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ANNEX

ANNEX

to the

Commission Decision

approving the work programme 2021 of the European Research Executive Agency



European
Commission

Annex

Annual Work Programme 2021

EUROPEAN RESEARCH EXECUTIVE AGENCY

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FOREWORD. Message from the Director

2021 is a year where the European Research Executive Agency (REA) will embark on its third mandate, this time under the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027. This offers opportunities to explore new activities while preserving continuity through further building on a record of strong performance that goes back more than twelve years. In 2020, despite the Covid-19 pandemic, REA prepared intensively for this new mandate. These preparations have safeguarded REA's full readiness, in terms of resourcing, processing capacity, and governance arrangements, to take up this new mandate effective as of 1 April 2021.

As explained throughout this document, REA's new portfolio means that it will continue to make a significant contribution to the achievement of European Commission President Von der Leyen's objectives for the 2020-2024 period. The parts of Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe that REA is implementing will contribute to the Commission objectives 'A Green Deal for Europe', 'A Europe fit for the digital age', 'Promoting our European way of life', and 'A new push for European democracy'.

There are important changes affecting the programme parts that have remained with REA. As highlighted in Part 3, Horizon Europe has significant new features. In addition, work will start to streamline several key processes in order to make productivity gains, as required by REA's new mandate. Several of the measures to increase efficiency, which REA identified and proposed to the DG RTD Common Implementation Centre at the end of 2020, will be implemented during this year.

In 2021 the Agency takes on board two initiatives outside of the Research and Innovation (R&I) framework programmes: the actions of the Research Fund for Coal and Steel, and the information provision and promotion measures concerning agricultural products. REA is also now managing the calls and grants that support the European R&I areas, by financing reforms and infrastructures. Successfully integrating the new colleagues and processes that these new responsibilities bring is a key priority for the year.

In 2021 REA will also see its project management activities under Horizon 2020 peak. More than ever will we be accompanying projects to achieve their objectives and promoting their exploitation of results. We will harvest interesting results for communication and policy monitoring and development purposes, in partnership with Commission services, under the new framework for effective feedback to policy. We will be contributing to the implementation of various 'Missions in Horizon Europe'; the MSCA programme managed by REA has a potential to contribute to various missions and REA will be the lead executive agency for the implementation of the soil health and food mission.

Of course all of the above will take place within the context of uncertainty that Covid-19 creates. It is clear that staff and experts working from home is possible

and reliable, but suboptimal. So far the pandemic has not negatively affected the performance of the Agency. However, management will continue to monitor and react to emerging consequences of the pandemic, whether they affect staff wellbeing or grant management.

PART 1. Mission statement

REA, mandated by the European Commission to support the EU Research and Innovation policy, funds and assists high-quality research and innovation projects that generate knowledge leading to a greener world, in which Europe has prosperous, inclusive economies and societies that take full advantage of the digital age.

To pursue this mission, REA will undertake the following activities:

Managing the selection of the proposals to fund, concluding and implementing the grant agreements, and enabling the take-up of project results - including for effective policy-making - for:

- a. major parts of the Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Programme (2021-2027) aiming at boosting the Union's productivity and competitiveness, sustaining our socio-economic model and values, and enabling innovative and systemic solutions to the challenges faced by our societies;
- b. information provision and promotion measures concerning agricultural products (2021-2027) (AGRIP) to enhance the competitiveness of the Union's agricultural sector;
- c. the Research Programme of the Research Fund for Coal and Steel (RFCS).

Implementing the remaining stages of the grant agreements concluded under predecessor programmes, and enabling the take-up of project results - including for effective policy-making - for:

- a. the Research Framework Programmes FP7 and Horizon 2020;
- b. information provision and promotion measures concerning agricultural products ;
- c. the Research Programme of the Research Fund for Coal and Steel.

Providing administrative and logistical support services:

- a. **to EU bodies implementing Horizon Europe and selected other programmes.** These services include: *Planning and **support for publication of calls** for proposals and contests for prizes; General logistical support for the evaluations including the **management of the evaluation facility; Contracting and payment of independent experts** who evaluate proposals.*
- b. **behind the single entry point of participants in grants (including prizes) and procurement activities for all Union programmes,** for the benefit of the EU bodies implementing them through direct management within the Single Electronic Data Interchange Area (SEDIA) framework. REA services for SEDIA include, in particular: **Validation of legal entities, including the assessment of third-country control over participants for some specific programmes (Horizon Europe, Digital Europe, EDIDP and EU Defence Fund); Preparation of legal entities' financial capacity assessment; Management of the Research Enquiry Service, which answers enquiries from citizens on EU research and innovation funding and general questions on the validation process of participants for all programmes.**

PART 2. Key performance indicators

The following five KPIs were chosen to reflect the most important aspects of the Agency's performance. They have not changed between 2020 and 2021, except the removal of the following sub-element of KPI 5: % of expert contracts signed by REA in less than 10 calendar days (because the time to contract depends significantly on actions beyond the control of REA).

