Advancing BWC National Implementation in Africa, Latin America and South East Asia

An Offer of Assistance

Side Event
2020 Meeting of States Parties of the Biological Weapons Convention
22 November 2021
Agenda

• Project Introduction

• Legislative Assistance Options

• Examples of Possible National and Regional Project Activities

• Ways BWC States Parties Can Participate

• Q&A
CRDF Global and VERTIC Team

• **CRDF Global** is an independent nonprofit organization working on advancing security, health, and economic progress by mitigating threats and enhancing opportunities through science, innovation, and collaboration

• **VERTIC** is an NGO in the UK working on the verification, implementation of and compliance with international agreements and initiatives

• Both organizations work in cooperation with international and regional partners, including the BWC ISU/UNODA
Project Introduction

**Objective:** Advance National Implementation of the BWC

**Funding:** The U.S. Department of State

Cost-free assistance, including travel and logistical support, when necessary

**Timeline:** National and regional projects on legislative implementation:
- Countries to express interest in 2021-2022
- Project implementation in 2022-2024

**Priority Regions:** Latin America, Africa and South East Asia

**Types of support** available for interested states:
- Awareness raising
- Legislative analysis
- Legislative drafting
- Regional cooperation
Project Implementation

• Tailored assistance for each state in the framework of accepted/funded projects

• Projects include country-specific or regional assistance

• Collaboration with partners

• Pro-active coordination and non-duplication of activities

• Multi-lingual assistance

• Project management, travel and logistics assistance
Implementing the BWC Through Legislation

• Current challenges:
  – Low implementation levels across BWC States Parties
  – COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of legal frameworks to respond to biological incidents

• Priority: Drafting of specific legislation, regulations and related measures to implement the BWC

• Benefits of drafting legislation, regulations and related measures to implement the BWC:
  – Monitoring and supervising any activities with certain biological agents and toxins
  – Enhancing national security and public, animal and plant health and safety
  – Strong signal to potential investors
  – Investigation and prosecution of offences
  – Meeting national implementation and reporting commitments (e.g. compiling and submitting CBMs)
Available Assistance Options

1. Awareness Raising
2. Legislative Analysis
3. Legislative Drafting
4. Regional Cooperation
Assistance Option 1: Awareness Raising

- Raise awareness of state’s obligations under the BWC (and related ones under UNSCR 1540)
- Disseminate information using methods proven to be effective
- Conduct online, hybrid and in-person workshops engaging relevant stakeholders
- Time frame: 3-6 months from initiation to execution
National Assistance Project: Example 1

- State “A” joined the BWC 10 years ago
- State “A” has no BWC legislation due to competing political priorities
- CRDF Global-VERTIC team holds awareness-raising workshop with key stakeholders
- Outcome: State “A” better informed and in a position to assess next steps for implementation
- CRDF Global-VERTIC team provides ongoing support and information
Assistance Option 2: Legislative Analysis

- Conduct comprehensive country-specific BWC legislative and regulatory assessment using VERTIC’s time-tested survey containing 137 distinct measures
- Includes related provisions of other relevant international instruments
- Complete legislative gap analysis examining existing national legislation, regulations and related measures
- Summarize recommendations to improve national legal framework
- Time frame: 4-6 months from planning to execution
National Assistance Project: Example 2

- State “B” is unsure if it needs to draft a specific BWC law
- State “B” joined BWC 15 years ago; included offences in penal code and adopted transfer control legislation and regulations
- CRDF Global-VERTIC team leads legislative analysis in collaboration with national experts
- Outcome: State “B” has analysis highlighting gaps (e.g. biosafety and biosecurity measures) and recommendations for drafting
- Legislative drafting may follow as a next-step activity
Assistance Option 3: Legislative Drafting

- Review existing legislation, regulations and related measures
- Conduct legislative drafting workshops to draft implementing legislation and regulations
- Hold online, hybrid and in-person workshops engaging relevant stakeholders
- Aid with drafting explanatory notes to bills or other accompanying documents
- Time frame: 3-6 months from planning to execution
National Assistance Project: Example 3

- State “C” has expressed an interest in BWC legislative drafting assistance
- Draft *Biological Weapons Act* written in 2015; to undergo governmental review
- VERTIC provides initial review of bill, comments and feedback
- CRDF Global-VERTIC and State “C” organize drafting workshop to implement recommendations
- Outcome: State “C” has a draft bill ready for governmental review
- Ongoing support for draft bill through internal processes; writing of explanatory notes
Assistance Option 4: Regional Project

• Regional cooperation

• Focus on regional experience sharing on:
  – Approaches to drafting BWC legislation
  – Management of the legislative drafting process
  – Content of the legislative and regulatory provisions
Regional Project: Example

- States “X”, “Y” and “Z” all share a border
- State “Z” has recently passed a law to implement the BWC
- CRDF Global-VERTIC team holds a workshop in the region to discuss BWC legislation, assist in reaching a shared understanding of successes and gaps
- Small delegation of relevant stakeholders from each State attends the workshop
- States share awareness-raising activities and lessons learned
- Outcome: States are informed of status and experience of legislation and regulations in their countries and ready to discuss next steps for their national implementation
How to Participate in the Project

• States Parties that would like to be considered for participation in the project are encouraged to contact the CRDF Global-VERTIC team at nim@vertic.org

• The communication should include:
  – Contact information for the government official that would serve as the national lead for the project
  – Any information that may be available regarding the needs or priorities of the State Party, as a basis for further communication
THANK YOU
FOR YOUR TIME AND ATTENTION!

Any questions?
Please leave them in the chat box