

# Note to the Management Board

## DRAFT PROGRAMMING DOCUMENT 2024-2027 and Expenditures 2024

### 1. Objective

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

- Final Programming Document 2024-2027, including the final annual work-programme 2024
- Statement of Revenues and Expenditures 2024 (Budget 2024)
- Integration of funds to the EFSA budget 2024 stemming from Horizon Action grant - European Partnership on Animal Health & Welfare
- Draft Programming Document 2025-2027, including the draft annual work-programme 2025.

### 2. Background and Scope

In December 2022, the Board adopted the final Programming Document 2023-2025 and the draft Programming Document 2024-2026, in compliance with the requirements of the Programming Document common template of the EU Agencies. These documents build the multiannual work programme of EFSA in line with its strategic objectives.

During 2023, EFSA prepared the “final draft Programming Document 2024-2026” and the “draft Programming Document 2025-2027” based on the draft Programming Document 2023-2025, and following the European Commission opinion<sup>1</sup> received in June 2023. The draft Programming Documents spanning 2024-2027 reflect the EFSA’s multiannual 2024-2027 and the annual plan 2024 and draft annual plan 2025 respectively, in the context of the EFSA Strategy 2027. A list of EFSA replies to the European Commission opinion comments is provided in the 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 B; while Appendix A and C are common)
- The human and financial resources annexes (Annex II 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 December 2022. New expenditure and revenue lines (3240 and 1003

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



respectively) to accommodate the funds stemming from new ways of EFSA cooperation and partnerships have been added to the budget structure in September 2023, following the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amending EFSA Budget 2023.

### **3. Integration of funds stemming from Horizon Action grant - European Partnership on Animal Health & Welfare**

In addition to the budget stemming from the European Union and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) contribution (C1 credits) Multiannual Financial Framework, approval is requested for the integration of the funds stemming from EFSA's future participation in the European Partnership on Animal Health & Welfare into EFSA 2024 budget (R0 credits). Under a HORIZON Action Grant, EFSA will become a beneficiary of a grant agreement awarded by the European Research Executive Agency (REA) to a consortium led by the University of Ghent. The grant agreement - to be signed between REA and University of Ghent - will enter into force upon signature by the last party and the project will commence on the 1st day of the month following the month of the signature. Within 30 days following the signature of the grant agreement, EFSA will sign a Consortium agreement with University of Ghent and Accession Annex to the Grant Agreement. The grant agreement provides for a co-financing rate of 50% of the total eligible costs which are estimated for EFSA as € 1.275,991.25. The receipt of 50% co-financing with a total maximum amount estimated at 637,995.63 will be received in 3 tranches over the period of 3 years: a pre-financing payment made within 30 days of the grant agreement signature, followed by an interim payment after 18 months and a final payment at the end of the initial implementation period of 36 months.

*Detailed information can be found in Annex 2 of this Note*

### **4. Next Steps**

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 2024-2026 will be published on EFSA's website and submitted to the EU Institutions by the end of January 2024 and become the reference for guiding EFSA's work programme implementation in 2024.
- The Draft Programming Document 2025-2027 will be further processed as follows:
  - by the end of January 2024: the document will be updated as per the actual 2023 execution data, and submitted to the EU Institutions (i.e. Commission, Parliament and Council);
  - during 2024: 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 2024;
  - by December 2024: the document will be submitted for final adoption to the Board.



### Annex 1: Commission’s opinion on the draft EFSA Programming document 2024-2026

#	Commission’s opinion on the draft EFSA Programming document 2024-2026	EFSA reply (integrated in the Final Draft Programming Document 2024-2026)
<b>General comments</b>		
1	The Commission welcomes the draft programming document and appreciates that the Authority has addressed the comments included in the Commission Opinion on the programming document 2023-2025.	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 Union’s priorities in the areas falling under the Authority’s remit and ‘EFSA Strategy 2027 and welcomes the flexibility the Authority is demonstrating to respond to evolving requirements.	Noted and appreciated.
4	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 other aspects including those relating to the area of regulated products, where legal deadlines apply (core risk assessment activities). 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.	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. 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.
5	The Commission acknowledges the Authority’s high workload and appreciates that the Authority commits to further prioritise its core risk assessment activities, without downsizing or discontinuation of already mandated tasks. The Commission welcomes that the Authority has planned various measures to address the high workload (e.g. increased outsourcing of the scientific preparatory work to the designated national scientific organisations referred to in Article 36 of	Further detail has been given throughout the document on the specific actions taken for each of the critical scientific production areas (supporting the information provided in table 20-now table 2). EFSA would like to highlight that the actual number of the stock of questions (backlogs) per each scientific area will be reported in the upcoming Annual Activity Report 2023.



