

## Note to the Management Board

### **EFSA final Programming Document 2017-2019**

### **Draft Programming Document 2018-2020**

### **Statement of revenues and expenditures 2019**

#### **1. Objective**

The following documents are submitted for possible adoption by the Management Board:

- Final Programming Document 2019-2021 (supported by a separate document including a detailed Statement of revenue and expenditure for 2019);
- Draft Programming Document 2020-2022;
- Statement of Revenues and Expenditures 2019 (Budget 2019).

#### **2. Background and Scope**

In January 2018, the Management Board adopted the draft Programming Document 2018-2021, in compliance with the requirements of the Programming Document common template of the EU Agencies' Network. That document continued as in the previous year to build the multiannual programme of EFSA to its strategic objectives defined with the adoption of the EFSA 2020 Strategy.

The draft Programming Document 2018-2021 included:

- The annual programme for 2018,
- The draft annual work programme for 2019, and
- An extended timeframe of the multi annual programme, until 2021 included.

During 2018, the Commission prepared a proposal on transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain<sup>1</sup> amending Regulation (EC) No 178/2002, which provides for enhanced transparency, wider access to relevant scientific evidence and increased involvement of Member States in the Authority's governance, and pooling of independent expertise, and strengthened risk communication; all these changes foreseen to be supported by increased funding from the EU budget. Pending the outcome of the legislative procedure, the Commission invited the Authority to include in the Programming document a reference to the Commission proposal and to reflect its impact on the resources multiannual planning should the proposal be approved. Accordingly, EFSA now presents to the Management Board a set of programming documents which together comprise EFSA's work programme for the period 2019-2022, providing for both scenarios of approval and non-approval of the Commission's proposal.

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<sup>1</sup> Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain amending Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 [on general food law], Directive 2001/18/EC [on the deliberate release into the environment of GMOs], Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 [on GM food and feed], Regulation (EC) No 1831/2003 [on feed additives], Regulation (EC) No 2065/2003 [on smoke flavourings], Regulation (EC) No 1935/2004 [on food contact materials], Regulation (EC) No 1331/2008 [on the common authorisation procedure for food additives, food enzymes and food flavourings], Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 [on plant protection products] and Regulation (EU) No 2015/2283 [on novel foods], of 11.04.2018, COM(2018) 179 final.

The set includes two documents, the final Programming Document 2019-2021 (which closes the 2019 annual programming cycle initiated in January 2018), and the draft Programming Document 2020-2022 (which initiates the 2020 annual programming cycle).

The programming documents are fully aligned to EFSA Strategy 2020. In addition, they also address the Commission Opinion<sup>2</sup> received in September 2018 (see annex 1 below). Please note that the two documents overlap and coincide to a large extent in view of the intersecting timeframe. While this is the result of requirements of the currently applicable template, it may occasionally make the reading complicated. For a more convenient review, please note that the parts where the two documents differ are:

- The annual work-programmes (section III in each of the two documents and its Appendices A and B, while Appendices C and D are common);
- The resource annexes (Annex II to IV in each of the two documents);
- The annual grants and procurement work programme (Annex IX in each of the two documents).

Regarding the statement of revenues and expenditures, the structure remained the same both for what concerns revenues and expenditures. In the statement of expenditures, the heading and budgetary comment for budget item 1176 has been updated compared to 2017.

### **3. Next Steps**

Following the adoption by the Management Board (subject to possible revisions that may be made at the Board's meeting), the next steps in the process are envisaged as follows:

- The Final Programming Document 2019-2021 will be published on EFSA's website and submitted to the EU Institutions by the end of January 2019 and become the reference for guiding EFSA's work programme implementation in 2019.
- The Draft Programming Document 2020-2022 will be further processed as follows:
  - By the end of January 2019: the document will be updated as per the actual 2018 execution data, and submitted to the EU Institutions (i.e. Commission, Parliament and Council);
  - During 2019: the document will be sent for consultation to EFSA's stakeholders, namely Sister Agencies, Advisory Forum and Stakeholders' Bureau and will be reviewed to address the opinion that will be received from the Commission and to reflect other important developments occurred during the 2019 consultation;
  - By December 2019: submitted for final adoption to the Management Board.

