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4 October 2017  
ENGLISH only

**NOTE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL****CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR AN EXERCISE  
ON ANALYSIS OF PROTEIN BIOTOXINS**

1. The Director-General wishes to inform Member States that the OPCW Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) intends to conduct a series of exercises on the analysis of samples of biologically derived toxins. The second exercise, focussing on ricin and abrin, is scheduled to begin in December 2017.
2. The purpose of the exercises is to build expertise in the analysis of samples of toxins listed in the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”), namely ricin and saxitoxin, as well as additional toxins, such as abrin, that are also relevant in cases of alleged use of chemical weapons. The exercises are 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 exercises will consist of a number of samples for which the participating laboratory will be requested to identify and, if possible, determine the approximate concentration of a specified biologically derived toxin.
4. Approximately one month prior to sample dispatch for an 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 and, where possible, to compare the results in their reports. Unlike the OPCW Proficiency Tests, technical assistance will be available during the exercise, either by telephone or e-mail.
5. The results of this exercise will not affect any laboratory currently designated or seeking designation by the OPCW. Participation in these exercises is voluntary and does not replace the requirement of “one OPCW proficiency test per calendar year” needed to obtain or retain designation.
6. Member States are invited to nominate laboratories with interest and/or expertise in the analysis of toxin samples to participate in this exercise. The exercise is not limited to laboratories that have participated previously in the official OPCW Proficiency Tests.



7. The second exercise will focus on the detection of ricin and abrin. The exercise schedule is as follows:
  - (a) Dispatch of the samples is expected in early December 2017. The exercise is scheduled so as not to overlap with the official OPCW Proficiency Tests.
  - (b) The OPCW Laboratory will be preparing the samples for this exercise.
  - (c) States Parties should notify the OPCW Laboratory via email at [biotoxin@opcw.org](mailto:biotoxin@opcw.org) by 17 November 2017 of the nomination of any laboratory to take part. The notification should include the name and address of the laboratory as well as the name, mailing address, and email address of the laboratory contact person. Nominations should be endorsed by the National Authority.
  - (d) Laboratories are requested to submit analysis reports by 29 January 2018.
8. In November 2017, 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**

**SECOND EXERCISE ON RICIN ANALYSIS**

**NOMINATION FORM**

Please submit the completed form **by 17 November 2017**  
to the OPCW Laboratory via email at [biotoxin@opcw.org](mailto:biotoxin@opcw.org)

**Please type or use BLOCK LETTERS**

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