

**NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT****ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF ANNUAL DECLARATIONS ON PAST ACTIVITIES
AS AT 31 MAY 2016****INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

1. The Declarations Handbook provides guidance for the preparation and submission of declarations by States Parties to the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”), including the submission of electronic declarations.¹ This helps improve both the quality of declaration data and the efficiency of processing such data in the Secretariat’s Verification Information System (VIS).
2. The electronic declarations tool for National Authorities (EDNA) was developed by the Secretariat and initially released in 2008 for use by States Parties for the preparation of Article VI declarations. The most current version (3.2.2) has been available since January 2016.
3. This Note presents an update on the overview of the status of submission of annual declarations on past activities (ADPA) in electronic format, information that was first provided in a Note by the Secretariat in 2009 (S/773/2009, dated 18 June 2009).

DECLARATIONS RECEIVED IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT

4. As at 31 May 2016, an ADPA for 2015 had been submitted by 95 States Parties, including 54 nil declarations. Of the 90 declarations that therefore are required to be processed, 58 declarations (64%) were submitted, fully or partially, in electronic format.² For the first time, the use of outdated Common Transmission File Structure (CTFS) format was eliminated this year and all 58 declarations were submitted in Extensible Mark-up Language (XML) format; 53 of these were prepared using EDNA. In total, 96% of plant sites and facilities were declared in electronic format.
5. As at 31 May 2016, 27 Schedule 1 facilities have been declared in ADPA for 2015, by 23 States Parties, out of which 14 declarations (61%) were submitted in electronic format, 12 of which were prepared using EDNA. Of the total 27 declared Schedule 1 facilities, 14 facilities (54%) were declared electronically.

¹ The Declarations Handbook 2013, Section A, paragraph 3.3.

² Only declarations that include electronic XML files are counted as electronic declarations.



PROCESSING ELECTRONIC DECLARATIONS

6. The Secretariat has worked with the States Parties concerned to resolve any technical problems that they have encountered when submitting electronic declarations. While some technical problems can be resolved by the Secretariat, continued successful implementation of electronic declarations also depends on States Parties closely following the relevant protocols and guidelines that have been issued by the Secretariat.³
7. Some States Parties that submit an electronic declaration also submit a hard copy declaration as the “authoritative” version. This requires that the Secretariat validate the consistency between both versions. As developments with electronic declarations continue, it is recommended that whenever possible, States Parties consider making their formal submissions in electronic format, thus removing the need for a hard copy.

SUMMARY AND PERSPECTIVE

8. The introduction and continual improvement of EDNA has led to an increase in the number of States Parties submitting declarations in electronic format and the overall percentage of data declared electronically. Looking at the ADPA for 2015, this trend has continued and can be summarised as follows:
 - (a) The number of States Parties submitting ADPA for 2015 in electronic format increased by six compared to ADPA 2014 submissions.⁴
 - (b) Five States Parties submitted their declarations in electronic format for the first time using EDNA.
 - (c) Compared to ADPA 2014 submissions, there was an increase by three in the number of States Parties submitting declarations of Schedule 1 facilities electronically.
9. The Secretariat welcomes the upward trend in submitting declarations electronically. For any questions regarding EDNA and electronic declarations, States Parties are advised to contact the Data Analytics, Reporting and Quality Control Section of the Declarations Branch via the dedicated email address vis@opcw.org.

- - - 0 - - -

³ Available on the OPCW external server (<https://external.opcw.org/>) under EDNA documents.

⁴ As at 31 May 2015, reported in S/1288/2015, dated 12 June 2015.