



NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF ANNUAL DECLARATIONS
ON PAST ACTIVITIES AS AT 31 MAY 2021

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1. The Declarations Handbook provides guidance to States Parties for the preparation of declarations and for their submission to the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”), including the submission of electronic declarations.¹ This improves declaration information-gathering activities and the efficiency of processing such data within the Secretariat’s Verification Information System (VIS).
2. In February 2020, the Secretariat released the Electronic Declaration Information System (EDIS) v1.1 for the preparation of declarations under Article VI and Article III of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”). EDIS, a modern web application with various new features (including those requested by States Parties), is a replacement for the Electronic Declarations Tool for National Authorities (EDNA).
3. In September 2020, the Secretariat released EDIS v1.1.1 to allow for Schedule 1 chemicals newly added to the Annex on Chemicals to the Convention² to be included in any annual declaration on anticipated activities (ADAA) or any annual declaration on past activities (ADPA) prepared in EDIS. The next official EDIS release, with new and improved features, is scheduled for the third quarter of 2021.
4. This Note presents an updated overview of the status of the submission of ADPAs in electronic format. The previous report on this topic can be found in Note S/1882/2020 (dated 3 July 2020).

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

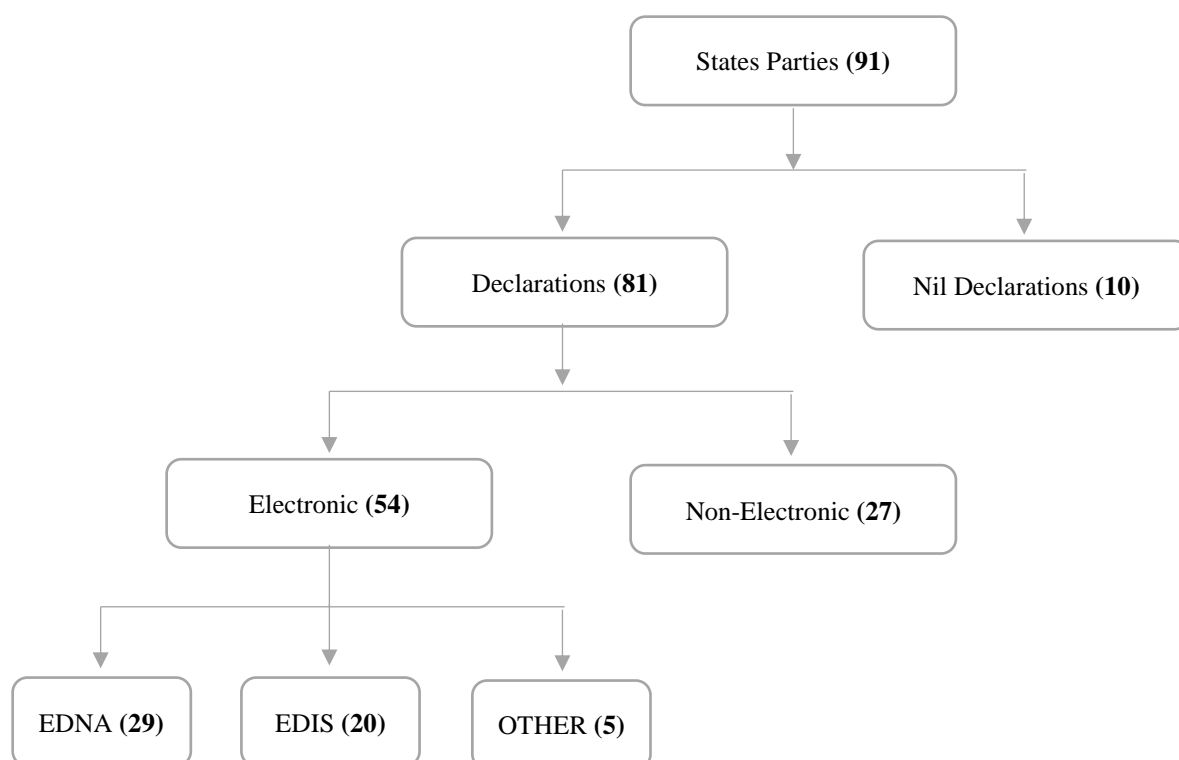
² As listed in Note by the Secretariat S/1820/2019 (dated 23 December 2019).



DECLARATIONS RECEIVED IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT

5. As at 31 May 2021, ADPAs for 2020 had been submitted by 91 States Parties, including 10 “nil declarations”.³ Of the 81 declarations that were required to be processed, 54 declarations (67%) were submitted, fully or partially, in electronic format.⁴ Twenty-nine of these were prepared using EDNA, and 20 using EDIS. In total, 95% of all declared plant sites and facilities were declared in electronic format. These details are further outlined in the figure below.

FIGURE: BREAKDOWN OF ADPA 2020 SUBMISSIONS BY MEANS OF TRANSMISSION TO THE SECRETARIAT



6. As at 31 May 2021, 29 Schedule 1 facilities had been declared in ADPA 2020 submitted by 24 States Parties. Of these 24 declarations, 22 contained information submitted partially or fully in electronic format. Of these 22 electronically submitted declarations, nine had been prepared using EDNA, nine using EDIS, and four using other software.
7. Of the 29 Schedule 1 facilities declared in ADPA 2020, 18 were declared electronically.

³ When States Parties voluntarily notify the Secretariat that they have no declarable activities, these submissions are referred to as “nil declarations”.

⁴ Only declarations that include electronic XML files are counted as electronic declarations.

PROCESSING ELECTRONIC DECLARATIONS

8. The Secretariat has worked with the States Parties concerned to resolve any technical problems that they encountered when submitting electronic declarations. While some technical problems can be resolved by the Secretariat, successful implementation of electronic declarations also depends on States Parties closely following the relevant protocols and guidelines that have been issued by the Secretariat.⁵
9. Some States Parties that submit electronic declarations also submit hard copies of those declarations, which they describe as the “authoritative” version. This requires the Secretariat to cross-check the data contained in the electronic version against the hard copy “authoritative” version. It is therefore recommended that, whenever possible, States Parties submit their formal declarations in electronic format, thus eliminating the need for a hard copy.

SUMMARY

10. The adoption and continuous improvement of EDIS, combined with support and training, has led to an increase in the number of States Parties submitting declarations in electronic format.
11. The Secretariat welcomes the increased use of electronic tools for the submission of declarations, and encourages those States Parties that have yet to use such tools to consider the benefits of adopting the new system, EDIS. These benefits include enhanced efficiencies for States Parties in the preparation of declarations, especially since industry representatives are now also able to use EDIS and to provide information to National Authorities electronically.
12. For any questions regarding EDIS or electronic declarations, States Parties are invited to contact the Declarations Branch of the Verification Division by email via its dedicated email address (edis@opcw.org).

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⁵ Available on the OPCW external server (<https://external.opcw.org/>) under EDIS documents.