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23 February 2026

ENGLISH and SPANISH only

NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR AN INTEGRATED ADVANCED COURSE AND
EXERCISE FOR STATES PARTIES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
(IN SPANISH)
SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA
18 – 25 AUGUST 2026**

1. The Technical Secretariat of the OPCW (the Secretariat) wishes to invite States Parties in the Latin American and Caribbean Group to nominate representatives to participate in an integrated advanced course and exercise related to assistance and protection under Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention), which will begin with an online course on the essentials of responding to incidents involving chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals.
2. The integrated advanced course and exercise will be jointly organised by the Government of Costa Rica in collaboration with the Secretariat. It will provide training for up to 20 sponsored participants in the essentials of assistance and protection, with a focus on responding to incidents involving chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals.
3. The training course will be divided into the following segments:
 - (a) an online essentials course, from 1 May to 30 June 2026;
 - (b) a hands-on advanced integrated course and exercise, from 18 to 25 August 2026, in San José, Costa Rica; and
 - (c) a one-day follow-up webinar in late 2026 (December – dates to be determined).
4. The online essentials course will provide basic theoretical knowledge about the OPCW, the Convention, chemical warfare agents, toxic industrial chemicals, the physico-chemical properties of chemicals, personal protective equipment (PPE), decontamination, detection, identification, and monitoring, the Emergency Response Guidebook, the CAMEO Chemicals database, and the Incident Command System. Through these aspects, the online course will prepare participants for the next training segment. The Secretariat may select up to 25 participants to participate in the online course, but only 20 participants will ultimately be selected to continue with the hands-on course.



5. The hands-on advanced integrated course and exercise will consist of a combination of theory-based lectures, equipment demonstrations, and practical training sessions and exercises. It will also explore a variety of complex scenarios in combination with the final exercise, which will serve as an opportunity to practise and confirm the knowledge and skills acquired during the entire course.
6. Given the objectives of the advanced integrated course, candidates should have a background in the field of chemical emergency response. The target audience is mainly personnel from front-line chemical emergency response units within civilian or military official institutions.
7. Applications must be submitted online via Eventus, the OPCW event management system (<https://eventus.opcw.org>) **no later than 20 March 2026**. Candidates must attach their curriculum vitae and a copy of their valid passport.
8. Endorsement by a candidate's respective National Authority is a prerequisite for being considered in the selection process. The endorsement process must be completed online through Eventus **no later than 23 March 2026**. The Secretariat strongly encourages States Parties and National Authorities to seek, support, and endorse applications from qualified women candidates.
9. Participants should be physically fit and able to wear PPE during the practical sessions under hot, humid, tiring, and stressful conditions. A medical certificate may be required to attend the hands-on training segment.
10. Participants should take the necessary steps to ensure their participation in the training by obtaining the required clearances from the relevant authorities based on the invitation letter issued by the Secretariat.
11. The Secretariat expects to be able to sponsor a maximum of 20 participants for the hands-on training. For sponsored participants, the Secretariat will cover the costs of travel, accommodation, airport transfers, medical insurance, and meals (lunch), and will provide a limited subsistence allowance to cover sundry expenses.
12. The Secretariat will seek the most economical options when making travel arrangements for sponsored participants. Participants are expected to arrive in Costa Rica for the hands-on training no earlier than 17 August 2026 and to depart no later than 26 August 2026. The Secretariat will not cover expenses unrelated to the courses or resulting from unauthorised travel arrangement changes. Once the Secretariat has purchased their tickets, sponsored participants will be responsible for ensuring that they participate in the courses. In case of any unforeseen circumstances, participants should immediately contact the substantive officers responsible for the courses.
13. The integrated advanced course and exercise will be conducted in Spanish. No interpretation services will be provided during the training. Qualified applicants from all States Parties in the Latin American and Caribbean Group that speak Spanish are welcome to apply.
14. Participants are requested to obtain all necessary visas (including transit visas) before traveling to Costa Rica. Further details regarding logistics and the final programmes will be issued to participants at a later stage.

