The programme of work of the SAB is supported by the regular budget of the OPCW, voluntary contributions from States Parties and grants from the European Union.

To date, sixteen States Parties have provided voluntary contributions to support the work of the SAB.

To build the “right” Scientific Advisory Mechanism, the following considerations are of critical importance:

- Why is advice for?
- Why is this advice needed?
- How does advice go forward?

There is an estimated annual output of more than 2.5 million scientific publications and over 3 million patent applications. Predicting the impact of new science is, in effect, trying to predict the future to the international stage of science. It is clear what has actually published in scientific literature? For these reasons, monitoring science is no easy task. In response, the SAB approaches scientific and technological change as an opportunity to gain access to trends and methods that might help in recognizing when something is a ‘lightning rod’.

This approach has a basis in paragraph 8 of Article VIII of the Convention, which states “in undertaking to verify activities, the Organisation shall consider measures to make use of advances in science and technology”. For science, this could be the use of chemical indicators of the environment around an incident, and their biochemical basis, as a means to recognize unusual toxic chemical presence and exposure.

Advice can also move forward through the initiative of an individual State Party or a group of States Parties. This might involve taking advice forward outside of the SAB, and the OPCW; bids move forward requires both internal and external, and immediate and long-term opportunities in both formal and informal ways.

Recommendations leading support to, or informing aspects of on-going programmes of work at the OPCW might be adopted by initiatives within the organization.

Some recommendations require formal decision to be taken. For example, adding content to the database used for on-site chemical analysis, the OPCW Central Analytical Laboratory (OCA) database or other software for the OPCW’s Stockpile Management Program (SMP) database. The SAB has issued a standing recommendation to include relevant unclassified chemicals in OCA database in 2003, and it was not until confirmed use of mustard mustards as an incendiary weapon in 2017 and 2018 that the need for this advice became apparent. SAB must ensure a complete suite of chemicals which the majority of the chemical weapon organisms being unclassified. In 2017, the States Parties decided to include unclassified chemical weapons in OCA database (a significant science advice lesson, learning everything.

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