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ENGLISH only

### NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

#### INVITATION TO APPLY FOR AN ANALYTICAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT COURSE FOR AFRICAN MEMBER STATES, PROTECHNIK LABORATORIES, SOUTH AFRICA, 3 – 14 JUNE 2024

1. The Technical Secretariat of the OPCW (the Secretariat) wishes to inform Member States that it will hold an analytical chemistry course in 2024 under the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention. The course will be supported jointly by the Secretariat and Protechnik Laboratories (Pty) Ltd in South Africa, and will be held at Protechnik Laboratories.

#### **Purpose of the course**

2. The course is intended for chemistry professionals from industry, government, and academia who are involved in the analysis, synthesis, or quality control of chemicals related to the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention). The course will enable participants to gain a sound working knowledge of the principles, procedures, and applications of gas chromatography (GC) and gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) for the analysis of chemicals related to the Convention. The course will accommodate 20 international participants.

#### **Duration of the course**

3. The course will be held from 3 to 14 June 2024. Successful candidates should arrive one day before the course begins in order to register and complete pre-course formalities in a timely manner.

#### **Content**

4. The first part of the course will concentrate on teaching participants the basic principles of chromatography, particularly GC, with a basic introduction to GC principles. This will include hardware and variations of hardware, inlet possibilities, column dimensions and varieties, an introduction to the detectors that can be used, gas chromatograph maintenance, and practical demonstrations during which participants will be afforded hands-on training.
5. The second part of the course will focus on preparing environmental samples for analysis with GC and GC-MS. The basic principles of mass spectrometry will be introduced. Hands-on training will be provided in order to prepare participants to handle different sample matrices to conduct analyses using GC and GC-MS. Different detectors and ionisation modes (chemical and electron) will be used to analyse the

samples prepared by the participants. Extraction and derivatisation techniques will also be taught. The use of libraries, software, and identification techniques used to identify compounds related to the Convention will also be demonstrated. At least half of the course time will involve hands-on training.

### **Sponsorship**

6. The cost of the course and accommodation for all participants will be covered by the Secretariat. In addition, the Secretariat will cover the costs of travel, meals, and medical insurance, and provide a limited subsistence allowance to cover sundry expenses for all participants for the duration of the course.
7. When making travel arrangements for sponsored participants, the Secretariat will seek the most economical options. It will purchase tickets and send them to participants.
8. Participants are requested to obtain any necessary visas, including transit visas, before travelling to South Africa. The Secretariat will also send information to the selected participants on how to apply for South African visas.

### **Admission requirements**

9. It is important to reiterate that the analytical skills development courses offered by the OPCW are aimed at building the analytical skills specific to chemicals relevant to the Convention.
10. Participants should:
  - (a) hold a degree or diploma in chemistry or analytical chemistry from a recognised university or institution;
  - (b) have at least three years of work experience in analytical chemistry or in other relevant fields;
  - (c) have experience working with either GC or GC-MS techniques;
  - (d) be citizens of African States Parties; and
  - (e) have strong command of both written and spoken English.
11. In the selection process, priority will be given to the applicants who have successfully participated in the two-week online basic analytical chemistry course offered by the OPCW.
12. All course activities will be conducted in English, and no interpretation services will be provided.
13. Participants will be required to sign a set of terms and conditions for participation in the course, as well as a confidentiality agreement with the OPCW.

### **Selection procedure**

14. Applications will be carefully screened based on the criteria specified in paragraphs 10 to 12 above. Eligible candidates from laboratories that have sought or are receiving support for OPCW Proficiency Testing are especially encouraged to apply. In addition, applicants who have already participated in an in-person analytical chemistry course, analytical skills development course, or similar programmes will not be considered for selection.

### **Application procedure**

15. Applicants from laboratories in African Member States are invited to submit their applications through Eventus—the OPCW event management system (<https://eventus.opcw.org/>). Applicants must first create an account and then register for the course. Please note that all questions marked with an asterisk (\*) in the online form must be answered in order for a candidate to be considered for this event. All applications must be reviewed and endorsed electronically through Eventus by candidates' respective National Authorities, to be followed by final review and approval by the Secretariat. In the event that interested applicants have difficulties submitting their application online via Eventus, applicants are requested to send an email explaining the problem to [icb.events@opcw.org](mailto:icb.events@opcw.org) with a reference to the name and location of the event in the subject line of the message, no later than 7 May 2024.
16. Only nominations endorsed by the National Authority will be considered.
17. National Authorities are strongly encouraged to support and endorse applications from suitable female candidates.
18. All applications must be registered and endorsed via the Eventus system **no later than 9 May 2024**. Additional information may be obtained from the International Cooperation Branch of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division. The contact persons are Mr Taeon Kim, Programme Officer (Tel: +31 (0)70 416 3369; Email: [taeon.kim@opcw.org](mailto:taeon.kim@opcw.org)) and Ms Rufaro Kambarami, Project Assistant (Tel: +31 (0)70 416 3272; Email: [rufaro.kambarami@opcw.org](mailto:rufaro.kambarami@opcw.org)).