Introduction to the Commission Roadmap towards phasing out animal testing for chemical safety assessment and its implementation

EFSA-ECHA workshop 2026
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Introduction

- The European Commission adopted on 1 June 2026 its **roadmap towards phasing out animal testing for chemical safety assessments** (Communication C(2026)3497 and Staff Working Document SWD(2026)144)
- The roadmap provides a plan how to reach the **long-term policy goal of phasing out animal testing**
- The roadmap is applicable to all **relevant pieces of EU chemical legislation** that might lead to animal testing for chemical safety assessments – 15 legislative areas identified



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Legislation in scope and in focus of this workshop

ECHA

- Biocidal products
- REACH
- CLP
- Water legislation
- ….

EFSA

- Plant protection products
- MRLs of plant protection products in food or feed
- Food and feed additives
- Food improvement agents
- Nutrition applications
- …..

(Full list in Annex I of the SWD - Overview list of regulatory areas and responsible agency)

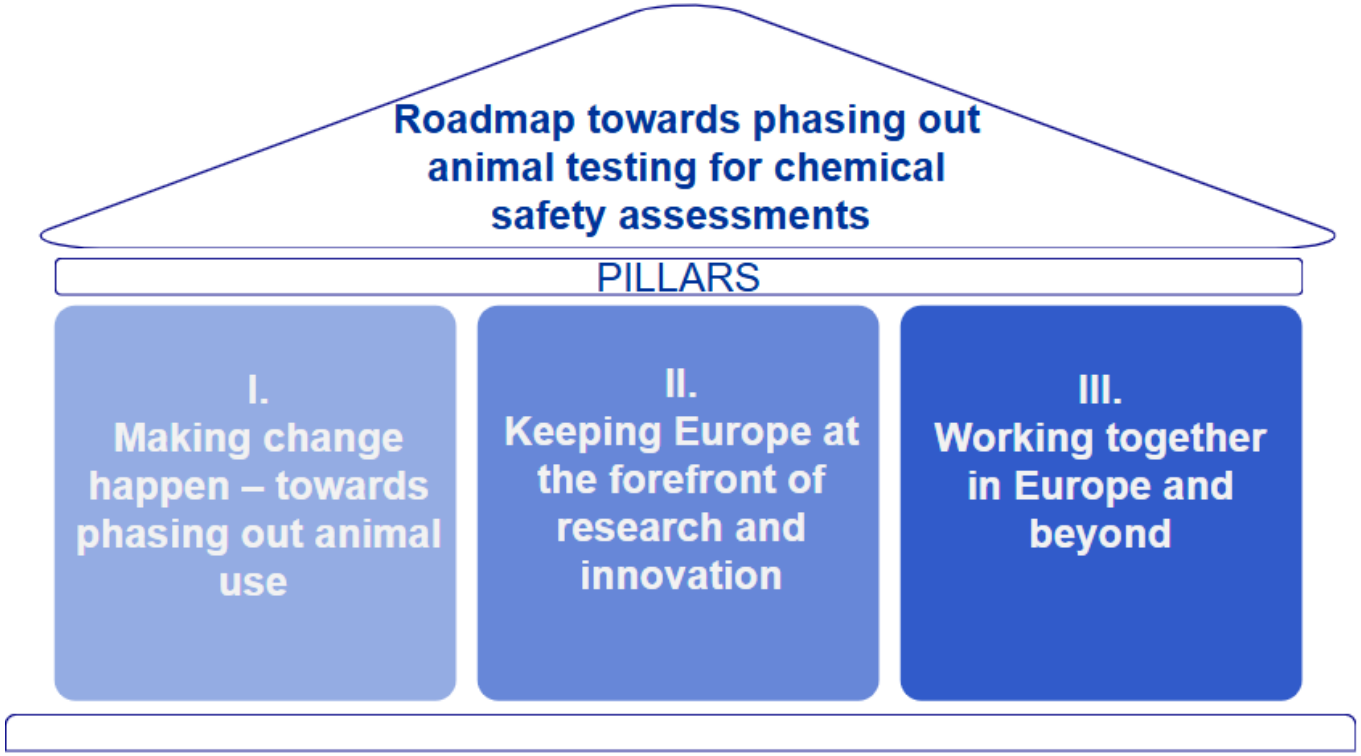
The Roadmap in two parts



- 22 policy actions (= commitments with timings/milestones) organised under 3 pillars for paving the way towards phasing out animal testing for chemical safety assessments
- One action point divided into ~ 30 sub-actions explained in the SWD (**human health** or **environmental** safety assess.)

