



S/2238/2024
15 January 2024
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NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

CALL FOR VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS
TO THE TRUST FUND FOR THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

1. In 2006, the Director-General established a trust fund (S/563/2006, dated 13 April 2006) “to support those activities of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) for which no funding is allocated in the Programme and Budget, such as the work of the SAB’s temporary working groups” (paragraph 1 of S/563/2006). The Third Review Conference¹ stressed that the SAB should continue its role in advising the Director-General (paragraph 9.32 of RC-3/3*, dated 19 April 2013) and encouraged States Parties to consider supporting the work of the SAB by making voluntary contributions to its trust fund (subparagraph 9.155(b) of RC-3/3*). Similar views were expressed in the process leading up to the Fourth Review Conference in 2018.
2. Since the inception of the SAB trust fund, 18 States Parties have made contributions to it, with four of those States Parties having contributed more than once. As of 31 December 2023, the available balance of the trust fund was EUR 136,103.41. There is no lower limit to making a contribution; past contributions have varied between EUR 2,000 and EUR 70,000 per contribution.
3. In 2024, the SAB will continue its efforts to provide the Director-General with advice on advancements in science and technology of relevance to the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention). With the Board’s scientific report in support of the Fifth Review Conference complete (RC-5/DG.1, dated 22 February 2023), the Board is now looking towards the future, identifying and recommending suitable topics for subsequent temporary working groups (TWGs) and themes for SAB-initiated workshops as it commences its considerations that will ultimately form the basis for the Board’s scientific report to the Sixth Review Conference. This work has already started with the newly established TWG on Chemical Forensics, whose mandate began on 1 January 2024.

¹ Review Conference = Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

4. The scientific review is an intensive multi-year activity, as demonstrated through the preparation of the SAB's report to the Fifth Review Conference (RC-5/DG.1), for which the Board held nine regular sessions,² produced substantive reports from one TWG,³ responded to one request for advice from the Director-General, and co-organised several international workshops. This review process, which ran from April 2018 to December 2022, included 21 meetings and produced 19 reports. With a combined attendance of 546 participants from 50 States Parties, the process brought together experts from across a broad range of scientific fields and technology sectors. Of particular importance in the review process were the insights gained from the findings of the TWGs and the reports of thematic workshops. The cost of an in-person TWG meeting is estimated at EUR 35,000, while thematic workshops held outside the OPCW can incur additional organisational costs (the actual costs will depend on factors such as the number of participants, whether meetings are clustered, and the cost of tickets).
5. In addition, voluntary contributions have supported the SAB's efforts to increase its engagement with States Parties through regular briefings, as well as the Science for Diplomats initiative.⁴ These efforts, which aim at promoting active scientist-policymaker dialogue to strengthen the Convention, are regularly occurring events that are also funded through extrabudgetary means. Voluntary funding has also enabled the SAB to engage with other relevant scientific advisory mechanisms to share experiences and best practices for the provision of technical advice to decision makers. With the opening of the OPCW's new Centre for Chemistry and Technology in May 2023, there will be even more opportunities for the SAB to contribute to the scientific activities of the OPCW.
6. In support of broader and more effective outreach to the global scientific community, SAB members have participated in the events of regional and international scientific societies. Voluntary funding has enabled the SAB to promote and raise awareness of the Convention, while also providing valuable insight into scientific advancements. Participation in such events augments meetings and workshops by keeping SAB members fully informed about scientific trends and their driving forces, and by maintaining strong ties to technical communities. Further information on activities of the SAB that have benefited from the availability of the trust fund are described in the review by the Technical Secretariat (the Secretariat) of the operation of the Convention since the Fourth Review Conference (WGRC-5/S/1 RC-5/S/1, dated 28 February 2023).
7. The Director-General attaches great importance to the work of the SAB in the implementation of the Convention, and hopes that States Parties will decide in favour of making contributions to the trust fund. The trust fund can also accept contributions from other sources, including non-governmental organisations, institutions, or private donors.

² All SAB session reports can be found at: <https://www.opcw.org/resources/documents/subsidiary-bodies/scientific-advisory-board>.

³ "Investigative Science and Technology: Report of the Scientific Advisory Board's Temporary Working Group" (SAB/REP/1/19, dated 1 December 2019). Available at: <https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/2020/11/TWG%20Investigative%20Science%20Final%20Report%20-%20January%202020%20%281%29.pdf>.

⁴ "Science for Diplomats" topics and presentations are available at: <https://www.opcw.org/resources/science-and-technology>.

8. The operation of the trust fund is subject to the guidelines and rules adopted for it (Annex to S/563/2006)⁵ and the applicable Financial Regulations and Rules, which include oversight by means of internal and external audits and the requirement that the Secretariat report to States Parties on the operation of the fund. Voluntary contributions to the trust fund are documented in writing; donors may use their own template document, or alternatively, the Secretariat can make available a model agreement or a model exchange of letters.
9. States Parties that wish to make a contribution to the trust fund are invited to contact the OPCW Secretary to the SAB by email (peter.hotchkiss@opcw.org) to discuss the practical arrangements. Interested States Parties may also contact the SAB Secretary for further information on activities related to science and technology.
10. Transfers can be made to the following account:

BENEFICIARY	:	OPCW TRUST FUND SCIENTIFIC BOARD
ACCOUNT NUMBER	:	60 30 65 961
BANK NAME	:	ABN-AMRO BANK, THE NETHERLANDS
IBAN NUMBER	:	NL75 ABNA 0603065961
BIC/SWIFT CODE	:	ABNANL2A
11. The Secretariat wishes to express in advance its gratitude to those States Parties that decide to make voluntary contributions to the trust fund.

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⁵ See, for example, subparagraph 4(a) of the Annex to S/563/2006, which states the following: “There shall be no upper or lower limit on the amount or amounts that can be contributed to the Trust Fund”. Subparagraph 4(b) states that “[n]o donor may place any restrictions on how the OPCW uses contributions to this fund”.