



Note to the Management Board

EFSA final Programming Document 2023-2025 & draft Programming Document 2024-2026 and Statement of Revenues and Expenditures 2023

1. Objective

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

- Final Programming Document 2023-2025, including the final annual work-programme 2023
- Statement of Revenues and Expenditures 2023 (Budget 2023)
- Draft Programming Document 2024-2026, including the draft annual work-programme 2024.

2. Background and Scope

In December 2021, the Board adopted the final Programming Document 2022-2024 and the draft Programming Document 2023-2025, in compliance with the requirements of the Programming Document common template of the EU Agencies. These documents build the multiannual programme of EFSA in line with its strategic objectives.

During 2022, EFSA has updated accordingly the draft Programming Document 2023-2025 and prepared the draft Programming Document 2024-2026 to reflect the EFSA's multiannual and annual plan towards the implementation of the new Strategy. The documents reflect:

- The EFSA Strategy 2027 adopted by the Management Board in June 2021;
- The Commission Opinion¹ received in June 2022 (see annex 1 below).

As in the past, please note that the two Programming Documents overlap and coincide to a large extent in view of the intersecting timeframe. 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 the relevant Appendix A, while Appendix B is common)
- The human and financial resources annexes (Annex I to V in each of the two documents)
- The annual grants and procurement work programme (Annex XII in each of the two documents)

Regarding the statement of revenues and expenditures the structure reflects the one adopted by the Board in October 2021. Minor updates have been done in budget headings and comments of the lines 3514 (Scientific meetings and missions services) and 3530 (Operational development and support, control and quality), highlighted in the Statement of Revenues and Expenditures in red. The statement of revenues and expenditures 2023 is submitted for Management Board approval.

3. Next Steps

(¹) Commission Opinion C (2022)4654 of the 29.06.2022 on the draft Programming document 2023-2025 of the European Food Safety Authority



Following the adoption by the Board of the submitted documents (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 2023-2025 will be published on EFSA's website and submitted to the EU Institutions end January 2023 and become the reference for guiding EFSA's work programme implementation in 2023.
- The Draft Programming Document 2024-2026 will be further processed as follows:
 - by the end of January 2023: the document will be updated as per the actual 2022 execution data, and submitted to the EU Institutions (i.e. Commission, Parliament and Council);
 - during 2023: the document will be revised to address the opinion that will be received from the Commission and to reflect other important developments that will occur during 2023;
 - by December 2023: the document will be submitted for final adoption to the Board.



Annex 1: EC comments on draft PD 2023-2025 and EFSA follow-up on final PD 2023-2025 and draft PD 2024-2026

Comment no.	Commission’s opinion on the draft EFSA Programming document 2023-2025	EFSA reply
General comments		
1	The Commission welcomes the draft programming document and appreciates that the Authority has addressed the comments included in the Commission Opinion on the previous one.	Noted and appreciated.
2	The Commission highly appreciates the Authority’s contribution to the overarching objective of the Union food law, in particular to maintain a high level of protection of human health and consumers’ interests in relation to food, including but not limited to food and feed safety, while addressing animal health and welfare as well as plant health within the Union.	Noted and appreciated.
3	The Commission notes that the draft programming document reflects the ‘EFSA Strategy 2027’, and its three strategic objectives, adopted by the Authority’s Management Board in June 2021 and welcomes that the Authority is streamlining and revising the key performance indicators (KPIs) for monitoring the implementation of the strategy. Against this background, the Commission notes that while stability of KPIs is important, it is also equally important for the Authority to be flexible and, where appropriate, to adapt those in the future.	As mentioned in the SPD (p.12), EFSA has defined key performance indicators (KPIs) to ensure that EFSA’s activities are focused on achieving the expected results as defined in its strategy 2027, and to be able to monitor its progress. Monitoring of these indicators or future reviews of the Strategy may naturally indicate adequate redesigning of the KPIs as well.