Key Performance Indicator	Indicator	Target	Latest known results (31 December 2020)¹
<i>KPI 1 - Full implementation of the operational budget</i>	<i>Percentage of execution of the 2020 operational budget (commitments and payments)</i>	<i>100% (at year end)</i>	<i>100% (REA previous mandate only)</i>
<i>KPI 2 - Rapid conclusion of grant agreements ('Time-To-Grant')</i>	<i>Time-To-Grant (TTG): Time from call deadline to grant signature (% of projects signed within the deadline set by the legal basis)</i>	<i>100% grants signed within - 8 months for Horizon Europe - 9 months for RFCS and AGRIP</i>	<i>H2020 : 98% AGRIP: 100% RFCS²: 100%</i>
<i>KPI 3 - High quality of the key procedures for scientific and grant management</i>	<i>Share of projects that achieved most of their objectives</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>Horizon 2020: 93% (REA previous mandate only)</i>
	<i>Number of complaints on evaluation results upheld or partially upheld (evaluation review)</i>	<i>Maximum 0.50% of proposals evaluated</i>	<i>Horizon 2020: 0.23%</i>

¹ Where end-2020 data is known for the programmes transferred to REA in 2021, it is included in this column.

² This figure relates to the latest completed call on 31/12/2020, call RFCS-2019.

Key Performance Indicator	Indicator	Target	Latest known results (31 December 2020)¹
<i>KPI 4 - Legality/regularity of financial transactions</i>	<i>Estimated risk at closure</i>	<i><2% of relevant expenditure</i>	<i>1.68% of relevant expenditure³</i>
	<i>Residual error rate in financial transactions</i>	<p><i>Horizon 2020:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Overall target : as close as possible to 2% (within the range of 2-5%)</i> • <i>Specific target for the MSCA: below 2%</i> <p><i>Horizon Europe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Overall target : Representative detected error rate within the range of 2.5%-3.5%</i> • <i>Residual error rate: around 2% (but not necessarily below)</i> • <i>Specific target for the MSCA: below 2%</i> • <i>Non-Horizon programmes:</i> • <i>Overall target : below 2%</i> 	<p><i>Horizon 2020:</i> <i>Representative detected error rate:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>R&I family (REA included)⁴: 2.95%</i> <p><i>Detected local error rate:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>REA MSCA: 1.24%</i> <p><i>Cumulative residual error rate:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>R&I family: 2.16%</i> • <i>REA: 2.33%</i> <p><i>Residual local error rate</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>REA MSCA: 1.14%</i> <p><i>Residual error rates for non-Horizon programmes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>AGRIP: 1,88%</i> • <i>RFCS: 3.13%</i>
<i>KPI 5 - Providing efficient support services to the Research DGs and other client services</i>	<i>Participant validation (for all direct management operations at the EC)</i>	<i>95% of validations performed within 90 days from "raise priority" date⁵</i>	<i>98.6%</i>

³ This figure corresponds to the previous REA mandate and therefore is not fully comparable to the expected results for 2021.

⁴ Based on the 334 representative results out of the 467 expected in the three Common Representative Samples.

⁵ "Raise priority" is a signal in PDM reflecting a validation request and triggering a request for supporting documents to the participant.

Key Performance Indicator	Indicator	Target	Latest known results (31 December 2020)¹
	<i>Expert payment</i>	<i>100% of experts paid within 30 days</i>	<i>99.7%</i>

PART 3. Delivering on the Commission's priorities: main outputs for the year

Part 3 of the work programme gives details about the planned outputs per activity. Sections A to C cover **programme implementation**. For information on the purpose and actions of the programme parts described, please see the new REA website⁶. Section D below concerns the **administrative and logistical support services** provided by REA.

Annexes I-VII of the REA Delegation Act⁷ set out in detail the tasks delegated to the Agency in the management of the programme parts that it implements. Within these areas, the Act entrusts REA with managing the full project lifecycle, based on the Commission's policy guidance stipulated in the work programmes adopted by the Commission for each programme part:

- Commission Decision C(2021) 4200 of 15.06.2021 on the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2021-2022
- Commission Implementing Decision C(2020) 8835 final of 16.12.2020 on the financing of information provision and promotion measures concerning agricultural products implemented in the internal market and in third countries and the adoption of the work programme for 2021
- The planned Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the Research Programme of the Research Fund for Coal and Steel (RFCS) and on the adoption of the work programme for 2021-2022

The Agency's mandate also covers the management of the portfolio of running projects financed by the predecessor programmes of these programme parts listed above.

REA's contribution to the achievement of the Commission's priorities

REA works in close cooperation with its Steering Committee and parent DGs. The connections between REA-implemented programmes and the **objectives of the Commission**, both annual and multi-annual, are shown in the following diagram (Figure 1).

The strategic priorities of DGs are structured according to the overall Commission objectives. Each programme part delegated to REA makes a direct contribution to at least one strategic priority of a parent DG for the period 2020-2024.

⁶ <https://rea.ec.europa.eu>

⁷ and the forthcoming Memorandum of Understanding between the parent DGs and REA

In addition, the parts of the REA portfolio that support multiple fields of research and innovation, such as widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area, make contributions to other strategic priorities. These indirect contributions are also shown in the performance tables in Annex 2.

