

## The NCTS News Winter 2011/2012

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### Introduction

Welcome to the Winter 2011 edition of the NCTS News.

This newsletter is produced by the ESA Technical and Quality Management Directorate's (D/TEC) NCTS Configuration Management Office (CMO).

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide information about ESA's Nonconformance Tracking System (NCTS) and its XML Interface to current and potential users. This includes:

- Completed, current and future activities
- Suggestions about how to use the tool more effectively

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### Did You Know?

Between October 2010 and October 2011, the number of:

- Registered NCTS users increased from 3,069 to 3,987 (+ 30%)
- NCs increased from 8,826 to 16,783 (+ 90%)
- Projects increased from 24 to 27 (+ 13%)

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### NCTS R2.8: Update

NCTS R2.8 has now been deployed on most of ESA's production servers.

Should you wish further information about the changes implemented in this release, please contact your NCTS Helpdesk to request a copy of the *NCTS R2.8 Release Note* (Sapienza Reference SW-2667).

Alternatively, you may consult the Adobe PDF version of the NCTS User Guide. See Section 1.1 (Release History).

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### NCTS XML Interface: Update

The XML Working Group (XWG) is comprised of ESA and several of its industrial partners (Astrium, Thales, OHB and Sapienza). This group is responsible for the continued support and evolution of the XML Interface specification used by NCTS to interface with industrial NC tools (e.g. Astrium's Pandora, Thales's Ficheyes).

Earlier this year, the XWG proposed a series of changes to the current (2006) XML Interface Specification.

These proposed changes are now being analysed by Sapienza. It will generate a specification which will be assessed by all XWG members.

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Once approved, the changes required by the revised specification will be implemented in the XML Interface.

The proposed changes are detailed in the following table:

Title	Change Type	XML Interface Impact	NCTS Impact
<b>XML Import</b>	Correction	XML Import process to be more robust when XML tags are or are not specified for non-mandatory data.	Improves fault-tolerance of XML Import process
<b>XSD (Project ID)</b>	Correction	XML schema descriptor (XSD) syntax to be modified to accept a single project ID per XML technical data package (TDP).	Removes the possibility of accidentally specifying 2 project IDs which would cause an attempted XML Import to fail.
<b>XSD (Syntax)</b>	Correction	XML schema descriptor (XSD) to be modified as follows:  a. 'materialSupplierName' tag to be optional  b. 'NRB_date' and 'NRB_summary' tags to be mandatory  c. 'statusDate' (for NCs and Actions) tag to be imported	Improves fault-tolerance of XML Import process
<b>XSD (Syntax)</b>	Correction	Minor syntax issues in XML schema descriptor (XSD) to be corrected.	None
<b>Action Type</b>	Enhancement	XML technical data package (TDP) to be modified to transfer Action Type information.	Add/Edit Action screen will be modified to store/display up to 255 characters of data.
<b>Description</b>	Enhancement	XML technical data package (TDP) to be modified to transfer lengthier Description fields.	NC Description, Internal/Customer NRB and Add/Edit Action screen Description fields will be modified to store/display up to 32K characters of data.
<b>NRB Participants</b>	Enhancement	XML technical data package (TDP) to be modified to transfer NRB Participant data.	NRB Participants screen will be modified to store/display up to 4K characters of data.
<b>Reason for Closure</b>	Enhancement	XML technical data package (TDP) to be modified to transfer Reason for Closure data.	NC Description screen's Close-out tab's 'Reason for Closure' field will be modified to store/display up to 32K characters of data.
<b>Industry Material Name</b>	New	XML technical data package (TDP) to be modified to transfer new Industry Material Name information.	NC Description screen will receive a new field to store/display up to 255 characters of data.
<b>XML Import/Export</b>	New	Provide ability to XML Export previous XML Imported NCs.	Improves NCTS's to support multi-prime projects where NC data transfer is required

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### NCTS R2.9: Update

This autumn, Sapienza will begin the Development phase for next major release of NCTS: R2.9. The following table identifies the enhancements planned for this release:

Functional Area	Objective(s)	Details	Benefit(s)
<b>Administration</b>	Improve the Administrator's ability to manage the Product Tree (PT).	<p>Allow Administrators to modify the PT element's ID, search for companies to be assigned to it and modify the PT by using 'drag and drop'.</p> <p>Allow Component Administrator role to change/revoke access to specific PT element -- but not to change the PT structure.</p>	<p>Improves Administrator role capabilities.</p> <p>Allows Industry to control access to PT, without changing it.</p>
<b>Attachments</b>	Improve the identification of attachments in exported Zipfiles.	Provide a mapping between the Zipfile's document attachments and their unique identifier used within NCTS.	Maintains the link between attachments in NCTS and those exported to the Zipfile Archive.
<b>Data Package</b>	Create NC data package	Allow users to create a data package (Zip file) containing PDFs and attachment(s).	Create large data packages (i.e. more than 50 NCs) for project milestones, periodical reviews and off-line storage.
<b>Deletion</b>	<p>Improve the ability to delete NCs.</p> <p>Improve the Administrator's visibility on deleted NCs.</p>	<p>Allow PA roles to see deleted NCs.</p> <p>Allow PA and Admin roles to delete XML imported NCs.</p>	Gives PA and Admin roles more control what may be deleted and what may be seen after deletion.
<b>Errors</b>	Increase the quality and traceability of error messages and logging.	Uniquely identify every error message provided to the user, using an agreed typology (Info, Warning, and Error).	<p>Allow users to more accurately report problems to the Helpdesk.</p> <p>Assists Helpdesk to more quickly find a solution.</p>
<b>Logging</b>	Allow users to discuss a NC.	Log public discussion about a NC.	<p>Improves the collaborative ability of the tool.</p> <p>Allows users to discuss a NC, before the Internal NRB is held.</p>
<b>Metrics</b>	Provide PA and Administrator roles with new metric functions.	Generate metrics on number of unique users assigned to each PT item and number of accesses per user.	<p>PA role will be able to access to metrics data per project.</p> <p>Admin role will be able to access metrics data per server (i.e. multiple projects).</p>
<b>Notifications</b>	Notify when a NC is updated.	PA and Administrator roles can define a notification rule to be informed when a set of selected NCs are identified.	Bookmark and follow the evolution of specific NCs.

