

ECHA Integrated Management System Strategy and Framework

I. INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM STRATEGY

The **objective of the Integrated Management System strategy** is to enable the achievement of ECHA's strategic priorities by ensuring a flexible and performance-based governance, well adapted to its priorities and ECHA's operational structure, while simultaneously recognising the legislative framework within which ECHA operates, including applicable requirements in the fields of internal control, quality, security, environmental and sustainability management.

The strategy includes ECHA's top management commitment and is supported by an Integrated Management System Framework. The framework further details the common principles and characteristics to be implemented in ECHA's operational and governance processes.

ECHA's management commits to:

1. **One-ECHA culture.** ECHA implements a culture of internal cooperation and alignment of goals and resources around common priorities. ECHA commits to effective execution across organisational boundaries, taking advantage of the available capabilities and maximising efficiencies. ECHA strives for continuous alignment with external contributors to its processes, leading to effective and efficient cooperation in developing outputs. ECHA implements a culture of delegation and trust, where decisions and controls are implemented at the lowest level compatible with the risks.
2. **Contribute to political priorities and values of the European Union** as regularly defined by the European Institutions.
3. **A quality mind-set** to provide services and products that consistently meet the needs and expectations of **ECHA regulatory partners and stakeholders**, including ECHA's governing body, institutional partners, industry, other relevant organisations and the citizens. ECHA maintains an open and transparent, two-way dialogue with its partners and stakeholders.
4. **An internal control system based on performance and efficiency without compromising the effectiveness, while maintaining compliance with legal, financial and regulatory requirements.** Effective and efficient internal control to be used to ensure proportionate controls based on a good cost/risk-benefit ratio, where strategic and operational opportunities and continual improvements are uncovered and pursued, and resources are allocated in the most economical manner contributing to the achievement of the Agency's strategic and EU political priorities.
5. **Flexibility, risk tolerance and simplicity.** ECHA strives to minimise bureaucracy and formalism, in executing its activities. ECHA endeavours to maximise the organisation's confidence in handling risks and opportunities, executing activities efficiently, adapting to circumstances, while complying with the applicable regulations and protecting legitimate interest of third parties.
6. **Promote transparency** as a default operating mode of the Agency.
7. **Ensure physical security** of staff and visitors, as well as **protection of confidential business information** and data entrusted to the Agency,

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8. **Increase sustainability in the day-to-day** operations of ECHA by carefully using natural resources and making corresponding choices when selecting products and services from external vendors.

The progress towards the achievement of the strategy will be measured annually. The assessment will be based on the criteria as stipulated in the following framework.

II. INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FRAMEWORK

ECHA's Integrated Management System Framework is the tool to implement ECHA's Integrated Management System Strategy through four high-level components: **(1) Governance, (2) Strategy, planning and risk management, (3) Operations and operational structure, and (4) Evaluation and improvement.**

Each component includes a number of respective principles and characteristics to be deployed into operational and governance processes, aiming to maintain oversight, track progress and adjust accordingly. The structure of the framework and its components follows the **Internal Control Framework's structure as stipulated in the Financial Regulation. Quality, environmental, security and business continuity management, sustainability and efficiency** principles, including a continual improvement focus are embedded as an integral part of that structure. There is an explicit focus on the need to ensure **both a high level of performance of ECHA and compliance** with relevant legislations and ECHA's Financial Regulation.

1. Governance

Component: 1.1 Mission and vision

Principles: Demonstrating what ECHA believes it is there for and what it wants to achieve, through its commitment to stakeholders and in alignment with ECHA's strategy.

Characteristics

Senior management is clearly defining the Agency's Mission and Vision in alignment to its strategy, and communicating them to staff and external stakeholders, aiming to ensure stakeholders' understanding and commitment.

Component: 1.2 Ethical and organisational values

Principles: Promoting commitment to transparency, integrity and ethical values

Characteristics

Senior management defines the ethical and organisational values it stands by, through an open and transparent dialogue, involving management, staff and stakeholders.

