 50,000 baht unless it is consumed legally for medical purposes.

However, Kratom leaves contain psychoactive substances that can impact health, and excessive consumption may lead to addiction. Children and adolescents should not consume Kratom or brew Kratom water mixed with any addictive substances as this could affect their brain development. Even unadulterated Kratom consumption can be harmful as the active substance, mitragynine, acts on the brain similarly to opioids, depressing the central nervous system and potentially harming the developing brain and body of children. Pregnant women and breastfeeding women should also avoid Kratom as it could adversely affect the health of the fetus and infants during breastfeeding. Thus, selling Kratom to vulnerable groups including persons under 18 years of age, pregnant women, and breastfeeding women, shall be liable to a fine not exceeding 30,000 baht under the Kratom Plant Act 2022.

Kratom Plant Sales

Selling Kratom leaves for industrial and commercial purposes requires a license from the Food and Drug Administration. License holders must display notices at the point of sale whether selling in convenience stores or electronic sales (online sales). It is prohibited to sell Kratom to persons under 18 years of age, pregnant women, and breastfeeding women.

Any person who sells Kratom leaves in educational institutions, dormitories, public parks, zoos, and amusement parks or sale via vending machines, any other places or by other methods or having other characteristics as mutually prescribed in Notifications issued by the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Public Health shall be liable to a fine not exceeding 50,000 baht.

If the offence is committed against a person under eighteen years of age, a pregnant woman, a breastfeeding woman or any other persons as mutually prescribed in Notifications issued by the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Public Health, the perpetrator shall be liable to twice of the punishment.

Any person who sells or encourages others to consume Kratom leaves mixed with narcotics or psychoactive substances under the Narcotics Code shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of not exceeding 2 years or to a fine not exceeding 200,000 baht or to both.

Use of Kratom Plant Parts as Ingredients in Food Products Manufactured for Sale

Currently, Kratom both the entire plant and its extracts, is still prohibited from being produced, imported, or sold as food under the Food Act by the Ministry of Public Health except for food products contain parts of Kratom or Kratom extracts that already undergo food safety evaluations and have their labels approved by the Food and Drug Administration before they can be produced, imported, or sold.

In cases where the production is intended solely for export, it must comply with the regulations of the trading partner country, and the production facility must obtain the necessary food production and food product permits from the licensor.

Import or Export of Kratom Plant

The import or export of Kratom must comply with other relevant laws related to plant quarantine, disease control, or plant hygiene which are associated with agricultural goods. Kratom seeds imported into the Kingdom of Thailand must not be genetically modified and must be packaged in new and clean containers that are free of insect contamination according to the Notifications by the Department of Agriculture.

Additionally, the export of Kratom must adhere to the laws of the destination country. If the destination country classifies Kratom as a narcotic plant or deems it illegal, the exporter shall be subject to penalties according to that country's laws.

Any person who imports or exports Kratom leaves without obtaining a license shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of not exceeding 1 year, or to a fine not exceeding 100,000 baht or to both.

Summary

The enactment of the Kratom Plant Act 2022 serves as a crucial outcome and tool for the government in addressing drug related issues within a new conceptual framework. This approach involves reviewing the legal framework and eliminating certain penalties through the "Decriminalization of Kratom", while simultaneously implementing legal measures to control and protect vulnerable groups. The goal is to harness the benefits of Kratom for medicinal purposes, healthcare, and its development as an economic crop as well as allowing its consumption in traditional ways without negatively impacting society. Moreover, this law helps to reduce related problems such as overcrowded prisons and the recurrence of drug related offenses aligning with the recommendations from the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS) in 2016, which suggested revising punitive measures to be more reasonable and socially appropriate.

Viet Nam

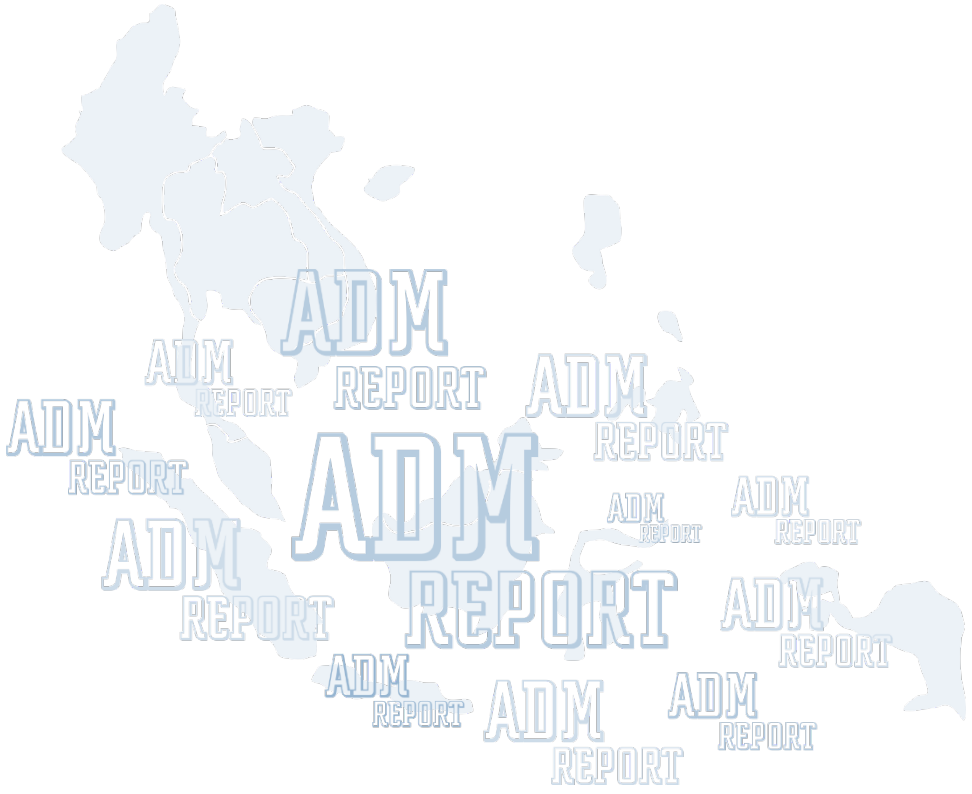
In 2023, Vietnam's relevant ministries and sectors continued to effectively implement the directives from the Party and State regarding drug prevention and control. Notably, this includes Directive No. 36-CT/TW dated August 16, 2019, from the Politburo on strengthening and improving the effectiveness of drug prevention and control efforts. A national online conference on drug prevention was held on March 10, 2023, with the participation of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Public Security, representatives from the provincial and municipal Party Committees, People's Committees, departments, and sectors, as well as related law enforcement units and local police from key drug-affected districts and communes.

