

VIM-ASAP

(Virtual Item Manager - ARN Supply-chain Automated Processing)

VIM-ASAP v2.1 Capabilities Overview

Prepared for:

Apparel Research Network Program
Defense Logistics Agency (DLA)
and
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Overview of System Capabilities and Advantages

VIM-ASAP is being sponsored by the DLA Apparel Research Network program and DSCP. The system has been designed as part of a total supply chain management system to provide support for DSCP Clothing and Textile contractors who manufacture items and/or handle the distribution as bill and hold contractors (see Figure 1).

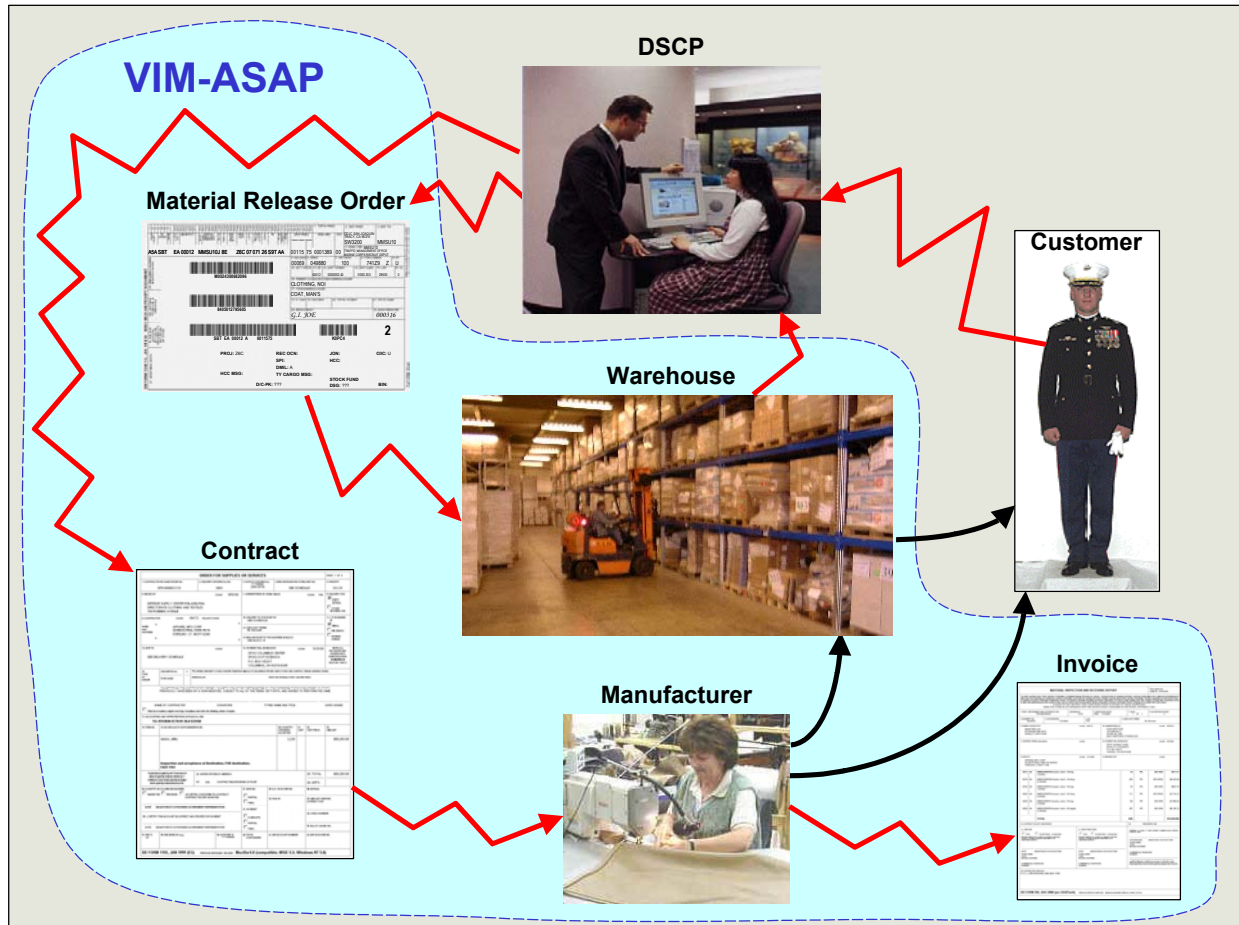


Figure 1: Role of VIM-ASAP in DSCP Supply Chain Management

The manufacturer's functions of the system support the following:

