



THAILAND

Summary of major trends and emerging concerns

Methamphetamine

- The supply of methamphetamine to and through Thailand further increased in 2021, in part due to a spillover of drugs from Myanmar to neighbouring countries. While the annual seizure amount of crystalline methamphetamine decreased in 2021, seizures of methamphetamine tablets reached a record level, together making up the largest amount of methamphetamine seized by a single country in East and Southeast Asia (table 3).
- The use of methamphetamine, as perceived by Government experts and drug treatment admissions, declined in 2021 (tables 1 and 2).
- Wholesale and retail prices for both crystalline methamphetamine and methamphetamine tablets further dropped to new lows in 2021, indicating continued widespread availability of the drugs, while purity levels were stable (tables 5 and 6).
- Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine remain the main precursors for methamphetamine found in the country (figure 4).

“Ecstasy”¹

- Experts perceived a decrease in use of “ecstasy” in 2021, in line with a decrease in drug treatment admissions for use of the drug (tables 1 and 2). However, quantities of the drug seized annually have increased every year since 2016 (table 3).
- Two clandestine “ecstasy” laboratories were dismantled in 2021, including one kitchen-sized laboratory and one tableting facility.²
- In addition to “ecstasy” tablets trafficked in from Europe, “ecstasy” tablets have also been trafficked through Thailand’s northeastern provinces bordering Lao PDR.³ Preliminary data up to September 2021 shows that the average content of MDMA in “ecstasy” tablets found in the country decreased to 62 mg, which is much lower than the corresponding figure for 2020 (205 mg). The decrease could be due to many samples containing a mixture of other substances, including methamphetamine and ketamine.⁴

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) and other synthetic drugs

- Seizures of ketamine declined in 2021, following two years of increases (table 3). Non-medical use of ketamine, as indicated by treatment admissions, also declined in 2021 (table 2). The prevalence of synthetic NPS remains limited.⁵

Other drugs

- A record amount of heroin was seized in 2021 (table 3). Wholesale and retail prices of the drug also dropped in 2021, while use of the drug increased, indicating a possible resurgence of the heroin market in the country (tables 1 and 6).

1 “Ecstasy” tablets sold in the country may contain a range of substances in varying composition and quantities in addition or instead of MDMA.

2 Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB), “Latest situation on synthetic drugs and responses to the threats in Thailand”, presented at the Global SMART Programme Regional Workshop, November-December 2021.

3 Bilateral meeting with Thai authorities in northeastern provinces, December 2021.

4 Official communication with ONCB, May 2022.

5 Synthetic NPS excludes ketamine and plant-based substances.

Key facts and figures

Drug demand indicators

Table 1. Trend in use of selected drugs in Thailand, 2016-2021

Drug type	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Crystalline methamphetamine	↑	↑	↑	↓	↔	↓
Methamphetamine tablets	↓	↔	↓	↓	↓	↓
“Ecstasy”	●	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓
Ketamine	●	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓
Cannabis herb	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓
Heroin	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↔
Kratom ^a	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓
Cocaine	●	●	↓	↔	↔	↓

Sources: Drug Abuse Information Network for Asia and the Pacific (DAINAP); Official communication with the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB), May 2022.

Note: Based on expert perception provided by ONCB; ↑ = Increasing, ↓ = Decreasing, ↔ = Stable, ● = Not reported.

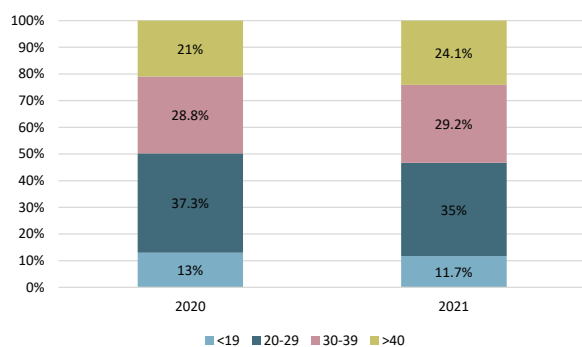
Table 2. Drug treatment admissions in Thailand, by drug type, 2016-2021