Commission Communication

→ Policy document with limited space



Staff Working document –overview

Chapter 2 Overview recommendations / long-term change

1. Recommendations of actions for human health and environmental assessments
2. Next Generation Risk Assessment (NGRA) for human health
3. Characterising protection level / level of confidence liken to NGRA
4. Long-term change for environmental safety assessments (ESA)
5. Integration of HH and ESA

Chapter 3 Recommendations on ESA

1. Acute fish toxicity
2. Aquatic and terrestrial bioaccumulation
3. Fish chronic toxicity
4. Endocrine disruption
5. Birds and mammals
6. Ecological thresholds of toxicological concern and species sensitivity distributions

Chapter 4 Recommendations on human health

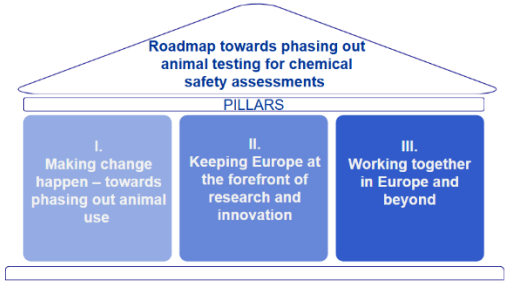
1. Acute toxicity
2. Genotoxicity
3. Carcinogenicity
4. Repeated dose toxicity
5. Developmental neurotoxicity
6. Developmental and reproductive toxicity
7. Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals

Chapter 1 Introduction / Roadmap Development

Chapter 5 Working together

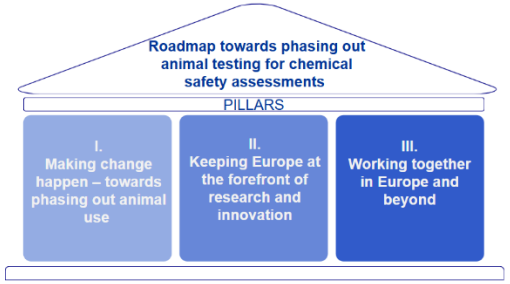
Chapter 6 Indicators

Pillar 1 – Making Change Happen (11 actions)



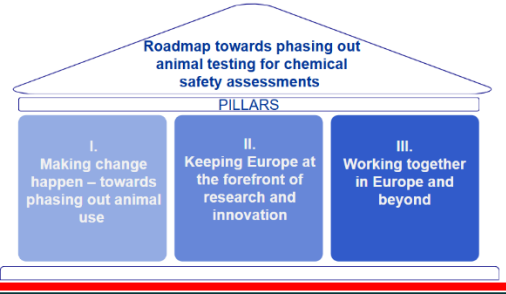
- Replacing, reducing or refining animal testing in the short- to long-term (→~ 30 recommendations in SWD)
- Access to JRC laboratories for testing, scaling, validating alternatives.
- Safe Spaces (Confidential discussion regulators/company) and Regulatory Exploration Spaces (multistakeholder discussion platforms)
- Identifying regulatory needs for prioritizing method development, validation, standardization - Report on key areas of regulatory needs
- Funding + making validation, standardisation or qualification more efficient
- …

Pillar 2 - Research & Innovation



- Making use of Artificial Intelligence for chemical safety assessments and for implementing the roadmap
- Ensuring that the AI-powered interactive tool under the life sciences strategy supports development of non-animal approaches for chemical safety assessment
- A Horizon Europe call on generative AI in biomedical research
- Leveraging human-relevant data for developing non-animal approaches (European Health Data Space Regulation)
- Supporting research, method development and bringing methods onto the market (e.g. Horizon Europe calls)
- …

Pillar 3 – Working together in Europe and beyond



Organisational structures

- A Roadmap Steering Team
- Collaborative platforms at EU agencies (ECHA, EFSA, EMA)
- An inter-agency working group on non-animal approaches within the EU Agency Network – giving space to EU agencies to coordinate
- Strengthening international collaboration (alignment and regulatory acceptance for alternative approaches at international level)
- Creating an electronic information hub to promote engagement with stakeholders and the general public
- …

30 sub-actions for human health and environmental assessment

SHORT TERM

Existing (combination) of methods that could be implemented in legislation already today.

