

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



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SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

The safe and environmentally responsible handling, storage and disposal of seized chemicals used in illicit drug manufacture present unique challenges to law enforcement and regulatory authorities. UNODC supports the environmentally responsible disposal of chemicals used in illicit drug manufacture to protect and maintain clean, accessible water resources, reduce pollution, protect aquatic environments, reduce or prevent land degradation and protect local environments and their biodiversity, contributing thus to Target 12.4. In 2022, UNODC's technical assistance to Member States in Latin America led to the safe disposal of almost 100 tons of chemicals used in the clandestine manufacture of drugs.

The Office has also developed resources to support law enforcement and customs officers, including those in remote locations where waste management infrastructure and expert technical support may not be available. Examples of these resources are the [Illustrated guide for the Disposal of Chemicals used in the Illicit Manufacture of Drugs](#) to support the implementation of the [Guidelines for the Safe Disposal of Chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of Drugs](#) and the principles of environmentally responsible disposal for remote locations; the self-paced e-learning courses on the safe handling and disposal of chemicals in remote, developing and non-secure environments available at [UNODC Global E-Learning platform](#); and the [videos](#) that offer guidance to frontline officers on the proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE) to remain safe from the risk of exposure to synthetic drugs.

UN entities work closely together to address the different targets and indicators of the 2030 Agenda.

Target 12.4: By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment



Furthermore, illegal mining and trafficking in precious metals also threaten the attainment of SDG 12 as it causes a range of harmful impacts on the environment, habitats, human and animal life, indigenous communities and their livelihoods, public health, economies, development and the rule of law. Illegal miners often use environmentally dangerous equipment, devices and chemicals, not only putting their own health at risk but also causing severe environmental harm, usually in areas not under full control by the state. Illegal mining and trafficking in precious metals are often accompanied by serious human rights abuses and associated with other criminal activities such as trafficking in firearms and explosives, trafficking in persons and forced labour, as well as linked to economic crimes such as tax evasion, fraud, and corruption, by exploiting loopholes in regulatory frameworks as well as gaps and vulnerabilities in the supply chain and trade monitoring procedures.

In line with its mission to assist Member States in confronting the threats and challenges posed by crime, UNODC has developed a [legislative guide](#) to support Governments in adopting or improving national legislation related to the prevention, investigation and prosecution of illegal mining and trafficking in metals and minerals. Additionally, UNODC is developing a Diagnostic Toolkit to conduct rapid assessments of vulnerabilities along the gold supply chain. More information on UNODC's role and response to illegal mining and trafficking in metals can be found in the [Response Framework on Illegal Mining and the Illicit Trafficking in Precious Metals](#).

Another issue that affects the environment and jeopardizes the achievement of SDG 12.4 is the illegal trade in waste (or waste trafficking). Once it reaches destination countries, illegal waste often ends up in illegal landfills and storage sites or is burnt in the open, harming the environment and human health and undermining the achievement of the SDG 12 and the transition toward a circular economy. To fight waste trafficking between the European Union and Southeast Asia (the leading destination of legal and illegal waste), UNODC has launched the [Unwaste project](#) to understand waste flows better and promote cooperation and partnership between the EU and Southeast Asian countries.

Moreover, through [UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme \(CCP\)](#), the Office works with States to address the [illicit trafficking of plastic and hazardous waste](#) by offering specialized training to Port Control Units, selected customs, law enforcement officials and other relevant agencies and by encouraging and facilitating inter-agency cooperation.



The illicit trafficking of plastic and hazardous waste is an ever-growing threat that endangers the environment, health and economic development. Assisting Member States in building technical capacity and strengthening cooperation related to the trafficking of waste is fundamental to achieving the SDGs.