Drug type	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Methamphetamine	130,364	172,847	202,201	185,526	155,676	135,795
“Ecstasy”	8,422	524	560	413	299	138
Cannabis	15,206	14,616	12,976	15,676	9,272	6,451
Heroin	3,767	3,383	3,819	3,660	4,890	5,543
Opium	3,165	3,841	3,481	3,167	8	3,341
Ketamine	●	381	704	1,093	711	511
Cocaine	84	25	22	12	15	7
Inhalants	1,693	1,456	1,288	1,055	698	●
Kratom ^a	5,327	6,828	5,384	4,495	2,737	1,795
Total	172,518	205,147	230,435	215,097	174,306	154,103

Sources: DAINAP; Official communication with ONCB, May 2022.

Note: ^a Includes users of kratom in leaf and liquid form; ● = Not reported.

Figure 1. Proportion of drug treatment admissions in Thailand, by age group, 2020-2021



Sources: ONCB, “Latest situation on synthetic drugs and responses to the threats in Thailand”, presented at the Global SMART Programme Regional Workshop, November-December 2021; Official communication with ONCB, May 2022.

Drug supply indicators

Table 3. Seizures of selected drugs in Thailand, 2016-2021

Drug type	Unit	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Methamphetamine tablets	tablets	93,700,000	240,051,853	515,146,570	395,000,000	368,798,198	592,013,942
Crystalline methamphetamine	kg	1,161	8,113.9	18,441.4	17,642.9	25,072.6	22,126.7
"Ecstasy" ^a	tablets	8,807	80,433	203,407	221,300	398,333	594,029
Cannabis herb	kg	3185.5	13,395.9	39,997	26,815.2	41,611.6	69,711.9
Cocaine	kg	50.1	54.7	49.7	41.8	36.6	36.1
Heroin	kg	147.5	599.4	1,085.4	722.7	1,873.5	3,370
Ketamine	kg	95.1	617.4	720.2	1,175.4	1,926.3	1,031.9
Kratom leaves	kg	91,006.2	97,993.0	50,422.7	85,707.7	81,965.4	●
Kratom liquid	lt	27,088.6	40,280.1	25,961.3	28,525.0	35,307.8	●

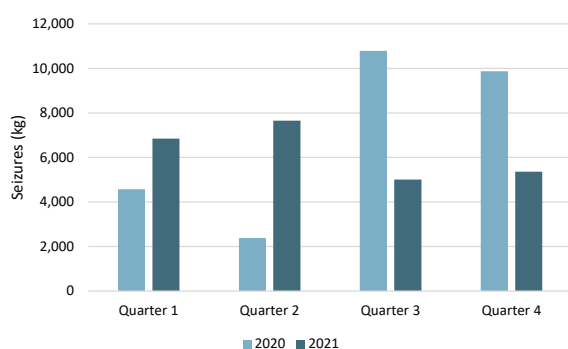
Sources: DAINAP; UNODC Annual Report Questionnaire (ARQ) Thailand for 2020 and previous years; Official communication with ONCB, May 2022.
Note: ^a Ecstasy tablet seizures converted into estimated kg equivalents at 1 tablet = 300 mg; ● = Not reported.

Table 4. Seizures of selected precursor chemicals and substances used as adulterants in illicit drugs in Thailand, 2017-2021

Drug type	Unit	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Hydrochloric acid	kg	0	0	15,950	0	0
Sodium cyanide	kg	4,000	77,000	99,750	0	0
Ammonium hydroxide	lt	0	90	0	0	0
Carbon	kg	0	160	0	0	0

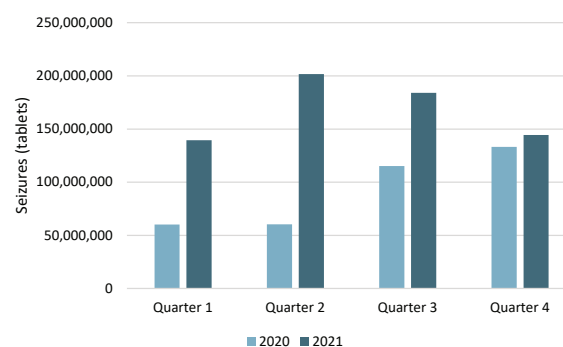
Sources: DAINAP; Official communication with ONCB, May 2022.

