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NOTE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

EVALUATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE FIRST TRIAL OPCW BIOTOXINS PROFICIENCY TEST

1. The Director-General wishes to inform States Parties of the results of the First Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test, which was conducted by the Technical Secretariat (the Secretariat) from August 2024 to March 2025.
2. This First Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test was focused on saxitoxin, a low molecular weight toxin, and followed a series of seven exercises, which were organised by the Secretariat between 2016 and 2022 and focused on the analysis of biotoxins.
3. This First Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test was intended to be the first step towards establishing an official proficiency test for biotoxin analysis. Participation in the First Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test was 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.
4. The test was conducted in line with, but not under, the quality management system documents based on International Organization for Standardization/International Electrotechnical Commission Standard ISO/IEC 17043. A set comprising one Guideline, three Working Instructions, and the reporting format was agreed upon with the participants and shared with the nominated laboratories prior to the test.
5. The Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) (Sweden) prepared the test samples at the OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology. The OPCW Laboratory, in collaboration with the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), evaluated the results of the First Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test.
6. Twenty-eight laboratories from 21 States Parties were nominated for participation in the test, including the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory and the assisting laboratory, FOI. One laboratory opted to take this test on a trial basis and, due to unforeseen circumstances, was unable to submit a report. Thus, the total number of regular participants for this test was 25.
7. The preliminary evaluation report was discussed at a meeting on 12 February 2025 held in a hybrid format online and at the OPCW Main Building, with Secretariat staff and test participants in attendance. The participants were given two weeks to comment on the results and to inform the Secretariat whether they accepted their performance evaluation.



8. In summary, the final results for the First Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test, including for the assisting laboratory, consisted of 23 A's, 1 B, 1 D, and 1 F, with detailed results as follows:
- (a) All but the trial participant submitted their analytical report within the test period.
 - (b) A total of 22 participants identified and reported all of the spiking chemicals with sufficient analytical data, resulting in the maximum performance rating of A.
 - (c) One participant identified and reported spiking chemicals in all but one spiked sample, resulting in a performance rating of B.
 - (d) One participant identified and reported fewer than half of the spiking chemicals, resulting in a performance rating of D.
 - (e) One participant failed the test, resulting in a performance rating of F.
 - (f) The trial participant did not submit a report.
 - (g) Four non-scoring chemicals were reported.
 - (h) Four false positive chemicals were reported.
 - (i) The sample preparation laboratory submitted its report and received the maximum performance rating of A.

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