MEDIUM TERM

Further development of existing methods needed or expansion of domain of applicability or validation.

LONG TERM

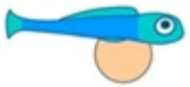
Paradigm shift: New regulatory assessment framework necessary to reach protection goals without animal use.

→ Non-animal approaches deliver different information than animal methods

→ E.g. classification criteria redefined



Use animal testing (eleuthero-embryo testing, invertebrates) to reduce or refine animal testing.





In the long term: phase out all animal testing, including e.g. eleuthero-embryo (fish/amphibian early life-stage) testing.

New safety assessment framework - features

- Human-centric, animal-free human health safety assessments
- Environmental safety assessments based on relevant species
- Mechanistic understanding to distinguish relevant from irrelevant substance effects
- Up-to-date science
- High-throughput, efficient
- High level of protection, demonstrated explicitly and transparently
- Integrated with environmental safety
- Globally aligned

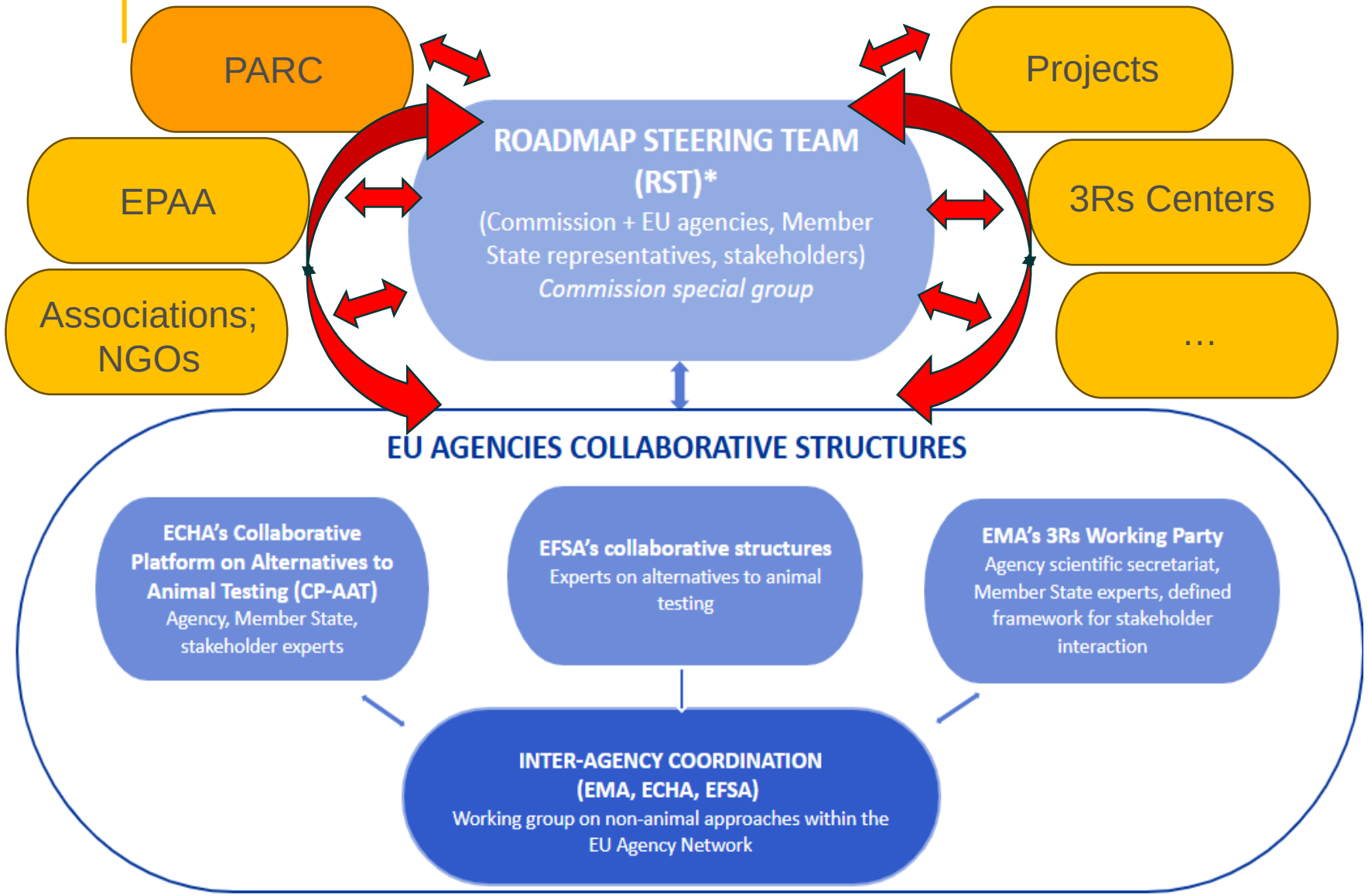
Organisational set-up supporting implementation



