



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
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Federal Office for Civil Protection FOCP
SPIEZ LABORATORY

UNSGM Designated Laboratories

Workshop in Spiez, Switzerland

9 - 11 November 2015



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Outline

- Rationale for Initiative
- ‘Guidelines and Procedures’ (1989)
- Objectives of the Workshop Series
- Workshop Report: Findings and Next Steps



Motivation

- Vision of SPIEZ LABORATORY
- Long history of supporting the UN in field missions
- Active support for OPCW
- Member of 'Friends of the UNSGM'
- Active participation in Expert Roster Trainings
- Importance of UNSGM for biological investigations



Rationale

- The Guidelines to the United Nations Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons indicate that UN Member States may designate analytical laboratories for the analysis of samples in support of an investigation.
- Designated laboratories would be asked to analyze samples for the presence of chemical, biological or toxin agents and report their findings to the Secretary-General.
- Expert workshops should discuss the necessary steps to establish a functional laboratory network for investigations of alleged use of biological weapons conducted under the UNSGM.



'Guidelines and Procedures' (1989)

Analytical laboratories

- Para 37
 - *Any Member State may designate laboratories ...*
- Para 76
 - *... identification of CBT agents ...*
 - *... validation of the preliminary analyses ...*
 - *... elucidation of the nature of unknown CBT agents ...*
 - *... timely preparation and transmission of a report ...*
- Para 77
 - *... participate in interlaboratory calibration studies ...*
 - *... establish the validity and accuracy ...*
 - *... ensure the best expertise necessary ...*
- Para 78
 - *... may present methodologies ...*



'Guidelines and Procedures' (1989)

Interlaboratory calibration

- Para 86 d
 - ... carry out interlaboratory calibration ...
 - ... to evaluate the validity and accuracy ...
- Para 86 e
 - ... demonstrating competence ...
- Para 86 f
 - ... assessment of the competence ...
- Para 86 h
 - ... sole purpose of maximizing the effectiveness ...
 - ... should not be revealed ... to anyone but him.



Objectives of the Workshop Series

The workshop series in Spiez intends to establish a group of expert laboratories and policy experts to address the following:

- What is the task of designated laboratories when they are requested to support an investigation of alleged use of biological weapons conducted under the UNSGM?
- How can designated laboratories fulfill this task and what would be required?
- How can it be ensured that laboratory results meet international quality assurance criteria in order to gain full scientific and political acceptance?


The first workshop in Spiez brought together 52 participants from 15 countries, UNODA and the OPCW.



Workshop Report

UNSGM Designated Laboratories Workshop Report

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Civil Protection and Sport DDFS
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Also available online:
<http://www.labor-spiez.ch>



Workshop Report

Findings

Main findings identified:

- A few dozen laboratories have been designated by UN Member States, however little is known about their capabilities and capacities;
- The impact of advances in the life sciences remains to be seen – especially with regard to the question what ‘identification’ means in the context of a BW investigation;
- A dedicated peer-to-peer network of designated laboratories carrying out confidence-building exercises would enhance mutual trust in the validity, accuracy and traceability of reported results;
- Efforts heavily rely on resources and expertise of Member States and on the willingness of laboratories.



Workshop Report

Findings

Benefits for laboratories in a dedicated peer-to-peer network:

- Face-to-face meetings and platform for exchanging information;
- Gain experience in developing good analytical strategies, validating methods, developing and applying recommended operating procedures and performance criteria;
- Identification of sources of validated reference materials and data;
- Support for training, self-assessments, quality assurance and accreditation;
- Platform for the evaluation of new technologies and analytical methods.



Workshop Report

Way forward

Main suggestions identified:

- UNODA should inform designated laboratories about this workshop, and invite feedback;
- A capacity and gap analysis is needed, based on the information available to UNODA;
- Engage with WHO /OIE reference laboratories that are also designated to the UNSGM;
- Start soon with some simple practical steps towards the formation of a voluntary network of interested laboratories (basic round robin tests focusing on identification);
- Switzerland and Spiez Laboratory stand ready to provide a platform for further conversations and workshops.