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<b>Functional Area</b>	<b>Objective(s)</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Benefit(s)</b>
<b>Reporting</b>	<p>Improve Status List Report format.</p> <p>Support personalized reporting.</p> <p>Reproduce PT structure in the report.</p>	<p>Report's NRB identifiers will correspond to those used in the tool.</p> <p>Status List report will contain additional data fields.</p> <p>Create a Status List report in HTML format.</p>	<p>Provide more thorough reporting.</p>
<b>Searching</b>	<p>Improve search capability.</p>	<p>Enhance the search function for NCs, users, changes, notifications, linked NCRs, internal and customer NRBs, etc...</p>	<p>Provide more powerful searching capability.</p>
<b>Testing</b>	<p>Provide new Testing Role with read access to the whole PT.</p>	<p>PA and Admin users will be allowed to see the whole PT.</p>	<p>Allow users in Test role to monitor NCs which have impact on several PT elements.</p>
<b>Usability</b>	<p>Provide general usability improvements.</p> <p>Improve visibility of menus, action buttons and data.</p> <p>Provide a bookmark function.</p> <p>Depending upon the user's login, increase and customize NC data which can be displayed to the user.</p>	<p>Prevent users from losing any information, if accidentally navigate away from a screen (without saving first).</p> <p>Only possible actions in the current screen's context will be enabled.</p> <p>Status definition will be aligned to ECSS standard.</p> <p>Bookmark NCs for quicker access.</p> <p>Improve information provided user after logging in (e.g. access date/time, role, NCs created since last login, etc.)</p>	<p>Provide various usability improvements</p>

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### Q & A

In this section, we provide suggestions about how to use NCTS more effectively.

*Question: I've attached a document to a NC, but I no longer recall the NCR Number. How can I find the document?*

Answer: Using the Attachment Search screen, you can search for various attributes of your document attachment including its description, filename, source (NC, internal/customer NRB), when it was last updated, etc.

*Question: With our supplier, we held a Customer NRB one month ago. I remember the NRB's date but not the NC which we discussed. How can I find this NC?*

Answer: Using the NRB Search screen, you can search for various attributes of the NRB including the NRB's description, its disposition, the date it was held, how the NC was classified, whether a RFW was raised, etc.

*Question: After a recent NRB, an action was assigned to my company. I know the date when the NRB was held, but not the specific action. How can I find this action?*

Answer: Using the Action Search screen, you can search for three different types of dates: the date when the action was created, the date when it is due and the date when it was closed.

*Question: I remember the reason that our company closed a NC, but I no longer recall the specifics about the NC itself. How can I find this NC?*

Answer: Using the NCR Search screen, you can search for the following NC close-out information: Cause of NCR, Close-out Date, Close-out Reference and Reason for Closure.

*Question: Our project has a standards document which explains how to create NCs and NRBs. Is there somewhere we can store this document so that it is available to all project users?*

Answer: Your NCTS Project Administrator or Helpdesk can configure this for your project. Once configured, a new 'Help ... Project Documents' menu option will be visible. Selecting this option displays the Project Specific Documents screen and will contain your project's standards document.

*Question: Our project is conducting more and more of its NRBs via telephone. Is it possible for NRB participants to see changes made NCs during the actual teleconference?*

Answer: Yes. In the Nonconformance Description and Internal/Customer NRB Disposition screens, there is a 'Refresh' button (in the lower left of each screen). Clicking this button will refresh the information you see in the screen (i.e. without losing your current context).

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### Previous Issues

Previous issues of this newsletter are available (in Adobe PDF format) on the ESA website at the following URL:

[http://www.esa.int/esaMI/Space\\_Engineering/SEMSJ659J2G\\_0.html](http://www.esa.int/esaMI/Space_Engineering/SEMSJ659J2G_0.html)

The newsletters are shown at the top right of the screen under the 'Previous newsletters' subheading.

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### Next Issue

The next issue of the *NCTS News* is planned for Summer 2012.

If you have any suggestions for the next issue, please contact the NCTS Release Manager/ESA Focal Point (Raffaele.Campagnuolo@esa.int).