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(<sup>2</sup>) Commission Opinion C(2018)5920 of the 13.9.2018 on the draft Programming Document 2019-2021 of the European Food Safety Authority

## Annex 1: Key EC comments on draft SPD 2019-2021 and EFSA follow up on final PD 2019-2021 and draft PD 2020-2022

EC opinion para no.	Commission's opinion on the draft Programming Document 2019-2021	EFSA's response
5	<i>The Commission's proposal on transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain<sup>[4]</sup> amending Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 provides for enhanced transparency, wider access to relevant scientific evidence and increased involvement of Member States in the Authority's governance and pooling of independent expertise; all these changes being supported by increased funding from the EU budget. Pending the outcome of the legislative procedure, the Commission invites the Authority to include in section I of the Programming Document (general context) a reference to the Commission proposal. The Commission will regularly inform the Authority on the state of play of this proposal in order to enable it to adequately plan.</i>	Extended reference to the Commission's proposal for a Regulation on transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain is included in the section I (General Context) of the Programming Document. The opportunities for EFSA to further enhance the transparency of its scientific processes, the sustainability of the risk assessment system and the risk communication, are outlined. Despite the uncertainty on the outcome of the discussions on the Commission's proposal these opportunities show the direction of the future EFSA's work plan development.
8	<i>The Commission notes with interest the Authority's performance indicators related to the multiannual part of the Programming Document (Appendix C) and to the annual part (section III). The Commission recognises that compared to the previous Programming document 2018-2020, additional baselines, actual values and targets have been defined. As regards the performance indicators in Appendix C, a number of baselines and targets are still foreseen to be defined. The Commission acknowledges that the Programming Document was prepared at the end of 2017 and asks the Authority to integrate the latest figures in the final version of the Programming Document, in particular for the indicators on people and culture (p. 64).</i>	Addressed for all the indicators pending measurement end 2017 and for those to be defined in 2018.
9	<i>A number of performance indicators in the Programming document are based on specific indices used by the Authority which are not self-explanatory (e.g. service delivery index p. 49; transformation performance index p. 50; media impact index p. 53; European interoperability framework index p. 56; data quality index p. 56; efficiency indices p. 63; management feedback survey p. 64; for measurement of satisfaction via feedback surveys "positive and relative qualitative improvement (with regard to follow-up actions)" pp. 52, 55, 57). The Commission invites the Authority to strive towards indicators and targets which are easy to understand and to provide further explanations where necessary.</i>	Further explanations are provided below and in the Programming Document to ensure the clear understanding of the indicators. The aim of these indicators is to more comprehensively measure performance in a given area, where a single measurement would not be sufficient. Efforts will be made in the new EFSA strategic cycle to further simplify this.  <b>Service delivery index:</b> it is used to monitor 4 dimensions of service delivery to understand the degree of service performance in regards to the end users. Specifically it controls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perfect Services (% of services which consistently achieve or over-achieve their targeted Service Level Agreements)</li> <li>• End user satisfaction for services (top-two box)</li> <li>• Project Stakeholder Satisfaction (top-two box)</li> <li>• Business Service Owner Satisfaction (top-two box)</li> </ul>

