

**NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT****LABORATORY TWINNING AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME****Purpose**

1. The Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) of the OPCW wishes to inform Member States of the terms of reference for its Laboratory Twinning and Assistance Programme (hereinafter, the “Programme”). These terms of reference are designed to integrate and subsequently replace the former Laboratory Assistance Programme and the Laboratory Twinning Initiative, referred to in the respective Notes by the Technical Secretariat S/328/2002 (dated 19 December 2002) and S/1397/2016 (dated 14 July 2016). The core principles and types of activities of both former programmes remain valid and are combined under the new single programme description, in light of their similarities and how they complement one another. The new programme also introduces some additional principles and actions designed to enable broader participation and better assist its beneficiary laboratories.
2. The Programme is aimed at improving the technical competence of laboratories in Member States with economies that are either developing or in transition, that intend to improve their performance in the OPCW Proficiency Tests in order to achieve OPCW designated status, or to otherwise demonstrate excellence in the analysis of chemicals in relation to the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter the “Convention”). The Programme is being proposed by the International Cooperation and Assistance Division (ICA) within the framework of Article XI implementation and is based on the need to strengthen the national capacities of Member States in the analysis and monitoring of Convention-related chemicals.

Introduction

3. 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 (hereinafter “the Conference”) at its Sixteenth Session mandated the Secretariat to support analytical laboratories in gaining OPCW designation. In particular, it stated that training programmes could be used “to lay the basis for further development of the designated laboratory system by improving the analytical capabilities of laboratories in those parts of the world that do not currently possess a designated laboratory” (sub-subparagraph 2(a)(iv) of C-16/DEC.10).



4. The Secretariat has been instrumental in supporting the capacities of Member States in analytical chemistry through a number of ICA programmes aimed at enhancing laboratory capabilities. These programmes include:
 - (a) Analytical skills development courses (training for analytical chemists); and
 - (b) the Equipment Exchange Programme (facilitation of donations and transfers of equipment).
5. A number of laboratories and institutions working in analytical chemistry in Member States have also been benefitting from other ICA capacity-building programmes addressing the promotion and exchange of chemical knowledge, namely:
 - (a) the Research Projects Support Programme (grants to support small-scale research activities); and
 - (b) the Fellowship Programme (mobility support for researchers and technical laboratory staff).

Scope of the Programme

6. In view of Conference decision C-16/DEC.10 and the increasing demand from Member States to support national laboratories aspiring to achieve OPCW designated status, especially in the regions where there are no designated laboratories present or there is a general lack of such capacity, the Programme is aimed at enhancing the capacity of aspiring laboratories by providing targeted support and facilitating partnerships with other, more advanced laboratories in different Member States that possess, or formerly possessed, OPCW designated status and wish to share their experience and offer support.
7. The aforementioned partnerships will follow the “twinning” scheme, whereby more experienced laboratories (hereinafter “Assisting Laboratories”) will mentor, with the support and coordination of the Secretariat, less experienced laboratories aspiring to achieve excellence in the analysis of Convention-related chemicals (hereinafter “Assisted Laboratories”). Alternatively, Assisted Laboratories can receive targeted support from the Secretariat to pursue this objective on their own in consultation with the Secretariat.
8. Assisted laboratories should be located in Member States with economies that are either developing or in transition, and they must possess sufficiently advanced technical status to enable them to become competitive in OPCW proficiency testing in the near future.
9. The activities proposed under the Programme will be carried out within the framework of assistance plans, which will be prepared for each Assisted Laboratory, or for a pair of laboratories if they are twinned. Such assistance plans may include activities supported by the Secretariat under the existing capacity-building programmes (see paragraphs 4 and 5 above), and could also include additional activities proposed by the Secretariat that are covered under the Programme on an ad hoc basis.
10. Additional ad hoc activities could include the following:
 - (a) Technical evaluation visits: visits of up to three days by a small group of experts, including OPCW representatives, to the Assisted Laboratory. In the case of a twinning scheme between laboratories, the group will include experts from the Assisting Laboratory. The visits are aimed at assessing or reassessing capacity and identifying the needs and gaps of the Assisted Laboratory and will be normally

implemented at the onset of the assistance plan, and again as a follow-up exercise to monitor progress if required;