The Agency's management and staff members are aware and uphold the values through their own behaviour, working methods and decision-making.

The Agency deploys cost-effective measures to prevent harassment, conflict of interests and fraud, as well as to ensure whistleblowing channels exist.

Component: 1.3 Management responsibility

Principles: Establishing authority and responsibility to support accountability and empowerment, ensuring proportionality and decision-making at a level corresponding to the risk.

Characteristics

The Agency's management is committed to implementing and improving its Integrated Management System, combining the elements of quality, internal control, sustainability, environmental, security and business continuity aspects. The Integrated Management System is aligned with ECHA's strategy, mission and vision while minimising bureaucracy and formalism.

The Agency's management is supporting effective decision-making by clear definition of responsibilities, authority and appropriate segregation of duties, where decisions are taken at the lowest possible level corresponding to the process risk.

The Agency's management actively promotes staff empowerment and delegation of powers in order to contribute to the efficiency of processes, competence development and flexibility, while keeping the balance between cost, risk and benefit.

Component 1.4 Human Resources

Principles: Committing to competence, high performance and staff development as part of ECHA's Human Resource Strategy¹

Characteristics

The Agency's management continuously enhances staff and competence development, management and leadership capabilities, needed for the achievement of the strategic priorities of the organisation, thus effectively and efficiently contributing to a motivating and flexible work environment with focus on high performance and adequate work-life balance for staff.

Senior management is ensuring that the available competencies as well as staff selection and recruitment contribute to the achievement of the Agency's strategic plan and priorities, via regularly identifying competency gaps and needs, and monitoring and assessing staff performance in an objective, equal and transparent way.

¹ Management Board document MB/52/2018.

Component 1.5 Stakeholders and partners engagement

Principles: Maintaining an open and transparent, two-way dialogue with the Agency's regulatory partners and stakeholders, including for effective on-boarding of new tasks

Characteristics

ECHA's engagement with regulatory partners and stakeholders is based on the Agency's corporate values and their involvement in the Agency's operations, enhanced through an effective communication strategy.

ECHA's internal and external communication is consistent, cost-effective and relevant to the audience being targeted to ensure internal and external partners and stakeholders can both obtain and provide sufficient and timely information for the performance of their responsibilities.

The Agency is monitoring and adjusting its stakeholders' and partners' policy in line with its evolving role aiming for synergies and consistency between its legislations, new and existing tasks, where common objectives and shared tasks are becoming more frequent between ECHA and its external stakeholders and partners.

2. Strategy, planning and risk management

Component 2.1. Priorities planning and resource allocation

Principles: Demonstrating commitment to objectives, priorities and respective steering including activity-based resource allocation.

Characteristics

The Agency's management under the supervision of the Management Board is defining ECHA's strategic and operational priorities, both positive and negative, and their implementation in view of the set political priorities and values of the European Union, as well as ECHA's strategy, mission, vision and values.

The Senior management is defining the strategic and annual priorities clearly in a way that makes it possible to measure their outcome and impact, identify the risks related to them and cascade them to all levels of the organisation.

The Agency is ensuring that human and financial resources are allocated based on the Agency's strategic priorities, activities and objectives in line with the principles of effectiveness, efficiency and economy.

Component 2.2. Risk management

Principles: Identifying and analysing risks and significant changes, uncovering opportunities and using cost-risk-benefit analysis to remove unnecessary controls.

Characteristics

The Agency has adequate mechanisms in place to mitigate risks and ensure uninterrupted operations, continuity, security and everyday protection of the Agency's staff, assets and information. Corporate

risk assessment includes all elements of ECHA Integrated Management System and all types of risks².

The Agency is integrating risk management into the annual planning and reporting cycle, embedding it in the decision-making process at all levels, using cost/risk-benefit analysis and other appropriate techniques at process and project level, aiming at higher risk tolerance where opportunities are pursued, and designing control activities in a cost-effective and efficient way, proportionate to the underlying risks³.