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		<p><b>Transformation performance index:</b> used to monitor on which degree the organizational development projects with an IT component are able to achieve the expected benefits. It monitors the following dimensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % transformation projects supported by an accepted and monitored business case</li> <li>• % growth projects supported by an accepted and monitored business case</li> <li>• Governance Quality Index (monthly)</li> <li>• Perfect Financial Spending (spend what was planned to be spent when it was planned to be spent)</li> <li>• Perfect Projects (% projects on time, in full, on budget, with quality)</li> </ul> <p><b>Media impact index:</b> This index captures the favourability of the media to EFSA's scientific outputs, in terms of volume of the coverage and qualitative perception.</p> <p><b>European interoperability framework index:</b> This indicator captures the extent to which EFSA's capability in data interoperability improves. The measurement will be based on the Interoperability maturity model according to EU guidelines (European Interoperability Framework for European public services/Interoperability maturity model). Every year, EFSA will determine which of the 25 European Interoperability Framework recommendations on interoperability will be applicable to EFSA.</p> <p><b>Data quality index:</b> This indicator measures the extent to which EFSA achieves and improves the quality of its data. The indicator will constitute a selection of three data quality dimensions for EFSA scientific data collections: Accuracy - Data plausible, representative, well-coded; Completeness - All information required/recommended is reported; Timeliness - information is reported according to deadlines and update according to agreed timelines). The measurement is performed for structured data collections in the scope of the Framework Partnership Agreement (Pesticide residues, chemical contaminants and additive occurrence, zoonoses, veterinary medicinal products).</p>

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		<p><b>Efficiency indices:</b> The Efficiency Index cluster is composed by three Performance Indicators that highlight the maturity and the performance of EFSA's processes and project. The Indicator "Mature processes: improved index" will be based on the work that EFSA is carrying out in assessing the "productivity" of its processes to set improvement targets. The Indicator "Process maturity index" aims at evaluating the maturity of EFSA processes (e.g.: level of control, level of standardisation, level of documentation available, maturity of the evaluation system in place, ...) The Indicator "Project: Improved Index" aims at evaluating the status of EFSA's ongoing projects. Project managers assign a score (on track/moderate deviation/relevant deviation) to the following dimensions of each project: TIME, BUDGET, FTEs, QUALITY, and SCOPE. The number of the "on track" is then compared against the total.</p> <p><b>Management feedback survey:</b> EFSA conducts a biannual Management Survey aiming at shaping a development programme to support manager's individual development. The survey is based on key progress indicators set for managers, with a threshold ranging from 60 to 80% of positive response required. The results of the survey are used as one of the key elements to evaluate manager's performance and ensuing development programme.</p> <p><b>Measurement of satisfaction via feedback surveys "positive and relative qualitative improvement (with regard to follow-up actions):</b> EFSA sends a survey to a wide range of its stakeholders and customers (such as the Management Board, the Sister Agencies, the National Authorities, the experts,...), asking for their feedback on a series of topic connected with EFSA's five strategic Objectives. The specific key performance indicator is connected on the Strategic Objective 1 and in particular with EFSA's capacity to produce fit-for-purpose scientific advices.</p>
10	<p><i>A number of the performance indicators in the Programming Document are based on survey results. The Commission invites the Authority to make sure that survey results which are used as key performance indicators are representative, to present a general overview of EFSA's activity.</i></p>	<p>The survey has been designed to address satisfaction indicators that are present in the Programming Document and that can be addressed via survey. It targets all the survey needs that are identified in SO1, SO2, SO3 and SO4 by compiling a number of questions which are directly linked to the relevant performance indicator, and in addition tries to identify other key areas where it will be beneficial for the organisation to receive feedback from its Customers/Stakeholders.</p> <p>To ensure that the feedback received is representative and substantiated, in those cases where the response rate of a given group is statistically low, no conclusions are drawn from them.</p>