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4	<p>The Commission invites the Authority to continue prioritising its support to the Union's activities on food and feed safety addressing biological and chemical hazards, animal health and welfare, plant health, and those related to the area of regulated products. The Commission underlines that the tasks needed to enable the Commission to fulfil its legal obligations, as well as any other tasks requiring urgent action, should take priority over other tasks.</p>	<p>EFSA will continue prioritising its core tasks over other activities, i.e. responding to requests from its customers for scientific advice, and within them prioritisation will be made on the basis of legal deadlines, and for addressing requests for urgent action, to enable the risk managers to fulfil legal obligations.</p> <p>EFSA will do so safeguarding the minimum investment necessary for continuous improvement and development initiatives to ensure, in line with EFSA strategy, that it remains relevant and prepared in the medium to long term.</p>
5	<p>The Commission appreciates that the Authority in the context of its core business of risk assessment does not foresee any downsizing or discontinuation of activities that are already mandated. The Commission stresses the importance to reflect the prioritisation to the Authority's core business activities also through the allocation of resources within the Authority. The Commission takes note that the Authority considers the activities relating to innovation and preparedness for future needs as a lower priority in case of resource limitations, within certain limits so as not to jeopardise the Authority's core business in the future. The Commission welcomes that any de-prioritisation would be managed in liaison with the Commission.</p>	<p>Noted and appreciated.</p>



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6	<p>The Commission appreciates the ongoing good and constructive cooperation with the Authority in ensuring the full integration and implementation of activities and resources required by Regulation (EU) 2019/1381 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁵ ('the Transparency Regulation').</p>	Noted and appreciated
7	<p>The Commission welcomes that the programming document gives emphasis on partnerships and synergies and supports the Authority's engagement to further cooperate and work together with the Member States, other Union agencies and risk assessment bodies and international partners on cross-cutting areas, in order to achieve efficiencies on both scientific and organisational aspects.</p>	Noted and appreciated.
8	<p>The Commission welcomes the Authority's commitment to support the implementation of the European Green Deal , in particular the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Chemicals Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy. The Authority is invited to continue collaborating with the Commission in supporting the delivery of the relevant actions of the Union's strategies within the Authority's mandate and in synergy with the other agencies and Commission services.</p>	Noted and appreciated.



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9	<p>Scientific knowledge continues to evolve rapidly and the Commission acknowledges the challenges linked to increased complexity of risk assessment, which require the science to adapt and evolve to face those challenges and make use of the opportunities offered by artificial intelligence, digital and data development. In this respect, it calls the Authority to ensure focus on fit-for purpose risk assessment while staying abreast of new developments in risk assessment that could be brought about by the different actions of the European Green Deal.</p>	<p>Noted and appreciated</p>
10	<p>The Commission welcomes that the Authority participates actively and supports the Health Policy Agencies Collaboration (HPAC) initiative as the vehicle for the Authority's digital and data strategies and for the alignment of technology roadmaps on health policy leading to streamlining of processes and enabling shared services across agencies and Commission.</p>	<p>EFSA welcomes a clearer roadmap from the Commission that binds the ENVI agencies toward alignment of work programmes, data interoperability standards and software platform. Without a roadmap, the HPAC vision is difficult to achieve in this MFF since each agency work programme is committed for the 3-year period.</p>
11	<p>The Commission acknowledges that the Authority identifies Horizon Europe as an opportunity for stimulating research and innovation in the area of the Authority's mission in order to support risk assessment, science for regulatory purposes and related policy-making activities. The Commission notes that the Authority's Science Studies and Project Identification and Development Office (SPIDO) activities aim at providing knowledge to foster risk assessment and science for regulatory purposes. The Commission calls the Authority to seek coherence and efficient coordination between the activities that the Authority follows under the Horizon Europe and those of SPIDO.</p>	<p>The Commission noted correctly that the Authority's Science Studies and Project Identification and Development Office (SPIDO) activities aim at providing knowledge to foster risk assessment and science for regulatory purposes and that research engagement related activities, including the Risk Assessment Research Assembly, aim to advocate support for risk assessment and science for regulatory purposes. Indeed, both functions, research engagement and SPIDO activities are co-ordinated from the same office, under responsibility of EFSA's Chief Scientist which ensures alignment and informed decision making on advocacy and resource investment. Activities under SPIDO aimed to deliver project recommendations for new tools, methodologies and data ready to provide short to midterm solutions to overcome the identified gaps together with our partners (e.g. EU Agencies, Member States) whereas the research engagement activities aims to addresses more systemic, comprehensive long term solutions.</p>