- Acceptance and handling of electronic contracts (DD Form 1155)
- Preparation and printing of all shipping documents, i.e., Packing Slip (DD Form 250), Shipment Labels (DD Form 1387), and Bar Coded Container Labels
- Transmission of electronic invoices (DD Form 250) to DFAS and to DCMA's QARs via WAWF-RA
- Monitoring DFAS payments for each invoice and each CLIN

The warehouse functions of the system support the following:

- Acceptance and handling of incoming shipments (MRO DD Form 1348-1A)
- Acceptance and handling of incoming electronic requisitions and the printing of MROs (DD Form 1348-1A), bar coded container labels, and Shipment Labels (DD Form 1387)

- Acceptance and handling of incoming MRO related orders and inquiries
- Automatic preparation and transmission of all required MILSTRIP and MILSTRAP transactions that eliminates the requirement to use DAMES

VIM-ASAP is an Internet based system where all the data is managed and maintained on a DLA server and database that is dedicated to this purpose. Manufacturers and warehouses access their specific subset of data from their own sites using a local Internet Service Provider and browser. Nearly all of the data is automatically extracted from a variety of DLA, DFAS, and DCMA systems that are used by DSCP to manage contracts, requisitions, inventories, invoices, and other supply chain related data. The only other data in the system is the small amount of data that is entered by individual users, e.g., the quantity shipped for a specific CLIN. DSCP data is updated each night after all of the previous day's actions have been recorded. The updated data is available each morning normally around 3:00 AM (East Coast Time), although there are periodic problems that can delay the updates. Even when there are problems, the prior day's data is available until the update is completed.

VIM-ASAP has been designed so that all communications and data formatting is done by the system automatically. The user does not need to be aware of any data formats or the transmission protocols. This can be seen when the system formats and transmits the appropriate MILSTRIPs and MILSTRAPs whenever an action takes place. For example, when a bill and hold contractor finishes a DD250 for a shipment to themselves, two things happen in the background. The first is the fully automatic formatting and transmission of the DD Form 250 data to a DFAS system called WInS (Web Invoicing System). Additionally, if the user has established an account with Wide Area WorkFlow-Receipt and Acceptance (WAWF-RA), an electronic DD Form 250 is automatically formatted and transmitted to the DCMA office of the user's Quality Assurance Representative (QAR) using the WAWF-RA system. The second thing that happens is the fully automatic formatting and transmission of the MILSTRAP transaction known as a D4S that informs the DLA systems of the receipt of the items identified on the DD Form 250.

The power of the VIM-ASAP system is based on the consistency of all documents and transmissions that are extracted from the single source of data from DLA's systems, e.g., the contract data in SAMMS is used to prepare both the paper DD Form 250 and the transmission of the invoice to DFAS. There can be no data mismatch, and thus no payment-delaying correction cycle. The only problem with this single source of information can be seen when the source data is incorrect. When this happens, personnel from each manufacturer or warehouse will need to contact the people they deal with at DSCP to correct the data problem. VIM-ASAP also provides an 800-number and e-mail address that can be used to get problems resolved. This may periodically cause a delay at the start of an activity, but the advantage is that the problems are corrected before more serious problems occur, such as shipments going to the wrong location or delays in payments because of some mismatch in data between the invoice and DFAS's records.

VIM-ASAP supports two classes of users and each has their own, but overlapping series of functions that they can perform. A summary of the functions that each class of users can perform is identified in the following sections. Detailed explanations of how to perform each function can be found in the users manual.