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11	<i>The indicators on "strengthened capacity using innovative ways" (p. 60) and "fostered use of new approaches and enhanced ability to anticipate and respond to risks" (p. 62) refer to further development in the Authority's different areas of work. The Commission points out that such development needs to be implemented taking into account relevance and proportionality, considering the added value and costs. Some innovative ways might not be relevant or of significant added value in some areas of the Authority's work. The existence of these indicators should not lead to automatic implementation of innovative ways, which often represent additional costs, when they are not relevant or do not bring well identified added value.</i>	The innovative/development activities relevant to these indicators are subject to scrutiny within EFSA through a portfolio prioritisation exercise occurring during the process of building the multiannual work programme. Elements such as relevance to strategy and expected benefits, overall cost, time to finish, and risks, are taken into account in order to allocate resources to these initiatives and include them in the EFSA.
12	<i>Also the indicator "increase in the use of cross-cutting guidance documents" (p. 62) should not lead to automatic implementation without checking relevance and proportionality of such increase.</i>	This indicator highlights the need to make use of the added value cross-cutting guidance documents bring to EFSA's work, knowing that the baseline is not optimal and should be improved. As a consequence in page 26 it is stated: "During this period, increased emphasis will be placed on the implementation of existing guidance through the production of supporting documentation to facilitate the work of the panels and associated training". The outcome of this effort is expected to be measured through the indicator.
14	<i>The Commission supports the Authority's cooperation with other EU agencies in order to achieve synergies and efficiencies on both scientific and organisational aspects. It encourages coordination and collaboration on cross-cutting areas especially antimicrobial resistance in particular with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) and European Medicines Agency, in respect of the limits set by each agency's mission.</i>	In the area of <b>scientific matters, please see comment 16.</b> In the area of <b>organisational matters</b> , where possible, EFSA collaborates with sister agencies in areas such as recruitment and procurement. EFSA is currently finalizing with ECHA a joint call for interest for toxicologists, and several joint calls have been launched and processed.
15	<i>The Commission welcomes the Authority's activities on endocrine disruptors and its intensive collaboration with ECHA on this particular subject. The Commission invites the Authority to initiate, where appropriate, actions to facilitate alignment of the conclusions of the relevant scientific committees in both agencies on the endocrine-disrupting properties of the same substance. The same alignment of the conclusions of the relevant scientific committees in both EFSA and ECHA is expected on other hazardous properties of substances: Carcinogens (C), Mutagens (M), Toxic for Reproduction (R), Persistent Bioaccumulative and Toxic (PBT), Very Persistent and Very Bioaccumulative (vPvB), Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP). Wherever an alignment cannot be ensured, the rationale for the different evaluations should be appropriately explained and communicated.</i>	EFSA is actively engaging in collaborative projects with ECHA and also the Member States to ensure alignment of conclusions. An example is the EFSA's proposal for a pilot project on Bisphenol S, considering that it is under the substance evaluation procedure in ECHA. A mandate is expected in this area for the evaluation of Bisphenol S as food contact materials. It is expected that with the experience gained this could be extended towards a bisphenol strategy.



