



Inspectorate Division
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NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

THE TRIAL PHASE OF THE ON-CALL-INSPECTOR SCHEME

Introduction

1. In his opening statement to the Executive Council at its Thirty-Sixth Session (EC-36/DG.19, dated 23 March 2004), the Director-General announced the launch of a pilot scheme whereby inspectors would work on-call under a special-service agreement (SSA). The Director-General explained that the scheme would allow the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) to enlist former OPCW inspectors, on a part-time basis, to inspect chemical weapons destruction facilities (CWDFs) in their own countries.
2. The purpose of the scheme is to allow the Secretariat to carry out more inspections at CWDFs without increasing the number of fixed-term staff, thus controlling inspection costs.
3. The present Note reports on how the scheme has developed over the past year, and makes recommendations about how it might be continued in the future, in line with the aforementioned remarks by the Director-General to the Council at its Thirty-Sixth Session.

Overview of the scheme

4. The inspections the Secretariat conducts at CWDFs take up more resources than any other category of inspections, and those resources have been stretched significantly with the growth in the number of CWDFs. The Secretariat has addressed this problem in two ways: by working with States Parties to optimise verification activities at CWDFs and thus reduce the size of inspection teams, and by launching the on-call-inspector scheme.
5. Because deployments to CWDFs can take up to 45 days, the Secretariat was of the view that the on-call scheme would allow it to realise significant savings, in particular by avoiding the higher salary costs associated with fixed-term staff operating from OPCW headquarters.



Implementation of the scheme

6. The Secretariat developed a proposal for the on-call scheme and, after consultations, it was agreed that a one-year trial run of the scheme should be held, starting on 10 July 2004, as a cost-saving measure against the 2004 Programme and Budget.
7. The Secretariat appointed 10 inspectors under the scheme in 2004. Funding for these appointments was provided from within the total number of funded inspector posts, even though the on-call inspectors were contractors and no longer fixed-term staff members. In other words, the total number of inspectors employed remained unchanged.
8. The parameters of the scheme were spelled out in Information Circular OPCW-S/IC/76, dated 28 January 2004. Because all of the inspectors employed under the scheme had already worked for the OPCW on fixed-term contracts, they would require no further training before they could be deployed.
9. Inspectors working under the scheme separate from the OPCW, relocate to their home country, and then start service under the one-year SSA. The payment rate is based on the equivalent of a P-3, step-1, salary, without entitlements but at the dependency rate. One half of this amount is paid in 12 equal monthly instalments; the other, as a daily assignment fee. The fee is calculated by taking the other half of the amount and dividing it by 150. The daily fee is then multiplied by the number of days the inspection lasts, and the resulting amount is paid when the inspector has completed the mission. The Secretariat guarantees on-call inspectors a minimum of 100 days' work.
10. Inspectors working under the scheme are deployed only on systematic inspections at CWDFs.

Confidentiality

11. As provided for in the aforementioned circular, all inspectors working under the scheme sign, and are bound by, the same secrecy agreement that is mandatory for all fixed-term inspectors. During the trial period, no incident regarding confidentiality was reported.

Budgeting for the on-call-inspector scheme

12. Provision is made in the 2005 Programme and Budget for 10 on-call inspectors in the first half of the year, and for 15 in the second half—that is, for 5 more on-call inspectors, starting in July 2005. The amount budgeted for SSAs in 2005 was EUR 860,000, or EUR 68,800 per on-call inspector, based on an average of 12.5 SSAs for the year.

Actual deployments, costs, and savings

13. The table annexed hereto provides a summary of the deployments of on-call inspectors, and of the associated costs, as at 28 February 2005, along with a projection for the first year of the on-call scheme.

14. As can be seen from the Annex, the scheme is proving to be even more cost-effective than had been envisaged in the 2005 Programme and Budget: The average annual cost per on-call inspector (based on 156 days spent on mission) has actually turned out to be just EUR 61,000—that is, less than the EUR 68,800 envisaged in the 2005 Programme and Budget. The actual costs are also significantly lower than the EUR 100,000 for a P-3, step 1, inspector on a fixed-term contract who spends an estimated 130 days on mission. Moreover, on-call inspectors complete, on average, a higher number of inspector days than fixed-term inspectors, because they are deployed only on systematic inspections at CWDFs.
15. The savings it has realised through the scheme have allowed the Secretariat to log additional inspector days equivalent in number to what would be put in by 12.5 inspectors working on fixed-term contracts.

