



International Narcotics
Control Board



INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS ON NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES (NPS)

A Global Project of the International Narcotics Control Board



ION
PROJECT



INCB is implementing practical solutions to prevent new psychoactive substances (NPS) from reaching the consumer market.



What are NPS?

Although there is no universally accepted definition of **New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)**, broadly they are referred to as substances of abuse, either in a pure form or a preparation, that are not controlled under the 1961 Convention on Narcotic Drugs or the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, but which may pose a public health threat. Some NPS may be under a patchwork of national controls.

These substances are often deliberately chemically engineered to circumvent existing international and domestic drug control measures. NPS can be man-made, synthetic substances, or natural materials and generally encompass several groups of substances, such as synthetic cannabinoids, phenethylamines, synthetic cathinones, tryptamines, opioids etc.

To date over 800 different types of substances have been identified, while many of them quickly disappear out of the market. As the NPS market is always transient and fast-changing, timely sharing of information/intelligence is key to effective response to them.

Member states "resolve to strengthen national and international action to address the emerging challenge of new psychoactive substances, including their adverse health consequences, and the evolving threat of amphetamine-type stimulants, including methamphetamine, and underscore the importance of enhancing information-sharing and early warning networks, developing appropriate national legislative, prevention and treatment models and supporting scientific evidence-based review and scheduling of the most prevalent, persistent and harmful substances, we note the importance of preventing the diversion and misuse of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and precursors while ensuring their availability for legitimate purposes."

Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS),
April 2016



What is Project ION?

Project ION (International Operations on NPS) is the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) international operational initiative supporting national authorities' efforts in preventing non-scheduled new psychoactive substances (NPS) of abuse from reaching consumer markets. A specific focus is on synthetic NPS with little or no known medical, scientific or industrial uses.

Project ION activities are primarily engaged in the coordination, collection and communication of strategic and operational information and intelligence related to suspicious shipments of, trafficking in, or manufacture or production of NPS.

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs "calls upon Member States to exchange information through bilateral and multilateral channels on legislative, regulatory, administrative, law enforcement and border control responses, including those that address promotion, distribution and sales through the Internet, in order to effectively manage the challenge posed by new psychoactive substances and, where appropriate, amphetamine-type stimulants, including methamphetamine."

CND Resolution 59/8 (2016)

What is the added value of Project ION?

Project ION establishes and maintains a mechanism for multilateral operational activities; enables and supports intelligence generation and dissemination (e.g., Special Alerts) to national focal points; raises awareness to the threat of and practical response to NPS; strengthens international partnerships and cooperation; and provides access to the IONICS secure communication platform for the real-time sharing of actionable intelligence on incidents involving NPS between Governments.



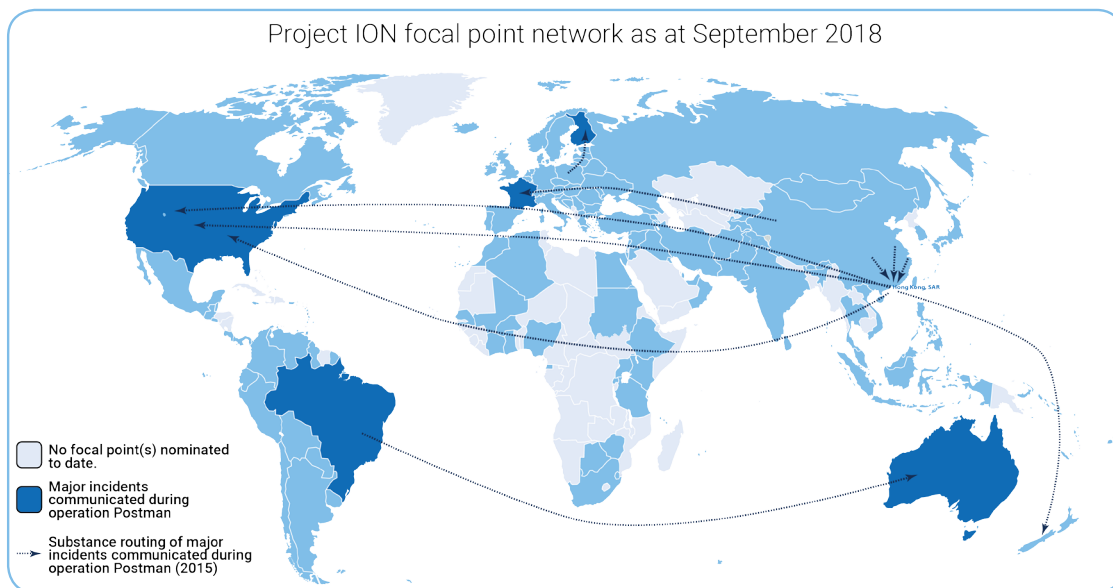
Developing and sharing intelligence among governments and agencies



A Global Network

What is the role of the Task Force?

The NPS Task Force proposes, directs and reviews time-bound special operations that generate and communicate strategic and operational intelligence regarding suspicious shipment of, trafficking in, or manufacture or production of NPS. The information and intelligence is exchanged through Project ION's global network of national focal points.

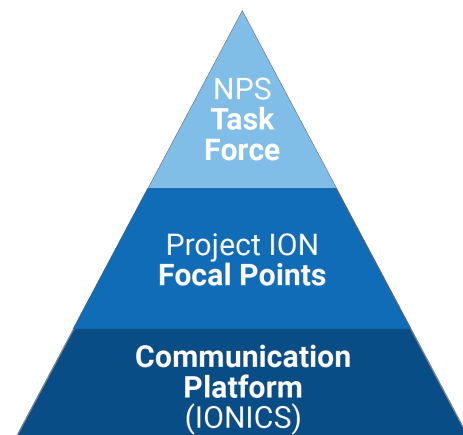


A global project focal point network

Project ION focal point(s) are nominated by their Governments to participate in the sending and receiving of relevant NPS information and intelligence, thereby enhancing timely communication and serving to improve the operational outcomes under Project ION.