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16	<i>The Commission further welcomes the emphasis given to scientific advice to be provided in the form of rapid risk assessments during [food-borne] emergencies in cooperation with ECDC (p. 15) and to development of methodologies enabling back and forward traceability of foods following a foodborne outbreak (p.21). EFSA and ECDC are invited to continue strengthening their collaboration for the speedy production of Joint Rapid Outbreak Assessments in the area of food-borne outbreaks.</i>	EFSA continues on the same path: Scientific advice will continue to be provided for collecting and analysing whole genome sequencing (WGS) data in the joint ECDC EFSA molecular typing database, as well as in the form of rapid risk assessments during outbreaks, both in cooperation with ECDC. In the area of antimicrobial resistance, legislation on harmonised monitoring will be reviewed, and work will continue on the integrated analysis of antimicrobial consumption and antimicrobial resistance along the food chain in collaboration with EMA and ECDC.
17	<i>The Commission welcomes the contribution of EFSA to the development and operation of the Information Platform for Chemical Monitoring (IPCHEM) provided so far and its intention to transfer metadata from EFSA collections to IPCHEM by 2018. The Commission, in line with its previous request from 2014, invites EFSA to continue leading the module for food and feed data and make all EFSA's collections of occurrence data searchable and accessible via IPCHEM by 2019.</i>	Noted. EFSA's 'Data DoI project' aims to facilitate this endeavour; the goal of the project is to establish an approach to proactively publish monitoring and survey data at the lowest level of granularity.
20	<i>The Commission welcomes EFSA's description of its "Risk management and internal control" (Annex VIII) including its transition towards the new internal control framework and the establishment of a list of indicators suitable to monitor the internal control framework (table 31). The Commission however regrets that no information is given on the current risks identified and the actions planned to mitigate these risks.</i>	The Annex VIII Risks of the Programming document is updated and table 47 includes risks identified and respective mitigating actions in place and planned, is now included. The risks associated with the relevant EFSA processes are in the areas of independence (competing interest management), human resources (scientific competencies selection), information management (information security) and Finance (grant & procurement procedures).
21	<i>The details on the resource allocation are appreciated (section II.3.2, section III and Annex I). The Authority is invited to provide in the final version of the Programming Document also the information in Appendix B – Resource allocation per strategic objectives in 2019. The fact that resources are allocated per strategic objective, with certain activities contributing to more than one strategic objective, makes it however sometimes difficult to oversee the resources allocated to these activities. In particular, data collection is referred to both under strategic objective 2 ("widen EFSA's evidence base and optimise access to its data", pp. 18 and 40) and under strategic objective 4 ("prepare for future risk assessment challenges", pp. 21 and 43). It is not always easy to understand the criteria for listing some data collection activities under one strategic objective or the other. For example molecular typing methods are listed under both strategic objectives. The Commission points out that some of the work which is currently considered to address future risk assessment challenges might become after some years standard permanent work under strategic objective 2 or other sections. Also the development of guidance is referred to both under strategic objective 1 and under strategic objective 4.</i>	Appendix B of the annual Work plan 2019 is updated with the resource allocated per strategic objective in 2019. Indeed, data collection for risk assessment is considered in SO2 (evidence management) while possible data collections that feed the needs for preparedness are considered und SO4 (prepare for future risk assessment). All the activities related to preparedness for the future are considered under SO4. Specific mandates linked to "business as usual" activities will then be allocated to the respective SO. This allows EFSA to maintain an overview and distinction of resources allocated to "business as usual" and "development" activities. Especially the works on the development of guidance is distinguished to "guidance for the administrative support of applicants" in the regulated products area, and were considered under SO1, while all other guidance development is considered under SO4 where the development of methodologies and harmonisation is included. <b>From now on all work related to guidance will be considered under Strategic Objective no. 4.</b>

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22	<p><i>The Commission notes an increase of the budget for strategic objective 1 (general risk assessment; regulated products evaluation; communications and engagement) from EUR 30.05 million in 2018 to EUR 33.52 million in 2019, p. 39. This increase concerns mainly the budget for regulated products evaluation (from EUR 16.45 million in 2018 to EUR 19.07 million in 2019, p. 39); versus a decrease of budget allocated to build the EU's scientific assessment capacity and knowledge community (from EUR 9.18 million in 2018 to EUR 8.06 million in 2019, p. 42) and to prepare for future risk assessment challenges (from EUR 8.15 million to EUR 7.55 million, p. 44). The Commission understands that these decreases aim at ensuring that the Authority will be able to deliver on its core tasks: the delivery of general scientific advice and opinions on regulated products, which are both crucial for the risk managers. In this respect, the Commission highlights that its Proposal COM(2018) 179 for a Regulation on transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain recognises the cooperation with Member States as an area needing better funding in the future and also provides for additional funding for the Authority's internal scientific capacity. The Authority will need to update its future programming to reflect the eventual outcome of the legislative process on this proposal.</i></p>	<p>The eventual outcome of the legislative process on the Commission proposal COM(2018) 179 for a Regulation on transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain, is reflected in the section Resources outlook and in the Annexes II-Financial resources 2019-2021 and Annex III-Human resources 2019-2021 quantitative of the Programming document 2019-2021.</p> <p>The allocation by strategic objective is not yet included in this early stage, but will be in the preparation of the final Programming Document 2020-2022 subject to the approval of the Commission proposal.</p>
23	<p><i>The strategic objective 5 "create an environment that reflects EFSA's values" aims in particular to enhance the Authority's accountability framework (governance, assurance management, result based management, quality management system) and its internal capabilities to support the delivery of the Authority's strategic objectives 1 to 4. The human and financial resources allocated to strategic objective 5 are significant (EUR 28.4 million in 2018 and EUR 29.5 million in 2019; 177 full time equivalents in 2018 and 182 in 2019). The Commission recognises that part of these resources is meant to contribute to the achievement of important objectives such as increased transparency and efficient management of independence. However, given the quite comprehensive character of strategic objective 5, better justification of the high level of human and financial resources would be appreciated.</i></p>	<p>Strategic Objective no. 5 covers a number of business cases aiming at improving transparency and independence, and increasing efficiency via digital collaboration. Each of these is outlined in the Programming Document (main text and Appendix D- list of projects, with descriptions on the resource investment and expected outputs and benefits). The increase of these resources is dedicated to projects, through the programmes (Information Management Programme, Expertise Management Programme, ARchiTecture Programme) that directly contribute to the final mission of EFSA.</p>