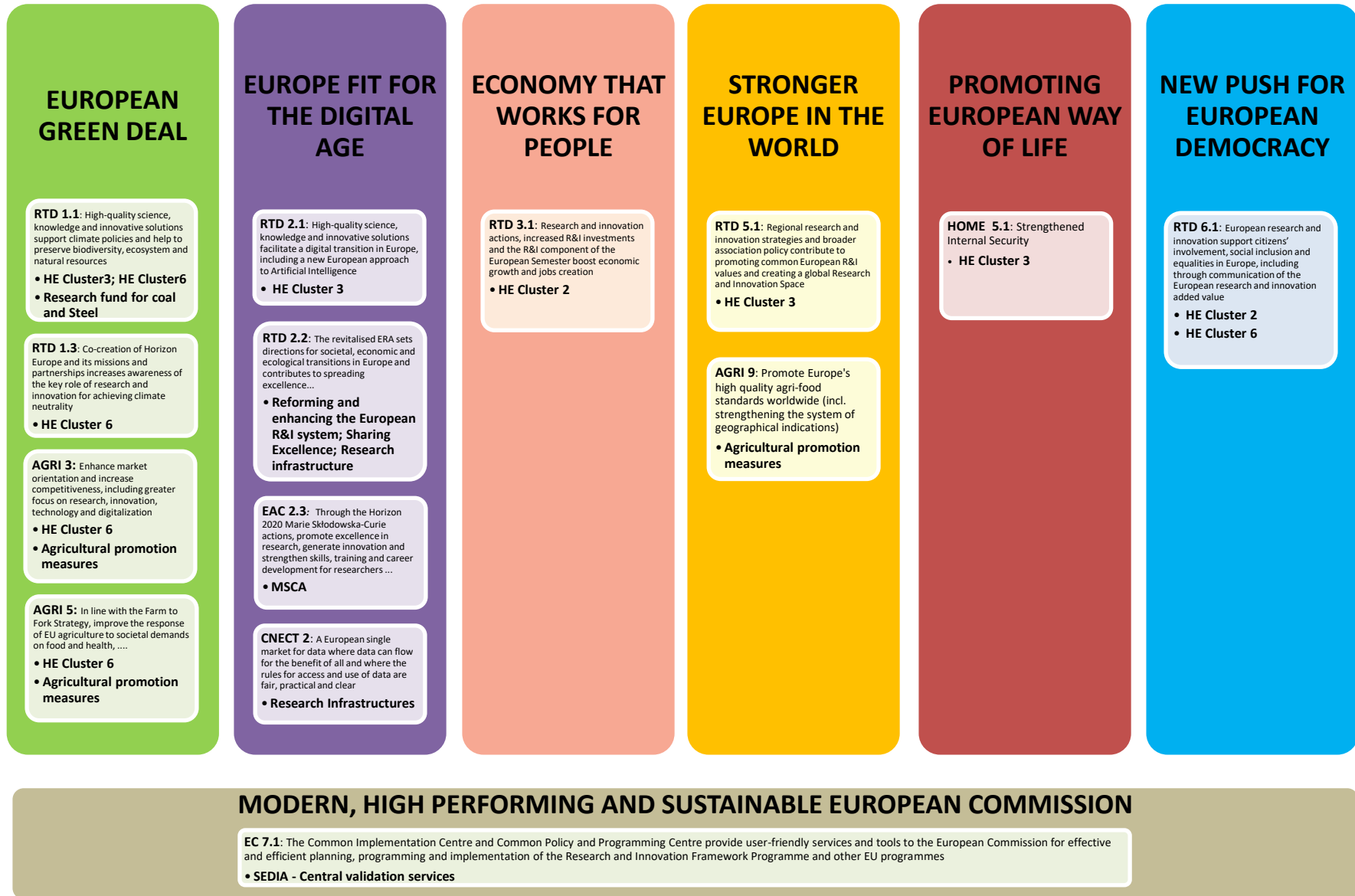
Furthermore, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), which cover a wide range of science and innovation topics, have the potential to support many of the Commission's objectives that are listed in Figure 1 below.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming

REA will align with the Horizon Europe approach to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in respect of the parts of the programme that it implements.

- The Horizon Europe MSCA support bottom-up and frontier/applied research contributing directly to the European Commission's commitment to tackling climate and environmental-related challenges. All MSCA-funded projects are encouraged to address the principles of the [MSCA Green Charter](#).
- Horizon Europe will support Research Infrastructures (RI) services to support health research, accelerate the green and digital transformation, and advance frontier knowledge (INFRA SERV), with a focus on the provision of integrated RI services to enable R&I addressing major societal challenges, notably in health, in support of the green and digital transformation and ensuring resilience to crises.
- Horizon Europe Cluster 2 mobilises multidisciplinary expertise of European social sciences and humanities for understanding fundamental contemporary transformations of society, economy, politics and culture. It aims to provide evidence-based policy options for a socially just and inclusive European green and digital transition and recovery.
- Horizon Europe Cluster 3 will support the European Green Deal and the new EU Climate Adaptation Strategy.
- Activities under Horizon Europe Cluster 6 will help to accelerate the ecological transition required by the European Green Deal in order to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. This will be done by preserving Earth's natural carbon sinks such as soils and plants, forests, farmed lands and wetlands, substantially reducing GHG from the agricultural sector and transforming the food system.
- The Horizon Europe Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area activities particularly encourage improving access to excellence and reforming the innovation system in climate science as well as clean-tech and energy & transport technologies, as disparities between R&I leading and lagging countries are particularly large in these domains.
- The promotion of EU agri-food products in and outside the EU in 2021 puts a special focus on promoting products and farming methods that support more directly the European Green Deal objectives, prioritising organic products, fruit and vegetables and sustainable agriculture.
- RFCS calls and projects will directly help the Commission to meet the European Green Deal objectives. The RFCS Modernisation Package aims to revise the three legal bases regulating the RFCS research programme, to mobilise greater resources for this aim.