Governments often nominate multiple focal points, such as various law enforcement agencies (i.e., Customs and Police) and a relevant regulatory agency.

Focal points are encouraged to voluntarily participate in time-bound multilateral intelligence gathering special operations and to collect and share information with national and international agencies (e.g., Interpol, World Customs Organization (WCO), etc.) or regional organizations involved in monitoring or investigating incidents involving NPS.



The Project ION Incident Communication System (IONICS)

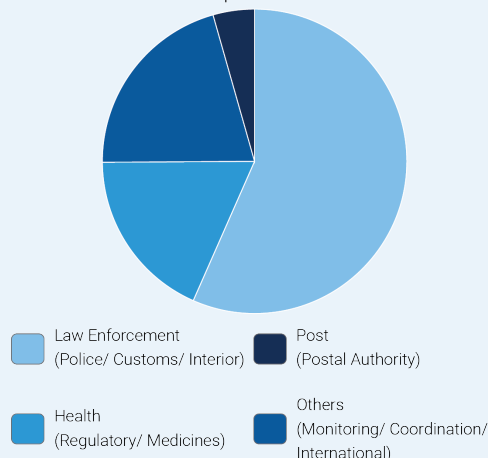


IONICS is a communication platform dedicated to real-time communication

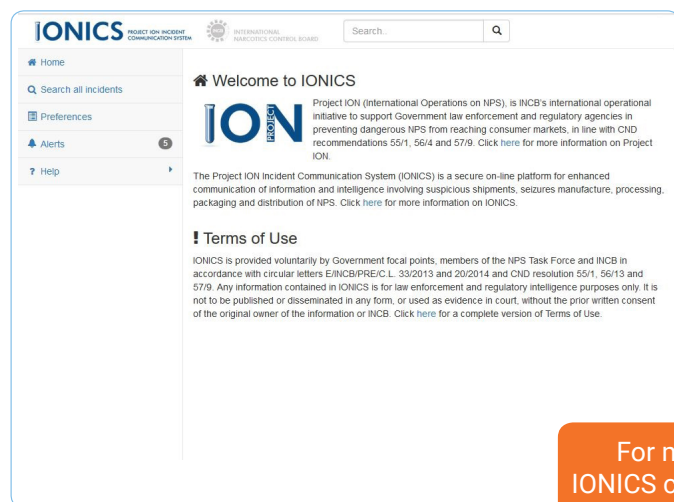
of incidents involving suspicious shipments, trafficking, manufacture or production of NPS. The platform:

- Offers secure communication of NPS incidents available to focal points (multiagency collaboration);
- Helps in the identification of key manufacturers and distribution hubs;
- Provides updates of activities under Project ION operational initiatives;
- Works on mobile devices including most tablets and smart phones.

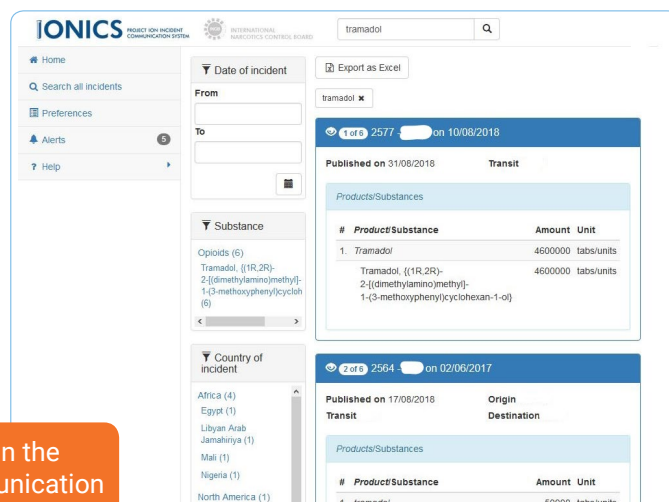
Statistics about established focal points as at September 2018



IONICS home screen



Sample IONICS incident search



For more on the
IONICS communication
platform, visit:
www.ionics.incb.org

Working Towards Long-term Sustainability

With its roots pre-dating the United Nations, the INCB is the oldest and most experienced international body to ensure that adequate supplies of drugs are available for medical and scientific uses, and that the diversion of drugs and their precursors into illicit channels does not occur.

Project ION builds upon the Board's track record of successful international operational initiatives under Projects PRISM and Cohesion. The Project activities began in December 2013 and align with both the Outcome Document of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the world drug problem, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages.



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.



Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.



Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.



Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

Our Mandate

Project ION builds upon recommendations from the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) resolutions 55/1 of 16 March 2012, 56/4 of 15 March 2013, 57/9 of 21 March 2014, 58/11 of 17 March 2015 and 59/8 of 22 March 2016 and the Outcome Document of the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS 2016), on enhancing international actions on NPS relating to sharing information on supply and demand reduction strategies.

Project ION
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
Vienna International Centre
P.O. Box 500
A-1400 Vienna, Austria

E-mail: incb.nps@un.org
Telephone: +43-1-26060-4367

http://www.incbl.org/incb/en/project_ion.html

Photo credits: INCB, DEA, Wikimedia Commons



International Narcotics
Control Board