In law enforcement efforts, the Ministry of Public Security issued a plan for the nationwide implementation of the "Month of Action for Drug Prevention" in June 2023. This included a plan for intensive propaganda and operations against drug crimes along border routes and the implementation of operational measures for preventing and fighting drug crime in key areas, with a focus on the Northwest, Northeast, North Central, Central Highlands, and Southwest regions. The policy aimed to enhance early and proactive drug crime prevention to reduce the drug supply entering Vietnam from the Golden Triangle for consumption.

In public education efforts, content and forms of communication were progressively updated and diversified, focusing both broadly and on specific target groups in need of drug prevention education. As a result, public participation in drug prevention efforts became more active and effective. The awareness of the responsibilities of all levels, sectors, and the public in drug prevention has significantly increased.

Additionally, the drug prevention forces were further strengthened in terms of organizational structure, with increased personnel and technical equipment to better meet the growing demands of the fight against drug crime in the current situation, contributing to enhanced effectiveness in drug crime prevention efforts.

ANNEX



Drug seizure statistics, precursors and chemicals in 6 countries

List	(Between 1 January 2023 - 31 December 2023)						
	China	Lao PDR	Myanmar	Thailand	Cambodia	Vietnam	Total
Arrests (case)	4	19	228	276	54	107	688
Suspect (person)	19	24	475	345	130	184	1,177
Confiscated items							
- YABA (tablet)	891,900	58,283,900	73,049,832	426,982,700	54,500	960,672	560,223,504
- Ice (kg.)	-	1,908.00	13,544.12	5,847.70	3,055.67	310.33	24,665.82
- Cannabis (kg.)	-	802.00	-	303.00	57.71	3.06	1,165.77
- Heroin (kg.)	-	225.00	619.06	1,916.00	52.71	168.99	2,981.76
- Opium (kg.)	-	-	741.34	179.12	-	22.60	943.06
- Ketamine (kg.)	-	-	339.92	281.11	1,272.03	21.63	1,914.69
- Ecstasy (tablet)	-	-	12,290	-	1,303,225	21,033	1,336,548
- Caffeine (kg.)	-	-	5,000.00	-	-	-	5,000.00
- Precursors (kg.)	-	-	17,858.00	25,020.00	-	-	42,878
- Chemicals (kg.)	-	-	90,810.72	-	178.40	471.14	91,460.26
Psychotropic substances							
- Erimin 5 (tablet)	-	-	6,370	-	-	-	6,370
- Methanol nitric (liter)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
- Happy Water (kg.)	-	-	236.34	-	124.60	-	360.94
- Precursors (kg.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
- Methenamine (kg.)	-	-	4,500.00	-	-	-	4,500.00

Remark** information from SMCC Database at 8:50 a.m. on July 12, 2024

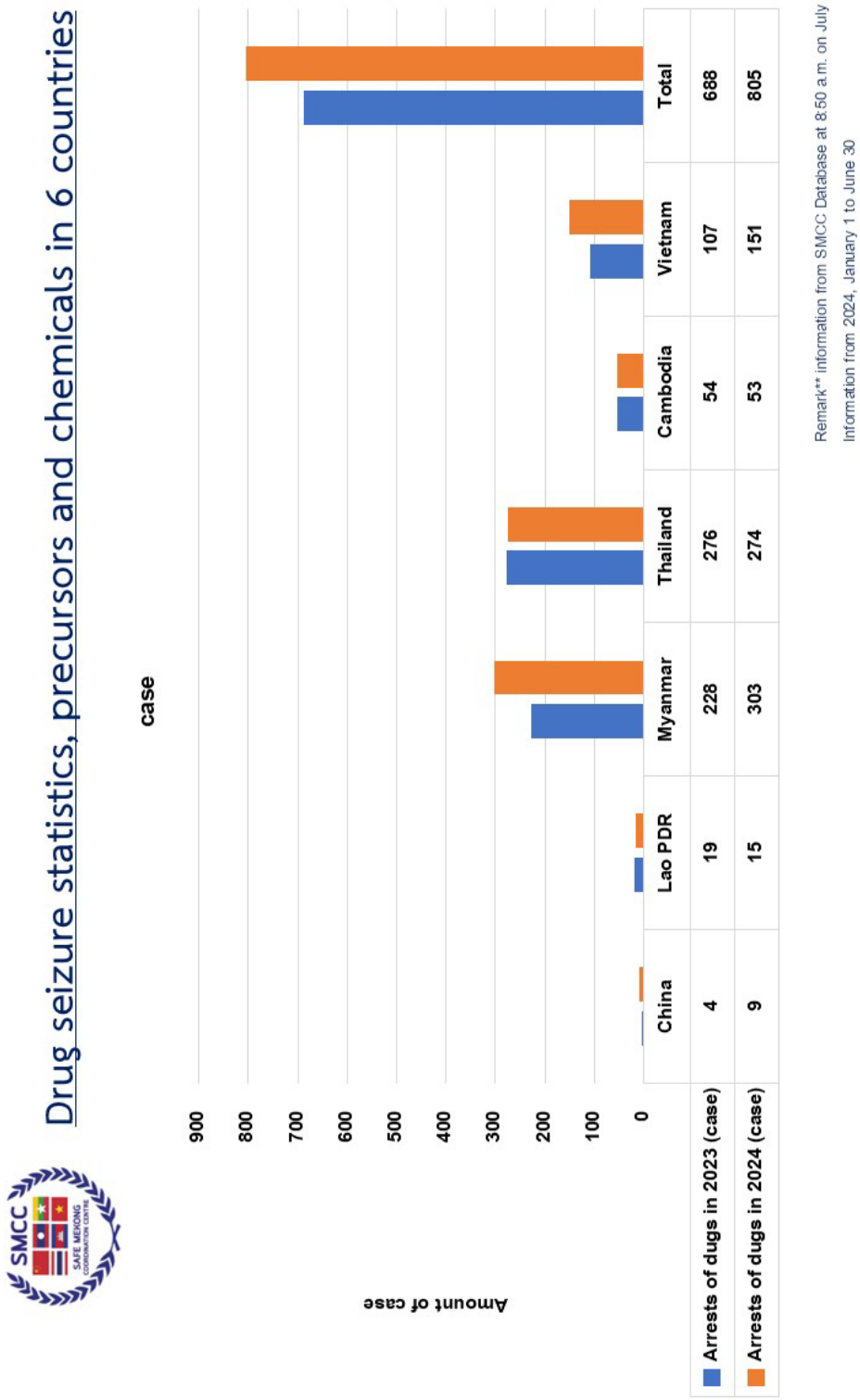
Information from 2024, January 1 to June 30

