

**NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL-SECRETARIAT****THE CONTENT OF THE PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE DATABANK
AND ITS USE****Introduction**

1. Pursuant to paragraph 5 of Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”), the “Technical Secretariat shall establish, not later than 180 days after entry into force of this Convention and maintain, for the use of any requesting State Party, a databank containing freely available information concerning various means of protection against chemical weapons as well as such information as may be provided by States Parties”.
2. At its First Session, the Conference of the States Parties adopted a decision requesting the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) to establish and maintain a databank containing the above-mentioned information (C-I/DEC.53, dated 16 May 1997).
3. In December 2006, the Protection and Assistance Databank (PAD) was established at OPCW Headquarters, as required by paragraph 5 of Article X of the Convention; since 2007, it has been made available through the OPCW extranet for the use of National Authorities and Permanent Representatives to the OPCW.
4. The Third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention requested the Secretariat to review and keep up to date the OPCW databank on protection (subparagraph 9.118(h) of RC-3/3*, dated 19 April 2013).
5. A project to update the PAD was initiated in 2018 with two primary objectives: (i) to enhance learning and collaboration, and (ii) to increase organisational efficiency and agility in operation. A project team was assembled comprising members of the Assistance and Protection Branch and Information Services Branch, who have collaborated on the project.
6. In a Note circulated last year (EC-91/S/2, dated 24 June 2019), the Secretariat updated the Executive Council on the progress of the project to re-engineer the databank for improved functionality and usefulness, with the expectation of going online with the upgraded PAD in 2019. This Note serves as a final report on the upgrade project and a general introduction to the new PAD as an enhanced assistance and protection resource for States Parties.



Established role of the protection and assistance databank

7. The databank contains the annual submissions of information by States Parties under paragraph 4 of Article X of the Convention (provided such information is not classified), offers of assistance under paragraph 7 of Article X, lists of experts suggested by States Parties, and other freely available information on protection against chemical weapons.
8. All information available in the databank is non-confidential. Any experts put forth by States Parties in the context of an offer under subparagraph 7(c) of Article X are identifiable only by nationality and area of expertise; no other personally identifiable information is made available to users.

Roll-out of the new protection and assistance databank

9. The new PAD went online in November 2019 with a period of testing by a limited group of external users from States Parties. Feedback from those users was incorporated into the final development stage of the project, leading to the new PAD becoming functionally complete in January 2020. Existing data on contributions to the voluntary fund for assistance, as well as legacy offers of assistance under paragraph 7 of Article X, were migrated thereafter.
10. In note verbale no. NV/ICA/APB/222790/20, dated 2 March 2020, the Secretariat informed all States Parties that the PAD was online and could be used as a platform for annual submissions on national programmes for protective purposes as required under paragraph 4 of Article X of the Convention. Instructions on how to create an OPCW login platform account and establish authorised PAD users were attached to that note.
11. A number of States Parties have made use of the new PAD during the reporting period, either uploading completed documents to their national dashboard or availing themselves of the electronic form (Annex to C-9/DEC.10, dated 30 November 2004) within the PAD. Unclassified submissions received by traditional means were uploaded to the PAD on the States Parties' behalf.

Enhanced functionality of the new protection and assistance databank

12. The new PAD retains the categories and confidentiality provisions described in paragraphs 7 and 8 of this Note, but with an intuitive "National Dashboard" and the addition of functional elements to facilitate all data-driven interactions between States Parties and the Secretariat under Article X.
13. The "Capacity Building Inquiry" section allows States Parties to articulate specific assistance and protection capacity-building needs for the Secretariat's attention or otherwise request assistance from the Secretariat in developing national objectives as they pertain to Article X. Inquiries of this nature help to define the scope and composition of future capacity-building activities, ensuring that the efforts of the Secretariat are formulated on the basis of defined needs.

14. The “Paragraph 4 Submission” section provides a quick and simple upload option for States Parties’ annual submission of information on national programmes related to protective purposes. Users may opt to fill in the electronic form provided in C-9/DEC.10, attach scanned submission documents, or employ a combination of the two to meet their submission obligations for the reporting year. When using the new PAD functionality form, data from previous years can be brought forward to populate the current year’s form, allowing quick and easy electronic submission to the Secretariat following any required updates.
15. The “Paragraph 7 Offers” section, in a similar way to the above, provides electronic forms and upload functionality for States Parties’ offers of assistance to the OPCW under subparagraphs 7(b) and (c) of Article X. The status of the voluntary fund for assistance under subparagraph 7(a) is accessible through this section as well.
16. With regard to “freely available information concerning various means of protection against chemical weapons as well as such information as may be provided by States Parties” (paragraph 5 of Article X), States Parties now have the option of uploading such information in various file types via their dashboard, and may similarly access any information made available by other States Parties in that manner. Any documents or files of this nature that are sent to the Secretariat will be uploaded to the PAD on behalf of the submitting State Party.
17. While the new PAD has been designed for easy access and use by States Parties, the Secretariat remains at the disposal of any State Party requiring guidance or assistance with the new system.