Figure 2. Seizure amounts of crystalline methamphetamine in Thailand, by quarter, 2020-2021



Sources: DAINAP; Official communication with ONCB, May 2022.

Figure 3. Seizure amounts of methamphetamine tablets in Thailand, by quarter, 2020-2021



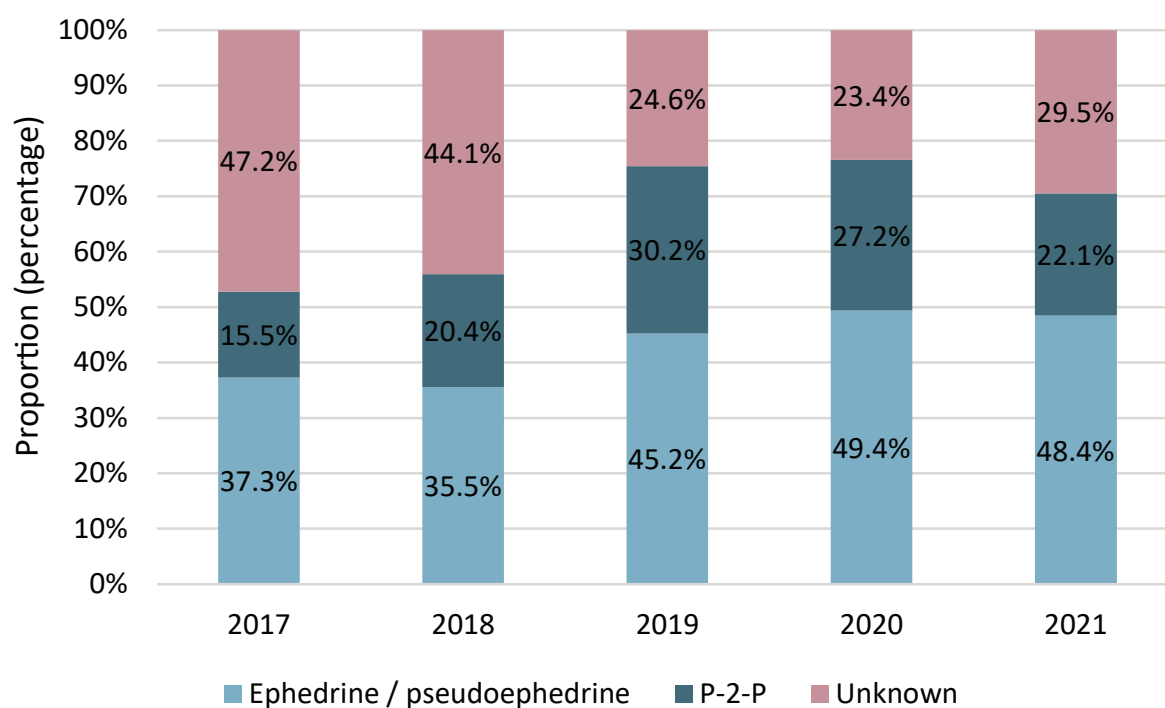
Sources: DAINAP; Official communication with ONCB, May 2022.

Table 5. Typical purity of selected drugs in Thailand, 2019-2021

Drug type	2019	2020	2021
Crystalline methamphetamine	94.85 (0.18-99.75)	95.62 (0.01-99.98)	93.54 (2.23-99.84)
Methamphetamine tablets	16.82 (0.06-31.17)	17.26 (0.01-30.35)	17.02 (0.02-23.99)
“Ecstasy”	49.03 (6.47-79.42)	50.93 (0.39-74.60)	18.80 (0.02-79.71)
Heroin (No. 3)	86.05 (71.85-92.39)	88.19 (41.83-96.63)	84.53 (39.46-95.31)
Cocaine	75.30 (18.43-98.43)	88.51 (31.38-96.77)	85.50 (0.33-98.47)
Ketamine	94.03 (3.71-99.79)	96.94 (0.01-99.98)	90.94 (0.09-99.11)

Sources: DAINAP; ONCB, “Latest situation on synthetic drugs and responses to the threats in Thailand”, presented at the Global SMART Programme Regional Workshop, November-December 2021; Official communication with ONCB, May 2022.