Do not miss Section 4 “User Notices – Important”

1 Manufacturers

The primary manufacturer's functions (see Figure 1-1) include the receipt and review of new contracts, the recording of the planned start of cutting, the preparation of the required shipping documents and invoices, and the monitoring of the payment process. The specific manufacturing capabilities of VIM-ASAP are as follows:

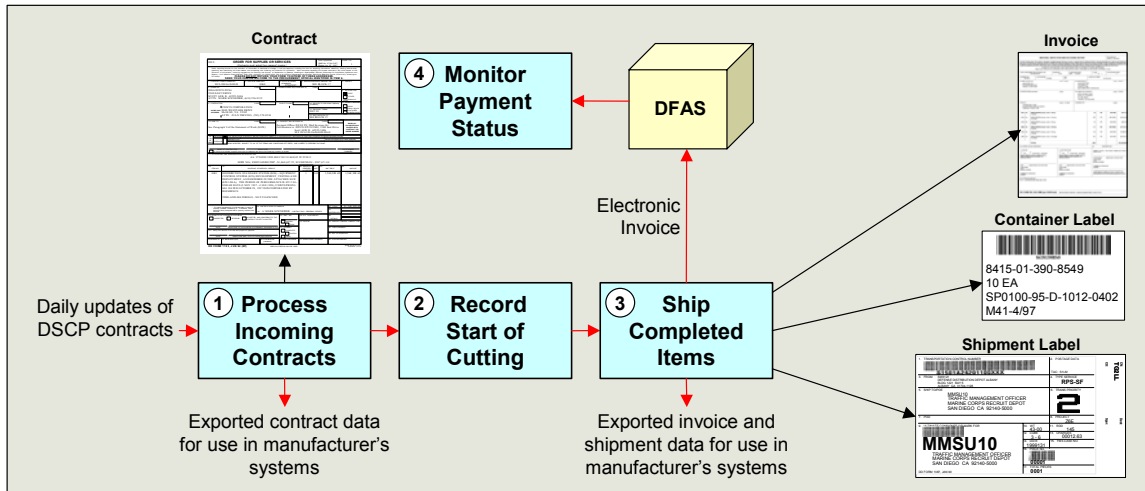


Figure 2-1: Manufacturer's Primary Functions

1. Contracts and delivery orders can be received electronically as a DD Form 1155 "Order for Supplies or Services" as well as a queue of CLINs that can be individually started into production as an entire or partial CLIN order quantity. The contract data is updated every night from the prior day's releases by DSCP. The data can also be downloaded for use in each manufacturer's internal accounting and/or production control systems. Any differences detected between the paper contract and the DD Form 1155 can be automatically submitted to the appropriate Item Manager/Buyer at DSCP for evaluation and correction if appropriate. Any corrections would be available in VIM-ASAP immediately upon approval by DSCP and then updated in SAMMS.
2. The system provides a list of CLINs for unfinished orders so that the start of cutting can be recorded for each contract and CLIN. This information can be used by manufacturers to track the status of their orders as well as by DSCP for a variety of purposes, including helping with the evaluation of the impact of a change to the schedule or order quantity. Both DSCP and the manufacturer can monitor the progress of the contract on the "View Contract Shipments and Invoices" screen.
3. When it is time to ship an order, the system can prepare all of the required shipping documents and labels. A shipment is a collection of containers (e.g., boxes) from one or more DD Form 250s. Each container requires a bar coded stick-on label that shows the NSN, quantity, and contract identification. The collection of containers on an individual pallet or inside a larger container requires a "Military Shipment Label" (DD Form 1387). The shipment contains one or more packing slips that identify all of the items being shipped. The packing slip is also the invoice in the form of a Material Inspection and Receiving Report (DD Form 250). The system is capable of formatting and printing all of these documents on 8½x11 sheets of standard Avery labels in accordance with the current MIL-STD-129, and then formatting and transmitting the invoice data to DFAS for payment. If the

manufacturer and their QAR are signed up with a WAWF-RA account, an electronic copy of the invoice is also automatically submitted to WAWF-RA for the QAR’s approval. The invoice data can also be downloaded for use in each manufacturer’s internal accounting and/or production control systems.

4. The system can track payment status by combining the submitted invoice data with payment data that is extracted each morning from the DFAS payment system. The tracking can be done at the invoice level as well as at the CLIN level. Data can be sorted and displayed in multiple orders. An inquiry can be automatically submitted to DFAS by the vendor for any Invoice that does not appear in VPIS within a few days of submittal or for any Invoice that has an unpaid amount after 30 days.
5. Additional management data can be analyzed by either the manufacturer or by DSCP utilizing a “View Contract Shipments and Invoices” function.

