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29 July 2019  
ENGLISH only

**NOTE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE FOURTH EXERCISE  
ON THE ANALYSIS OF BIOTOXINS**

1. The Director-General wishes to inform Member States of the OPCW that the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) intends to conduct the fourth exercise on the analysis of samples of biologically derived toxins. The fourth exercise, focusing on ricin, abrin, and saxitoxin, is scheduled to begin in December 2019.
2. The purpose of the exercise is to build expertise in the analysis of samples of toxins, namely ricin and saxitoxin, listed in the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”), as well as additional toxins such as abrin that are also relevant in cases of alleged use of chemical weapons. The exercise is not intended to be a test of current laboratory proficiency, but rather a means for the various laboratories and the Secretariat to examine the specific requirements for toxin identification.
3. The exercise will involve a number of samples of biologically derived toxins that the participating laboratory will be requested to identify; if possible, the laboratories should also determine the approximate concentrations of the toxin(s).
4. Approximately one month prior to the dispatch of samples for the exercise, specific details of the reporting requirements and suggested analytical procedures will be distributed to all laboratories that are nominated. Laboratories are encouraged to use their own methods of analysis as well as those suggested by the Secretariat and, where possible, to compare the results in their reports. Unlike during OPCW proficiency tests, technical assistance will be available during the exercise, either by telephone or email.
5. The results of this exercise will not affect any laboratory currently designated or seeking designation by the OPCW. Participation in this exercise is voluntary and does not replace the requirement of “one OPCW proficiency test per calendar year” required to obtain or retain designated status.
6. Member States are invited to nominate for participation in this exercise laboratories that are interested in and/or have expertise in toxin sample analysis. The exercise is not limited to laboratories that have participated previously in official OPCW proficiency tests.



7. The fourth exercise will focus on the detection of ricin, abrin, and saxitoxin; the OPCW Laboratory will be preparing the samples. The schedule for this exercise is as follows:
  - (a) Samples are expected to be dispatched in early December 2019. The exercise is scheduled so as not to overlap with the official OPCW proficiency tests.
  - (b) States Parties should notify the OPCW Laboratory **by 22 November 2019** of the nomination of any laboratory wishing to take part in the exercise. The nomination form (attached in the annex hereto) should be sent via email attachment (**biotoxin@opcw.org**) and should include the name and address of the laboratory as well as the name, mailing address, and email address of the contact person at the laboratory. Nominations should also be endorsed by the National Authority of the Member State in which the laboratory is located.
  - (c) Laboratories are requested to submit analysis reports **by 21 February 2020**.
8. In November 2019, the OPCW Laboratory will provide each nominated laboratory with more details on the nature of the test, potential analytical methods, draft reporting formats, and draft evaluation criteria.

Annex: Nomination Form

**Annex****FOURTH EXERCISE ON THE ANALYSIS OF BIOTOXINS  
NOMINATION FORM**

Please submit the completed form **by 22 November 2019**  
to the OPCW Laboratory via email attachment to **biotoxin@opcw.org**

Laboratory name	
Nature of the laboratory's work in relation to the Chemical Weapons Convention	
Full laboratory address, including postcode	
Full sample delivery address, including postcode (if different from laboratory address above)	
Special requirements for sample delivery (e.g. customs requirements, preferred courier agency)	
Quality system management and accreditation body, if any	
Primary laboratory contact person's name, telephone number (including country and city codes), and email address	
Secondary laboratory contact person's name, telephone number (including country and city codes), and email address	
Printed name, signature, and affiliation of person nominating the laboratory	
Approval of the National Authority (signature, with official seal or stamp, of authorised representative)	