



2020 - 2021 WORK PROGRAMME OF THE EU AGENCIES NETWORK

Under the chairing role of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)





Background

According to the Terms of Reference of the Network of EU Agencies (EUAN), the Coordinating Agency should submit, at the meeting preceding the commencement of its chairing role, a Network Working Programme for the endorsement by the Assembly of the Heads of Agencies. The Network Working Programme shall include the Sub-networks work programmes, defining the planned tasks and deliverables, their added value and the corresponding timelines.

In line with this, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) prepared the present working programme for its chairing role from March 2020 – February 2021.

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SUMMARY

The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) takes over the chairing role of the Network of EU agencies (EUAN) in March 2020, at a period of transition. The timeline for implementing the objectives of the current strategy (adopted in 2015) will be completed, and a new strategy for 2021-2027 is scheduled to be finalised by the EUAN in February 2020. Its implementation roadmap is expected to be approved in October 2020.

ECHA will devote appropriate attention for preparing the ground for the effective implementation of this new strategy, which will be in full operation under the chairing role of the European Environment Agency (EEA) in 2021. This requires engagement activities within the Network and towards European institutions, as well as a fit-for-purpose governance structure.

Another key priority for ECHA will be to advocate the interests of the EU agencies in the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027, by demonstrating their added value and setting out the challenges they face.

As regards the internal governance, ECHA will start to engage the agencies systematically in thematic clusters, including during the meetings of Heads of Agencies. The work in clusters should allow agencies from the same policy fields to engage in strategic discussions about the engagement of institutional stakeholders and mutual value creation through closer cooperation on operational or administrative matters. This will be particularly relevant in 2020, when the new Commission is expected to articulate concrete policy initiatives after its first 100 days in office.

ECHA will continue to streamline the internal governance of the Network. With a view to the challenges faced in the past to identify candidates for chairing role, it is essential that the Network can operate in an agile manner, which also facilitates smaller agencies in effectively assuming the coordination role. ECHA will continue to focus on key priorities, limit new initiatives, promote the sustainable use of public resources, and make full use of the potential of the now fully operational Shared Support Office (SSO).

At a more general level, ECHA will, with the support of the SSO, continue the day-to-day activities of the Network and its subgroups, for example related to the preparation and follow-up of the budget and discharge procedures. ECHA and the SSO will strive to further streamline these procedures for EUAN members and the Institutions.

PRIORITIES OF THE ECHA CHAIRING ROLE

Preparing the implementation of the Strategy 2021-2027

The Dublin Agenda from October 2015 was the first over-arching agenda of the EUAN. It identified four focus areas (Mutual value creation with EU institutions, Shared services and capabilities, Outward communication and Internal governance) and developed concrete actions in each area that formed the core of the annual Work Programmes.

Preparations are ongoing for the new post-2020 strategy, which is expected to be adopted in February 2020. Should the finalisation be delayed, ECHA will continue the work-stream so that it can be adopted in October 2020 and can be put into action to reach the agreed objectives with fit-for-purpose monitoring and feedback loops. This would provide an opportunity to take institutional developments into account, such as those related to the MFF 2021-2027 and new Commission priorities.

“The future post-2020 strategy should reflect the input of all members of the network, should resonate well with external stakeholders, and should give tangible added value to all EUAN members, EU institutions and citizens.”

The coordination under ECHA's chairing role will focus on the effective communication of this new strategy and on governance aspects, including how to support progress and monitor impact. Engaging institutional stakeholders in relation to the strategic orientation of the EUAN will increase the visibility of the EU Agencies. In this, the Network's activities will complement and build on the communication work carried out by individual Agencies.

The Heads of Communications Network (HCIN) will be requested to develop an effective communication plan to implement this objective. With respect to the communication with institutional stakeholders, the SSO will support the Coordinating Agency to ensure its practical implementation in Brussels.

The Performance Development Network (PDN) will be requested to develop the associated performance management model, which will make it possible to determine the rate of progress in implementing EUAN's strategy.

In summary, the future post-2020 strategy should reflect the input of all members of the network, should resonate well with external stakeholders, and should give tangible added value to all EUAN members, EU institutions and citizens.

Articulate EU agencies' interests in the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027

The EUAN is the collective voice of the EU agencies and, in 2020, a substantial effort from the network and the SSO will be required to consolidate its renewed relations with the European Parliament and the other institutions. Following the changes in key positions in the European Commission, new contacts with the horizontal Commission

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DGs and services (in particular DG HR, DG BUDG, Sec Gen) will need to be established.

The negotiations on the MFF will continue in 2020 and, in this context and that of the Draft Budget 2021, it will be a major challenge and opportunity to demonstrate the added value of the EU Agencies and Joint Undertakings, as well as properly reflect their resource requirements. The ongoing special report from the European Court of Auditors on the performance management of Agencies will provide input to this dialogue as well. The negotiations on the Draft Budget 2021 will be another focus during the chairing role as being the first annual budget of the new MFF period.