- **Tasks of the Roadmap Steering Team**
  - Overseeing / coordinating implementation of the roadmap
  - Exchanging / coordination with other initiatives
  - RST action teams will be set up as sub-groups, as

- **Status of setting up the Roadmap Steering Team**
  - Terms of References and Rules of Procedure for RST currently in Commission internal approval process
  - Open call for stakeholder participation during next months
  - Selection of stakeholders by the ISCG
  - Planned to be operational by end of Q4/2026

Collaboration, exchange, coordination



- Implementation will have to be a collaborative effort
- Exchange and coordination as key element of the organisational set-up

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How to get involved in the implementation of the roadmap

- Involvement is possible for all stakeholders via different venues



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Workshops

Commission, agency or other workshops / conferences announced for coming years to support the roadmap implementation in specific areas:

- Workshop on Safe Spaces and Regulatory Exploration Spaces: 1 June 2026
- Workshop on Artificial Intelligence: 2 June 2026 (Need for follow-up event?)
- EFSA/ECHA Workshop on implementation for biocidal products/PPP: 22 October 2026
- Intern'l workshop on implementation of NAMs for chemical risk assessment 29 Oct 2026
- Commission Workshop on long-term change with global authorities: 2027
- Conference to take stock of progress on phasing out animal testing: 2029

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Workshop on long-term change with global authorities: 2027

Action point 17: To this end, the Commission will organise a workshop at the latest in 2027 including with authorities from non-EU countries to launch international discussions on a new risk assessment framework based on non-animal approaches.

- Workshop planned for Q2/2027
- One day with non-EU authorities (+ representatives from international organisations)
- Back-to-back to open workshop with stakeholders
- Exchange on options for developing and introducing a new risk assessment framework based on non-animal approaches only (paradigm shift)

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Collaboration desired, some examples

[OSOA sub-group on Test Method Development and Validation]

- Accelerate, prioritise & fund (non-) animal test method development
where needed in Europe



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CHANGE
Collaboration to Harmonise the Assessment of Next Generation Evidence

- Design system-level interventions for bringing forward the date of effective use of NAMs.
[Change]

[ERA NAMs action (2025 – 2028)]
- Increase availability and use of non-animal methods for biomedical research (80% of animal use!), medicines & medical devices
- Coordinate & streamline MS actions

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Monitoring progress of implementation and reporting

Dashboard to view progress towards the 22 policy actions

Indicator framework to take stock at scientific, regulatory and sociological level

Conference in 2029 to take stock of progress made and invite input for continued strategic activities

- Dashboard currently in development
- Test version reviewed by Interservice Coordination Group
- Planned to be online in Q4/2026

Thank you

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