Figure 1 Overview of REA's contribution to the Commission objectives



Cross-cutting aspects relating to all programme management activities

Information and Communication

Annexes I to VII of the REA Delegation Act give the Agency the task of establishing information and **communication strategies for the implementation of the delegated programmes**,



in agreement with the corresponding parent DGs. In 2021 REA will particularly focus on adapting its digital presence (website, social media and newsletter) to its new portfolio, running a campaign to attract expert evaluators, and providing effective Information Days for grant applicants and beneficiaries. For example, a high number of participants (>3000) is expected to participate remotely in the Information Day for Horizon Europe Cluster 6.

Communication activities will also include:

- REA participation in the events of National Contact Points (NCPs).
- Key input to the major R&I Days conference that DG RTD holds annually. For example, a joint REA-RTD session on 'Breakthrough technologies for resilient recovery' with a speaker on Clean Steel.



Challenges affecting REA's project management activities in 2021

An exceptional level of staff mobility into and within the Agency, in the context of remote working: In 2021, 109 new staff members will join REA. This includes the transfers of 'blocks' of staff from other services, who work on the programme parts that the Agency is taking over. There will be significant numbers of incoming managers, of all levels. In parallel, REA has enabled its existing staff to take new assignments as part of the overall reorganisation and to ensure that new teams can benefit from experienced colleagues who know the 'REA way of operating'. Further measures to support new staff/teams are taking place this year (see Part 4, Section A on Human resource management).

A substantial legacy of Horizon 2020 grants: At the start of its new mandate on 1 April 2021, the Agency was managing over 7,500 ongoing Horizon 2020

projects. In 2021, several REA units will devote significant resources to signing grants with and delivering information events for the beneficiaries of the final Horizon 2020 calls (such as the major 'Green Deal' call). Furthermore, the reorganisation has required significant transfers of legacy projects to and between REA units. For example, around 160 projects of the Horizon 2020 *Science with and for Society* legacy are now managed in a different unit than before.

The need to generate increasing efficiency gains over the period 2021-2027: The number of staff allocated to agencies for 2021-2027 is based on targets for efficiency gains through economies of scale ranging from 15% to 50%. In response, REA is not only implementing a programme of internal changes leading to greater efficiency, but is also actively contributing to actions at R&I family level that will streamline processes and IT tools for call and grant management. The work is further explained in Part 4, Section F of this document.

REA will continue to use its day-to-day management structures to monitor and respond to the consequences of **Covid-19**. In 2021, REA will reinforce its existing measures for the rapid and effective handling of and communication with bankrupt beneficiaries, in anticipation of a possible further rise in cases. In addition, REA monitors the reports of independent observers who are appointed to assess the objectivity, impartiality, and transparency of each evaluation of proposals. The reports are an important source of information to track and make any necessary adjustments to the fully-remote proposal evaluation process currently in place due to Covid-19.

A. Horizon Europe and legacy of Horizon 2020

Section A first highlights aspects that will require particular attention of all REA units implementing Horizon Europe:

- The new requirement for all proposals to undergo a security appraisal.
- Piloting both the right for applicants to react through the so-called 'rebuttal' approach, and 'blind evaluation' of proposals whereby applicants are made anonymous to the evaluating experts.
- Maximising the contribution of projects to European Commission policy monitoring and development.

An additional important element of Horizon Europe is that increased attention will be paid to gender equality in the evaluation and grant preparation processes, as well as in expert management.

The remainder of the section outlines a number of developments relating to particular parts of Horizon Europe that REA implements.

Horizon Europe security appraisal procedure

According to Article 20 of the Regulation establishing Horizon Europe, the activities carried out under the programme shall comply with the applicable security rules and in particular, rules on the protection of classified information against unauthorised disclosure, including compliance with any relevant EU and national law.

The process to assess and address the security dimension of activities funded under Horizon Europe is called the security appraisal procedure. It includes three main steps:

- The security self-assessment, performed by the applicant at the proposal preparation stage;
- The security review procedure, conducted before the start of the project; and
- The security checks, conducted during or after the life of the project.

Only proposals above threshold and considered for funding will undergo the security review procedure. The security review is organised based on the outcome of the security self-assessment and whether the call or topic, under which a proposal is submitted, is security sensitive or not and it can lead to security requirements that become contractual obligations. It includes three steps:

- The security pre-screening performed by REA (the granting authority);
- The security screening performed by the appropriate Commission service for selected cases after pre-screening; and
- The security scrutiny conducted by national security experts. If required, the concerned REA unit can support DG HOME in the meetings with the national security experts.

‘Right to react’ or ‘rebuttal’ approach

REA will pilot a ‘rebuttal’ approach under the first Work Programme of Horizon Europe. The Agency will make the Individual Evaluation Reports (IERs) available to the proposals’ applicants and allow five days to react. The experts then must take into account the reactions, to the extent that they aim to refute statements in the IER, before finalising the consensus phase of the evaluation.

The foreseen interaction with the applicants will increase the transparency of the evaluation process, correcting any factual or major misunderstandings by experts at an early stage while providing more detailed feedback to applicants.