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Specific comments on the multiannual (2023-2025) and annual (2023) work programme		
12	<p>The Commission notes the information provided in the draft programming documents on the Authority's activities related to biological and chemical hazards, animal health and welfare, plant health, human nutrition and regulated products. The Commission further notes the Authority's commitment to continue issuing yearly Union summary reports (e.g. on zoonoses and food-borne outbreaks, antimicrobial resistance, pesticide residues, veterinary medicinal product residues and Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies).</p>	Noted and appreciated.
13	<p>The Commission welcomes the Authority's work in the area of animal welfare, in particular, on supporting the update of the animal welfare law and on the welfare of all farmed animals during transport. The Commission appreciates the development of a roadmap for action on quantitative risk assessment and data collection in animal welfare as well as the Authority's work on the welfare of several species related to the slaughter and to the killing other than slaughter.</p>	Noted and appreciated.
14	<p>The Commission acknowledges the Authority's work on guidance development and review. In this context, the Commission invites the authority to seek a balance that provides predictability for applicants in the area of regulated products in the food chain, while ensuring the scientific robustness of risk assessment.</p>	<p>Indeed, EFSA strives to ensure a balance between the predictability for applicants and keeping the sectorial guidance documents up to date. In fact, EFSA has identified a number of guidance documents for which an update should be prioritised to ensure robustness of risk assessment (see Resources Outlook section).</p>



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15	<p>On Transparency Regulation, the Commission appreciates that the Authority is placing particular emphasis on the implementation of the new tasks entrusted to it. In this respect, the Commission invites the Authority to continue ensuring the smooth transition to its new governance, the new Management Board set up as of July 2022. In the area of information technology (IT), the Commission welcomes the Authority's intention to develop and further improve new IT solutions to support its work in the execution of the risk assessment workflow and all the connected transparency measures while ensuring integration and co-evolution with relevant Commission IT solutions and business process alignment. In order to improve the new solutions, the principles of interoperability by design and reuse of already made solutions need to be taken into consideration. Efficient and smooth operation of these tools, once in place, will lead to process improvement and efficiency gains. In the area of risk communication, the Commission welcomes the Authority' work and the number of projects that have been initiated, which will underpin Commission's work on the general plan on risk communication.</p>	<p>EFSA welcomes alignment with the Commission in the area of development and improvement of new IT solutions to support EFSA's work in the execution of the risk assessment workflow and all the connected transparency measures. However, EFSA emphasises that implementing the principles of interoperability requires a superordinate or federated approach to defining the technical specifications that support such interoperability. Without such standards committed to the work programme of the Commission and ENVI Agencies, and without a superordiante HPAC governance, interoperability standards fail to emerge.</p>
16	<p>The Commission recalls that the Transparency Regulation allows the Authority to rely upon its staff and on the designated national scientific organisations referred to in Article 36 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 to carry out preparatory work to support the tasks of the Scientific Committee and the Scientific Panels. This includes the possibility for preparing scientific opinions to be peer-reviewed by the latter Committee and Panels before their adoption.</p>	
17	<p>In this respect, the Commission appreciates the Authority's different actions (e.g. Advisory Forum Discussion Group on the Future of Partnerships, boosted Focal Point agreements, re-visiting of Union Risk Assessment agenda initiative) establishing a new ecosystem framework for partnerships. The Commission recognises the challenges related to</p>	<p>EFSA has been increasing in the past years and is planning to further increase the (out) sourcing of preparatory work to Member States competent organisations (see resource outlook section).</p>



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	<p>building partnerships with national scientific organisations to engage in the Authority's preparatory work sharing with Member States. The Commission encourages and supports the Authority in this task so to strengthen the risk assessment capacity in the Union.</p>	<p>EFSA's contribution for setting a new ecosystem framework for partnerships were consolidated in 2022 and is at stage of implementation.</p> <p>State-of-play of key high-level actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advisory Forum Discussion Group on the Future of Partnerships final report presented to AF in October 2022, with short- mid- and long-term recommendations for action; - New multi-annual Focal Point (FP) agreements to be implemented as of 2023, and with a duration of 5 years. With the new FP Agreements, a financial investment of up to 10M by 2027 will be deployed, most of which dedicated to tailor-made partnerships with Member States (MS); - A new framework for the EU-risk assessment agenda will be chartered by end of November 2022 and be prepared during 2023, with a focus on EFSA and MS needs for partnerships; - Newly designed processes focused on strategic engagement and community management are expected to feed and boost partnerships with MS, leading to strengthened the risk assessment capacity in the European Union. <p>The Programming Document has been updated with reference to these key high-level actions.</p>
18	<p>Regarding the partnerships and synergies, the Commission highlights the importance of cooperation between the Union agencies in the context of One Health (e.g. support the setting up of a coordinated surveillance system under the One Health approach for cross pathogens that threaten the Union). The Commission invites the Authority to address relevant activities in the programming document. Similarly, the Commission stresses the importance of cooperation in the area of antimicrobial resistance. The Commission appreciates the Authority's engagement on various multi-sectoral activities in the area of antimicrobial resistance and invites the Authority to provide related information in the programming documents, in particular on the specific mandate of azole fungicides.</p>	<p>See the one health policy needs addressed in the activities under EOR 2.1.4 In the multiannual section</p>



