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29 February 2024
ENGLISH only

NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR TWO COURSES ON THE ENHANCEMENT OF
LABORATORY SKILLS AT THE FINNISH INSTITUTE FOR VERIFICATION
OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (VERIFIN)
HELSINKI, FINLAND
16 – 27 SEPTEMBER 2024**

PURPOSE OF THE COURSES

1. The Technical Secretariat of the OPCW (the Secretariat) wishes to inform States Parties that in 2024 it will hold two courses on the enhancement of laboratory skills at the Finnish Institute for Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention (VERIFIN) in Helsinki, Finland. The courses are intended for qualified analytical chemists from States Parties with economies that are developing or in transition, and are aimed at:
 - (a) assisting them in acquiring further experience and practical knowledge;
 - (b) facilitating the analysis of chemicals related to national implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention);
 - (c) enhancing national capacities in these States Parties by offering training in analytical chemistry to personnel from industry, academic institutions, and government laboratories;
 - (d) facilitating the adoption of good laboratory practices; and
 - (e) broadening the pool of human resources from which National Authorities and the Secretariat can draw in the future.

COURSES

2. The courses, to be held from 16 to 27 September 2024 at VERIFIN, are as follows:
 - (a) a course on the enhancement of laboratory skills in chemical weapons-related laboratory quality management (CW-LQM); and
 - (b) a course on the enhancement of laboratory skills in chemical weapons-related quantitative mass spectrometry (CW-QMS).



Course on the enhancement of laboratory skills in chemical weapons-related laboratory quality management

3. The CW-LQM course will include study of the quality standard for testing laboratories—ISO/IEC 17025:2017 (General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories). This Standard of the International Organization for Standardization/International Electrotechnical Commission (ISO/IEC) will be examined through lectures, discussions, and practical exercises. The goal is for the participants to learn how to better implement the requirements of Standard ISO/IEC 17025:2017 in their laboratory quality management systems. Prior to the course, participants will be asked to provide information on the quality assurance system adopted in their laboratories.
4. This course will accommodate a maximum of six participants from States Parties with economies that are developing or in transition. The Secretariat will select the participants in consultation with VERIFIN.

Course on the enhancement of laboratory skills in chemical weapons-related quantitative mass spectrometry

5. The CW-QMS course is aimed at improving practical skills in the quantitative analysis of chemicals related to the Convention, through such techniques as liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS) and gas chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry (GC-MS/MS). For this reason, participants should have previous hands-on experience using LC, GC, and MS.
6. The course will consist of the following elements:
 - (a) sample preparation and the use of internal standards;
 - (b) method development, optimisation, and validation;
 - (c) quantitative/qualitative data processing and reporting;
 - (d) demonstrations of LC-MS/MS and GC-MS/MS techniques;
 - (e) hands-on exercises including environmental and biomedical samples; and
 - (f) quality assurance.
7. The course will accommodate a maximum of four participants from States Parties with economies that are developing or in transition. The Secretariat will select the participants in consultation with VERIFIN.

SPONSORSHIP

8. The cost of the courses themselves, as well as accommodation for sponsored participants, will be covered by the Secretariat. In addition, the Secretariat will pay for international travel, meals, and medical and travel insurance for sponsored participants.
9. The Secretariat will not pay for medical assistance. Therefore, participants should be fit for travel. All participants taking prescribed medication should arrive with supplies sufficient for the duration of the events. Only selected candidates will be notified by the Secretariat.

10. When making travel arrangements for sponsored participants, the Secretariat will seek the most economical options. It will purchase tickets and send them to the participants. The Secretariat will not cover expenses that are not related to the courses or that result from changes to travel arrangements that it has not authorised. Sponsored participants must bear all costs resulting from changes they make, including cancellations, once the Secretariat has purchased tickets.
11. Participants are responsible for obtaining any necessary visas (including transit visas) before travelling.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

12. It is important to reiterate that the analytical skills development courses offered by the OPCW are aimed at building the analytical capacities for chemicals relevant to the Convention.
13. States Parties and National Authorities are strongly encouraged to support and endorse the applications or nominations of suitable female candidates for the courses.
14. The courses are open to candidates who:
 - (a) have a minimum of a first degree (BSc or equivalent) in chemistry or analytical chemistry from a recognised university or institution, with relevant practical and theoretical experience in analytical chemistry, including:
 - (i) laboratory quality assurance systems (for the CW-LQM course); and
 - (ii) quantitative mass spectrometry (for the CW-QMS course);
 - (b) are citizens of States Parties with economies that are developing or in transition; and
 - (c) have been working in a chemical laboratory or research institution in their home country for at least five years.
15. The courses will be conducted in English. Candidates must therefore have a strong command of both written and spoken English. Any candidate who is found upon arrival not to meet this requirement may not be allowed to continue in the course.

SELECTION PROCEDURE

16. Applications will be carefully screened on the basis of the criteria specified in paragraphs 14 and 15 above. Only selected candidates will be notified by the Secretariat.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

17. Interested candidates are invited to submit their applications for the courses through Eventus, the OPCW event management platform (<https://apps.opcw.org/eventus>). Applicants must first create an account and then register for the courses (CW-LQM or CW-QMS). Each application must be endorsed digitally on the Eventus platform by the nominee's respective National Authority or Permanent Representation to the OPCW. Only nominations endorsed in this manner will be considered.

18. Application forms must be accompanied by the following:
- (a) a curriculum vitae;
 - (b) a photocopy of the personal identification pages of the candidate's passport;
 - (c) a one-page description of the candidate's practical experience; and
 - (d) a letter of recommendation from the supervisor of the candidate in his or her institution addressing the candidate's qualifications in line with paragraphs 14 and 15 above and attesting to the relevance of the course to the work of the institution.
19. Applications must be submitted via Eventus **no later than 8 April 2024**. Incomplete or incorrectly completed applications will not be considered. Additional information may be obtained from Mr Massimo de Rienzo, Senior Programme Officer (Email: massimo.derienzo@opcw.org) and Ms Rufaro Kambarami, Project Assistant (Email: rufaro.kambarami@opcw.org).

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