2 Manufacturers with Warehousing Responsibilities

Manufacturers with warehousing responsibilities are called Bill and Hold contractors. Their manufacturing capabilities (see Figure 2-1) are nearly identical to those of the manufacturers identified in Section 1 of this document. The only difference between the two can be seen in function 3 where a MILSTRAP transaction “D4S” is automatically sent to SAMMS at DSCP whenever the manufacturer is shipping to themselves. The “D4S” informs SAMMS that the shipment has been received at the warehouse. It is sent automatically because the shipment never really goes anywhere. The shipment is kept by the manufacturer, who also manages the warehouse until the bill and hold contractor is told to ship some or all of the items to a specific location.

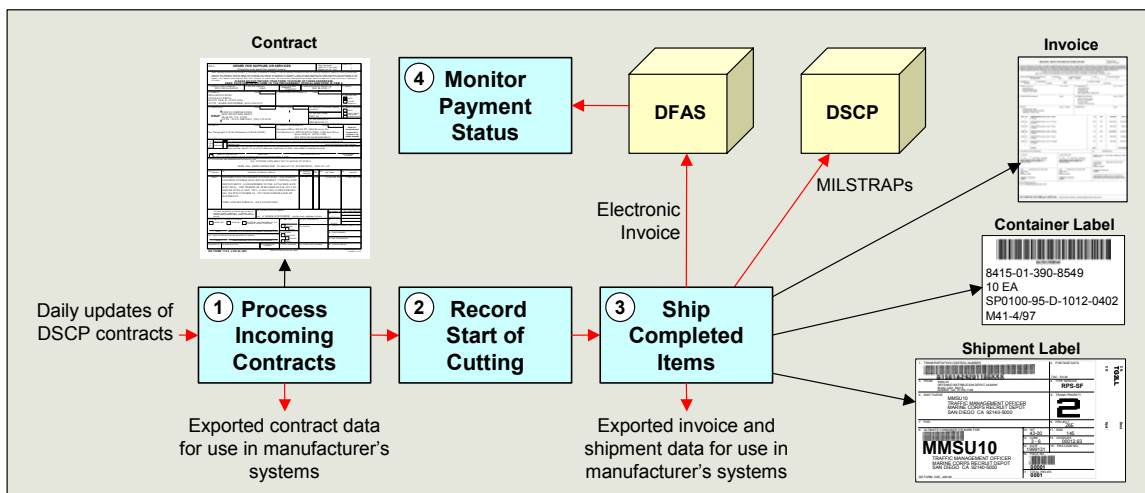


Figure 2-1: Bill and Hold Contractor’s Primary Manufacturing Functions

In addition to their manufacturing activities, the bill and hold contractor has warehousing responsibilities for responding to orders and inquiries (see Figure 2-2). The specific warehousing capabilities of VIM-ASAP are as follows:

