

**NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT****STATUS REPORT ON THE VERIFICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM****Introduction**

1. The Verification Information System (VIS) is the information system that has been developed by the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) to manage all verification-related information and to support its verification activities.
2. The concept for the development of the VIS was presented by the Director-General in a Note to the Executive Council (hereinafter “the Council”) at its Fortieth Session (EC-40/S/2, dated 27 January 2005). Further Notes from the Director-General to the Council at its Forty-Second (EC-42/S/3, dated 2 September 2005), Fifty-First (EC-51/S/2, dated 20 November 2007), Fifty-Fifth (EC-55/S/3, dated 30 January 2009), Fifty-Ninth (EC-59/S/3, dated 1 February 2010), Sixty-Third (EC-63/S/4, dated 20 January 2011), Sixty-Seventh (EC-67/S/2, dated 25 January 2012), Seventy-First (EC-71/S/1, dated 16 January 2013), Seventy-Fifth (EC-75/S/4, dated 15 January 2014), and Seventy-Eighth (EC-78/S/1, dated 7 January 2015) Sessions provided updates on the status of the development of the VIS.

Status of the Verification Information System

3. As the key business-enabling technology platform supporting verification activities, the VIS is continually being improved to streamline and support verification business processes and to increase the Secretariat’s analytical capabilities.
4. In 2015, the Secretariat continued to improve the VIS, with a particular focus on implementing changes to further enhance data processing and analytics capabilities in the area of inspection-related data management. This effort resulted in the development and deployment of a new module within the VIS to support the integrated and centralised management of Schedule 1 inspections. The completion of this module, which has been long pending, will eliminate the additional tools used to track relevant information and streamline related processes.
5. With additional access and tools provided on the Security Critical Network in 2015, the Verification Division was able to conduct extensive data analysis prior to the official selection of plant sites for inspection in 2016. For instance, data quality issues have been identified and addressed, and a comprehensive review of mixed plant sites based on inspection reports and declared information has also been completed.



6. Also in 2015, the Secretariat intensified its efforts to implement improvements in the area of classified document and records management by starting up a new project aimed at the introduction of a secure contemporary enterprise content management solution for the integrated management of documents and records related to verification activities. The work in this area in 2015 was focused on project initiation, establishment of the project team, and the conduct of a detailed business analysis of the current, as well as the desired future state. These efforts resulted in the production of a comprehensive requirements document, which will be used for the procurement of the new system and related implementation services planned for 2016.

Electronic declarations

7. In the year under review, the Secretariat observed that States Parties demonstrated a continued interest in the submission of declarations in electronic format. Seven new States Parties used the electronic declaration tool for National Authorities (EDNA) for the first time, leading to 47 States Parties in total that used EDNA for the preparation of annual declarations of past activities for the year 2014.
8. Throughout 2015, the Secretariat continued its efforts to ensure that all electronic declarations use the same file formatting standard, so as to further improve declaration data quality and streamline the related business processes. As a result of these efforts and upon confirming that all States Parties have now transitioned to the standard XML¹ format in accordance with the specification available on the OPCW external server, the Secretariat has announced the end of support for the old electronic declaration format, Common Transmission File Structure (CTFS), with effect from 1 January 2016.
9. The project team tasked with overseeing EDNA has continued to work on further improvements to this software tool based on requests received from States Parties during previous user-group forums (S/882/2010, dated 1 November 2010), regional workshops and training sessions, and based on the feedback received from the States Parties. Past improvements, including the release of version EDNA 3.0, with support for declaration of Schedule 1 activities, have also been reported by the Director-General to the Council (EC-75/DG.10, dated 4 March 2014). In continuation of these improvement initiatives, in 2015 the Secretariat made available two updated and enhanced versions of EDNA: version 3.1, in January 2015, for the preparation of annual declarations of past activities for 2014; and version 3.2.1, in September 2015, for the preparation of annual declarations of anticipated activities for 2016. The updates included the addition of support for the revised product group codes and the synchronisation of the chemicals list with the latest version of the Handbook on Chemicals, as well as the resolution of the most important software errors discovered in previous versions.
10. In 2015 the Secretariat also observed a significant rise in interest amongst States Parties in using the newly established Secure Information Exchange (SIX) system, which was made available to States Parties in July 2014 (as reported in the Secretariat's Note S/1192/2014, dated 1 July 2014). By the end of 2015, 29 States Parties had registered to use the system, in comparison to nine States Parties as

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eXtensible Markup Language.

reported to the Council in the previous status report (EC-78/S/1, dated 7 January 2015). As reported to the States Parties in the Secretariat's Note S/1327/2015, dated 13 November 2015, the expected key benefits of the system have already started to materialise, in particular those related to improvements in both the timeliness of declarations and the overall efficiency of the declaration processing process. The Secretariat will continue its efforts to increase and expand the use of the system, as well as to provide further information and updates to the States Parties.

11. Further to the efforts to broaden the use of existing tools and systems and to promote the new systems, the Secretariat has also continued its efforts for the provision of training material related to these tools and systems. In addition to the comprehensive set of user documentation for that EDNA and SIX systems that had already been made available in all official languages, in March 2015 the Secretariat also made available to States Parties two dedicated e-learning modules for EDNA and SIX. The provision of this alternative training method will complement the regular training activities organised throughout the year and provide an additional means for States Parties to acquire knowledge on the electronic tools and related systems.

Further information

12. The Secretariat considers the VIS to be an established system. It is in routine use and the main development activities have been completed. As a key enterprise software system that supports all verification activities, the VIS will continue to be subject to continual improvement, with maintenance and enhancement activities carried out as subprojects. The Secretariat will continue to report on this system, focusing on key developments, such as new releases of EDNA software, developments with regard to electronic declarations and secure information exchange, and reports of the user-group forums.
13. Information on the VIS, EDNA, and SIX can also be found on the OPCW external server, and is regularly updated as new information becomes available. Questions about the VIS or EDNA can also be sent to a dedicated email address (vis@opcw.org); questions concerning SIX can be sent to the email address six@opcw.org. Interested States Parties can also make enquiries by ringing the OPCW central telephone number (+31 (0)70 416 3000) and asking for the EDNA or SIX help desk.