‘Blind evaluation’ of proposals

REA will pilot a ‘blind evaluation’ procedure on proposals submitted at the first stage of twostage- calls. For these cases the Work Programme will include an additional admissibility criterion: applicants cannot be disclosed in the narrative

part of the proposal. Therefore the experts will carry out the evaluation of the proposals without any explicit reference to applicants' identity.

The aim is to remove the possibility of reputational bias influencing the experts participating in the evaluation.

Support to Commission policy work

The five mission areas included in the Horizon Europe Regulation are subject to further refinement, but it is foreseen that REA will contribute to their implementation. Missions may involve a portfolio of actions including research projects, policy measures, and possibly legislative initiatives. R&I projects implemented by REA could contribute to any of the Missions, and in particular to all the European Green Deal-related Missions that would be strongly linked to Cluster 6 (indicatively Climate adaptation, Oceans, and Climate neutral cities).

REA would take a leading role in supporting the implementation of the prospective Mission in the area of Soil health and food, which would work towards soils in the EU being healthy for food, people, nature, and the climate. This Mission would develop solutions that directly contribute to the European Green Deal and its ambition to progress on climate, biodiversity, and sustainable food. Now that the mission is in a preparatory phase, its co-chairs have invited REA to contribute to its implementation plan and work together with the Mission Board to set out detailed actions, the investment strategy, and performance indicators. The Agency would manage the resulting calls and actions and oversee the development of a coherent mission portfolio of projects. Furthermore, the Agency would aim at providing targeted contributions to the various Missions from the wide range of science and innovation topics covered by the MSCA.

As foreseen in legislation, the Commission will undertake the ex-post evaluation of Horizon 2020 and the interim evaluation of Horizon Europe. The approach developed by the DG RTD Common Policy Centre foresees back-to-back exercises coordinated and implemented by the Monitoring and Evaluation Virtual Entity (MEAVE). REA is an active participant in the MEAVE and will participate in a number of planned studies in this context.

REA will be among the services implementing the new strategy for the dissemination and exploitation of Horizon Europe project results, which will build on the experience and initiatives of the Horizon 2020 programme.

Also during 2021, REA will join the other services involved in implementing the programme to roll-out the single Feedback to Policy framework to maximise the impact of funded projects on policy-making. In 2020, REA ran two pilots⁸ for setting

⁸ Rapidly analysing the current portfolio of Covid-19 projects as an example for Horizon Europe Cluster 1 (Health), and developing a plan for feedback to policy for projects on "Resilient, inclusive,

up and running policy feedback activities through joint teams involving policy officers and project officers from grant management services. Some issues will need further elaboration such as improved ways of sharing information or the modus operandi for project/policy officers during the project evaluation and implementation.

Connecting project results to policy-making will remain a priority for REA. For example, a series of cluster events are planned to bring together projects and promote the take-up of project results in policy-relevant areas such as soil, water, circular economy, polar and nature-based solutions. The annual EuroGEO workshop will also offer networking opportunities with stakeholders contributing to the Global Earth Observations System of Systems (GEOSS).

Furthermore, two MSCA cluster events will be organised in 2021: on cancer research and innovation (18-19 March 2021) and on the European Green Deal (6-7 July 2021). Both cluster events cover projects in the relevant fields funded by the MSCA and other relevant programmes (such as the European Institute of Innovation and Technology and Erasmus+), and will involve parent DGs, other policy DGs, and external speakers. Both events use(d) an online format.

Programme implementation: key developments by programme part expected in 2021

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)

To ensure harmonisation and simplification across the different MSCA actions and to meet certain requests from external stakeholders, some changes have been introduced in the MSCA under Horizon Europe. These include, among others, the introduction of a limitation in terms of years in research in Postdoctoral Fellowships, new cost categories (special needs and long-term leaves allowances), and the harmonisation of the eligibility and secondments rules across the MSCA. Therefore, it is necessary to make solid preparations before the first calls are published. This will entail constant contact with the IT teams of the Common Implementation Centre (CIC) within DG RTD to design, for example, the proposal and reporting templates and automated checking of the eligibility rules. To support the introduction of new features, REA will organise dedicated training for MSCA National Contact Points (NCPs) as well as internal information sessions.

REA will also focus on the efficiency gains identified for the implementation of the MSCA under Horizon Europe, in cooperation with DG EAC and external stakeholders (NCPs and Programme Committee members). Two important areas for review are the management of the Special Needs Lump Sum legacy projects under Horizon Europe and the MSCA evaluation system. In addition, REA and DG EAC will streamline the information provided online for MSCA applicants, beneficiaries, and

healthy and green rural, coastal and urban communities”, preparing for Horizon Europe Cluster 6 (Food, Bio economy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment).

researchers. In this regard, REA and DG EAC will continue cooperating in communication activities towards these groups, including the revamp of DG EAC's MSCA website and the development of REA's MSCA pages.

Furthermore, in Horizon Europe, additional MSCA activities will be delegated by DG EAC to REA. These remain to be finalised but will involve REA managing grants for:

- Trans-national cooperation among MSCA NCPs;
- MSCA Researchers at risk action;
- MSCA International cooperation action; and
- Support to the Marie Curie Alumni Association action.

These grants were previously managed by DG EAC. Since they focus on actions with a strong policy dimension, specific implementing arrangements between REA and DG EAC will have to be agreed, and grant management tasks allocated internally.