- (b) Mentorship visits: visits of up to one week by an expert or small group of experts to the Assisted Laboratory. In the case of a twinning scheme between laboratories, experts will come from the Assisting Laboratory. The purpose of the visits would be to mentor the managerial and technical staff of the Assisted Laboratory on the implementation of specific analytical protocols and procedures, the use and maintenance of equipment, quality control, etc. The visits may include theoretical lectures, training, and consultations related to the participation in OPCW proficiency testing; and
 - (c) Infrastructure support: the Secretariat can decide to support the participation of Assisted Laboratories in OPCW testing (Proficiency Testing, The Convention Chemical Analysis Competence Test (CCAAT), the Exercise on the Analysis of Biotoxins, or other testing and exercising opportunities) by covering the costs related to the acquisition of consumables, reference chemicals, analytical and sample preparation equipment, small repairs, or spare parts.
11. Assisting Laboratories are expected to share knowledge and expertise with Assisted Laboratories, and to provide any other assistance useful for participation in OPCW testing schemes and analysis of Convention-related chemicals. Limited support to Assisting Laboratories can be provided by the Secretariat to cover regular personnel and laboratory costs related to technical evaluation, training, and mentorship activities.

Funding

12. The extent, duration, and modalities of funding will be decided by the Secretariat on an individual basis for specific assistance plans. Funding may be provided either exclusively by the OPCW or jointly by the OPCW and another donor or funding organisation. Only expenditures intended to directly benefit Assisted Laboratories for the purpose of the Programme will receive OPCW funding.

Eligibility

13. Laboratories in Member States that either require assistance or are willing to offer assistance are eligible to be considered for the Programme. Such laboratories must meet the necessary requirements, as outlined below. The requirements will be further assessed following the submission of the respective expressions of interest.
14. Eligible Assisted Laboratories are those that:
- (a) have sufficient infrastructure and resources in terms of personnel and equipment to competitively perform in OPCW testing schemes;
 - (b) have their major focus in fields of the same type of chemical analysis techniques as those normally employed in the analysis of Convention-related chemicals;
 - (c) are likely to have experience in the analysis of Convention-related chemicals or have participated in OPCW tests and exercises; and
 - (d) are strongly committed to becoming competitive in OPCW proficiency testing.

15. Eligible Assisting Laboratories are those which:
- (a) are OPCW designated laboratories or have held OPCW designated status for a prolonged period of time in the past;
 - (b) have the necessary infrastructure and human resources at their disposal and agree to offer these resources and share knowledge with Assisted Laboratories on the analysis of Convention-related chemicals and participation in OPCW Proficiency Testing; and
 - (c) are firmly committed and motivated to engage in a medium- to long-term partnership in the Programme framework.

Submission and evaluation of expressions of interest

16. Laboratories that intend to participate in the Programme are requested to submit their expressions of interest using the form attached to this Note as an annex. Expressions of interest may be submitted at any time. Laboratories are requested to forward the forms either to their Member State's National Authority or Permanent Representation to the OPCW. The National Authority or Permanent Representation should endorse the form and forward it via email to the International Cooperation and Assistance Division, International Cooperation Branch, at icb.events@opcw.org.
17. The Secretariat will evaluate the expressions of interest submitted by the laboratories based on their technical merit and other criteria as outlined in paragraphs 14 and 15 above. It will also propose potential pairings of twinned laboratories.

Drafting of assistance plans

18. After the evaluation of expressions of interest, the Secretariat will initiate consultations either directly with the projected Assisted Laboratory for an assistance plan, or with both Assisted and Assisting Laboratories for a twinning arrangement to establish assistance plans. The assistance plans (which are to include a plan of activities, timelines, and budget) will be drafted by the Secretariat.
19. The funding and implementation of assistance plans will be subject to the availability of resources and will follow the timelines, procedures, and financial rules established at the Secretariat.
20. Further information 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).

Annex 1: Expression of interest form

Annex 1**OPCW LABORATORY TWINNING AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME****EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM**

1. Expressions of interest are to be made using this form. Before completing the form, please read the guidelines presented in the cover Note to confirm your eligibility.
2. Expressions of interest may be made at any time.
3. Interested laboratories should complete Part I and Part II, if relevant, of this form and send it (both as a PDF document and Word attachment) either to the appropriate National Authority in their country or to their country's Permanent Representation to the OPCW, requesting that it complete Part III of this form.
4. The National Authority or Permanent Representation to the OPCW should then submit the completed form via email to the International Cooperation Branch, International Cooperation and Assistance Division, OPCW, Johan de Wittlaan 32, 2517 JR, The Hague, the Netherlands at icb.events@opcw.org.

