

ECHA Integrated Management System Strategy and Framework

I. INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM STRATEGY

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

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

ECHA's management team commits to:

1. Delivering strategic goals and priorities, where quality and environmental goals are embedded, as described in the Programming Document.
2. Providing high-quality independent decisions, opinions, advice and tools that consistently meet the needs and expectations of ECHA's partners and stakeholders.
3. Communicating and engaging openly, transparently and welcoming stakeholders' feedback.
4. Implementing an Integrated Management System focused on improving performance, while maintaining compliance with legal, financial and regulatory requirements.
5. Using effective internal control to provide assurance to ECHA's management team and the Management Board that controls are functioning as designed. Embedding risk management in ECHA's decision-making.
6. Innovating, exploiting synergies, learning from mistakes, adapting to changing circumstances and stakeholders' needs, as well as promoting such behaviours.

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

II. INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FRAMEWORK

ECHA's Integrated Management System Framework is the tool to implement ECHA's Integrated Management System Strategy, which is organised in 12 components. These components are further grouped into four building blocks: **(1) Governance, (2) Strategy, planning and risk management, (3) Operations and operational structure, and (4) Evaluation and improvement.** Each component includes a number of principles and characteristics to be deployed into operational and governance processes, aiming to maintain oversight, track progress and adjust accordingly. The structure of the framework and its components follows the **Internal Control Framework's structure as stipulated in the Financial Regulation. Quality, environmental, security and business continuity management, sustainability, and efficiency** principles, including a continual improvement focus are embedded as an integral part of that structure. There is an explicit focus on the need to ensure **both a high level of performance of ECHA and compliance** with relevant legislations and ECHA's Financial Regulation.

1. Governance

Component: 1.1 Purpose and vision

Principles: ECHA's purpose and vision aligns to its strategic goals and priorities and reflects its commitment to its legal mandate and stakeholders.

Characteristics

Management Board is clearly defining the Agency's Purpose and Vision and overall strategic direction. Management team is communicating these to staff and external stakeholders, aiming to ensure stakeholders' understanding and commitment.

Component: 1.2 Values and behaviours

Principles: Management Board sets and demonstrates the tone at the top for the values, behaviours and expected standards of conduct, which are implemented by ECHA's management team and staff.

Characteristics

Management Board defines the values the behaviours for the Agency, through an open and transparent dialogue, involving ECHA's management team, staff and stakeholders.

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

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

Component: 1.3 Management responsibility

Principles: ECHA's Management Board exercises oversight responsibility. ECHA's management team establishes structure, accountability and responsibility.

Characteristics

ECHA's Management Board demonstrates independence from ECHA's management team and oversees the development and performance of ECHA's Integrated Management System.

The Agency's management team is committed to implementing and improving ECHA's Integrated Management System, which combines elements of quality, internal control, sustainability, environmental, security and business continuity aspects. The Integrated Management System is aligned with ECHA's strategy, purpose and vision.

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

Component 1.4 People (Human Resources)

Principles: ECHA is committed to investing in people and organisational excellence.

Characteristics

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

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

The Agency's management team actively promotes staff empowerment and delegation of powers to support accountability.

Component 1.5 Stakeholders and partners

Principles: ECHA collaborates with regulatory partners and stakeholders to strengthen public confidence and trust.

Characteristics

ECHA's collaboration with regulatory partners and stakeholders and their involvement in the Agency's operations is based on the Agency's purpose, values and strategy.

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

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

2. Strategy, planning and risk management

Component 2.1. Goals planning and resource allocation

Principles: ECHA demonstrates commitment to strategy planning and implementation including activity-based resource allocation.

Characteristics

The Agency's management team under the supervision of the Management Board is defining ECHA's strategic goals and their implementation in line with the goals and values of the European Union.

The Management team is clearly defining the strategic goals and annual programmes of work, measuring their outcome and impact, identifying the risks related to them and cascading them to all levels of the organisation.

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

Component 2.2. Risk management

Principles: Management Board sets the risk appetite and oversee the risk management in the Agency. ECHA's management team identifies and analyses risks and significant changes, uncovers opportunities and implements proportionate controls.

Characteristics

ECHA's Management Board sets the overall risk appetite and oversees the implementation of ECHA's risk policy.

The Agency has adequate mechanisms in place to mitigate risks and ensure uninterrupted operations, continuity, security and everyday protection of the Agency's staff, assets and information. Corporate risk assessment includes all elements of ECHA's Integrated Management System and all types of risks as defined in the Risk policy.

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

3. Operations and operational structure

Component 3.1. Activity management

Principles: ECHA's activity and process structure enables the achievement of ECHA's strategic goals

Characteristics

The Agency defines its activities, processes and their interactions, as well as the organisational structure to support them, in alignment with its strategic goals, aiming to clearly identify the outcomes, the expected performance, as well as intermediate and long-term impact.

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

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

Component 3.2. Information and data management

Principles: ECHA selects and develops general control activities over technology to support the achievement of its strategic goals

Characteristics

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

Component 3.3. Change management

Principles: ECHA aims at agility, responsiveness and continuity when responding to changes

Characteristics

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

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

4. Evaluation and improvement

Component 4.1. Performance management

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

Characteristics

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

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

Component 4.2. Assessments, audits and evaluations

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

Characteristics

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

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

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