



**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). The Secretariat provides regular updates to the Council on the status of the development of the VIS.<sup>1</sup>

**Status of the Verification Information System**

3. The VIS is the key business-enabling technology platform that supports verification activities. With a view to streamlining and supporting verification business processes more effectively and to increasing the Secretariat’s analytical capabilities, the VIS is continually being improved.
4. In 2017, the Secretariat completed several activities to improve the VIS, with an emphasis on unifying and streamlining business processes and eliminating ad hoc ways of capturing and tracking information. One of the key results of this effort is the new Old and Abandoned Chemical Weapons Module, which offers a platform for the integrated and centralised management of data related to the declaration of these types of chemical weapon. Another important module created this year was the Transfer Discrepancies Module, which enables all transfer discrepancies to be maintained and analysed in the central repository. As a consequence, the Verification Division is working to eliminate other tools and methods that were used previously for tracking and sharing this information.
5. One of the key projects that the Verification Division embarked on in 2017 concerns the establishment of an advanced data analytics environment that will meet the needs

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<sup>1</sup> The updates are contained in the following Notes by the Secretariat: EC-42/S/3, dated 2 September 2005; EC-51/S/2, dated 20 November 2007; EC-55/S/3, dated 30 January 2009; EC-59/S/3, dated 1 February 2010; EC-63/S/4, dated 20 January 2011; EC-67/S/2, dated 25 January 2012; EC-71/S/1, dated 16 January 2013; EC-75/S/4, dated 15 January 2014; EC-78/S/1, dated 7 January 2015; EC-81/S/2, dated 12 January 2016; and EC-84/S/2, dated 13 January 2017.



of the Division to explore and take advantage of new tools that are available on the market. The implementation of the initial phase of this project started in the fourth quarter of 2017 and focused on data related to declarations and Article III and VI inspections. Further phases, focusing on aspects such as data related to chemical weapons, will be implemented in 2018.

6. In 2017, the Secretariat continued its efforts to implement a contemporary enterprise content management solution for the integrated management of documents and records related to verification activities on the Security Critical Network. The implementation phase started in the first quarter of 2017 and will continue in 2018.

### **Electronic declarations and secure information exchange**

7. In the year under review, the Secretariat observed that States Parties demonstrated a continued interest in the submission of declarations in electronic format. Fifty-Four States Parties used the electronic declarations tool for National Authorities (EDNA) for the preparation of annual declarations of past activities for the year 2016. In 2017, one additional State Party submitted its declarations using EDNA and representatives from 39 States Parties received EDNA training.
8. In continuation of the efforts to improve the EDNA software, the Secretariat conducted a survey about the system among all States Parties. The responses collected from the survey served as a basis for the requirements of the new version of the system. A feasibility study for the new design of the system was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2017; the conclusion of the study will serve to define the new architecture and functionalities of the system, to be developed in 2018.
9. In 2017, the Secretariat also observed a rise in interest among States Parties in using the 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 2017, 46 States Parties had registered to use the system, in comparison to 38 States Parties as reported to the Council in the previous status report (EC-84/S/2). During the Nineteenth Annual Meeting of National Authorities in November 2017, the Secretariat conducted several bilateral meetings with the representatives of States Parties to assist with the registration process. In the fourth quarter of 2017, the Secretariat conducted technical assistance visits to two National Authorities to help them to implement SIX. Eight additional visits are planned to be conducted in 2018. This particular effort will accelerate the adoption of the system by more States Parties, bringing additional efficiencies and security to the annual declaration process.
10. The SIX system is constantly evolving and new areas of application are continuously being explored. In 2017, the Secretariat conducted a pilot project for the secure transmission of information during Article VI inspections. Also, States Parties have been encouraged to use the system to help them in the effort to resolve discrepancies, as indicated in the latest transfer discrepancy letters sent in the fourth quarter of 2017. Furthermore, the system could be envisaged as a possible means for secure data exchange between the OPCW and other international organisations. 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 provides regular training activities. During the Twenty-Second Session of the Conference of the States Parties, training courses provided on EDNA and SIX were attended by a number of States Parties.

**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 enhanced data analytics capabilities.
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 be sent to a dedicated email address ([vis@opcw.org](mailto:vis@opcw.org)); questions concerning SIX can also be sent to a dedicated email address ([six@opcw.org](mailto:six@opcw.org)). Interested States Parties can also make enquiries by telephoning the OPCW central telephone number (+31 (0)70 416 3000) and asking for the EDNA or SIX help desk.

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