PART I. INFORMATION ON THE LABORATORY**1. Status of laboratory**

1.1 Name of laboratory:

1.2 Postal address of laboratory

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Tel:..... Fax:..... Email:

1.3 Normal functions or mandate of the laboratory (what is its role?)

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1.4 Is the laboratory operated independently? Yes / No

If the laboratory is part of another establishment (e.g. government department, research centre, hospital, university, municipality, etc.), please specify.

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1.5 Source of financing of the laboratory: Government / private / other (please specify).

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1.6 For how many years has the laboratory been in operation?

2. Laboratory staff

(a)	Total number	
	(i) Part-time	
	(ii) Full-time	
(b)	Managerial level	
(c)	Professionals with university degrees	
(d)	Laboratory technicians	
(e)	Others	

3. Chemical analyses being undertaken

3.1 Purpose(s) for which analyses are conducted (e.g. toxicological, standards, defence, food, forensic, occupational health, industrial, hygiene, environmental, other)

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3.2 Types of samples (industrial and commercial products, food, water, environmental, workplace-related, other)

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3.3 Number of samples / cases per month:

3.4 In the table below, list the types of analytes in the substances analysed (substances may be chemical weapons or their precursors, toxic chemicals, hazardous wastes, discrete organic chemicals, pesticides, persistent organic pollutants, customs-related drugs and pharmaceuticals, organic solvents, toxic gases, natural toxins, food chemicals, etc.):

	Analyte (type or group)	Chemical substance	Techniques and equipment used
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			

4. Equipment (indicate equipment used with the name of the manufacturer and model)

4.1 List the major equipment available for use by the laboratory in the table below:

	Equipment	Manufacturer	Model
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			

4.2 Are there any formal relationships or agreements with equipment suppliers for maintenance and training? Yes / No

If "Yes", please provide details

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5. Research experience

Does the laboratory conduct research (e.g. method development and validation, preparation of reference materials with reference to national or international standards, etc.)? Yes / No

If yes, please describe (e.g. list recent publications on the subject)

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6. Quality assurance

6.1 Does the laboratory have a formal quality system? Yes / No

6.2 Does the laboratory have an internal quality assurance programme? Yes / No

6.3 Does the laboratory take part in an external quality assurance programme? Yes / No

If "Yes", please describe

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6.4 Does the laboratory take part in any type of inter-laboratory or inter-calibration activities? Yes / No

If “Yes”, please describe with results achieved

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7. Accreditation

Is the laboratory formally accredited? Yes / No

If “Yes”, by which body?

If “Yes”, describe the scope of accreditation and to which standard (e.g. ISO). If “No”, describe the type of activities for which accreditation is desired.

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8. OPCW designation

8.1 Does the laboratory possess, or has it possessed in the past, OPCW designated status? Yes / No

If “Yes”, please state when the laboratory acquired OPCW designated status and provide information on the performance in the recent OPCW Proficiency Tests.

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8.2 If the laboratory does not possess OPCW designated status, has it participated in OPCW tests and exercises? Yes / No

If “Yes”, please provide details about the marks the laboratory received in the recent tests.

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9. Hindrances and problems

Describe any problems or hindrances relating to technical competence that were experienced by the laboratory when participating in the OPCW tests and exercises.

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10. Name and contact details of the person completing the questionnaire:

Name:
Position:
Contact address:
Telephone number(s):
Fax:
Email:

PART II. TWINNING PROPOSAL

11. Proposal for twinning

11.1 Does the laboratory wish to benefit from a twinning scheme as an Assisted Laboratory: Yes / No

If “Yes”, please provide details (name or description of desired characteristics) regarding the proposed or possible laboratories, if any, that you would like to see act as an Assisting Laboratory under a possible assistance plan.

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11.2 Please specify if the laboratory wishes to provide support to Assisted Laboratories under a twinning scheme as an Assisting Laboratory: Yes / No

If “Yes”, please provide details (name or description of desired characteristics) of the proposed or potential laboratories, if applicable, that you would like to see benefit as an Assisted Laboratory under a possible assistance plan.

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