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	<p>Regulation (EC) No 178/2002, on-going fine tuning of the information technologies (IT) systems supporting the risk assessment process, and increased scientific production delivery by reducing the human resources investment in development activities to a maximum of 10% of the Authority staff). The Commission also notes the specific actions taken for each of the critical scientific production areas (Table 20 of the programming document) and invites the Authority to describe those in more detail, including information on the actual number of the stock of questions (backlogs) per each scientific area.</p>	
6	<p>The Commission is nevertheless concerned that the stock of questions in the areas of regulated products remains high and it does not seem to decrease at a considerable rate. The Commission notes that the Authority foresees a progressive reduction of the stock of questions – at least in some critical areas – from 2023 onwards and to a level equivalent to one year production by 2026-2027. However, these estimations for the forecasted evolution of stock for the period 2023-2027 are based on several assumptions, including in particular on ensuring successful partnerships and synergies with the national scientific organisations.</p>	<p>Indeed, the forecasted evolution of stock relies on several assumptions, in particular EFSA's ability to implement structural measures, such as the development of partnerships with art.36 organisations. To achieve this, considerable resources have been allocated for seeking opportunities for collaboration and establishing partnerships, supported by outsourcing methodologies. To this end, EFSA has held joint workshops with DG SANTE, and has carried out a number of initiatives over 2023 to identify opportunities for increasing the speed of risk assessment and production output. Follow-up actions will start to be implemented as of 2024 onwards.</p>
7	<p>The Commission supports the Authority's engagement to further cooperate with the Member States and recognises the challenges relating to building partnerships with national scientific organisations to carry out preparatory work to support the tasks of the Authority's Scientific Committee and Scientific Panels. In this respect, the Commission would like to invite the Authority to carefully consider the areas of work to be outsourced, taking into account the available capacity and expertise at national level. Development of partnerships with national scientific organisations is a long-term objective which would need, in most of the areas, considerable investment from the Authority to ensure that the outsourced work is performed according to the Authority's methods and quality standards. Accordingly, the Commission invites the Authority to consider taking mitigating measures for advancing its risk assessment work, while preparing the ground for effective partnerships with the national scientific organisations. Additional information on the selection and planning of the outsourced activities in the programming document would also be welcomed.</p>	<p>EFSA is placing due emphasis on the selection and planning of areas of work to be outsourced, considering the needs as well as the capacity if Member States to respond; indeed this has proven to be a resource intensive activity, including the involvement of the EFSA Advisory Forum to steer the process. A recent example is the recently signed four-year (2023-2026) Partnership with Member State Article 36 organizations to provide support to EFSA in the risk assessment of food additives, food enzymes, food flavourings and feed additives.</p> <p>EFSA will ensure that the outsourced work is performed according to its methods and quality standards by promoting organisational capacity building and delivering training to Art. 36 organisations while enhancing the support role provided by the Focal Point network (on the basis of new Focal Point operational framework) and continuing the EU-FORA programme.</p>



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8	<p>The Commission acknowledges the Authority's need for safeguarding the minimum investment necessary for continuous improvement and development initiatives. The Commission welcomes the Authority's decision to reduce the human resources investment in development activities (to a maximum of the 10% of the Agency staff), which would allow the scientific units staff currently involved in development activities to focus more on risk assessment "Business As Usual" activities. In a context of limited resources and taking into account the high number of stock of questions, the Commission invites the Authority to continue assessing all its development activities and to prioritise those that are expected to have an actual positive impact on the Authority's "Business As Usual" work either in speeding up the risk assessment process or in terms of addressing short- and medium-term risk assessment needs. The Commission welcomes that any de-prioritisation of development activities would be managed in liaison with the Commission.</p>	<p>Noted and appreciated.</p>
9	<p>The on-going dialogue between the Authority and the Commission is essential for further aligning the Authority's support to Union policy priorities and for optimising the use of existing resources. The Commission looks forward to continuing the close dialogue with the Authority with a view to finalise the draft programming document before its submission for final approval to its Management Board.</p>	<p>EFSA acknowledges the importance of the on-going dialogue with the Commission with regards to the drafting and finalisation of the programming document. The exercise of sharing comments on the draft programming document is a good example of this collaboration which will ensure alignment and a successful completion of the document.</p>
<p><b>Specific comments on the multiannual (2024-2026) and annual (2024) work programme</b></p>		
10	<p>The Commission notes the information provided in the draft programming document 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). The Commission highly regards the inclusion of the planned scientific questions for 2024 in the draft programming documents (i.e., Appendix A).</p>	<p>Noted and appreciated. To note that planned scientific questions are to be found in Appendix B this year.</p>
11	<p>The Commission welcomes the Authority's commitment to support the implementation of the European Green Deal, in particular the Farm to</p>	<p>Noted and appreciated.</p>



