

**OPCW****Technical Secretariat**

S/2363/2025
3 February 2025
ENGLISH only

NOTE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR
THE SECOND TRIAL OPCW BIOTOXINS PROFICIENCY TEST**

1. The Director-General wishes to inform States Parties that the Technical Secretariat (the Secretariat) intends to conduct a Second Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test.
2. This Second Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test constitutes a follow-up to the First Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test and a series of seven exercises on the analysis of biotoxins, which were organised by the Secretariat between 2016 and 2024. These exercises and trial proficiency test were not intended to be a test of current laboratory proficiency, but rather a means for various laboratories and the Secretariat to examine the specific requirements for toxin identification.
3. The Secretariat has been encouraged by improvements in the expertise and performance of laboratories over the course of seven years of biotoxin analysis exercises, and by the outcomes of the First Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test on the low molecular weight biotoxin saxitoxin. Following the recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB-37/1, dated 1 September 2023) and its Temporary Working Group on the Analysis of Biotoxins (Annex 2 to SAB-37/1), the Secretariat now considers it appropriate to organise a second trial proficiency test to further explore the establishment of an official OPCW proficiency test for biotoxin analysis.
4. The Second Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test, which will focus on the high molecular weight toxin ricin, is tentatively scheduled for the second half of August 2025.
5. States Parties should notify the OPCW Laboratory by 1 July 2025 of the nomination of any laboratory wishing to take part in the Second Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test. The nomination form (annexed hereto) should be completed and sent via email attachment (biotoxin@opcw.org). Nominations should be endorsed by the National Authority of the State Party in which the laboratory is located. Participating laboratories are requested to arrange internal customs clearance procedures for the samples in order to prevent any unnecessary delays in the sample delivery process.
6. The Second Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test will be conducted in line with the quality management system documents based on International Organization for Standardization/International Electrotechnical Commission Standard ISO/IEC 17043. A set comprising one guideline and three working instructions will be shared with participants of the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Exercises on the Analysis of Biotoxins and with the participants of the First Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test in March 2025.



for feedback. These documents will include the reporting format and evaluation criteria. Final versions of the guidelines and working instructions will be shared with the participants of the Second Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test prior to the actual test.

7. Participants will be requested to submit analysis reports within 15 calendar days of receiving the samples.
8. Participation in the Second Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test or in the prospective proficiency test for biotoxin analysis is voluntary, and is neither related to nor replaces the requirements applicable to laboratories that wish to obtain or retain designated status for the analysis of authentic environmental or biomedical samples in accordance with, inter alia, decision EC-XX/DEC.3 (dated 28 June 2000), which stipulates the requirement for designated laboratories to demonstrate once per calendar year that they have maintained their capabilities in a proficiency test organised by the Secretariat, unless the additional guidelines in the Annex to decision C-20/DEC.4 (dated 2 December 2015) are applicable.
9. States Parties are invited to nominate laboratories that are interested in biotoxin sample analysis and/or have expertise in that field to participate in the Second Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test. Nominations are not limited to laboratories that have previously participated in the biotoxin analysis exercises, the First Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test, or in official OPCW proficiency tests.

Annex: Second Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test – Nomination Form

Annex**SECOND TRIAL OPCW BIOTOXINS PROFICIENCY TEST****NOMINATION FORM**

Please submit the completed form to the OPCW Laboratory **by 1 July 2025**
via email attachment to biotoxin@opcw.org

Name of laboratory	
Address of laboratory	
Nature of work related to the Chemical Weapons Convention	
Quality system management and accreditation body (if any)	
Full sample delivery address (if different from the laboratory address)	
Special requirements for sample delivery (e.g., customs requirements, preferred courier agency)	
Primary contact person's name, telephone number, and email address	
Second contact person's name, telephone number, and email address	
Name, signature, and affiliation of the person nominating the laboratory	
Approval of the National Authority (official seal and signature)	