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24	<p><i>According to table 34, support activities represent 27% of the staff population (forecast for 2018). The Commission considers this percentage still to be high and encourages the Authority to continue reducing the (share of) support activities in favour of the operational activities.</i></p>	<p>It should be noted that following the Activity Based Budgeting logic, support activities include the activities of staff of such nature performed throughout the organisation and not only in "administrative" functions, i.e. including coordination activities, management activities, etc. in core operational Departments and Units.</p> <p>Moreover, EFSA has been following a path of centralising support functions which has generated overall administrative and cost reductions (e.g. as evidenced by project closing reports and ex-post evaluations) but which is not visible via time-tracking statistics since they are now booked as support activities whereas previously they were booked (erroneously) in the operations activities by the de-centralised staff. Examples: already centralised planning, monitoring and procurement administrative support (Global Performance Services and Finance), and travel planning for working groups (Corporate Services) and future scientific training (Human Capital will experience an increase when centralising scientific training).</p> <p>In addition, EFSA classifies under support activities some development activities that aim to improve overall efficiency and effectiveness (e.g. New World of Work project, Data Management and Data Analysis Virtualisation, Digital collaboration, Bike project) as well as other corporate activities not specifically linked to any specific core process (e.g. EU Agency Network coordination, External Evaluation, 178 preparedness activities). The amount of resources allocated to these activities in the period 2017-2020 has been and is expected to be particularly high and exceeds the savings on the pure support activities that have been implemented by centralising planning, monitoring and procurement administrative support (evidenced by project closing report and ex-post evaluation), centralising travel planning for working groups and, in the future, centralising scientific training.</p>
25	<p><i>The Commission invites the Authority to align its final Programming Document with the levels of human and financial resources for 2019 set out in the final voted budget of the EU and for 2020 with the updated financial programming as set out in the legislative financial statements accompanying the Commission's proposal COM(2018) 179. The Commission acknowledges that the programming of activities beyond 2020 is entirely indicative and can be given only for illustrative purposes given that the discussions in the European Parliament and the Council on the Commission proposal<sup>[5]</sup> for the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 of 2 May 2018 have just started.</i></p>	<p>The human and financial resources for 2019 are aligned to the final voted budget of the EU, while for 2020 are aligned with the updated financial programming as set out in the legislative financial statements accompanying the Commission's proposal COM(2018) 179. These changes are reflected in the section 3 "Resources outlook" and in the Annexes II-Financial resources 2019-2021 and Annex III-Human resources 2019-2021 quantitative of the Programming Document 2019-2021.</p>