#	Commission’s opinion on the draft EFSA Programming document 2024-2026	EFSA reply (integrated in the Final Draft Programming Document 2024-2026)
	<p>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>	
12	<p>Scientific knowledge and availability of data continue to evolve rapidly and the Commission acknowledges the challenges linked to the new developments in risk assessment. The Commission takes note of the Authority’s work on process improvement initiatives including guidance development and review which should aim to ensure both the robustness and efficiency of risk assessment. In this context, the Commission calls the Authority, in particular in the area of generic risk assessments, to ensure flexibility in the application of guidance documents and focus on fit-for purpose risk assessments. The Commission welcomes that the Authority lists a number of guidance documents that need to be updated and that it considers the development of a multi-annual plan for guidances’ updates in liaison with the Commission.</p>	<p>EFSA acknowledges the Commission comments, and reassures that a flexible approach regarding the application of guidance documents in the generic risk assessments area is being and will continue to be employed. EFSA's aim is to always deliver fit-for purpose risk assessments. To achieve this it will continue to consider and prioritise the guidance updated in liaison with the Commission; moreover it will continue implementing and further strengthen the process of mandate preparation with DG SANTE before a generic risk assessment request is sent to EFSA.</p>
13	<p>The Commission notes that the Authority has designed a multiannual portfolio consisting of processes and projects and their underlying budget and resource needs for implementing its strategy. The Commission also notes that three new programmes (i.e. DEEP, IRMA and NEXT) will manage the Authority’s projects aimed at improving and developing the core business through the three strategic transformation priorities: (1) speed of risk assessment; (2) preparedness for future risk assessment needs; and, (3) digital collaboration within the Union food safety system. In this respect, while the Commission appreciates the information already provided in Appendix B to the programming document, it invites the Authority to specify, where relevant, the expected contribution of these projects to address short- and medium-term risk assessment needs or other risk assessment activities (e.g. the ‘Business As Usual’ work, the reduction of stock of questions, etc.).</p>	<p>Specific reference is made in appendix C. PROJECTS PER EFSA STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION PRIORITY AND EXPECTED OUTCOME</p>



#	Commission's opinion on the draft EFSA Programming document 2024-2026	EFSA reply (integrated in the Final Draft Programming Document 2024-2026)
14	The Commission appreciates the ongoing good and constructive cooperation with the Authority in ensuring the implementation of new tasks entrusted to the Authority by means of Regulation (EU) 2019/1381 of the European Parliament and of the Council (the 'Transparency Regulation').	Noted and appreciated.
15	In the area of digital technologies, the Commission welcomes the Authority's digital and data initiatives to support its work in the execution of the risk assessment workflow, including required transparency measures, while ensuring business process integration and alignment with relevant Commission IT solutions. Furthermore, the Authority participates actively in different partnerships including the Health Policy Agencies Collaboration (HPAC) initiative as a common vehicle for implementing digital and data strategies, aligning technology roadmaps on health policy leading to streamlining of processes and enabling shared services across the Union decentralised agencies and the Commission.	Noted and appreciated.
16	The Commission notes the Authority's concerns on the high volume of applicants' confidentiality requests, which impacts the available resources allocated for performing the assessment of these requests. The Authority is closely monitoring the situation and considers ways to increase efficiency.	EFSA is actively taking steps towards a leaner approach in the confidentiality decision making, such as via further integration of current tools which should have a positive impact on the efficiency of the process. However, the process has improved its productivity during the course of 2023, via the support provided by temporary resources.
17	In the area of risk communication, the Commission welcomes and supports the development of communication tools and activities by the Authority that enhance trust in Union risk assessment.	Noted and appreciated.
18	Regarding partnerships and synergies, the Commission supports the Authority's engagement in the "one substance, one assessment" approach, set out in the Chemicals Strategy. The Commission invites the Authority to pursue further cooperation with other relevant Union agencies and risk assessment bodies on crosscutting areas, so as to achieve synergies and efficiencies on both scientific and organisational aspects and avoid scientific divergences. The Commission also highlights the importance of cooperation between the Union agencies in the context of One Health, which contributes to more integrated, cross-sectoral, and collaborative scientific assessments to better inform Union policies. In this respect, the Commission invites the	<p>EFSA will support the Commission as well as Member States for the follow-up to the Council Recommendation on stepping up EU actions to combat antimicrobial resistance in a One health approach, in particular via participation in the inter-agency working group on antimicrobial resistance.</p> <p>Moreover EFSA is a member of an EU Agencies task force on One Health, including the preparation of a concept paper for further action.</p>





