



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 hub¹ 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. The legacy databank contained submissions made by States Parties under paragraph 4 of Article X of the Convention (provided such information was not classified), offers of assistance made by States Parties under paragraph 7 of Article X, lists of experts suggested by States Parties, and other freely available information provided by States Parties relating to protection against chemical weapons.
6. 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 Catalyst.
7. In April 2024, the Secretariat circulated Note Verbale NV/ICA/APB-627/24 (dated 29 April 2024) to all States Parties requesting that, pursuant to paragraph 4 of Article X

¹ The PAD can be accessed on Catalyst at: <https://catalyst.opcw.org/sites/pad>.

of the Convention, they make their annual submissions on their national programmes related to protective purposes. In June 2024, the Secretariat also circulated Note Verbale NV/ICA/APB-639/24 (dated 5 June 2024) to all States Parties, requesting that they review and update their paragraph 7 submissions, and for those States Parties yet to provide any offers of assistance, that they submit an offer.

CONTENT AND USE OF THE PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE DATABANK

8. The new 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); and
 - (c) offers of assistance under paragraph 7 of Article X, lists of experts, as well as other freely available information on protection against chemical weapons.
9. In early 2021, the Secretariat 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. The user manual has also been uploaded on the PAD platform itself and can be found under the tab “user manual”. 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 through the platform. The PAD and the information contained therein is not classified, although it is still subject to the provision 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. 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.
10. 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>).