Drug seizure statistics, precursors and chemicals in 6 countries

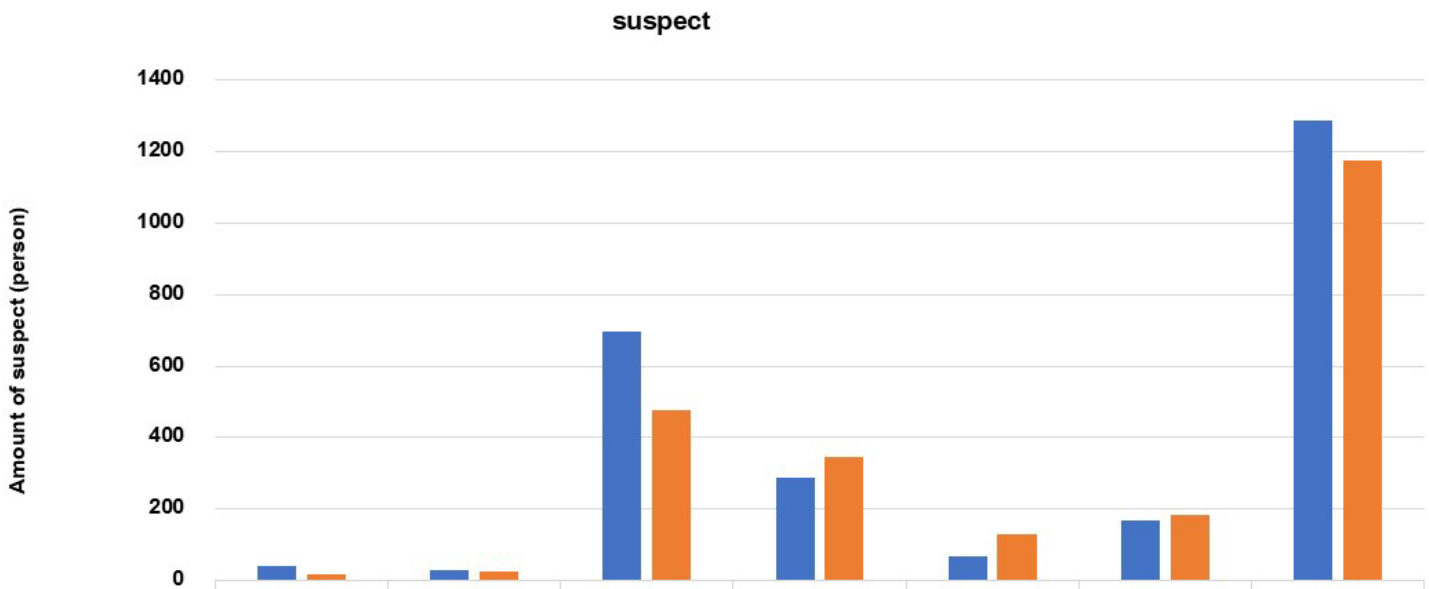
List	(Between 1 January 2024 - 30 June 2024)						
	China	Lao PDR	Myanmar	Thailand	Cambodia	Vietnam	Total
Arrests (case)	9	15	303	274	53	151	805
Suspect (person)	20	28	623	366	174	231	1,442
Confiscated items							
- YABA (tablet)	833,880	40,594,418	84,332,718	414,996,376	32,588	1,163,754	541,953,734
- Ice (kg.)	64.00	1,928.00	10,168.78	5,190.74	1,925.37	196.50	19,473.39
- Cannabis (kg.)	-	690.00	1.00	303.00	48.60	14.56	1,057.16
- Heroin (kg.)	106.56	-	673.97	321.58	23.07	88.11	1,213.29
- Opium (kg.)	-	0.01	794.62	158.32	-	38.89	991.84
- Ketamine (kg.)	-	-	2,443.86	444.82	1,032.44	42.87	3,963.99
- Ecstasy (tablet)	-	-	30,077	1,066	521,315	86,793	639,251
- Caffeine (kg.)	-	-	9,000.00	-	-	-	9,000.00
- Precursors (kg.)	-	-	12,400.00	-	-	-	12,400
- Chemicals (kg.)	-	25,000.00	97,518.54	0.01	478.11	448.14	123,444.80
Psychotropic substances							
- Erimin 5 (tablet)	-	-	4,500	-	-	-	4,500
- Methanol nitric (liter)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
- Happy Water (kg.)	-	-	126.25	2.03	4.34	-	132.63
- Precursors (kg.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
- Methenamine (kg.)	-	-	16,400.00	-	-	-	16,400.00

Remark** information from SMCC Database at 8:50 a.m. on July 12, 2024

Information from 2024, January 1 to June 30


Drug seizure statistics, precursors and chemicals in 6 countries
case
Amount of case
900
800
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
China
Lao PDR
Myanmar
Thailand
Cambodia
Vietnam
Total
Arrests of dugs in 2023 (case) 4 19 228 276 54 107 688
Arrests of dugs in 2024 (case) 9 15 303 274 53 151 805
Remark** information from SMCC Database at 8:50 a.m. on July 12, 2024
Information from 2024, January 1 to June 30

