



**International
Science Council**

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Science-Policy
Interface



Call for nominations of experts

**Providing scientific advice within the
Biological Weapons Convention**

Deadline: 14 July 2024

The Biological Weapons Convention ([BWC](#)) effectively prohibits the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons. It was signed in 1972 and came into force in 1975 and currently has 185 States Parties. The BWC lacks a structured mechanism for systematically reviewing relevant science and technology developments. The need for such a mechanism was recognized in the recent [Ninth BWC Review Conference](#) (December 2022) and negotiations to establish such a mechanism are currently ongoing.

The International Science Council (ISC) is [partnering](#) with the BWC Implementation Support Unit (ISU) to help strengthen the bridge between science and policy by bringing scientists and academics together with diplomats thus contributing to a stronger science-policy interface within the BWC.

The ISC invites nominations of authoritative experts specializing in science and technology advisory mechanisms relevant to the fields of disarmament and life sciences, verification and compliance of biological weapons related activities, and international cooperation and assistance under international conventions.

Opportunity overview

As the BWC approaches significant discussions in the second half of 2024, there is a recognition of the critical importance of providing scientific expertise for the policy and decision-making processes. This initiative therefore aims to create a collaborative platform where experts can provide inputs into the ongoing policy conversations within the Convention.

The Ninth Review Conference established a Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention which is now working to identify, examine and develop specific and effective measures, including possible legally-binding measures, and to make recommendations to strengthen and institutionalize the Convention. The topics to be addressed by the Working Group include international cooperation and assistance under [Article X](#) of the Convention, scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention, and compliance and verification. Discussions on each of these topics are being facilitated by Friends of the Chair from a diverse range of countries.

The process will entail the following tasks:

- Experts will interact online with the Friends of the Chair under the Working Group on the three topics mentioned above and will provide independent scientific advice which the Friends of the Chair may take into account.

- Experts, in collaboration with a communications consultant, will produce short videos highlighting key insights from their engagements with diplomats. These videos will be distributed in advance of the BWC meetings in Geneva in December 2024.
- Experts will also be invited to attend BWC meetings in Geneva in December 2024 and participate in a side event.

Topics to be discussed with the Friends of the Chair

Online briefings will be organized for the Friends of the Chair to identify specific needs for independent scientific inputs and advice pertaining to the topics being discussed within the BWC Working Group. They may include the following:

1. Science and Technology (S&T) advisory mechanisms:

- a. Identify and analyze best practices for creating effective and inclusive scientific advisory mechanisms particularly in the fields of disarmament and life sciences;
- b. Analyze the benefits of S&T mechanisms for low, middle and high income countries;
- c. Provide options for ensuring political independence in scientific bodies;
- d. Provide options for strengthening scientific advice to diplomats to support more evidence-informed negotiations.

2. Compliance and Verification (C&V):

- a. Identify and characterize potential verification measures for biological weapons related activities;
- b. Provide input on the definition of biological threats and peaceful uses of biology;
- c. Provide suggestions for engaging with stakeholders to improve compliance;
- d. Identify the latest S&T advances that might provide new tools and approaches to implement verification measures and ensure compliance.

3. International Cooperation and Assistance (ICA):

- a. Provide options for the development of a comprehensive framework under [Article X](#) of the BWC;
- b. Advise on the scientific assessment of ICA project proposals submitted to the Convention.

Funding & honorarium

This project is funded through a grant provided by the Geneva Science-Policy Interface. It is designed and implemented by the ISC and the BWC Implementation Support Unit.

Experts will be given an honorarium of 2,000 Euros for their work and will act in their personal expert capacity.

Expert profiles

We are looking for authoritative experts from the life sciences, artificial intelligence and the social sciences and humanities with:

- Extensive knowledge and experience in at least one of the following areas: science and technology advisory mechanisms relevant to the fields of disarmament and life sciences; Verification and compliance of biological weapons related activities; and international cooperation and assistance under international conventions;
- An in-depth understanding of issues related to disarmament, biosafety and biosecurity, responsible use of science, etc.;
- Experience in policy engagement and in providing scientific advice to policy-makers, preferably in an international diplomatic setting;
- (Desirable) An understanding of the BWC.

Other considerations for the selection of experts will include gender and geographical diversity.

Eligibility

The experts must be nominated by a [Member organization](#) of the ISC or a partner organization of the ISC (including the World Federation of Engineering Organizations, the InterAcademy Partnership, and the International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences). A letter of nomination will be requested in addition to a CV in the online application form.

Experts with appropriate credentials who are not affiliated with a Member organization of the ISC are invited to contact the ISC secretariat.

Important dates

- **Application deadline:** 14 July 2024
- **Notification of selection:** Week of the 12 August 2024
- **Engagement period:** All experts *must* be available on the following dates (Switzerland time):
 - 4 September (12:30 – 14:30)
 - 5 September (10:00 – 12:00)
 - 16 September (15:00 – 16:30)
 - 24 September (12:30 – 14:00)
 - 3 October (12:30 – 14:30)
 - 4 October (15:00 – 16:30)
 - 7 October (15:00 – 17:00)

Additionally, the following dates are important:

- 3 September, 13:00 – 14:30 (Switzerland time)
- Period of 6 – 17 September: for experts to develop answers and content for the Friends of the Chair.
- Period of 16 – 30 October: experts to be interviewed by communications consultant to prepare videos
- 2 – 3 December: in-person attendance at the BWC meeting in Geneva, Switzerland.

Application process

Please submit your application by filling out the [online form](#) by **14 July**.

Contact information

For any queries regarding this open call, please contact Anne-Sophie Stevance, Head of the Global Science Policy Unit, ISC Secretariat (anne-sophie.stevance@council.science).

We look forward to your contributions towards strengthening the science-policy bridge within the BWC, ensuring that our collective efforts lead to a safer and more secure world free of bioweapons.

Online application form

(sample form – please complete your application directly [online](#))

Nominator

Nominating organization:*

Nominating person:*

Email address of the person submitting the nomination:

Expert nominated

Information on the nominee:

1. First name
2. Last name
3. Title
4. Email
5. Phone number
6. Institution
7. Role/job title
8. Country of residence
9. Region of residence
10. Nationality/ies:
11. Gender: F, M, Non-binary
12. Career stage: Early career (0 - 9 years); Mid-career (10 years - 19 years); Advanced career (19 years - 29 years); 30 years plus
13. Primary scientific domain: Engineering and technology; Humanities; Life and medical sciences; Natural and formal sciences; Social and behavioural sciences;
14. Please describe your area(s) of scientific expertise using keywords:

15. Please select the area(s) of work of the BWC that correspond(s) the most to your expertise (multiple choice): Science & Technology advisory mechanism, International Cooperation and Assistance in Disarmament, Compliance & Verification in life sciences
16. In 1-2 paragraphs describe that expertise.
17. How many years of experience in policy engagement, science diplomacy or government science advice do you have?
18. In 1-2 paragraphs describe that experience.
19. Are you available on all dates of the engagement period (see call text)?
20. How many years of experience do you have working on topics directly relevant to the BWC?
21. In 1-2 paragraphs describe that experience.
22. Are you willing to be interviewed by our communications consultant for the preparation of video materials that will be disseminated to diplomats at the BWC and made available for open access? Y/N
23. In 1-2 paragraphs let us know why you would like to be part of this project.
24. Link to online professional webpage
25. Upload CV
26. Upload letter of nomination