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NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT
COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECTS
UNDER THE OPCW FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Technical Secretariat of the OPCW (the Secretariat) wishes to inform States Parties of the launch of a new programme on collaborative research projects established under the framework of the OPCW Fellowship Programme¹ (the Joint Fellowships Programme). The current Note serves to provide the terms of reference and to invite potential donors, such as States Parties, institutions of States Parties, and intergovernmental organisations, to support the Joint Fellowships Programme.
2. With the opening of the Centre for Chemistry and Technology (the ChemTech Centre) in May 2023, the Secretariat has obtained additional capacity to sustain and expand its programmes under Article XI of the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention), especially those aimed at supporting research, including the exchange of scientific information. To strengthen the ChemTech Centre's capacity in training and research, the Joint Fellowships Programme will offer a mechanism to support technical cooperation and knowledge transfer through the mobility of researchers, such as visits by scientific personnel among institutions in States Parties, including to the ChemTech Centre, in the framework of long-term collaborative research.
3. The basis for the above-mentioned mobility will be collaborative research projects (the projects), to be established between the Secretariat and selected institutions from States Parties, known as co-host institutions, which will host scientists (Fellows) from States Parties other than those of the co-host institution. The Fellows will take part in specific project tasks of both the co-host institution and the ChemTech Centre (the co-host attachment and the ChemTech attachment, respectively). Joint Fellowships Programme conditions are tailored to accommodate participation in the projects by scientists with different mobility types, with special opportunities offered to candidates from States Parties with economies that are either developing or in transition.
4. The projects will focus on topics of direct relevance to the Convention, such as the implementation of the verification regime and the analysis of Convention-related chemicals, chemical safety and security, and topics related to the peaceful applications of chemistry. Thus, the Joint Fellowships Programme will contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge in such fields, as well as to strengthening the role

¹ Note by the Secretariat S/1279/2015*, dated 21 May 2015.



of the ChemTech Centre in relevant scientific research and education activities, to allow it to become a centre of excellence and a hub for knowledge and cooperation in relevant fields.

5. The Joint Fellowships Programme is an extrabudgetary initiative that requires financial support from donors in order to be efficient, productive, and sustainable.

INTRODUCTION

6. In its decision entitled “Components of an Agreed Framework for the Full Implementation of Article XI” (C-16/DEC.10, dated 1 December 2011), the Conference of the States Parties at its Sixteenth Session mandated the Secretariat, among other key measures, to implement national capacity building for the research, development, storage, production, and safe use of chemicals for purposes not prohibited under the Convention and to promote networking and exchange among scientific communities, academic institutions, chemical industry associations, non-governmental organisations, and regional and international institutions. The decision also refers to enhancing the effectiveness of current international cooperation programmes of the OPCW.
7. As part of this mandate, the Secretariat has been instrumental in developing capacities of States Parties through an extensive programme portfolio within the thematic area of chemical knowledge promotion and exchange of the International Cooperation Branch (ICB) of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division of the Secretariat. In particular, the following long-standing ICB programmes in this area have been instrumental in supporting scientific research in a complementary manner:
 - (a) the Programme for Support of Research Projects (grants to support small-scale research activities);² and
 - (b) the Fellowship Programme (mobility support for researchers and technical laboratory staff).³
8. The Joint Fellowships Programme was first announced in the Secretariat’s Note on “Anticipated New Programmes and Activities at the Centre for Chemistry and Technology” (S/2102/2022, dated 30 September 2022)⁴ as one of the nine potential new initiatives and activities to be implemented at the ChemTech Centre. The Joint

² Note by the Secretariat S/2047/2022, dated 14 April 2022. The Programme for Support of Research Projects supports small-scale individual research activities in institutions of the States Parties in a range of topics that fall within the letter and spirit of Article XI of the Convention while relating to the development goal(s) of the State Party concerned and aiming at sustainable development in general. The Programme for Support of Research Projects mainly covers the running costs of research, and does not offer support to collaborative research or knowledge transfer.

