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## Factsheet 3

# Precursors Report 2013 - Key trends in the control of precursors

The INCB Annual Report on Precursors, launched with the INCB Annual Report 2013, identifies the gaps that currently exist in the international framework for the control of precursors, which are the chemicals frequently used in the illicit manufacture of drugs and which the international community has decided to schedule under the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

### **International trade in precursors increasingly secure but traffickers targeting domestic trade instead**

Diversion of scheduled precursors from licit international trade is becoming less frequent compared to just a few years ago. To get around the INCB Pre-Export Notification (PEN) Online system, which is used to control licit imports and exports of precursors, traffickers divert substances from domestic trade for subsequent smuggling into vulnerable countries, such as Afghanistan.

### **Drug cartels seek new non-scheduled chemicals to manufacture drugs**

Traffickers circumvent the international control system by increasingly turning to new non-scheduled chemicals to illicitly manufacture drugs, as highlighted by the rise in incidents involving alpha-phenylacetonitrile (APAAN), a substitute “pre-precursor” used in illicit amphetamine and methamphetamine manufacture, being seized throughout Europe and North America.

### **INCB moves to place new “pre-precursor” under international control**

In response to significant seizures of alpha-phenylacetonitrile (APAAN), the Board formally initiated the procedures for the scheduling of APAAN, and the UN Secretary-General has invited Governments to express their opinion regarding the proposed scheduling at the 57th Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March 2014.

### **Ecstasy precursor seizures suggest MDMA is making a comeback**

Seizures of precursors used in the illicit manufacture of 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA, commonly known as “ecstasy”), rebounded in 2012 and into 2013 and, combined with several illicit industrial-scale laboratories found recently in Europe, raises the concern that MDMA will soon become readily available again throughout the world’s major illicit markets.

### **Activities under Project Prism and Cohesion task forces continue to yield results**

INCB in conjunction with its Project Prism and Project Cohesion task force members, including INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization, have executed numerous international intelligence gathering and other special operations, and those coupled with counter diversion training activities in 2012 resulted in significant seizures of various chemicals. Project Prism and Project Cohesion are international initiatives of INCB which serve as communications platforms for national authorities for exchanging intelligence information and launching multilateral investigations.