15. The provisional programmes for the integrated advanced course and exercise are included as the annexes to this Note. Any questions may be addressed to the focal points for this training in the Assistance and Protection Branch of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division of the Secretariat: Mr Miguel Albaladejo Pomares (Tel.: +31 (0)70 416 3451; Email: miguel.albaladejopomares@opcw.org) and Ms Aureliarita Marcellus (Tel.: +31 (0)70 416 3483; Email: aureliarita.marcellus@opcw.org).

Annexes:

Annex 1: Online Essentials Course, 1 May – 30 June 2026 – Provisional Programme

Annex 2: Hands-on Advanced Integrated Course and Exercise on Response to Incidents Involving Chemical Warfare Agents and Toxic Industrial Chemicals, San José, Costa Rica, 18 – 25 August 2026 – Provisional Programme

Annex 1

ONLINE ESSENTIALS COURSE 1 MAY – 30 JUNE 2026

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

Chapter 1: The Chemical Weapons Convention

- 1.1. Historical review
- 1.2. The Convention
- 1.3. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)
- 1.4. Article X of the Convention

Chapter 2: Technical aspects for responding to emergencies involving toxic chemicals

- 2.1. Physical and chemical properties of substances
- 2.2. Toxicological values applied to the management of emergencies involving chemicals
- 2.3. Dispersion of contaminants in the environment after an event involving chemicals
- 2.4. Safety distances and planning zones

Chapter 3: Introduction to chemical agents

- 3.1. Chemical weapons
- 3.2. Chemical warfare agents
- 3.3. Exposure to chemical warfare agents
- 3.4. Toxic industrial chemicals

Chapter 4: Introduction to personal protective equipment

- 4.1. Chemical protection suits
- 4.2. Respiratory protection
- 4.3. OPCW protection levels

Chapter 5: Introduction to decontamination

- 5.1. Decontamination overview
- 5.2. Decontamination stations and corridors
- 5.3. Decontamination processes
- 5.4. Decontamination systems

Chapter 6: Introduction to detection and identification

- 6.1. Recognition
- 6.2. Detection
- 6.3. Identification

Chapter 7: The Emergency Response Guidebook

- 7.1. Introduction
- 7.2. The yellow section
- 7.3. The blue section
- 7.4. Operational guides (the orange section)
- 7.5. The green section

Chapter 8: The CAMEO Chemicals database

- 8.1. Overview
- 8.2. Searching for chemicals
- 8.3. Searching for chemicals by name
- 8.4. Searching for chemicals by United Nations number
- 8.5. Chemical reactivity

Chapter 9: The Incident Command System (ICS)

- 9.1. History of the ICS
- 9.2. ICS definitions
- 9.3. Structure and functions
- 9.4. Steps to be followed by the first responder with operational capacity
- 9.5. How can the population be protected during a chemical emergency?

Annex 2

**HANDS-ON ADVANCED INTEGRATED COURSE AND EXERCISE ON
RESPONSE TO INCIDENTS INVOLVING CHEMICAL WARFARE AGENTS AND
TOXIC INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS
SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA
18 – 25 AUGUST 2026**