³ Note by the Secretariat S/1279/2015*. The Fellowship Programme complements the Programme for Support of Research Projects by providing mobility opportunities to scientists and engineers from States Parties with economies that are developing or in transition by supporting their work for fixed periods at research institutions in other States Parties. These activities provide valuable hands-on experience, strengthen cooperation between institutions, and promote scientific and technical exchanges on issues, such as analytical methods and validation techniques for toxic chemicals and the application of chemistry for peaceful purposes.

⁴ The Note referred to the coordinated research projects that serve to expand the Fellowship Programme.

Fellowships Programme benefits from the aforementioned Programme for Support of Research Projects and the Fellowship Programme, as it maintains some existing core principles and procedures while introducing additional elements to achieve its objectives.

9. In particular, the Joint Fellowships Programme offers additional benefits through a broader mobility scheme that is open to scientists with diverse profiles and experience levels, from young and mid-career professionals to group leaders, professors, or other established researchers with a substantive record of scientific work. At the same time, the Joint Fellowships Programme contributes to the objectives of institutions' research activities in fields relevant to the implementation of the Convention, while helping to establish a research and training capacity at the ChemTech Centre and to catalyse sustainable research partnerships for the Secretariat with institutions in States Parties in the future.
10. For researchers from States Parties with economies that are developing or in transition, especially for early and mid-career individuals (the joint fellowship scheme), the Joint Fellowships Programme will offer the advantage of extended on-the-job experience through combined visits to the ChemTech Centre and a co-host institution, career development, and networking. For established mid-career and senior level researchers (the senior fellowship scheme) visiting either a co-host institution or the ChemTech Centre, it will also contribute to the advancement of their individual research agendas in the given fields of research. To support knowledge transfer to the ChemTech Centre, short-term visits by senior scientists from the co-host institutions to the ChemTech Centre (visiting scientist scheme) are also foreseen under the Joint Fellowships Programme.
11. The projects, jointly implemented by the Secretariat staff at the ChemTech Centre, co-host institutions' staff, and the Fellows, will not only generate knowledge and innovation, but will also provide mobility benefits and lay the foundations for scientific collaborations between the Secretariat and institutions. Being medium-to-long term (two years or longer), they will also help to strengthen the arrangements at the ChemTech Centre for conducting experimental research in specific areas, including building skills and competencies of the Secretariat staff directly involved in the research tasks and supervision of Fellows.
12. Thus, the Joint Fellowships Programme aims to seize the potential of the ChemTech Centre in research and capacity building and to help it gain international recognition as a centre of excellence.

SCOPE OF THE JOINT FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAMME

13. Projects under the scope of the Joint Fellowships Programme are expected to commence within the next two years (2024–2025), depending on numerous factors, such as the scale and scope of proposed activities, the capacity of the ChemTech Centre, and the resources available to the Secretariat. The projects will be agreed between the Secretariat and the co-host institutions either in keeping with the direct arrangements or following the candidate co-host institutions' submission of an expression of interest and their consequent evaluation and selection (shortlisting) by the Secretariat, as explained below.

