

**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 (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 data bank 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 (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 the OPCW Headquarters, as required by paragraph 5 of Article X of the Convention. Since 2022, it has been made available through the OPCW Catalyst online hub<sup>1</sup> for the use of National Authorities of States Parties and Permanent Representations 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 databank on protection (subparagraph 9.118(h) of RC-3/3\*, dated 19 April 2013).
5. In Note EC-88/S/5 (dated 14 June 2018), the Secretariat informed the Executive Council of efforts that were under way to re-engineer the databank for improved functionality and user experience. The upgraded PAD interface was successfully tested in 2020, with the support of interested States Parties, and is now universally available through the Catalyst platform. The information contained in the legacy databank has been uploaded into the PAD.
6. On 8 May 2025, the Secretariat circulated Note Verbale NV/ICA/APB-761/25 to all States Parties requesting that, pursuant to paragraph 4 of Article X of the Convention, they make their annual submissions on their national programmes related to protective purposes. With regard to offers of assistance under paragraph 7 of Article X, States Parties are requested to review their submissions and update them if necessary; those States Parties that have not yet provided an offer of assistance are urged to do so.

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1See <https://catalyst.opcw.org/sites/pad>

**ENHANCEMENTS TO THE PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE DATABANK**

7. The Secretariat continuously works to improve the functionality and user experience of the PAD, and in 2024 it initiated enhancements to the platform. As part of this undertaking, new features have been introduced to the PAD with the aim of facilitating data handling and information sharing among the States Parties and to enhance the user experience.
8. One of the newly introduced features enables States Parties to submit freely available information on various means of protection against chemical weapons pursuant to paragraph 5 of Article X of the Convention. Such information may include, inter alia, information on training and research on protection against chemical weapons and toxic industrial chemicals, information on development and implementation of emergency response programmes, information on medical treatment of victims of chemical warfare agents, or any other freely available Article X-related information to be used by other States Parties to support their capacity-development efforts.
9. The information submitted by States Parties under paragraph 5 of Article X of the Convention will constitute a repository of information that is stored in the PAD and is accessible to all States Parties. Accordingly, the Secretariat does not make any warranties or representation as to the accuracy or completeness of freely available information submitted by States Parties through the PAD, nor does it accept any responsibility for the content or consequences of any action taken on the basis of this information.
10. For the purpose of maintaining up-to-date information on the offers of assistance made by States Parties under subparagraph 7(c) of Article X, a new feature has been added to allow for the archiving of offers that have expired and/or are no longer valid. The State Party wishing to terminate and archive its previous offer(s) should send a request to this effect to the Assistance and Protection Branch of the Secretariat. The offer will be archived and accordingly reflected in the PAD.
11. Other changes have also been implemented to improve the data submission process. Detailed information and instructions on how to use the PAD and its new features can be found in the updated version of the PAD user manual available through the Catalyst platform.

**CONTENT AND USE OF THE PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE DATABANK**

12. The PAD contains options for States Parties to provide:
  - (a) requests for capacity-building support;
  - (b) annual submissions of information on national programmes related to protective purposes pursuant to paragraph 4 of Article X (provided such information is not classified);
  - (c) freely available information concerning various means of protection against chemical weapons pursuant to paragraph 5 of Article X; and
  - (d) offers of assistance under paragraph 7 of Article X.

13. The Secretariat had previously circulated a user manual to all States Parties to provide them with a better understanding on how to use the platform and to make submissions. As indicated above, the manual has been updated to reflect the new enhancements and can be found under the tab “User Manual” on the PAD. The Secretariat remains available to assist any State Party in successfully connecting to and navigating through the various features of the PAD. In order to save considerable time in their handling, submissions should be made online through the platform. The PAD and the information contained therein is not classified, although it is still subject to the provisions of subparagraph 2(c) of the Confidentiality Annex to the Convention. Information submitted by a State Party is visible only to the respective State Party itself, with the exception of the freely available information submitted under paragraph 5 of Article X. For States Parties that deem it absolutely necessary, submissions under paragraph 4 of Article X containing classified information can be made using alternative means. In these cases, the PAD will be manually updated by the Secretariat to reflect that the national submission has been made for the year in question, indicating only whether that State Party has declared the existence of a national programme related to protective purposes.
14. It should be noted that the manual processing of classified submissions is cumbersome and time-consuming. Accordingly, States Parties are kindly requested, to the extent possible, to submit unclassified information using the PAD platform on Catalyst (<https://catalyst.opcw.org/sites/pad>).

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