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26	<i>The 2017 figures from the "Overview of past and current situations" under section II. 3.1 of the Programming Document need to be updated according to the actual budget implementation.</i>	Done.
27	<i>The Commission takes note that the requested EU contribution for the year 2019 exceeds the amount foreseen in the Commission Communication COM(2013) 519<sup>[6]</sup> by almost EUR 2.5 million. The additional funds are requested to recruit 25 additional contract agents (CA) to cope with new tasks in the fields of novel foods (+ 10 CA), pesticides (+10 CA) and plant health (+ 5 CA). As set out in the draft budget 2019, the Commission can accept that the Authority recruits 6 additional contract agents and that consequently the 2019 EU contribution is increased by EUR 222.000 to cover their cost for 2019.</i>	Calls for interest have been published and the selection process should start asap for the recruitment of the 6 additional contract agents. However, the limited number of additional contract agents accepted by the Commission will impact EFSA's capacity to stand with the new tasks in the fields mentioned. EFSA invites the Commission to consider adequate matching between new tasks and resources through proper assessment and ensuing fiche financière. Resources were temporarily shifted to these areas, resulting in a de-prioritisation of other areas from which resources were withdrawn.
28	<i>The Commission takes note that also the staffing level for the year 2019 is not fully in line with the Commission Communication COM(2013)519. The Authority requests one additional temporary agent (TA) post (AD 8) for the Shared Support Office of the EU Agencies Network. The Authority intends to host as of 2019 the Head of this Shared Support Office. No additional budget related to this establishment plan post is requested as the EU agencies will mutualise the costs. The Commission accepts this request.</i>	EFSA welcomes the comment; it is worth noting that EFSA's establishment plan will include an additional AD8 for Shared Support Office. Although no additional Title 1 budget will be required as EFSA will recover from other agencies, the position will appear on EFSA's establishment plan as an increase.

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29	<p><i>The Commission takes note that on 31 December 2017 there were 16 posts vacant in the Authority (12 TA positions, 2 CA positions and 2 seconded national expert positions) against 20 vacant positions on 31 December 2016 and 31 vacant positions on 31 December 2015. The vacancy rate while decreasing remains significant. The Commission invites the Agency to increase its efforts to fill in the posts as soon as possible in order to ensure a full use of available resources, especially considering the additional 6 Contract Agent positions that have been authorised for 2019.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Out of 12 vacant Temporary Agent posts, 4 had been kept vacant in order to comply with the 2018 target of reduction (-1% corresponding to -4 Temporary Agent posts). The 8 truly vacant posts within the Temporary Agent and Contract Agents populations were the result of turnover/recruitment and could not be filled for budgetary constraints. The mechanical increase in staff cost stemming from indexation and steps is effectively undermining the possibility to fill-in the establishment plan. In order to compare 2017 and 2018, in August 2018 we have the following figures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment Plan (Officials + Temporary Agent): 312 posts occupied out of 319 (7 posts are empty). In 2018, EFSA targeted an occupancy rate of 314 Officials + Temporary Agent on average, keeping 6 posts vacant.</li> <li>• Contract Agents: 121 posts occupied out of 125 (4 posts are vacant). In 2018, EFSA targeted and occupancy rate of 121 Contract Agents on average, keeping 4 empty posts.</li> <li>• Seconded National Experts: 12 posts occupied out of 15. In the coming months two new Seconded National Experts will join EFSA (a third one from Albania, who had confirmed EFSA's offer, just rejected our proposal). The occupancy rate is high considering that the recruitment process of Seconded National Experts is complex and experiences long delays due to lengthy administrative procedures in National Authorities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Every year EFSA has a certain number of vacancies that are filled in by internal candidates (i.e. Contract Agents getting Temporary Agent contracts or Temporary Agent /AST getting Temporary Agent /AD contracts). This has an impact as it generates lower occupancy rate levels</p>
30	<p><i>The Commission notes a growing number of AST positions in the Authority. It should be recalled that the distribution of AD/AST posts depends on the operational profile of the agency. Before reducing available AD level resources, EFSA should carefully consider its operational needs.</i></p>	<p>The AST/AD ratio from 2016 to 2018 (source: EFSA Annual Activity Reports) shows a reduction in AST filled positions (from 33.7% to 32.7% of the establishment plan population) and an increase in the AD filled positions (from 66.3% to 67.7% of the establishment plan population).</p>