14. A phased approach to the Joint Fellowships Programme roll-out will include an initial pilot phase in 2024, when the Secretariat will establish a limited number of projects based on the current priorities and the planned or ongoing research activities at the ChemTech Centre for which funding has already been secured. Both existing and future possible research priorities being undertaken by the OPCW Laboratory are set out in Notes S/2034/2022 (dated 1 March 2022) and S/2102/2022. The Secretariat will engage directly with the potential co-host institutions to explore both current and foreseen projects in such areas, as well as in other areas of relevance to the Convention, and will inform States Parties once potential projects have been identified, with a view to opening fellowship positions for applications.
15. Following the Joint Fellowships Programme's proof of concept and subject to the availability of funds and capacity of the ChemTech Centre, in the second phase the Secretariat may further expand the number of projects. In such an event, depending on the conditions of any extrabudgetary funding already secured, the Secretariat may either publish an open call for project proposals by prospective co-host institutions or will continue to identify project proposals itself in line with research priorities. If an open call is published, the Secretariat will inform States Parties for the purpose of inviting proposals from research institutions or intergovernmental organisations, setting out specific rules and terms of reference of the application process, thematic scope, and other requirements in line with current priorities and donor requirements.
16. The Secretariat will also consider retaining proposals of relevant thematic scope, identified through the call, on a roster of proposals pending available funding. Proposals from the roster may then be shared with the potential funding entities.
17. The projects will be formalised through the institutional agreements between the Secretariat and co-host institutions. Once the agreements are in place, the calls for joint and senior fellowship positions will be published by the Secretariat, and the Fellows will be selected as described in the eligibility and selection criteria listed below.
18. The Secretariat will enter into individual agreements with the selected Fellows regarding their mobility and the scope of research in line with the projects previously formalised. The institutional agreements will ensure that the resources are available and that all arrangements are in place for hosting research tasks assigned to the Fellows on both sites.
19. In addition to the visits by Fellows, the co-host institution may nominate for the Secretariat's consideration senior scientists, who are assigned leading roles in the local implementation of projects, to spend short periods, normally up to three months, at the ChemTech Centre for the purpose of coordination of research activities of the Fellows. Such nominations will be arranged on an ad hoc basis, based on the plans and current needs of specific projects and the availability of resources. The coordination of research activities by the senior scientists will be carried out in consultation with the Head of the OPCW Laboratory.

20. The following categories of activities are covered under the Joint Fellowships Programme:
- (a) joint Fellows visiting the ChemTech Centre (ChemTech attachment): visits by the selected researchers not exceeding 12 months, as part of the joint mobility plan, either prior to or after their attachment at the co-host institution;
 - (b) joint Fellows visiting the co-host institution (co-host attachment): visits by the selected researchers not exceeding 12 months, as part of their combined mobility plan, either prior to or after their ChemTech attachment;
 - (c) senior Fellows visiting the ChemTech Centre: visits by the selected researchers of up to four months (extendable to nine months). Senior Fellows will be able to cooperate with and enjoy the support of other scientists working on the projects while also providing guidance to junior joint Fellows where appropriate, under the guidance of the Head of the OPCW Laboratory;
 - (d) senior scientists from the co-host institution visiting the ChemTech Centre (invited scientists): visits of up to one month with the purpose to mentor, guide, and collaborate with joint and senior Fellows on the implementation of their tasks at the ChemTech Centre;
 - (e) infrastructure support: the Joint Fellowships Programme funds will provide support to the Fellows' and invited scientists' activities at the ChemTech Centre by covering the costs related to the acquisition of consumables, reference chemicals, analytical and sample preparation equipment, small repairs, or spare parts; and
 - (f) co-host institution in-house activities: assigned research tasks at the co-host institution will be carried out by both the co-host institution's scientists and joint Fellows during their co-host attachment under the overall guidance and supervision of the co-host institution.
21. All mentioned activities that take place at the ChemTech Centre will be carried out under the authority and supervision of the Head of the OPCW Laboratory and their designated representative. The timing of visits and specifics of research to be conducted at the ChemTech Centre and related practical and logistic arrangements will be duly forecast and approved by the OPCW Laboratory.
22. Co-host institutions will be expected to share knowledge and expertise relating to the projects with the Fellows, the OPCW Laboratory, and other divisions of the Secretariat involved in the Joint Fellowships Programme in order to maintain cooperation and ensure a smooth implementation of the projects and other Joint Fellowships Programme-related activities.

FUNDING

23. The Joint Fellowships Programme expenditures will be covered completely from extrabudgetary funds. States Parties are invited to provide resources for the Joint Fellowships Programme, using an appropriate trust fund. Donors will also be able to provide donations for specific projects after they have been selected for funding, and are invited to engage directly with the Secretariat for more information.