The coordination, with support from the SSO, will continue its interaction with different institutions and inter-institutional bodies (such as CCA, CPQS, CGAM, SRC, ISIF, RUF) and the Standing Working Party to channel the Agencies' views and common positions on issues of shared interest. While all Agencies have unique financing models and resource needs under the new MFF, which they will continue to independently communicate, the EUAN coordination will invest in identifying common challenges and priorities and channelling them at the appropriate juncture of the special budgetary procedure. For this purpose, the EUAN coordination will continue to have regular contacts with relevant Commission services, in particular with Sec Gen, DG HR, and DG BUDG, representatives of the European Parliament's Committees on Budgets and on Budgetary Control and the Council Budget Committee. The close monitoring of the continuing discussions on MFF, providing timely and targeted information to EUAN members and advocacy efforts to represent the EUAN members' interests in this context will remain the focus of EUAN work in 2020.

Sharpen the focus of the Network on thematic clusters of agencies

One of the main benefits of the network remains the sharing of best practice and knowledge, as well as joint initiatives towards institutional stakeholders. Agencies working in the same policy field mostly share the same key stakeholders, cooperate with the same Committees of the European Parliament, Commission services and are financed under the same budget headings. Without compromising the need for the EUAN as such to cooperate on horizontal matters of general interests, it is relevant to also strengthen the focus on clusters of agencies.

ECHA, therefore, plans to engage the members more systematically in thematic clusters, including in the framework of the meetings of Heads of Agencies under its chairing role. The work in clusters exists already in some areas, like JHA or ENVI, and promotes the exchange of knowledge and cooperation whilst increasing the ability to react flexibly and effectively to policy developments relevant to the agencies operating in the same policy field. This will be particularly relevant in 2020, when the new Commission is expected to articulate concrete policy initiatives after its first 100 days in office.

The October 2020 EUAN meeting will be hosted in Helsinki, in ECHA's

new premises. The meeting time will be partly devoted to allow for exchanges in thematic clusters, to discuss synergies between the work programmes of the agencies, how they can together contribute to the new Commission priorities or, more practically, how can they cooperate on staffing or other horizontal matters. A retrospective of the experience with this format will be organised in the February 2021 meeting in Brussels.

The approach for clustering the agencies will be developed in consultation with the Network members, and supported by the SSO. Examples used in the past include following a logic in line with the division of responsibilities for the agencies between the Committees of the European Parliament, or the clustering approach used in the 2016 Deloitte study on the added value of agencies.

A fit-for-purpose internal governance

In 2011, ECHA proposed as Coordinating Agency, to establish a permanent structure for supporting the coordination work. In 2017, the Heads of Agencies decided to expand the Permanent Secretariat in terms of staff and tasks, to facilitate the Network's coordination and the technical liaison with the EU Institutions and also relieve the future Chairs of the Network from the burden of having to invest substantial own resources in the coordination activities. The Permanent Secretariat was renamed Shared Support Office (SSO) to stress the fact that it results from the mutualisation of existing resources.

With a view to the challenges faced in the past, in identifying candidates for chairing role, ECHA believes it to be essential for the continued successful operation of the Network that it can operate in an agile manner so that smaller agencies can effectively assume the coordination role without impacting their core activities. ECHA will, therefore, use its coordination term to demonstrate how the coordination can, to a large degree, rely on the SSO for operating the network and, in particular, for all day-to-day activities which are not of strategic nature.

“ ECHA will, therefore, focus on key priorities, limit new initiatives, promote the sustainable use of public resources, and make full use of the potential of the fully operational Shared Support Office (SSO). ”

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As a first step, ECHA has, in line with the conditions articulated when accepting the chairing role in February 2018, opted not to chair all the sub-networks, with other Agencies kindly agreeing to step in. This experimental model will be reviewed at the end of the chairing role and could, subject to agreement, be adopted again in the future.

Finally, ECHA will strive to promote a greater separation of roles and discussion topics between the Heads of Agencies (HoA) and Heads of Resources (HoR) meetings.

SUBNETWORKS

In addition to chairing the Heads of Agencies and Heads of Resources networks, ECHA appreciates that the sharing of knowledge and best practice is an important element of collaboration within the EUAN. Therefore, it will continue to form the basis of the sub-networks' work programmes for 2020-2021 (attached or highlights included in Annex 1). The list of networks and chairs is provided at Annex 2 and the indicative timelines for meetings of the network is provided at Annex 3. It should be noted however, that ECHA will, as an ISO 14001 environment certified organisation, aim to keep face-to-face meetings of the subnetworks to a minimum.



ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

Planned activities and deliverables - 2020-2021

	ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES	LEADERS	STRATEGY AGENDA OBJECTIVE ¹
EUAN	EUAN post-2020 strategy agenda	Prepare implementation to be approved in October 2020. Preparation of a successful implementation of the EUAN strategy post-2020 and engagement of institutional partners. Q2-Q4/2020	Coordinating Agency	MVC
	Focus on Clusters of agencies	Agreement on the approach used for clustering October 2020 meeting in Helsinki will devote part of the meeting to dedicated sessions of clusters of agencies. Approach will be consulted in advance. Q3/2020	Coordinating Agency SSO	IG
	Shared Support Office (SSO)	Demonstrate that the coordination of the EUAN can to a large degree rely on the SSO, especially for day-to-day administration, and therefore be chaired by smaller agencies. Implement the outcome of the February 2020 review Q2/2020-Q1/2021	Coordinating Agency SSO	SSC
	Extranet	The SSO will be responsible for the administration of the Extranet (ToR). EUIPO will host the Extranet platform until 2025. The future modalities of the Extranet will be included in discussions on the post-2020 EUAN strategy. Q3-4/2020	SSO	SSC
	Monitoring use of Shared Services	SSO will continue to monitor and report on the use and benefit of Shared services, according to the practices already established in 2019	SSO	

¹ Strategic objectives of the Strategy adopted in Dublin in 2015: SSC: Shared services and capabilities; MVC: Mutual value creation with EU institutions; OC: Outward communication; IG: Internal Governance

	ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES	LEADERS	STRATEGY AGENDA OBJECTIVE ¹
EUAN	Shared office space in Brussels	Depending on the number of agencies, potentially joining the same premises as SSO/EFSA (reaching a 'critical mass'), the option of having one common office area for all participating agencies/JUs with one single rental contract will be explored. The name of the common office area for all participating agencies/JUs will be determined. Options may include Agencies' Coordination Centre or Agencies' Centre. Q3-4/2020	SSO	SSC
	Brexit	Continue to provide forum for exchanging views and practices as regards Brexit related issues. Liaise with TF50 Q2/2020-Q1/2021	Coordinating Agency SSO	MVC
HR	Human Resource Management (HRM) community	Update the list of HR practitioners (with sub-categories according to specialisation). Promote and strengthen Extranet as a virtual platform of exchange on HR matters.	Coordinating Agency SSO	SSC
	Staffing and staff development	Conduct workshops on HR matters with focus on sharing of experiences and tools.	Coordinating Agency	SSC
	Interaction with institutions	Annual meeting with DG HR in February; annual meeting with AASC in February; continuous follow-up on the work of the Standing Working Party and Interinstitutional Bodies and Committees.	Coordinating Agency SSO	MVC
	SYSPER for Agencies and JUs	Participate at the Working Group, the Steering Committee and the Interinstitutional Governance Board	Coordinating Agency SSO	SSC
FIN	Budget procedure	Coordination and conveying of Network members' input at the various stages in the process	Coordinating Agency SSO	MVC
	Discharge procedure	Coordination and conveying of Network members' input at the various stages in the process	Coordinating Agency SSO	MVC
EU-ANSA	Impact of Agency-led Science	Ongoing work developing indicators to assess scientific quality and impact of Agencies scientific and technical advice (in support of PDN network activities on indicators).	ECDC, EMCDDA, Eurofound	
	Continuing professional development	Joint action to understand and enhance inter-agency scientific learning opportunities for agency staff to maximise human resource capital.	ECDC, EFSA	
	Data Protection	Further work to understand implications of data protection regulation in the context of Agency scientific/research data collection, storage and use.	FRA	
	Futures/Foresight	Ongoing work on a framework for Foresight activities within ANSA agencies as a basis to enhance quality and consistency and promote further knowledge exchange on methodologies and approaches.	EMCCDA, JRC, ECDC	

	ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES	LEADERS	STRATEGY AGENDA OBJECTIVE ¹
EU-ANSA	Scientific uncertainty and standards of evidence	Ongoing work on the application of science and use of evidence in policy making to further enhance the value of agency outputs to meet policy needs.	Eurofound, JRC, ECDC	
	Reconciliation economic and budgetary outturn	Carried-forward topic from 2019 due to absence of Accounting Officer in the meeting	SRB	
IAAN	Annual instalments	The current practice is, in case of contribution agreements and assigned revenues, the funds can only be committed when money is received. However, one article in FFR states that the whole amount as per agreement can be committed first, and the annual instalments received afterwards but is unclear how it works in practice.	SESAR, EBA (proposed by EUROJUST)	
	Brexit follow-up (incl. VAT matter)		EMA / ECHA	
	Conduct another banking survey		EMA, EUIPO	
	Continue cover SUMMA development	Ideas to improve SUMMA, current glitches, etc to be summoned by ECDC and sent to the SUMMA team.	ECDC / ECHA	
	Finance Lease agreements Accounting	Proposed by ECHA after the annual conference, based on interest expressed by the network	ECHA / INEA / EUROPOL	
PDN	New EUAN Strategy - performance management model	Develop a performance management model, which will make it possible to determine the rate of progress in implementing the EUAN's strategy The deliverable is a set of assessment criteria, milestones, KPIs, to monitor progress in implementing the EUAN strategy	This could be executed within a EUAN strategy implementation task force, or with a dedicated PDN group	MVC
	Environmental and sustainability planning, monitoring and reporting	Develop a proposal, following the work already started in EEA and Eurofound, to establish sustainability aspects for Agencies to plan, monitor and report. With the new Green Deal of the Commission, and its ambition to become climate neutral by 2030, the working group would concretely support the Agencies' efforts in that direction, starting from the environmental aspects identified within the sustainability categories.	EEA, Eurofound, CPVO + other members TBD Potential cooperation with the Greening network?	MVC

	ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES	LEADERS	STRATEGY AGENDA OBJECTIVE ¹
PDN	Impact of Agencies and new Commission priorities	Following the concept paper on impact, the working group could support the formulation of contribution of Agencies to Commission priorities and Sustainable Development Goals The deliverables could be exchange of best practices in formulating multi-annual objectives and specifying contribution to policy goals, for example through exchanges at programming document preparation phase The working group could contribute content to the overall EUAN workstream on advocating Agencies in the next MFF	This working group could be set up by policy clusters of Agencies, to maintain closer coherence of content.	MVC
	Communities of practice, exchange of best practices	Possibility to establish voluntary groups around topics of interest, if there is clear interest and one Agency is willing to take the lead and facilitate. Example topics below:	TBD based on a survey of priority topics and willing lead Agencies	MVC
		Programming Document and Consolidated Annual Activity Report preparation and communication		
		Monitoring and adjustment of work programme implementation during the year		
		Activity definition, budget, resourcing and management		
		Planning and monitoring tools		
		Performance management models, including objectives, milestones, KPIs, audits, evaluations, also considering the outcome of the audit from Court of Auditors		
		Implementation of management systems, including quality management and internal control standards. The exchange on QM is planned under the two current Community of Practice: Integrated Management Systems and Process Management, and may include not only exchange of practical experiences, but common training and on-demand on-site expert exchange.		
		New operating models, based on a view of the Agency as a system: ways to implement e.g. horizontal cooperation, lower level delegation, governance and decision making		
		Internal control framework implementation and risk management	Potential cooperation with Auditnet	
	PDN plenary meeting (May 2020 - exact date TBC)	The meeting would be held in workshop mode, with few agenda points and active participation, with the main goal of best practice sharing	ECHA	MVC

ANNEX 2

EU Agencies Network (EUAN) – 2020-2021

EUAN Networks

Network	Present Chair	Incoming Chairperson (ECHA)	Incoming term (From – To)
Heads of Agencies Network (HoAG)	ECDC A. Ammon	B. Hansen	01/03/2020 - 28/02/2021
Heads of Resources Network (HoR)	ECDC P. Molin	S. O'Malley	01/03/2020 - 28/02/2021

EUAN sub-networks

Sub-Network	Present Chair	Incoming Chairperson (ECHA)	Incoming term (From – To)
European Fee Receiving Agencies Network (EFRAN)	ECHA B. Hansen	-	01/03/2019 -
Inter-Agency Legal Network (IALN)	ECDC	M. Heikkilä	01/03/2020 - 28/02/2021
Heads of Communication and Information Network (HCIN)	ECDC	J. Salomaa-Valkamo	01/03/2020 - 28/02/2021
Performance Development Network (PDN)	ECDC	M. Giardini	01/03/2020 - 28/02/2021
Inter-Agency Appeal Proceedings Network (IAAPN)	EUIPO	A. Buchet	01/03/2020 - 28/02/2021
EU Agencies Network on Scientific Advice (EU-ANSA)	ECDC	ECDCM M. Catchpole	01/03/2020 - 28/02/2021
ICT Advisory Committee (ICTAC)	ECDC	EFSA A. Ciccarelli	01/03/2020 - 28/02/2021
Network of Agencies Procurement Officers (NAPO)	ECDC	Co-chaired by ECDC (TBC) and ECHA (Jaime Martin- Granizo)	01/03/2020 - 28/02/2021
Inter-Agency Accountants' Network (IAAN)	ECDC	S. Boursalian	01/03/2020 - 28/02/2021

ANNEX 3**Indicative timelines of network meetings -
2020-2021**