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31	<i>In Annex IV on the recruitment policy it is stated that posts for technical assistants who provide assistance in general and budgetary processes and coordinate administrative work are typically filled by grades AST 4 to AST 9 and FG III. The Commission would like to recall that since the entry into force of the 2014 amendments to the Staff Regulations<sup>(7)</sup>, these profiles should mainly be recruited in AST 1 and AST 2. Only very specialised profiles with a minimum years of experience should be recruited in AST 4 and not above.</i>	Annex IV attributes AST4-AST9 and FGIII.8-12 to jobs of a technical nature, involving "the drafting of documents and assistance in the implementation of policies and procedures in areas such as administration, law, finance, science and communication, following advice from their managers." These are jobs requiring a certain degree of autonomy. Technical assistants may also "provide assistance in general and budgetary processes and coordinate administrative work". These jobs are of a technical rather than clerical nature, and do require a number of years of experience. EFSA complies with the requirements of the Staff Regulations (Regulation 13) and will review the draft policy to remove any ambiguity.
32	<i>The Commission notes that the Authority employs interim staff for two reasons: 1) To replace staff members who are absent for sickness, parental leave and maternity leave and 2) for ad hoc temporary support for specific projects. The Commission would appreciate further detail on the latter category (number of interim staff in 2017 and average length of interim).</i>	In 2017, 40 interim staff were employed, out of which 12 were providing support to cross-functional projects. The remaining were covering for parental and maternity leave and long term sickness. In 2018 EFSA has taken measures to reduce the number of interim staff, and currently 20 interim staff are employed, out of which 5 are assigned to provide administrative support to cross-functional projects. The remaining interim staff are covering for maternity, parental leave and positions that are under selection. The average length of interim staff is 18 months.
33	<i>The Commission welcomes the Authority's initiative on the managerial development path. The Commission questions however if having 17 people in 2017 in the "managerial pipeline" will not give excessive expectations to the concerned staff taking into account the number of management positions that may be vacant in the near future.</i>	EFSA welcomes the comment and is piloting an alternative career pathing for individuals with high potential such as a Lead Experts function, and is considering replacing the managerial pipeline with a "Career pipeline". Members of the managerial pipeline are not all interested in the managerial path per se, but are seeking recognition of their higher expertise in scientific topics. (EFSA is also considering a rotation mechanism for those interested in being exposed to the managerial duties).

EC opinion para no.	Commission's opinion on the draft Programming Document 2019-2021	EFSA's response
34	<p><i>As in previous years, the Commission invites the Authority to reinforce measures to attract staff from more Member States, especially with the new recruitments expected to come, in order to eliminate the site-effect (43.6% of Italian staff on 31/12/2017). The tendency is going upwards (42% on 31/12/2014).</i></p>	<p>EFSA's focus is on excellence and recruiting the highest talent, while deploying considerable efforts to ensure diversity and attract candidates from all member states. Since January 2017, 77 offers were sent out, out of which 13 were declined. The candidates were from the following countries: Hungary, Croatia, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Poland and Italy.</p> <p>Measures that are currently being considered by EFSA to further attract staff are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More intensive use of the agency recruitment board and of social media/tools (LinkedIn included),</li> <li>• Work more proactively with MS focal points to disseminate EFSA vacancies, and reach out to a larger number of institutions and universities,</li> <li>• Emphasis on traineeship programme as the future talents of EFSA,</li> <li>• Career fairs – where possible, attend career fairs in targeted Member States to identify potential candidates.</li> </ul>