Cluster 2: culture, creativity and inclusive society

For Horizon Europe, DG EMPL, DG EAC and DG RTD are leading the co-creation process in Cluster 2. Previously, activities in this area were delegated to REA only by DG RTD and DG CNECT, therefore there will be a new form of coordination between REA and the parent DGs for Cluster 2, including to maintain efficient and effective connections between projects and policy work.

In addition, by implementing Cluster 2, REA will for the first time run operational (rather than administrative) procurements. Significant efforts will be devoted to setting up this procurement capacity within the tight deadline defined. In parallel, the REA unit implementing Cluster 2 will also receive nine additional Horizon 2020 projects currently managed by DG RTD.

Cluster 3: civil security for society

REA will need to adapt to important differences compared to Horizon 2020, specifically the increase in the number of topics and changes in the submission and evaluation process (e.g. related to the assessment of the exclusive civilian aspects, particularly relevant for Cluster 3). 2021 will also see the delegation to REA of the full legacy of Horizon 2020 Societal Challenge 7 grants. Therefore it will be a peak year as regards the management of REA security-related projects.

Cluster 6: food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and environment

Several complex call and grant management processes will be carried out simultaneously during 2021. The implementation of Cluster 6 of Horizon Europe will start, with seven coherent packages of calls and topics ('destinations') distributed among three REA units. Consolidation of internal processes and inter-unit coordination will therefore be a priority in 2021 to maximise the efficiency of

operations, particularly given the high number of newcomers to REA who will work on Cluster 6.

In parallel, there will be intensive work to follow up the Green Deal call that was among the last of Horizon 2020. Proposals were evaluated by the end of March 2021 and the grant preparation will continue until October this year. REA will manage altogether 11 out of the 20 Green Deal call topics. As an example, one of these topics, Farm-to-Fork, received 261 proposals and presents the additional organisational challenge of ensuring correct calibration between six sub-topics.

The Agency will also be leading on the calls/topics contributing to the implementation of the Soil health and food mission. In addition, the new Horizon Europe “co-fund” partnerships: e.g. on biodiversity will be managed by REA.

Widening participation and spreading excellence

The programme under Horizon Europe has new types of calls (such as the Excellence Hubs, the European Excellence Initiative, and European Research Area (ERA) Fellowships and Talents) that complement the calls from Horizon 2020 for Teaming, Twinning and ERA Chairs. The Teaming action now uses a two-stage evaluation approach.

Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system

The new programme will be a continuation of the Horizon 2020 *Science with and for Society* programme, with an extended scope ranging from universities to international cooperation (14 strands in the legal basis). The new programme will focus on prioritising investments, improving access to excellence, translating R&I into economic value and deepening the ERA. For 2021, all the actions of the programme are bundled into a one-stage call for proposals with a deadline in September.

Research infrastructures

Before the Horizon Europe calls are launched, REA is conducting proposal evaluations/grant preparation for research infrastructure topics of three Horizon 2020 calls (Green Deal, Covid-19, EU Presidency event). Targeted training of the legal and financial officers who support the management of research infrastructure grants will be provided early on. It will cover specific requirements as regards access costs, rules for provision of access and sub-contracting. Project officers will need to acquire knowledge of the actors in a given research infrastructure community and the political priorities (European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) roadmap, ERA action plan). Selecting specialist evaluators/monitors who have no conflict of interest is challenging as consortia sometimes have more than fifty beneficiaries already involving European experts in the field.

There will be further coordination between programme implementation and policy follow-up (e.g. via ESFRI and international cooperation), In addition, many calls will

be challenge-oriented and addressed to multiple communities of research infrastructures. Consequently, close collaboration between project officers with different portfolios will be needed.

B. Research programme of the Research Fund for Coal and Steel (RFCS)

Operational aspects

The main priorities for 2021 are to complete the transfer of programme management from DG RTD to REA, and to form new organisational relationships between REA, RTD, and the external bodies that have a role in implementing the RFCS Research Programme. In addition, subject to the adoption of the RFCS Modernisation Package, REA will contribute to programming for the Clean Steel Partnership and new programming activities on 'coal' transition. REA will present the progress of programme implementation to the Coal and Steel Advisory Groups (CAG-SAG) and Coal and Steel Committee (COSCO). CAG-SAG also provide advice for the preparation of calls for proposals. In addition, REA will manage the seven technical groups of experts (two for coal and five for steel) that support the monitoring of ongoing research, pilots/demonstrators, and accompanying measures projects.

Support to Commission policy work

Overall, RFCS calls and projects will directly help the Commission to meet the 'Green Deal' objectives. The RFCS Modernisation Package aims to revise the three legal bases regulating the RFCS research programme, to mobilise greater resources for this aim; it is awaiting the consent of the European Parliament, having been agreed in principle by the Council of the EU. REA will collaborate with DG RTD in the organisation of an inter-institutional workshop and an event to celebrate the adoption of the RFCS Modernisation Package. REA will also support the preparation of an event for the signature of the Clean Steel Partnership.

REA will provide policy-relevant inputs from current and future projects. It will collaborate with DG ENER and DG RTD to present results of RFCS projects to the Coal Regions in Transition Platform. These regular meetings among stakeholders highlight the transition processes of coal regions that are planning or already in the process of phasing out coal production and coal use. Also among the Commission DGs that regularly engage with the RFCS are DG ENV, DG CLIMA, DG GROW, and DG REGIO.