3. Operations and operational structure

Component 3.1. Activity management

Principles: Defining the activities, processes and their interactions, ensuring one-ECHA cooperation and alignment to the strategic priorities to ensure objectives are met, and allow for measurement of outcome and impact.

Characteristics

The Agency defines its activities, processes and their interactions in alignment with its strategic priorities and objectives, aiming to clearly identify the outcomes, the expected performance and efficiency, as well as intermediate and long-term impact.

The Agency ensures that its activities and processes are managed towards achieving effectiveness and efficiency, executed through one-ECHA contribution by relevant competencies and functions, and they deliver quality output according to ECHA possibilities and stakeholder needs and allow for efficiencies and synergies both internally and with external parties.

ECHA aims at ensuring that its suppliers are managed in the most cost-effective and economic way in line with the applicable environmental and sustainability criteria.

Component 3.2. Information and data management

Principles: Aiming at effective, efficient, integrated information, communication and data solutions

Characteristics

The Agency is ensuring that its technology, information and data solutions are aligned to its strategy, including its data management strategy, are well integrated to support efficiency and automation of the Agency's activities, while increasing the knowledge base for more effective regulatory work, sharing information on safe use of chemicals, proactively making the data re-usable to target users, better leveraging the data for stakeholders and partners through interoperability, providing a "digital by default" and paperless environment, where information is secure, protected and, where relevant, submitted only once while serving multiple purposes.

² Risks could be broadly defined as follows: governance and strategic risks, operational risks, human resources risks, risks of fraud, risks of conflict of interests, business continuity risks, security risks, reputational risks, communication and information risks, risks related to legality and regularity, external risks, as well as significant external and internal changes that may pose both risks and opportunities.

³ Pursuant to the provisions of Article 30 FR on efficient internal control.

The Agency is ensuring that the technology, assets and the IT systems used for running its processes are reliable, secure, comply with the applicable legislation, provide adequate audit trails and are in line with the principles of data protection, availability, confidentiality and integrity.

Component 3.3. Change management

Principles: Aiming at agility and flexibility to respond to changes while ensuring continuity

Characteristics

The Agency's management system and operational structure support flexibility and agility in response to changes in the external and internal environment while maintaining effectiveness and increasing efficiency.

The Agency is assessing external and internal major changes as a result of evolving stakeholders' requirements, which may potentially have an impact on the Agency's priorities, and consecutively on its strategies and on ECHA Integrated Management System.

4. Evaluation and improvement

Component 4.1. Performance management

Principles: Aiming at performance-based management where continual improvement is pursued and ex-ante and ex-post controls are risk-based

Characteristics

The Agency aims at having adequate and performance-based monitoring and measurement structures, including procedures for monitoring the effectiveness and efficiency of its operations to ensure reliability of reporting, accuracy, completeness and timeliness of data and related information on the use of the Agency's resources, activities, processes and products.

The Agency aims at having adequate ex-ante and ex-post controls which are proportionate to the risk, to detect, assess and manage gaps, non-conformities, complaints, deficiencies, as well as continual improvements.

Component 4.2. Assessments, audits and evaluations

Principles: Conducting risk-based assessments, audits and evaluations, driven by operational and strategic needs to identify gaps, assess benefits, impact and added value of specific ECHA activities

Characteristics

Evaluations of strategies, activities, programmes and projects are driven by ECHA's strategic and operational needs and are performed to assess the benefits, results, gaps, impacts and the added value of those activities for ECHA's partners and stakeholders.

The Internal Audit Capability, the Evaluation Coordination Function⁴, the Internal Control Officer, the Quality Manager and other qualified staff members supporting audits, assessments and ex-post evaluations are providing independent and objective assurance, as well as performance consulting, based on risk assessment, designed to add value and improve the operations of the Agency.

Senior management is reviewing periodically and carrying out a management review on the effectiveness, adequacy and suitability of the Agency's Integrated Management System in line with the existing strategic priorities, and the applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

⁴ The Evaluation Coordination Function is responsible for coordinating and performing ex-post evaluations.