Drug seizure statistics, precursors and chemicals in 6 countries

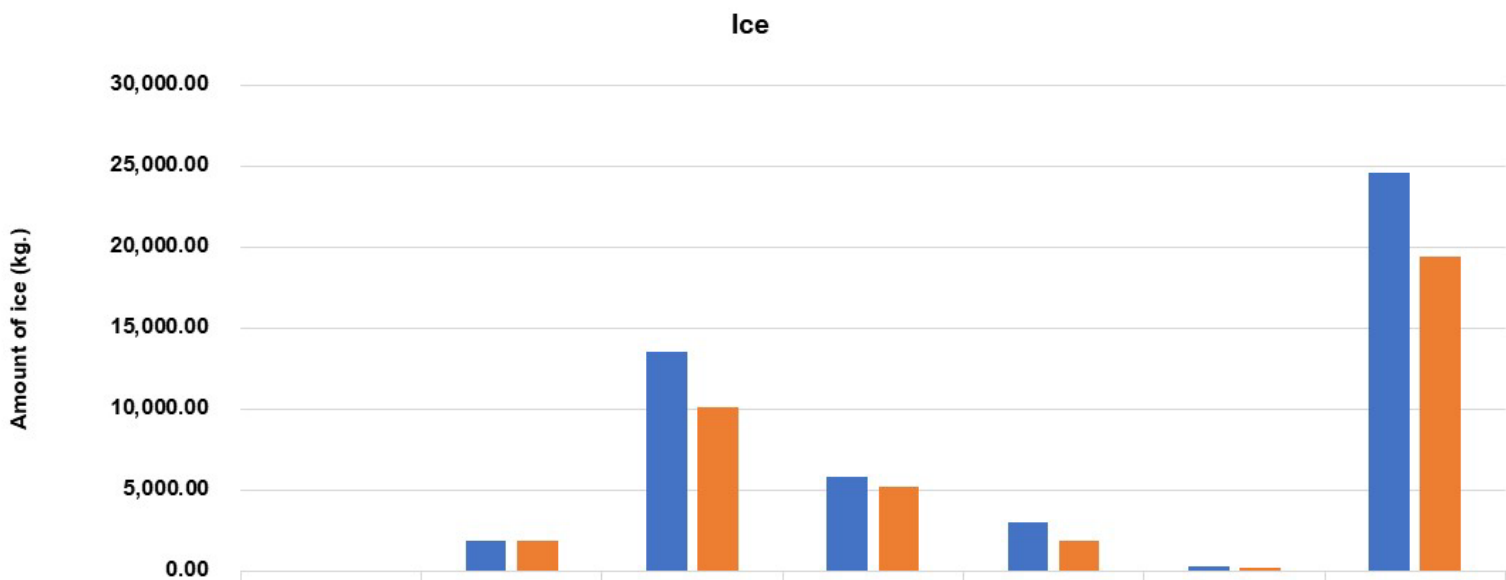


	China	Lao PDR	Myanmar	Thailand	Cambodia	Vietnam	Total
Suspect in 2023 (person)	39	30	695	288	69	168	1,289
Suspect in 2024 (person)	19	24	475	345	130	184	1,177

Remark** information from SMCC Database at 8:50 a.m. on July 12, 2024

Information from 2024, January 1 to June 30

Drug seizure statistics, precursors and chemicals in 6 countries

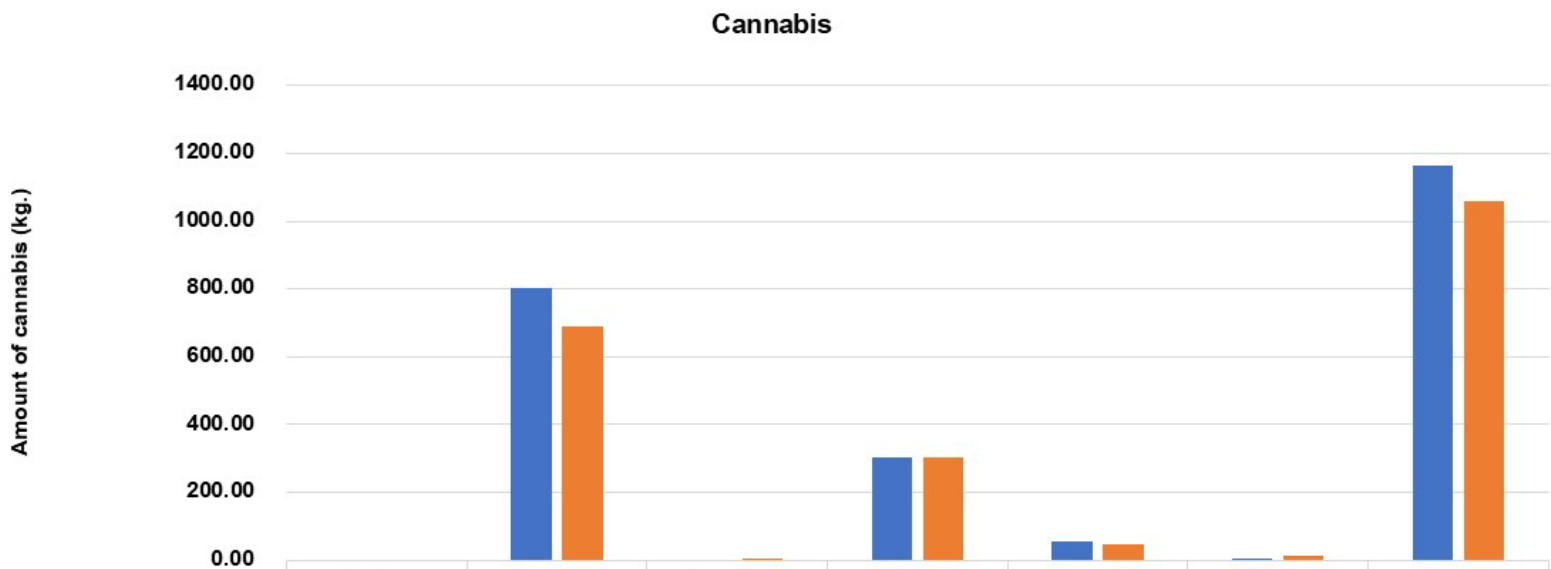


	China	Lao PDR	Myanmar	Thailand	Cambodia	Vietnam	Total
Ice in 2023 (kg.)	0.00	1,908.00	13,544.12	5,847.70	3,055.67	310.33	24,665.82
Ice in 2024 (kg.)	64.00	1,928.00	10,168.78	5,190.74	1,925.37	196.50	19,473.39