C. Information provision and promotion measures concerning agricultural products

Operational aspects

2021 will represent the sixth year of implementation of information provision and promotion measures concerning agricultural products, which is reaching cruising speed in terms of yearly budget. These tasks and the responsible staff were transferred to REA from the EU Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive

Agency (CHAFEA) on 1 April 2021. Two calls for proposals for co-financed programmes, which were published in January 2021, close in May 2021. In the case of a serious market disturbance or loss of consumer confidence, further calls could be published in response.

The measures concerning agricultural products include two financing forms that REA has not previously implemented:

- Grants submitted to and evaluated by REA but managed by the competent national authorities under shared management (for programmes where all beneficiaries come from the same Member State).
- Operational procurement (of promotional campaigns and events aimed at enhancing the image of EU products, and technical support services e.g. to raise awareness of different markets).

Work is underway to ensure that the central REA finance and validation units are able to support these new types of financing.

It is expected that during 2021 Covid-19 will continue to affect the implementation of information provision and promotion measures concerning agricultural products, since they often consist of face-to-face communication activities that cannot take place under public health restrictions. Numerous grant agreements and contracts will need amendment once implementation can resume, with an impact on the timing and workload for financial transactions.

Support to Commission policy work

Based on a strategy established at the European level, information provision and promotion measures concerning agricultural products aim to boost jobs and growth in rural areas by enhancing the competitiveness of the EU agricultural sector. The actions open up new markets and consolidate existing ones, as well as raise awareness among consumers, both inside and outside Europe, of EU quality schemes and the high standards of EU agricultural products.

The actions also contribute to achieving the objectives of the EU Farm to Fork strategy. In 2021, the Commission is undertaking a review of the policy, with a view to enhancing its contribution to sustainable production and consumption, and in line with the shift to a more plant-based diet, with less red and processed meat and more fruit and vegetables.

D. Support tasks delegated to the Agency

REA provides support according to the Annex VIII of the Delegation Act.

i. Participant management for grants/tenders and management of the Research Enquiry Service

Through its central validation service, REA contributes to the implementation of the Single Electronic Data Interchange Area (SEDIA)⁹ by performing the following operations for participants in grants (including prizes) and procurements¹⁰:

- Validating legal entities (including the appointment of Legal Entity Appointed Representative);
- Creating/modifying their bank account data in the EU financial system; and
- Preparing the assessment of their financial capacity.

REA also operates the **Research Enquiry Service** that answers citizens' questions on research matters and participants' validation, as well as feeding the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) public database. The launch of **Horizon Europe, with its new features, is expected to increase demand** for the Service.

The new REA Delegation Act extends the scope of the central validation service, for example to identify if third countries have control over some participants, a check foreseen in the Horizon Europe, Digital Europe, EDIDP,¹¹ and EU Defence Fund programmes. **Discussions are well advanced on specifying procedures to address the requirements of the new types of validation.**

In 2021, the central validation service will implement the first of a series of pilots to **support information and communication with programme participants in all EU official languages**. This is delivered through new, specifically designed workflows and tools developed with the EU Translation Centre. In addition, REA will continue cooperating with DG BUDG in ensuring consistent application of the validation rules and practices and with DG DIGIT in developing the relevant corporate IT tools in a fully automated and integrated way.

The central validation service will continue to manage the **PDM/URF¹² database** which supports its operations, including compliance with the applicable data protection rules. Obsolete data is eliminated annually from PDM/URF and it is

⁹ Article 147 of the Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1046/2018 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

¹⁰ Also for participants in the first level of indirect management transactions.

¹¹ European Defence Industrial Development Programme

¹² Participant Data Management/Unique Registration Facility

aligned with the personal data management policy of the EU Funding and Tenders Portal.

In recent years, a series of new clients have joined SEDIA and discussions were initiated to extend its services to further EU bodies. In this context, **a pilot will be launched with the European Parliament** to explore the possibility and elements of a potential agreement on validation services that REA will provide to it from 2022.

ii. Administrative and logistical support services

REA provides expert management and support services to EU bodies implementing Horizon Europe and selected other programmes. These services include:

- Planning and support for publication of calls for proposals;
- General logistical support for the proposal evaluations, including the management of the evaluation facility; and
- Contracting and payment of the independent experts who evaluate proposals.

The priorities for REA's expert management and support services in 2021 consist of the following:

- **Transition** to the new Multi-Annual Financial Framework and associated programmes;
- Supporting the CIC for the **testing and deployment** of new IT features and tools in view of the move to the Expert Common Services (ECS) platform;
- Supporting the CIC in the **identification and resolution of issues** linked to the transfer to the new MFF;
- Implementing measures to allow for the **safe resumption of on-site expert activities** after the current public health situation.

In the first quarter of 2021 considerable work was undertaken to ensure that the call planning for 2021-22 would be finalised in time and that the **first calls could be launched as scheduled**.

Other challenges may also need to be resolved such as issues with the deployment of new IT features and tools, or a potential revision of Commission Decision C(2007)5858¹³ on the reimbursement of experts. Having established good working relationships with the CIC's IT Service Provider, REA will continue to provide support and assistance to the CIC with the **testing and deployment** of these new features.

