The
Philippine
Drug
Situation
Dominant Drugs in the Philippine Market

The availability of various types of dangerous drugs emboldens drug users to be involved in illegal drug activities. Thus, majority of the drug dependents in the country are considered to be poly-drug users for they use several types of illegal drugs.

Since the introduction of methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu in the country, it has been the primary drug of choice among abusers. In 2013, 83.97% of the arrests involved shabu. It is followed by marijuana or cannabis sativa and methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) or ecstasy.

Drug Trafficking Trends

Illegal drug trafficking is still the most pervasive drug activity in the Philippines. Drug traffickers never stop discovering new and various ways to hide their illegal transactions and activities.

In order to come up with effective operational plans, PDEA continuously monitors trends in the illegal drug trade. Several modus operandi observed in 2013 are the following: the use of milk boxes, Chinese tea bags, slippers and cellphone charger, and the use of mail and parcel courier.

Three incidents of confiscation of illegal drugs concealed in milk boxes/packaging were recorded in the country for year 2013. The first incident was on January 8, 2013, wherein 7.048 kilograms of shabu concealed in carton boxes labeled as “Gold Premium Milk” were seized at Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) from a Filipino drug courier. On October 24, 2013, 8.39 kilograms of cocaine placed in packaging of assorted brands of powdered milk products were seized at NAIA from a South African drug courier. Finally, 17.48 kilograms of shabu placed in powdered milk boxes were seized at Zamboanga International Airport from two Filipinos on November 8, 2013.

In addition, four operations in 2013 resulted in the seizure of illegal drugs contained in Chinese tea bags, three of which involved arrested Chinese drug personalities.

The use of mail and parcel courier to conceal and to transport illegal drugs continues to exist. Incidents of use of freight provider were recorded. Two operations resulted in the interception of shabu concealed in slippers shipped through freight provider at Zamboanga International Airport.

Another operation resulted in the confiscation of illegal drugs concealed in a cellphone charger shipped through the same courier, wherein payment was coursed through a money transfer firm. Investigation revealed that the suspects had been employing the same modus in transactions completed four to five times a week.
Inventory of shabu concealed in powder milk boxes seized at Zamboanga International Airport.
New Trends in Illegal Drug Activities

It is also alarming to discover a new course in illegal drug trafficking into the country. Drug syndicates continue to employ strategies to conveniently transport illegal drugs.

On June 9, 2013, a Benin national was arrested at NAIA Terminal 1 for attempting to smuggle illegal drugs into the country by swallowing 60 capsules containing a total of 448.8 grams of shabu. He was considered as the first drug swallower arrested in the country.

Furthermore, the year 2013 also recorded the first marijuana tiangge dismantled in the country. On October 24, 2013, a marijuana tiangge in Sagada, Mountain Province, Cordillera Administrative Region, the region where marijuana is rampantly grown, was dismantled.

On top of these activities, emergence of new forms of illegal drugs has been noticed in 2013. The first incident of seizure of ephedrine in tablet and capsule form was recorded. In a buy-bust operation conducted in Quezon City in November 19, 2013, 4,005 tablets of ephedrine weighing 608.80 grams were seized. On December 5, 2013, seven capsules of ephedrine were also seized from three drug personalities during a buy-bust operation in Mandaluyong City.

The Agency is also monitoring the mixing of shabu and ecstasy. This new form of ATS is popularly known as “fly-high,” a drug usually abused by party-goers.
Drug Syndicates in the Philippines

The role of drug syndicates in the proliferation of illegal drugs is immense and indispensable in illicit drug trafficking business. They are the foundation of the illegal trade. In the Philippines, international drug trafficking organizations are identified to have been operating in the country.

In addition to the African Drug Syndicates and Filipino-Chinese Drug Syndicates, a drug syndicate based in Sinaloa, Mexico, the Sinaloa Drug Cartel, was established to have been operating in the country. In 2013, various links between the said Mexican drug cartel and the Chinese Drug Syndicate were established on different occasions.

Undergoing x-ray is the Benin National who swallowed 60 capsules of shabu weighing 448.8 grams.

Arrested Nigerian national who concealed 2.9 kilos of shabu in his brown luggage.
Critical Areas in the Philippines

IDENTIFIED MARIJUANA PLANTATION SITES

LUZON
- Benguet
- Mt Province
- Kalinga
- Ifugao
- Ilocos Sur
- La Union
- Isabela
- Oriental Mindoro

VISAYAS
- Cebu
- Eastern Samar
- Southern Leyte

MINDANAO
- Misamis Oriental
- Bukidnon
- Davao Oriental
- Davao Del Norte
- Compostela Valley
- North & South Cotabato
- Sultan Kudarat
- Sarangani Province
- Sulu

Legend:
- Smuggling Incidents
- Clandestine Laboratories
- Marijuana Sites
MAJOR SMUGGLING INCIDENTS (2002 - 2013)

LUZON
NAIA Pasay (2010-2013)  – 107 kg shabu
Port Area, Manila (Oct 2004)  (Nov 2003)  – 69 kg shabu
Subic, Zambales (Jun 2008)  (Aug 2013)  – 745 kg shabu
Aurora Province (Dec 2009)  – 30 kg shabu
Nasugbu, Batangas (2007)  – 22 kg ketamine

Port Area, Manila (Oct 2004)  – 21 kg cocaine
Port Area, Manila (Nov 2003)  – 1 ton ephedrine
Subic, Zambales (Aug 2013)  – 432 kg shabu

VISAYAS
Cebu Port (Mar 2004)  – 1.5 tons pseudoephedrine
Coastline of Samar & Leyte (2009-2010)  – 508.24 kilos cocaine

MINDANAO
Davao City (Dec 2009)  – 15.5 kilos cocaine
Zamboanga (Nov 2013)  – 18.6 kilos shabu

SHABU LABORATORIES DISMANTLED (2002 - 2013)

LUZON
NCR  – 40
Region 4A  – 17
Region 3  – 16
Region 5  – 3
Region 1  – 1
Region 4B  – 1

VISAYAS
Region 7  – 2

MINDANAO
Region 9  – 1
Region 10  – 1
Region 11  – 2
Region 12  – 1
ARMM  – 1
Profile of Drug Personalities

In the attempt to avoid apprehension, perpetrators’ utilization of minors in illegal drug activities was continuously noted. For the year, 148 minors were rescued from their involvement in illegal drug activities, and were turned-over to the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Consistent with previous data, males dominate the arrested drug personalities at 86.60%.

The roll of drug personalities arrested is mainly composed of drug pushers at 60.18%.

Drug Price

Affected by the amount of supply and demand of the drugs, prices of illegal drugs vary depending on the quality of the drug and the area of transaction. At the national account, as of December 2013, shabu is valued at Php3,800 to Php10,000 per gram, marijuana at Php20 to Php300 per gram, cocaine at Php4,600 to Php7,000 per gram, and ecstasy at Php1,200 to Php2,500 per tablet.

National Capital Region has the lowest price of shabu at Php3,800 per gram. Cordillera Administrative Region, on the other hand, has the lowest price of marijuana at Php100 per bulk. Region 4B has the highest prices for both shabu and marijuana at Php10,000 per gram and Php500 per bulk, respectively.

A woman arrested for trying to slip illegal drugs into prison through her footwear.