Remark** information from SMCC Database at 8:50 a.m. on July 12, 2024

Information from 2024, January 1 to June 30

Drug seizure statistics, precursors and chemicals in 6 countries

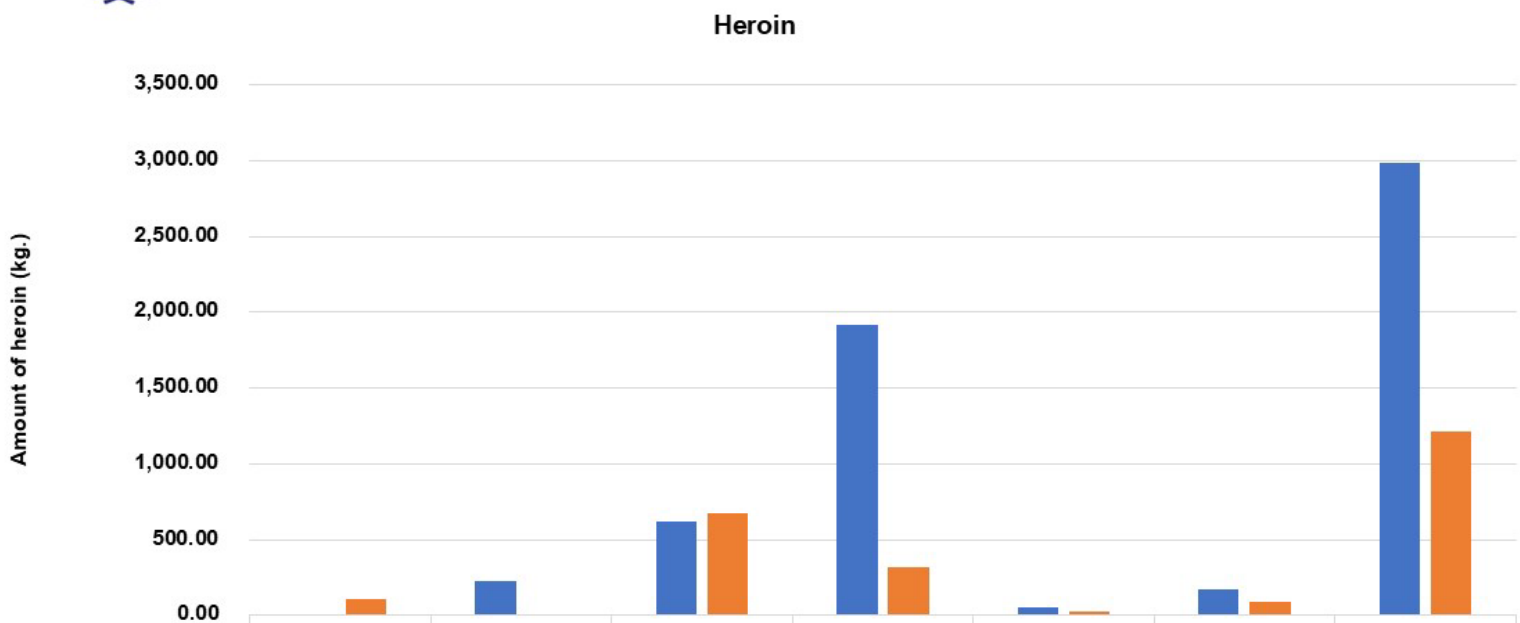


	China	Lao PDR	Myanmar	Thailand	Cambodia	Vietnam	Total
Cannabis in 2023 (kg.)	0.00	802.00	0.00	303.00	57.71	3.06	1,165.77
Cannabis in 2024 (kg.)	0.00	690.00	1.00	303.00	48.60	14.56	1,057.16

Remark** information from SMCC Database at 8:50 a.m. on July 12, 2024

Information from 2024, January 1 to June 30

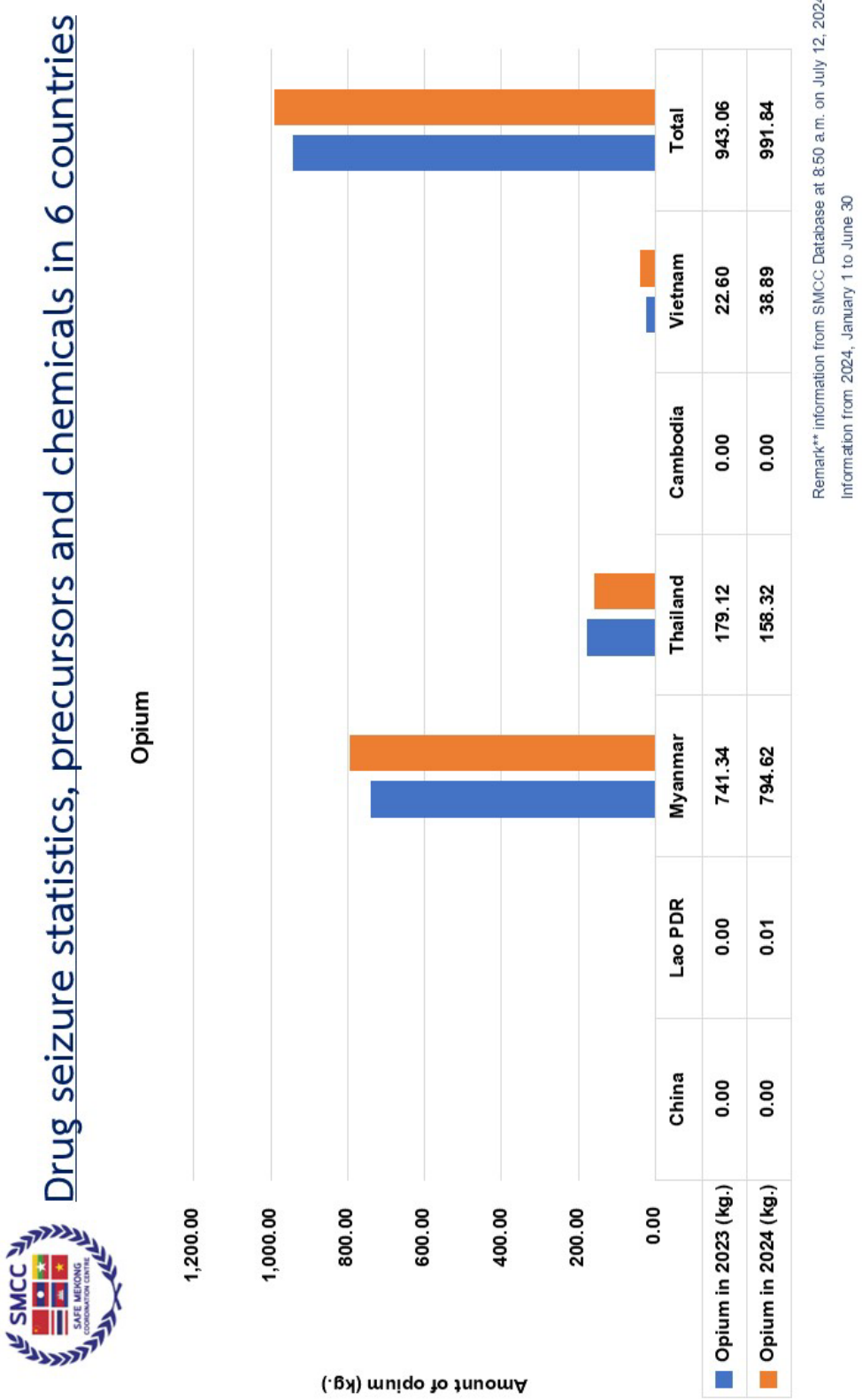
Drug seizure statistics, precursors and chemicals in 6 countries