Note: Data in this table refer to the weight/weight (w/w) % expressed as the hydrochloride salt of these substances. Values in parentheses are the purity range (minimum-maximum) of the substances.

Figure 4. Proportion of crystalline methamphetamine samples analysed in Thailand, by main precursor, 2017-2021

Sources: DAINAP; ONCB, “Latest situation on synthetic drugs and responses to the threats in Thailand”, presented at the Global SMART Programme Regional Workshop, November-December 2021; Official communication with ONCB, May 2022.

Table 6. Wholesale and retail prices of selected illicit drugs in Thailand, 2019-2021 (US\$)

Drug type	2019	2020	2021
Methamphetamine tablet (per 2,000 tablets)	820 - 1,147	820 - 984	298 - 446
Methamphetamine tablet (per tablet)	1.64 - 3.28	1.64 - 3.28	1.49
Crystalline methamphetamine (per kg)	8,197 - 13,115	6,557 - 9,836	4,464 - 5,952
Crystalline methamphetamine (per g)	33 - 49	16 - 27	9 - 15
"Ecstasy" (per tablet)	10 - 16	13 - 20	12 - 18
Heroin (per 700 g)	9,836 - 13,115	13,115 - 16,393	7,440 - 11,900
Heroin (per g)	33 - 66	82 - 98	30 - 60
Cannabis herb (per kg)	164 - 262	180 - 328	164 - 298
Cannabis (per unit*)	1.64 - 3.28	2.62 - 3.28	2.38 - 2.98
Ketamine (per kg)	11,475 - 13,115	11,476 - 13,115	●
Ketamine powder (per g)	16 - 33	13 - 33	24 - 30

Sources: ONCB, "Latest situation on synthetic drugs and responses to the threats in Thailand", presented at the Global SMART Programme Regional Workshop, November-December 2021; Official communication with ONCB, May 2022.

Note: * Approximately 5 g; ● = Not reported.

Table 7. Types of NPS and other emerging synthetic substances identified in Thailand, 2018-2021

Substance type	Substance name	2018	2019	2020	2021
Synthetic cannabinoids	JWH-018	✓	✓	●	●
Synthetic cathinones	3,4-Methylenedioxypropylvalerone (MDPV)	●	✓	●	●
	4-Methylmethcathinone (Mephedrone)	●	✓	●	✓
	beta-keto-N-methylbenzodioxolylbutanamine	●	✓	●	●
Piperazines	1-(3-Trifluoromethylphenyl)piperazine (TFMPP)	●	✓	●	✓
	1-Benzyl-4-methylpiperazine (MBZP)	✓	●	●	●
	1-(3-chlorophenyl)piperazine	●	✓	●	●
Phenethylamines	para-Methoxymethylamphetamine (PMMA)	✓	✓	●	✓
	M-alpha	●	✓	●	●
	Etizolam + Nitrazepam (combination)	●	●	✓	●
	Phenazepam	●	●	✓	●
	Etizolam	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Clonazolam	●	✓	●	●
	Flunitrazolam	●	✓	●	●
	Diclazepam	●	✓	●	●
	Isopropylphenidate	●	✓	●	●
	7- [2-([1-(4-chloro-2,5-dimethoxyphenyl)propan-2-yl] amino)ethyl] -1,3-dimethyl-3,7 dihydro-1H-purine-2,6-dione	●	✓	●	●
	2-[3-(aminomethyl)-5-methyl-4H-1,2,4-triazol-4-yl]-5-chlorophenyl-(phenyl)methanone	●	✓	●	●
	(±)-Dimethyl-1-[1-(4-chlorophenyl)cyclobutyl]-N,N,3-trimethylbutan-1-amine	●	✓	●	●

Sources: Official communication with ONCB, May 2022; UNODC Early Warning Advisory on NPS.

Note: ✓ = Detected, ● = Not detected.