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	<p>Authority to indicate in its programming document that it will support the Commission as well as Member States for the follow-up to the Council Recommendation on stepping up EU actions to combat antimicrobial resistance in a One health approach, that it is expected to be adopted by the Council in 2023, following the Commission proposal of 26 April 2023. The Authority is invited, in particular, to refer to its participation in the inter-agency working group on antimicrobial resistance.</p>	
19	<p>The Commission takes note of Annex XIII on the "Strategy for cooperation with third countries and/or international organisations." In this respect, the Commission highly appreciates the Authority for its expertise and technical support provided to the Commission in the standard setting bodies, such as the Codex Alimentarius and the International Plant Protection Convention's work and re-iterates the importance of continuing such support. The Commission further welcomes the scientific cooperation with international organisations, regional partners and third countries which would synergise efforts, improve risk assessment methodologies and internationally harmonise risk assessment approaches and actions that are beneficial to the risk analysis as well as to discussions on sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS) within the World Trade Organization.</p>	<p>Noted and appreciated.</p>
20	<p>The Commission supports the Authority's activities to improve the quality of crisis preparedness and emerging risks identification by linking the early warning systems and data systems across the Union bodies, Union Agencies, Member States, and international organisations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH), as this would strengthen its foresight capacities.</p>	<p>Noted and appreciated.</p>
21	<p>The Commission welcomes the references to climate change as an emerging risk driver, and the inclusion of relevant projects and activities in the Agency's programming document. In this respect, the Commission would like to invite the Authority to mention in the programming document also its continued support of, and contribution to, the European Climate and Health Observatory, in support of the Article 5 of the European Climate Law ('Adaptation to</p>	<p>Specific reference is made in the Multiannual plan-SO2-EOR 2.1.2 -Area of activity: Emergency response management</p>





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	climate change') and of the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change.	
22	The Commission would also like to highlight that under Regulation (EU) 2371/2022 on serious cross-border threats to health, a role is foreseen for the Authority to deliver risk assessments in the case of a serious cross-border threat to health that falls under its mandate. In this respect, the Commission invites the Authority to include a reference in the programming document concerning the Authority's role in the context of this Regulation.	Specific reference is made in the Multiannual plan-SO1- EOR 1.1.2 Area of activity: Animal health
23	The Commission supports the Authority's research and innovation activities in the area of the Authority's mission in order to support risk assessment, bridge possible gaps between research and science for regulatory purposes and ensure that the outcomes of the research programs can be used for regulatory science needs.	Noted and appreciated.
24	As regards independence, the Commission notes that in 2023-2024 the Authority intends to finalise the ex-post evaluation and review its 2017 Independence Policy.	The ex-post evaluation of the Independence Policy has taken place as planned. A report will be presented to the Management Board in December 2023, where a decision will be taken regarding a possible update of the policy. In case of a review decision the policy will be adopted in 2024.
<b>Comments on budget and human resources</b>		
25	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 2022 outturn of 0.7 million EUR, the net Union contribution in commitment appropriations in 2023 will amount to EUR 153.3 million. The Commission invites the Authority to update the amounts in the single programming document.	Indeed, EFSA has updated the amounts accordingly.
26	The Commission invites the Authority to adjust its establishment plan in the programming document (table 33) in line with the Draft Budget 2024.	Noted and appreciated.
27	The Commission notes the increase of 15 contract agents for three years (2022-2024) to cope with a temporary capacity shortage and address the increased workload. In accordance with the service level agreement for the International Uniform Chemical Information Database (IUCLID), the Commission notes that the Authority will	Noted and appreciated. EFSA would request with the draft budget 2025 to make these posts permanent, as they have supported in facing the increased complexity of EFSA's opinion (such as Glyphosate). These resources also contributed to the increase of production in some key areas,