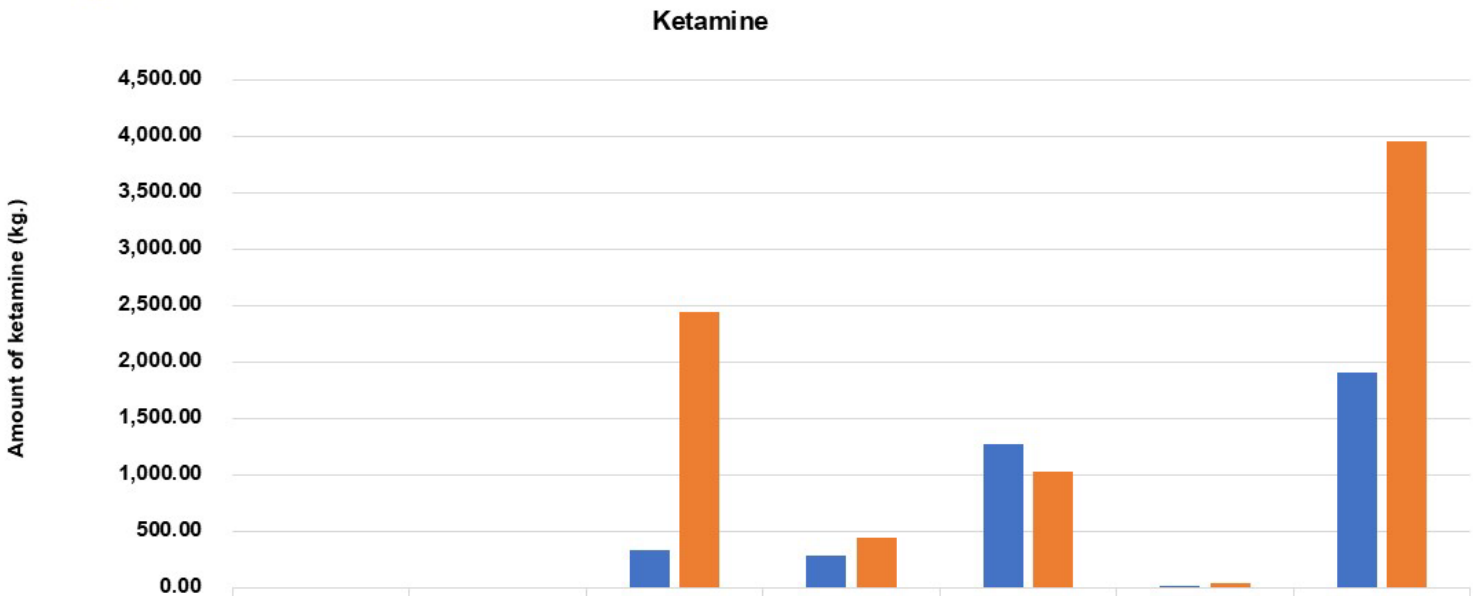
	China	Lao PDR	Myanmar	Thailand	Cambodia	Vietnam	Total
Heroin in 2023 (kg.)	0.00	225.00	619.06	1,916.00	52.71	168.99	2,981.76
Heroin in 2024 (kg.)	106.56	0.00	673.97	321.58	23.07	88.11	1,213.29

Remark** information from SMCC Database at 8:50 a.m. on July 12, 2024

Information from 2024, January 1 to June 30


Drug seizure statistics, precursors and chemicals in 6 countries
Opium
Amount of opium (kg.)
1,200.00
1,000.00
800.00
600.00
400.00
200.00
0.00
China
Lao PDR
Myanmar
Thailand
Cambodia
Vietnam
Total
Opium in 2023 (kg.) 0.00 0.00 741.34 179.12 0.00 22.60 943.06
Opium in 2024 (kg.) 0.00 0.01 794.62 158.32 0.00 38.89 991.84
Remark** information from SMCC Database at 8:50 a.m. on July 12, 2024
Information from 2024, January 1 to June 30

Drug seizure statistics, precursors and chemicals in 6 countries

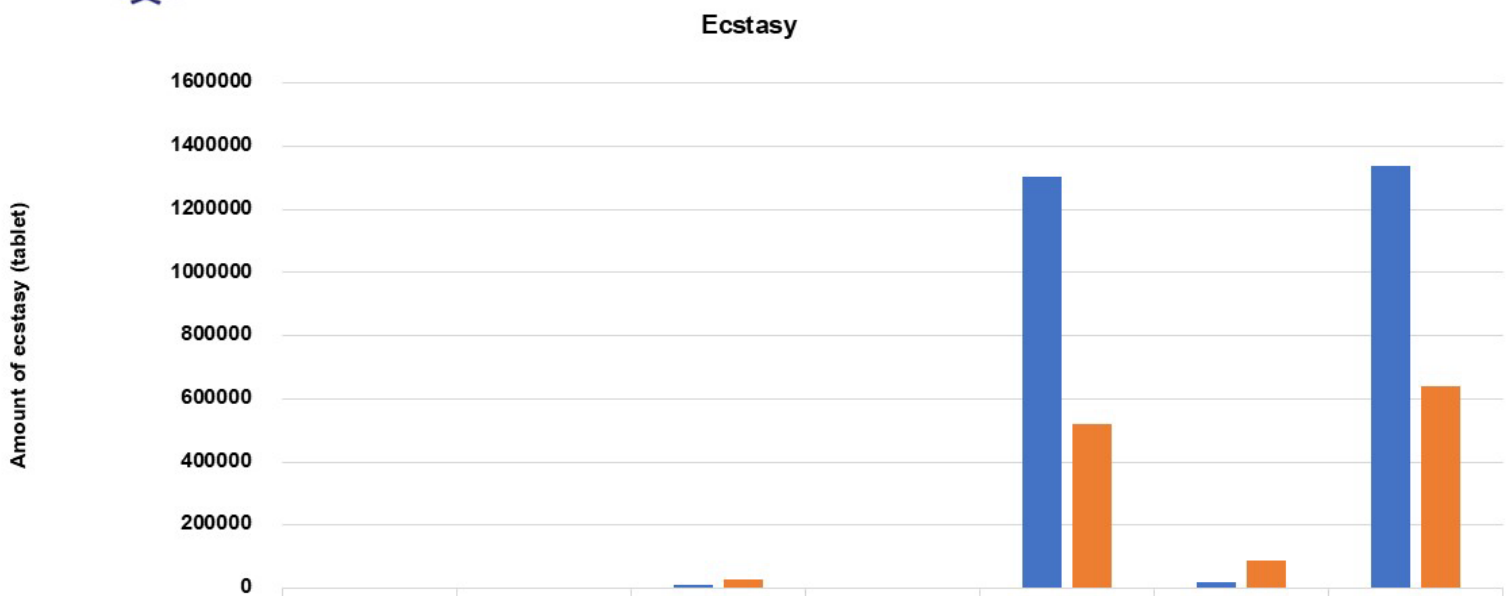


	China	Lao PDR	Myanmar	Thailand	Cambodia	Vietnam	Total
Ketamine in 2023 (kg.)	0.00	0.00	339.92	281.11	1,272.03	21.63	1,914.69
Ketamine in 2024 (kg.)	0.00	0.00	2,443.86	444.82	1,032.44	42.87	3,963.99