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19	<p>Another important area of cooperation is the one substance-one assessment (1S1A) approach set out in the Chemicals Strategy where the Authority already successfully cooperates with the Commission and other Union agencies. The Commission appreciates the Authority's commitment to such cooperation and its contribution to the different strands of work under the 1S1A, with a view to better support risk managers in taking policy decisions, as well as efficiency gains.</p>	<p>Noted and appreciated.</p>
20	<p>The Commission recognises that the Authority has defined independence as one of its fundamental values. The Commission notes that in 2023 the Authority will finalise the ex-post evaluation and review of its 2017 Independence Policy. Such a review will be particularly important given the fact that the new composition of the Management Board will be in place as from 1 July 2022.</p>	<p>Specific reference is made in page 84 (Annual plan 2023 - EOR 3.1.3). The possible review of the Independence Policy</p>
<p>Comments on budget and human resources</p>		
21	<p>The Commission acknowledges that the Authority request for Union contribution corresponds to the ceiling set by the 2021 - 2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). Following the deduction of the 2021 outturn of 0.5 million EUR and considering an increase for salary expenditure due to high inflation, the net Union contribution in commitment appropriations in 2023 will amount to EUR 150.5 million.</p>	<p>Noted and appreciated</p>
22	<p>The Commission took note of the Authority's request of slight readjustments to the distribution of posts staff resulting from the 2021 promotion exercise and the 2022 reorganisation.</p>	<p>Noted and appreciated.</p>



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23	The Commission welcomes the stable staffing figures for 2023 in comparison with 2022, namely 587 FTEs: 405 Temporary Agents, 167 Contract Agents and 15 Seconded National Experts.	Noted and appreciated
24	Moreover, the Commission considers that grades requested for 2023 in the multi annual staff policy plan reflect the reclassification possibilities per grade.	Noted and appreciated.
25	The Commission notes the increase of 15 Contract Agents agreed from 2022 for three years (2022-2024) to cope with a temporary capacity shortage and address the increased workload. In accordance with the Service level agreements for the International Uniform Chemical Information database (IUCLID), the Commission notes that the Authority will recruit four Contract Agents below its ceiling, as it has temporary seconded them to ECHA in connection with the adaptation of the IUCLID system for the utilisation by the Authority.	Noted and appreciated.
26	The Commission notes that the result of the third external evaluation of the Authority, delivered in 2018, along with the recommendations received in 2018 and 2019, by the two additional external evaluations, were integrated into the 'EFSA Strategy 2027'. The Commission acknowledges that the next external evaluation is planned to be finalised by March 2026.	Noted and appreciated.
27	The Commission welcomes the continuous, proactive and systematic risk management approach of the Authority, and the proposed mitigating actions and controls that reduce the	Noted and appreciated.



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	risks that could potentially impact the achievement of the Authority's objectives.	
28	The Commission welcomes that a detailed programme for grants and operational procurements is presented in Annex XII to the draft programming document.	Noted and appreciated.
29	The Commission takes note of the detailed information regarding efficiency gains and ongoing automation of processes to counterbalance the increased workload and complex work as well as the extensive use since 2020 of external resources (interim, external providers, outsourcing of tasks). It welcomes the fact that once the on-going development of IT tools and organisational changes are fully implemented, the resources granted will be in line with the initial estimations incorporated in the draft MFF 2021 – 2027. This should also reduce the significant use of external resources.	Noted and appreciated.
30	As regards the reclassification of temporary agents, the Commission reiterates its comment made last year regarding reclassification rate within the Authority which is too low. Reclassification being an important element of talent management, the Commission would encourage the Authority to follow the rates in Annex IB of the Staff Regulations and its implementing rules more closely.	<p>EFSA's promotion/ reclassification exercise strictly follows the Implementing Rules on the reclassification of Temporary Agents: based on the performance of the past year, every year, Reporting Officers compare merits of their eligible staff and write a business case for promotion/ reclassification. The business cases and relevant merits are further discussed and compared at unit, department and organisational level; this latest comparison takes place with EFSA's senior management and results in the 1st Draft list for promotion/reclassification which is subsequently presented and discussed with a delegation of EFSA's Staff Committee, resulting in the 2nd Draft List published and available to all staff.</p> <p>With regards to the promotion rate, EFSA has increased its reclassification rate over the last 10 years going from 5% to 13.5% (2020); 16% (2021); and 16.2% (2022), keeping the indicative duration of a career outlined in Annex IB as reference.</p> <p>We are appreciative of the 30% reclassification target although we are also benchmarking ourselves with our "Sister" Agencies where reclassification seems to be hovering at around 20% rate ca. As per above point, 30% reclassification may indeed be a stretch also for EFSA. Staff costs will absorb</p>