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	recruit four contract agents below its ceiling, as it has been agreed that those agents will be recruited by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) for its activities on biocides.	considering also that EFSA is facing a bigger inflow of questions compared to the situation when the business cases were drafted.
28	The Commission takes note of the stable staffing figures for temporary agents over the 2024-2026 period and of its commitment to counterbalance the resource demands by mainly intensifying cooperation with sister agencies and increasing the digitalisation process.	Noted and appreciated.
29	Concerning the request for the additional contract agents for cybersecurity following the outcome of the budgetary hearings, this has not been granted as this is not in line with Commission instructions for stable staffing. The Commission advises the Authority to analyse whether this position could be shared with another Union agency. This is what is being envisaged by some agencies.	EFSA considered the European Commission's advice of analysing if the position could be shared with another Union Agency. However, due to the very specific tasks/issues EFSA deals with and the volume of work it entails for the size and breadth of activities, it has been assessed that there is no scope for sharing a resource for this cybersecurity position. Still, EFSA is investigating into other means of possible collaboration with other agencies in the field of converged security.
30	<p>Grading:</p> <p>There is an excessive amount of AST staff in the establishment plan of EFSA; the Commission invites the Authority to solve this issue and comply with the agreed distribution of AD and AST TA staff.</p>	The EFSA's request for Establishment Plan envisages a gradual conversion of AST posts into AD posts with the aim to reduce its share of Support Staff. On this regard several initiatives of project/process improvements have been put in place to achieve efficiency gains as well as leading to the outsourcing of some services freeing up internal FTEs mainly pertaining to the assistant category. Staff turnover and/or outcome of internal procedures are the pre-requisite for freeing up AST positions to be then upgraded into AD ones. In fact, in 2023 two AST posts were freed up and upgraded into AD posts and the EFSA's plan is to follow this pattern for as many positions as possible in the coming years to comply with the Establishment Plan post distribution.
31	<p>Reclassification:</p> <p>The Commission would like to stress again that the Authority should follow more closely the seniority in grade stated in Annex IB of the Staff Regulations. The Commission requires that this issue is now seriously tackled and followed up.</p>	<p>EFSA has been steadily increasing its promotion rate over the years: from 13.5% in 2020 to 18.9% in 2023. While Annex IB is always kept as reference, to entirely align with the indicative durations therein described, EFSA needs to follow a constant, gradual and incremental pathway to reach an approximate 30% promotion rate.</p> <p>To accommodate an increased promotion rate, additional elements also need to be taken into consideration and balanced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A significant adjustment of our Establishment Plan projections would be needed within the framework the next planning cycle (2025-2027);</li> </ul>



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The cumulative financial impact of this increase would be significant - staff costs will absorb up to 42% of EFSA's total budget in 2023;</li> <li>- In particular with reference to high grades, the distribution of our population would be significantly skewed towards higher grades (~50% in grades AD9 and above) over the next 5-10 years, also considering the very limited turnover rate of the organisation.</li> </ul> <p>EFSA's promotion/reclassification exercise strictly follows the Implementing Rules on the reclassification of Temporary Agents: 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>It must be noted that staff engagement index is at 79%, a key leading indicator that staff appreciates the organisational approach to talent management, including broader means of recognition and development (e.g., via participation to programs and projects, mentoring, job rotation, job shadowing, training, a dedicated leadership development program).</p>
32	<p>Gender and geographical balance:</p> <p>The Commission considers that more attention is to be paid to the gender and geographical balance dimensions. The Commission recommends the Authority to present at least once a year the data on these dimensions and its evolution over years to the Management board supported by the proactive actions in place to mitigate the current situation.</p>	<p>EFSA takes note of the suggestion of the European Commission. In the progress report to the Management Board EFSA will provide an update on the evolution of the gender and geographical balance combined with a summary of our actions.</p> <p>The following initiatives are part of a comprehensive employer branding strategy focusing on increasing the visibility of EFSA as an employer with the support of its Communication and Partnership Department.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- targeted initiatives to increase EFSA's attractiveness and the nationality balance have been promoted such as extra dissemination efforts on social media platforms, targeted dissemination in certain Member States and participating/organising career events in all EU Member States. EFSA has also reached out to other EU Agencies on best practices to attract diverse candidates as well as with its Partner Organisations (more in particular EFSA's Focal Points) in the different EU Member States to reinforce the collaboration, by providing with them with new communication material and to discuss joint career events.</li> <li>- a new career website was launched in May 2023 with new creative and</li> </ul>