Remark** information from SMCC Database at 8:50 a.m. on July 12, 2024

Information from 2024, January 1 to June 30

Drug seizure statistics, precursors and chemicals in 6 countries

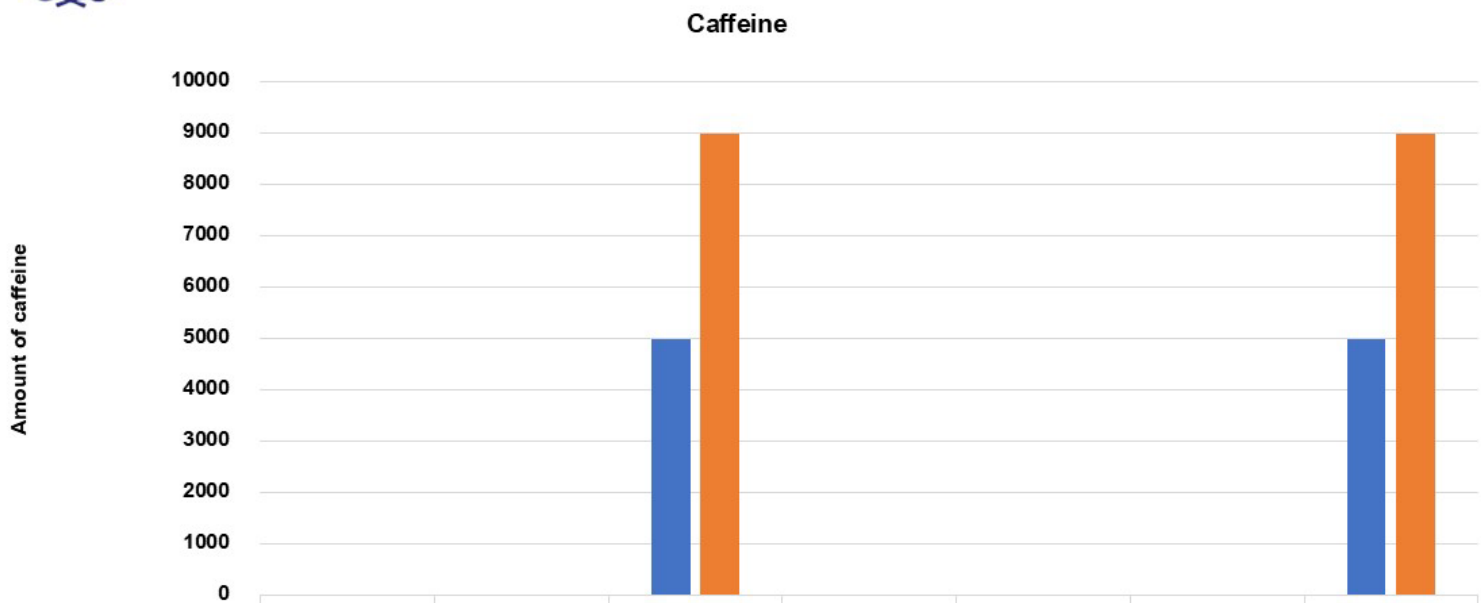


	China	Lao PDR	Myanmar	Thailand	Cambodia	Vietnam	Total
Ecstasy in 2023 (tablet)	0	0	12,290	0	1,303,225	21,033	1,336,548
Ecstasy in 2024 (tablet)	0	0	30,077	1,066	521,315	86,793	639,251

Remark** information from SMCC Database at 8:50 a.m. on July 12, 2024

Information from 2024, January 1 to June 30

Drug seizure statistics, precursors and chemicals in 6 countries

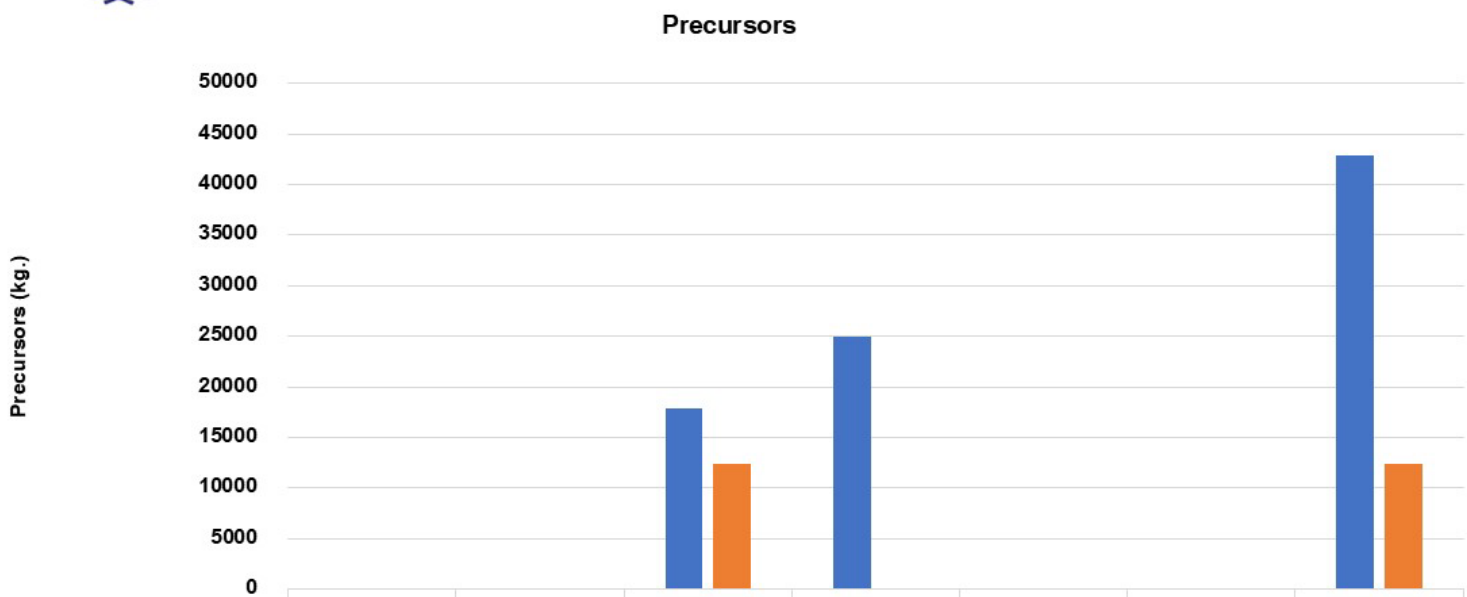


	China	Lao PDR	Myanmar	Thailand	Cambodia	Vietnam	Total
Caffeine in 2023 (kg.)	0	0	5,000.00	0	0	0	5,000.00
Caffeine in 2024 (kg.)	0	0	9,000.00	0	0	0	9,000.00