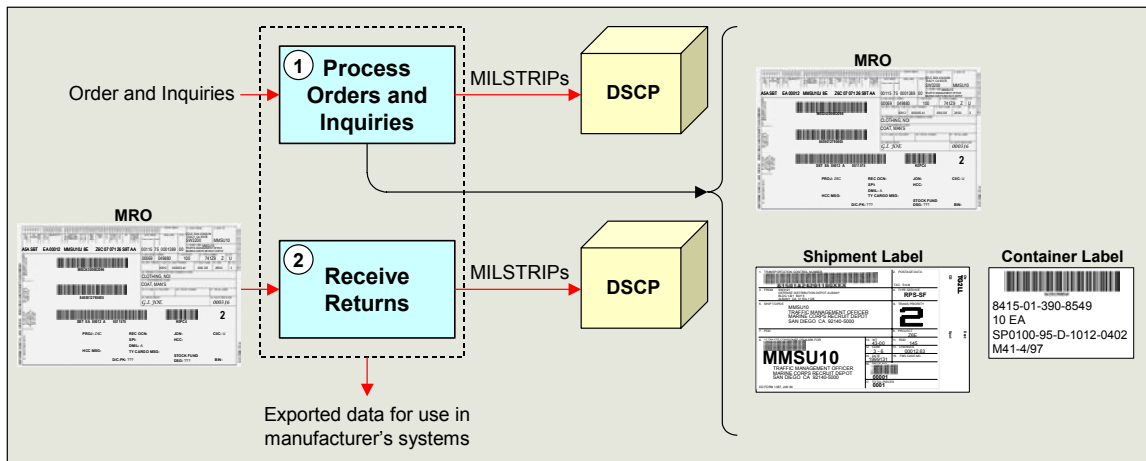


Figure 2-2: Bill and Hold Contractor's Primary Warehousing Functions

1. Orders and inquiries can be viewed and acted upon by the bill and hold contractor. Orders come in the form of an MRO to ship a quantity of a specific NSN to a particular location. Inquiries take many forms, but are primarily follow-up inquiries from the organization that created the original requisition. When acted upon, both orders and inquiries need to have a MILSTRIP transaction created to inform DSCP of the actions taken. VIM-ASAP is capable of formatting and transmitting these transactions automatically. When an order is being filled, the system can also prepare and print all of the required shipment documents, including a Material Release Order (DD Form 1348-1A), a Military Shipment Label (DD Form 1387), and whatever numbers of container labels are required for each individual container. These labels are formatted to fit on standard sheets of Avery labels, which can be used in any typical office printer. The data can also be downloaded for use in each manufacturer's internal accounting and/or production control systems. Additionally, data on all MROs processed through VIM-ASAP can be viewed or downloaded in Excel format to simplify monthly or quarterly transportation charges reconciliation.

2. Bill and hold contractors never receive shipments from other depots or manufacturers. They only receive manufacturing shipments from themselves. The MILSTRAP D4S has already been transmitted (upon generation of the DD 250). The data can be downloaded for use in each manufacturer's internal accounting and/or production control systems.

3 System Requirements

The following equipment and software is required to use VIM-ASAP:

- **Computer:** The computer requirements are a function of operating system and the version of the browser that is being used although the operating system must be MS Windows based. Microsoft provides minimum configuration information for their latest browser (IE 6.0) at <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/evaluation/sysreqs/default.asp>. A general comment is that if the browser you selected runs on your computer, then VIM-ASAP will also run.
- **Internet Connection:** Any type of Internet connection will work although faster is always better. Phone modems at 64k bps will work fine in nearly all circumstances. Delays should only be noticeable when large numbers of shipping labels or container labels are required.
- **Printer:** Nearly any brand of printer can be used as long as it is either an ink jet or laser printer.
- **Software:** You will need to install Microsoft's Internet Explorer 6.0 and set the security level to no higher than "Medium". Users who prefer higher security settings are advised to add <http://vim.ct-dscp.com> to their list of "Trusted Sites," with security settings for the Trusted Zone set in accordance with the Lessons Learned notes on <http://info.ct-dscp.com>. Some versions of the browser do not contain all the needed additional software. If your version does not have everything that is needed, the system will automatically detect this and initiate a download of the required components. You will be asked to give permission for the download. Simply approve the download and everything that needs to be done will be done automatically. This will only happen the first time a missing component is discovered. Once downloaded, the component is permanently installed.

The two most common causes of slow VIM-ASAP performance are the speed of your modem and the amount of RAM you have on your computer. Adding additional RAM can typically be done for less than fifty dollars, and significantly improves performance. There are dozens of ways to improve communications speed. Your local Internet Service Provider or cable company can review what they have to offer. Satellite communications are also available in rural areas that do not have many other options. Each of the satellite companies can tell you about their services.

4 User Notices - Important

Item	Problem	Solution
1	<p>There are problems with invoices for subsequent shipments after earlier shipments were within 2% of order quantity</p> <p>DFAS frequently close contracts whenever the received quantity gets within 2% of the order quantity. This also causes DSCP's contract data to be removed from their system (i.e., SAMMS). When this happens, VIM-ASAP can no longer be used to create DD250s for the last 2% of the order. Bypassing VIM-ASAP and sending a paper DD250 is not a solution to this problem. DFAS will not pay the invoice because they no longer have a record of the contract.</p>	<p>DSCP has stated that the only way to resolve this problem is for the manufacturer to contact their DSCP contracting officer to get the contract reinstated. Once this is done, VIM-ASAP and DFAS will have the data required to create and pay the DD250. DSCP is beginning to modify the method they use to code variances so that shipments within the variance percentage, but under the order quantity stay active in DFAS.</p>