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		<p>appealing content including EFSA's value propositions. The new website has been combined with the launch of a new Employer Branding video and several individual testimonials by EFSA Staff Members. The testimonials focus on the work content, opportunities to establish and grow networks as well as development opportunities, EFSA as a diverse and inclusive employer and about living in Parma. -a 25% ceiling on the numbers of Italians has been established and reached in relation to the 2023 Traineeship call, also considering this as one important pipeline for future staff recruitments.</p>
33	<p>Environmental management: The Authority is ISO 14001 certified since 2016 and is registered in the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) since 2017. The Authority has always shown a strong commitment in the implementation of measures to control and lower the environmental impact of its operations. The Commission very much welcomes the several actions already implemented and the ones identified in the single programming document for the next years.</p>	<p>Noted and appreciated.</p>
34	<p>This opinion is addressed to the Authority. The Commission invites the Authority to amend the draft programming document 2024-2026 taking into account this opinion, and to adopt the final version.</p>	<p>Noted and appreciated.</p>



## **Annex 2: Integration of funds stemming from Horizon Action grant - European Partnership on Animal Health & Welfare**

### *Detailed information*

Under Europe's Research and Innovation funding programme 2021 – 2027, a new instrument - the European Partnerships - was established.

The European Partnership Animal Health & Welfare (EUP AH&W) aims to deliver key knowledge, services and deliverables to significantly improve the control of animal infectious diseases and animal welfare in a coordinated way. EFSA's contribution to this partnership aims to bridge possible gaps between research and regulatory science and facilitates the use of the outcomes of this research programme for regulatory science needs.

For EFSA, it will facilitate the science-to-policy transition, supporting the implementation of EFSA's roadmap on animal welfare, expand the One Health approach, collect missing data and complement the existing EFSA Networks, linking them to networks of other research organisations. It will allow quicker uptake of scientific data and methodologies produced by academia into EFSA's risk assessment work and creates the opportunity to follow up on research recommendations stipulated in EFSA opinions and the upcoming SPIDO roadmap on animal welfare.

EFSA will contribute via support to the identification of research needs, the design and development of guidelines and surveillance strategies and the identification and validation of methods. EFSA's expertise will be instrumental to EUP-AH&W in the establishment of an assessment protocol, design of the data model, data tools and data platform to ensure compatibility with existing systems.

The most relevant involvement for EFSA is in Work Packages 2 (SRIA update & Monitoring) and 3 (Joint initiatives & integration) to ensure that the EUP-AH&W outputs will be of use and do not duplicate EFSA actions.

EFSA will be involved as a full partner (i.e. beneficiary receiving grant funding). This is the best way to ensure synergies with risk assessments done by Member States and EFSA and to avoid duplication of activities and double funding. DG-RTD and DG AGRI have expressed on several occasions the need for close alignment of EFSA and eventually other EU Agencies such as the European Medicines Agency (EMA) in the EUP-AH&W to avoid diverging scientific opinions/outputs and avoid duplication of activities.

DG SANTE agreed with EFSA's involvement, allowing it to participate in the call HORIZON-CL6-2023-FARM2FORK-01-2. SANTE's agreement is without prejudice to the analysis to be carried out on double funding, for which beneficiaries are asked to declare the absence of double funding. In addition, the Research Executive Agency (REA) runs specific searches retrospectively verifying there is no double funding of the same activity.

The grant agreement - to be signed between REA and University of Ghent - will enter into force as of its signature of by the last party and the project will commence on the 1st day of the month following the month of the signature. Within 30 days following the signature of the grant agreement, EFSA will sign a Consortium agreement with University of Ghent and Accession Annex to the Grant Agreement.

### *Resources*

The alignment of the activities will have to be performed by staff with an in-depth understanding of the ongoing and planned EFSA work.



EFSA estimates to dedicate around 1 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) of its current workforce to the overall coordination and planning activities of EUP-AH&W, including senior staff from Biological Hazards and Animal Welfare Unit (acting as liaison for their specific domain of expertise and involvement in ongoing EFSA's mandates), Finance and Chief Scientist's Office (providing administrative and financial support to administer the grant agreement, e.g. receive the funding, recording and reporting effort to evidence the costs incurred).

EFSA will hire 2 contract agents to perform tasks directly linked to Partnership implementation, paid from the EUP-AH&W grant that does not weigh on the establishment plan and contract agents' posts ceiling.