24. The extent, duration, and modalities of funding will be decided by the Secretariat on an individual basis for specific projects, in consultation with the donors (in the case of earmarked contributions) and the co-host institution. All project costs shall be duly forecast and budgeted in the project document that will form part of an agreement between the co-host institution and the Secretariat for each project. The breakdown of funding per specific fellowship and other activities will be part thereof.
25. Funding will be provided to cover the mobility of Fellows and invited scientists from the home country to the ChemTech Centre and co-host institution in line with the general terms of reference of the Fellowship Programme and will be further specified in the dedicated Notes calling for fellowship applications. For invited scientists, the modality of funding will be in the form of an ad hoc subsistence allowance, where possible in line with the forecasts of specific project budgets.
26. Additional expenditures related to the acquisition of equipment, chemicals and other consumables, maintenance, and infrastructure intended for the research activities under the Joint Fellowships Programme at the ChemTech Centre will be covered by the Joint Fellowships Programme budget. The laboratory running costs relating to Fellows' research activities at the co-host institution can also be covered by the Joint Fellowships Programme budget as per specific project agreements and subject to the availability of resources.
27. Upon their return to the co-host institution, the invited scientists will no longer receive any subsistence allowance under the Joint Fellowships Programme but are expected to continue contributing to the ongoing projects from their end, including supervising the joint Fellows. It is expected that the co-host institution will be covering an important part of its engagement in the project in kind, while also considering raising additional funding and resources for renewing and sustaining successful projects.
28. Limited financial support for co-host institutions can be provided by the Joint Fellowships Programme to cover laboratory costs associated with their other research tasks (other than Fellows' co-host attachment-related tasks) in the case of co-host institutions from States Parties with economies that are developing or in transition. Such support will be subject to the availability of resources.
29. Funding for approved activities of co-host institutions will be provided in the form of grants. The agreement between co-host institutions and the Secretariat should explicitly refer to the grants and contain the provisions regulating the applicability of their use, reporting, and other aspects in line with the established procedures and legal framework of the OPCW Programme for Support of Research Projects.

ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA

30. The Fellows will be selected by the Secretariat. While the major principles and criteria for selection of Fellows will reflect those established in the OPCW Fellowship Programme, the Joint Fellowships Programme makes a distinction between joint—as a rule early or mid-career scientists—and senior Fellows, which is not only based on age and qualifications but also on different types of mobility, as described in paragraphs 10 and 20 above. With the detailed conditions to be specified in the dedicated calls for applications and unless otherwise specified therein, the key criteria for eligibility are listed below.

31. Joint Fellows are required to:
 - (a) be a national of a State Party to the Convention;
 - (b) be employed in a State Party with an economy that is either developing or in transition;
 - (c) have an MSc degree in the field of research (a PhD in the field of research may be required for specific projects);
 - (d) be within 10 years of obtaining a PhD; and
 - (e) have at least three years of relevant research experience.
32. Senior fellows are required to:
 - (a) be a national of a State Party to the Convention;
 - (b) be an established researcher employed in an institution of the State Party, with preference given to States Parties with an economy that is either developing or in transition;
 - (c) have a PhD in the subject field of research; and
 - (d) have at least 10 years of relevant doctoral research experience.
33. For all types of Fellows and researchers benefitting from OPCW support, to achieve fair gender distribution the Secretariat will strongly encourage female candidates to apply; similarly, co-host institutions will be requested to engage female scientists in the respective project-related activities.
34. Individuals from States Parties that meet the eligibility criteria will be invited to submit applications for participation in the Joint Fellowships Programme as joint or senior Fellows using the application form to be distributed under dedicated Secretariat Notes. Invitations to apply for specific projects will be circulated as Secretariat Notes, which will include details on the application procedure, administrative modalities, and conditions for fellowship implementation.
35. Further information on the Joint Fellowships Programme may be obtained from the International Cooperation and Assistance Division, OPCW, Johan de Wittlaan 32, 2517 JR The Hague, the Netherlands (Fax: + 31 (0)70 306 3535; Email: icb.events@opcw.org).