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		<p>up to 42% of EFSA's total budget in 2023 and a proportionate and responsible approach to resource management is needed, taking into account of-course the interests of staff. From a budget discipline point of view, the transparency regulation EFSA received more staff and budget, however this budget is dedicated to the core business in title 3.</p> <p>In addition, within EFSA's overall talent management strategy, encompassing staff engagement, recognition, learning and development, promotion/ reclassifications are not the only means of staff recognition and development. In this broad framework, EFSA displays a number of initiatives, amongst others: programs and projects, mentoring, job rotation, job shadowing, training, dedicated Leadership Development Program. Staff has the opportunity to express career aspirations within the annual Performance Dialogue Exercise and define relevant development objectives for the year(s) ahead. Both these aspects are discussed during the annual Talent Review Meetings where career aspirations and learning needs are discussed at unit, department and organisational level.</p> <p>Also worth mentioning that EFSA staff engagement index has been consistently strong scoring 78% in 2017 and 79% in 2019 with 2022 results still work in progress.</p> <p>Having said all that, again we welcome the steer and the direction by the Commission and will act to ensure we keep the situation and improvements monitored and progressed.</p>



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31	<p>As regards gender representation, the Commission welcomes the good evolution with regard to women in management positions (from the level of Heads of unit) over the period 2017 - 2021 (41,7% women /58,3% men). However, some additional efforts, beyond the published equal opportunities vacancy notices and the gender balance selection board, will be needed to further address the internal imbalances as concerns women's representation in managerial positions (including team leaders).</p>	<p>EFSA has started to develop Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Programme in cooperation with the other agencies, by participating to the Working Group Diversity & Inclusion from the network of EU Agencies. The programme has a goal to create an inclusive environment promoting equal opportunities and to ensure gender balance for all positions at the Agency. The gender balance estimate on 31/12/2022 for People Management roles is of 37.5% women/62.5% men. The total staff gender balance is 60% women/40% men. EFSA will also put more women in the spotlight on our website, social media channels when promoting new career opportunities.</p>
32	<p>As regards geographical balance, the Commission takes note of the very high representation of staff members with Italian nationality in the Authority (almost half of the staff), including the high representation also in the AD category (31,5 % of Italian nationality). In this context, The Commission welcomes the efforts of the Authority to tackle this imbalance with its dedicated project to increase awareness of EN 6 EN the Authority and improve its nationality balance. The Commission will monitor the evolution in light of this new programme in future single programming documents.</p>	<p>EFSA welcomes the EC's encouragement and is fully aware about the need for better geographical balance within its staff. EFSA continues to promote a series of targeted initiatives to increase EFSA's attractiveness and nationality balance in general in particular with extra dissemination efforts on social media platforms, targeted dissemination in certain Member States and participating/organising career events in the different EU Member States. These initiatives are part of a comprehensive employer branding strategy focussing on increasing the visibility of EFSA with the support of its Communication and Partnership Department, also using EFSA's networks with EU Agencies, international agencies and partner organisations. EFSA finalised a Market Research Study on EFSA's awareness as an employer in 2021 and has finalised in 2022 its new Employer Branding Strategy, which contains a clear description on EFSA's value propositions (work content, opportunities to establish and grow networks as well as development opportunities, flexible working conditions, relocation support, etc.) and the necessary insights allowing EFSA to improve the targeted dissemination of its vacancies to under-represented countries to enlarge the</p>



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		<p>pool of applicants through the use of different channels. The new Employer Branding Strategy will also lead to a new career website including EFSA's value propositions and new communication material with new creative/appealing content.</p>