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

<i>Monday, 17 August 2026</i>	
	Arrival of participants
<i>Tuesday, 18 August 2026 – ESSENTIALS OVERVIEW</i>	
09:00 – 10:00	Welcome
10:00 – 10:15	Group photo
10:15 – 10:30	<i>Break</i>
10:30 – 11:00	Presentation: The Chemical Weapons Convention, the OPCW, and Article X of the Convention
11:00 – 11:30	Stakeholder presentation by the National Authority of Costa Rica
11:30 – 12:30	Presentation: Chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30 – 14:30	Presentation: Physico-chemical properties and their application in incident management
14:30 – 14:45	<i>Break</i>
14:45 – 16:45	Practical session: Physico-chemical properties and their application in incident management
16:45 – 17:00	Daily wrap-up
<i>Wednesday, 19 August 2026 – PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT</i>	
09:00 – 10:00	Presentation: PPE – Respiratory protection (review)
10:00 – 10:30	<i>Break</i>
10:30 – 11:30	Presentation: PPE – Chemical suits (review)
11:30 – 12:30	Presentation: Equipment delivery and familiarisation (practice)
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30 – 14:30	Practical session: PPE (rotation of 3 groups)
14:30 – 15:30	Practical session: PPE (rotation of 3 groups)
15:30 – 16:30	Practical session: PPE (rotation of 3 groups)
16:30 – 16:45	<i>Break</i>
16:45 – 17:00	Daily wrap-up
<i>Thursday, 20 August 2026 – DECONTAMINATION</i>	
09:00 – 10:00	Presentation: Decontamination principles (review)
10:00 – 11:00	Presentation: Decontamination methodology, techniques, and procedures (review)
11:00 – 11:30	<i>Break</i>
11:30 – 12:30	Presentation: Familiarisation with decontamination equipment (practice)
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30 – 15:00	Practical session: Dry/wet decontamination for operators (rotation of 2 groups)
15:00 – 16:30	Practical session: Victim/mass decontamination (rotation of 2 groups)
16:30 – 16:45	<i>Break</i>
16:45 – 17:00	Daily wrap-up

Friday, 21 August 2026 – DETECTION AND SAMPLING	
09:00 – 10:00	Presentation: Detection and identification (review)
10:00 – 11:00	Presentation: Introduction to sampling
11:00 – 11:30	<i>Break</i>
11:30 – 12:30	Presentation: Detection and identification (practice)
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30 – 14:30	Practical session: Sampling (rotation of 3 groups)
14:30 – 15:30	Practical session: Sampling (rotation of 3 groups)
15:30 – 16:30	Practical session: Sampling (rotation of 3 groups)
16:30 – 16:45	<i>Break</i>
16:45 – 17:00	Daily wrap-up
Saturday, 22 August 2026 – INCIDENT COMMAND AND EXERCISES	
09:00 – 10:00	Presentation: Incident command (review)
10:00 – 11:00	Presentation: The Emergency Response Guide (ERG) (review)
11:00 – 11:30	<i>Break</i>
11:30 – 12:30	Practical session: The ERG
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30 – 13:45	Pre-session briefing
13:45 – 15:00	Practical session: Exercise scenario 1 – (rotation of 2 groups)
15:00 – 15:15	<i>Break</i>
15:15 – 16:45	Practical session: Exercise scenario 2 – (rotation of 2 groups)
16:45 – 17:00	Daily wrap-up
Sunday, 23 August 2026 – Rest and free day	
Monday, 24 August 2026 – INCIDENT COMMAND AND EXERCISES (cont.)	
09:00 – 10:00	Presentation: Initial care of victims on the ground
10:00 – 10:15	<i>Break</i>
10:15 – 10:30	Pre-session briefing
10:30 – 11:30	Practical session: Rescue operations in contaminated environments with PPE (rotation of 2 groups)
11:30 – 12:30	Practical session: Rescue operations in contaminated environments with PPE (rotation of 2 groups)
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30 – 13:45	Pre-session briefing
13:45 – 16:00	Practical session: Exercise scenarios 3 and 4 (rotation of 2 groups)
16:00 – 16:15	<i>Break</i>
16:15 – 16:30	Daily wrap-up
Tuesday, 25 August 2026 – EXERCISE	
09:00 – 10:00	Pre-session briefing
10:00 – 12:00	Practical session: Complex exercise scenario 5
12:00 – 12:15	<i>Break</i>
12:15 – 12:30	End of course briefing
12:30 – 13:00	Closing ceremony
13:00 – 14:00	<i>Lunch</i>
Wednesday, 26 August 2026	
	Departure of participants