Issues that have arisen and lessons that have been learned during the trial phase of the on-call scheme

16. The trial phase of the scheme was implemented smoothly. Inspection teams that included on-call inspectors were received by Member States without difficulty. Moreover, the contributions the on-call inspectors made to the inspections themselves have been excellent.
17. In the light of the experience it has gained during the trial phase of the scheme, and in order to enhance the scheme's practical value, the Secretariat has made some minor changes to it. They include the following:
 - (a) The scheme has functioned as envisaged as regards the availability of inspectors. In the one case where an on-call inspector failed to report for duty, the contract was terminated. Another on-call inspector had to resign for personal reasons during the trial phase of the scheme. In each case the Secretariat was able to make a replacement appointment without difficulty.
 - (b) Experience has shown that on-call inspectors have in fact needed some refresher training before being deployed. This training is of three kinds:
 - (i) the mandatory safety-related training that is included, for example, in what is known as the "inspector refresher" module;
 - (ii) training on confidentiality policy and procedures; and
 - (iii) the training required to comply with regulatory restrictions that cover inspections carried out in the United States of America (the annual "Hazwoper" training course), which is provided by instructors from that State Party at OPCW headquarters.
 - (c) Planning for the deployment of on-call inspectors now takes these training needs into account.
 - (d) Because on-call inspectors are contractors and are thus not entitled to annual leave, they must be able to reserve some time for personal activities or other obligations. Thus, at the beginning of each contract period, the Secretariat

works with each on-call inspector to come up with a deployment plan for the year. At this stage—or later, if that is possible—the Secretariat makes every effort to accommodate the needs expressed by on-call inspectors for such reserved periods, subject to approval by the Inspectorate Division (INS).

18. At present, all Member States that have declared possession of chemical weapons have indicated their willingness to continue to receive on-call inspectors at their CWDFs, with the exception of one such Member State, which has indicated that it is willing to consider accepting this scheme at a later stage.

The way forward

19. The experience it has gained thus far with the scheme, along with the expectation that the inspection workload will continue to increase, indicates to the Secretariat that the scheme should continue. It will thus employ around 15 on-call inspectors. By doing so, the Secretariat will continue to shift a large part of the burden of carrying out systematic inspections at CWDFs to on-call inspectors, and will be able to rely on the scheme as a means to effect a smooth transition for some staff members who are affected by the OPCW policy on tenure.
20. At a time when the inspection workload is increasing, the scheme also allows the Secretariat to retain valuable expertise that it would otherwise lose, whether as a result of the tenure policy or because of natural attrition. At the same time, the scheme may serve as an incentive for some experienced inspectors to separate voluntarily from the OPCW to work under an SSA.
21. The current scheme could also be supplemented by another contractual arrangement of a similar nature to handle short-term peaks in the demand for inspections.

Summary

22. The current scheme has proved to be workable and cost-effective. Indeed, it is expected to save the OPCW approximately EUR 585,000—assuming that the Secretariat employs 15 on-call inspectors (see the Annex). The actual amount saved from May 2004 to February 2005, when an average of 10 on-call inspectors were employed under the scheme, was EUR 292,690.
23. As noted above, the scheme also allows the Secretariat to retain valuable expertise, if only temporarily, and facilitates the transfer of knowledge from more-experienced to newer inspectors.
24. Based on projections submitted by Member States that have declared possession of chemical weapons regarding operations at their CWDFs, the Secretariat is of the view that peaks in destruction activity will entail peaks in the inspection workload. Thus, continuing the on-call-inspector scheme seems both prudent and necessary. Depending on the actual requirements for additional inspectors, the number could be increased further and supplemented with a similar scheme based on shorter-term (as opposed to one-year) contracts, possibly covering just a single inspection, which could provide INS with additional flexibility in its efforts to meet the aforementioned peaks in demand.

25. The Secretariat trusts that Member States will see the scheme as a cost-effective means of carrying out an increased number of inspections, involving as it does the employment of on-call inspectors who already have significant experience conducting inspections at CWDFs; and it hopes that they will support its plan to continue with an expanded version of the scheme, as laid out in the 2006 Draft Programme and Budget. Without the scheme, the Secretariat would need to hire at least 15 additional full-time inspectors at an approximate additional cost of EUR 585,390, not including the costs associated with the recruitment and training of new inspectors.

Annex:

On-Call-Inspector Scheme: Summary of Activities and Costs

Annex

ON-CALL-INSPECTOR SCHEME: SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AND COSTS

	Total Number of SSA Rotations	Total Number of SSA Inspector Days	Average Number of Inspector Days per SSA	Total Cost¹	Average Cost per SSA	Average Cost per Fixed-Term Inspector	Savings per SSA	Total Savings
Data up to 28 February 2005, for an average of 10 inspectors over 9 months	25.5	1,171	117	457,308 ²	45,731	75,000	29,269	292,690 ³
Projected estimates for 15 inspectors over 1 year	51	2340	156	914,661	60,974	100,000	39,026	585,390 ⁴

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¹ All amounts given are in Euros.
² Based on the actual cost of employing 10 on-call inspectors over 9 months
³ Actual savings based on the period from May 2004 to February 2005 (equivalent to an average of 10 on-call inspectors employed for 9 months)
⁴ Projected savings over 1 year (based on the employment of 15 on-call inspectors)