Remark** information from SMCC Database at 8:50 a.m. on July 12, 2024

Information from 2024, January 1 to June 30

Drug seizure statistics, precursors and chemicals in 6 countries

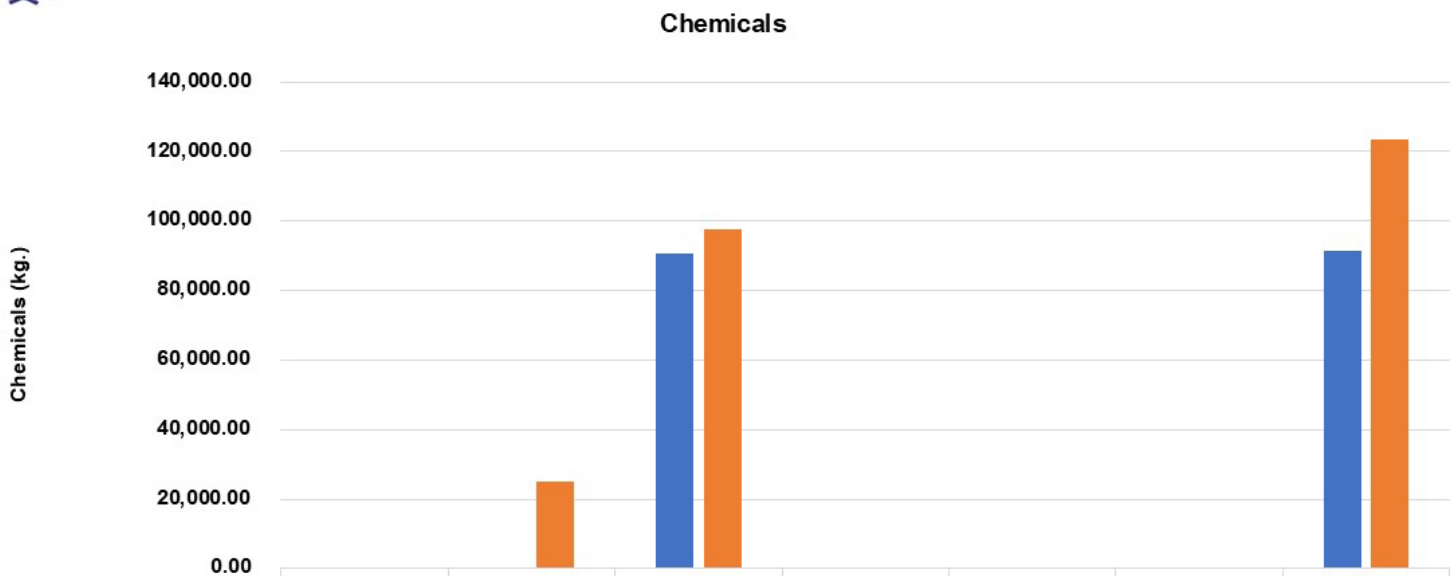


	China	Lao PDR	Myanmar	Thailand	Cambodia	Vietnam	Total
Precursors in 2023 (kg.)	0	0	17,858.00	25,020.00	0	0	42,878
Precursors in 2024 (kg.)	0	0	12,400.00	0	0	0	12,400

Remark** information from SMCC Database at 8:50 a.m. on July 12, 2024

Information from 2024, January 1 to June 30

Drug seizure statistics, precursors and chemicals in 6 countries

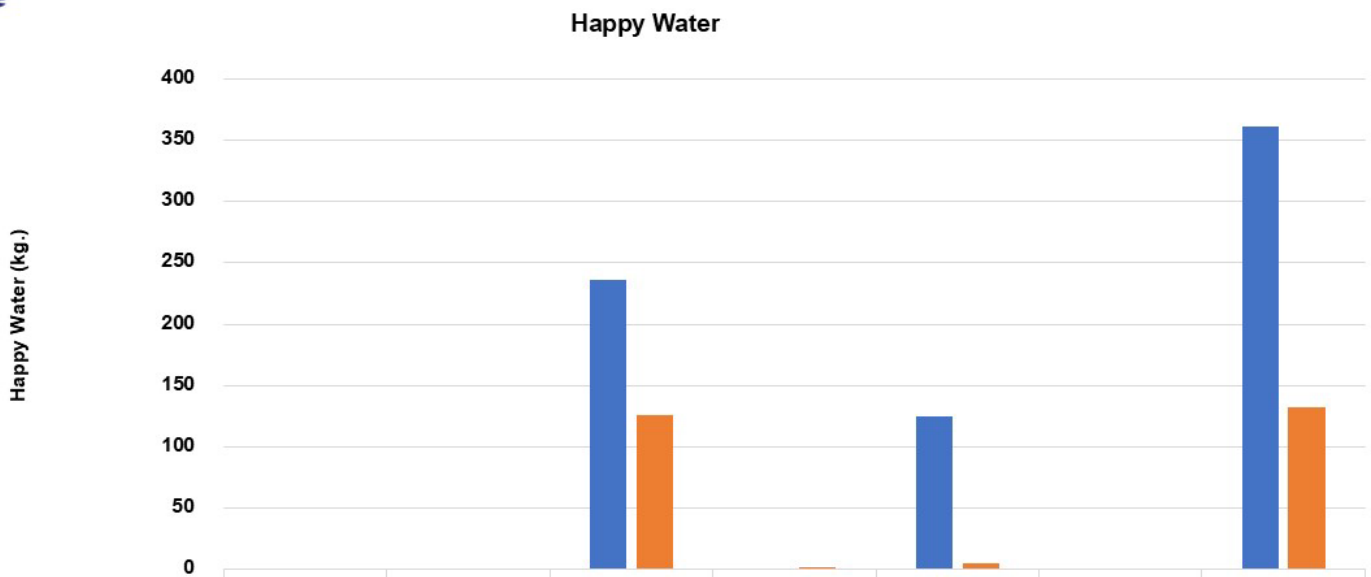


	China	Lao PDR	Myanmar	Thailand	Cambodia	Vietnam	Total
Chemicals in 2023 (kg.)	0.00	0.00	90,810.72	0.00	178.40	471.14	91,460.26
Chemicals in 2024 (kg.)	0.00	25,000.00	97,518.54	0.01	478.11	448.14	123,444.80

Remark** information from SMCC Database at 8:50 a.m. on July 12, 2024

Information from 2024, January 1 to June 30

Drug seizure statistics, precursors and chemicals in 6 countries



	China	Lao PDR	Myanmar	Thailand	Cambodia	Vietnam	Total
Happy Water in 2023 (kg.)	0	0	236.34	0	124.60	0	360.94
Happy Water in 2024 (kg.)	0	0	126.25	2.03	4.34	0	132.63

Remark** information from SMCC Database at 8:50 a.m. on July 12, 2024

Information from 2024, January 1 to June 30