¹³ Commission Decision C(2007)5858 : Rules on the reimbursement of expenses incurred by people from outside the Commission invited to attend meetings in an expert capacity.

A secondary priority will, in view of the current public health crisis, be to ensure a **safe resumption of on-site expert activities**. Methods by which this may be achieved are already being explored, if not implemented, and it is expected that, once the situation improves, REA will be able to promptly resume on-site work with experts. It is planned to upgrade 11 large meeting rooms in the evaluation facility to be able to handle hybrid meetings that combine onsite and remote experts.

There are additional issues to monitor and, if necessary, manage in 2021. REA is cooperating with the CIC and DG BUDG to enable the individual registration of commitments for each expert contract, for clearer financial reporting. Furthermore, REA is contributing to the development and deployment of a new model contract for experts (currently scheduled for 2021).

PART 4. Modernising the administration: main outputs for the year

This part is structured around REA's long term objectives in the following areas:

- Human resource management;
- Sound financial management;
- Fraud risk management;
- Digital transformation and information management; and
- Sound environmental management.

For each area, the priorities and challenges for the coming year are summarised. The related long term objectives, with their respective indicators, and the list of specific outputs planned for 2021 are presented as performance tables in Annex 1.

The internal control framework¹⁴ supports sound management and decision-making. It notably ensures that risks to the achievement of objectives are taken into account and reduced to acceptable levels through cost-effective controls.

REA has established an internal control system tailored to the nature of its core business tasks. The effective functioning of the agency's internal control system will be assessed on an ongoing basis throughout the year and be subject to a specific annual assessment covering all internal control principles.

REA continues to work with other executive agencies in order to achieve further synergies in performing horizontal support tasks. The following sections mention several examples of this ongoing cooperation.

A. Human resource management

While many of the REA positions resulting from its new mandate were filled quickly, it is important for the successful operation of the Agency to complete its staffing as soon as possible. REA's selection and recruitment activity will be focused on this objective throughout 2021. As a priority, REA will follow-up its recent consultation of existing staff's mobility wishes, in order to redeploy them to vacant posts that suit their profiles and interests.

REA will prioritise actions that assist newly-appointed staff to make a successful transition. This includes assisting those who are taking up new senior, middle, or junior management positions, whether they are moving roles within REA or are newly seconded by a parent DG. The Agency will work throughout 2021 to

¹⁴ [Communication C\(2017\)2373 - Revision of the Internal Control Framework](#)

smoothly integrate these new colleagues. REA will also put in place measures that support this process, such as learning & development opportunities and internal communication tools, which are adapted to the working environment/public health requirements in place at the time.

In relation to indicator 1 in the *Human resource management* performance table of Annex 1 on first female middle management appointments, REA participates in the new working group of executive agencies on gender equality matters a. This group regularly reports to and interacts with representatives of REA's parent DGs and DG HR.

The Agency, together with other executive agencies, will further develop its social dialogue practices, notably by engaging in regular exchanges with trade unions and its staff committee. The new HR strategy under development at the Commission will impact on more extensive use of telework and office space design; this will be a key subject of such intensified social dialogue.

B. Sound financial management

REA participation in measures at R&I family level

Given the results of the audit campaign up until 2020, and the observations made by the European Court of Auditors in its 2018 and 2019 Annual Reports, the CIC, in close cooperation with DG BUDG, the Secretariat-General and the Internal Audit Service (IAS), is defining actions aiming at reducing further the multiannual error rate of Horizon 2020, and paving the way for a simpler and, to the extent possible, an error free Horizon Europe.

REA is closely collaborating with the CIC in developing and delivering these actions, which include further simplification, increased use of simplified forms of funding (including lump sums), focused communication campaigns¹⁵ to more "error-prone" types of beneficiaries, such as SMEs and newcomers, and enhanced training to internal project officers and External Audit Firms performing audits on behalf of the Commission/Agency. By focusing on the most common errors, these events will be short and simple, reaching more participants and achieving higher impact.

It should be noted that, although the start of the implementation of these actions will be immediate, their positive effect in the form of reducing the multiannual error rate may take time to materialise.

¹⁵ For example, webinars were already held in early 2021 on *Avoiding errors in declaring personnel costs in Horizon 2020 grants*, which are viewable at <https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/other/event210224.htm>

In the context of further reducing the error rates, REA will make an important contribution to the CIC's examination of existing tools for ex-ante controls by participating actively in the *R&I family services Network of Ex-ante Control practitioners* (RINEC). The CIC will carry out a consultation with the stakeholders in order to collect their views on what improvements should be developed in the grant management risk module or via additional business activity monitoring reports.

As concerns the use of simplified forms of costs, the Horizon 2020 lump sum pilot will continue in 2021. This pilot, which gave rise to more than 400 lump sum grants, will be assessed, to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the pilot in order to improve the current approach. The results of this assessment will support the decision as to what extent, and for which actions, lump sum funding will be used in Horizon Europe. In addition, the feasibility of a unit cost option for personnel costs will be analysed.

Additional REA actions

In 2021 REA will also take a number of internal steps that complement the corporate framework for sound financial management within which the Agency operates.

REA has put in place a harmonisation plan for 2021 that will enable REA internal processes, workflows, and IT set-up, also to serve the newly delegated programmes. The programmes are already largely aligned for grants as all programmes use eGrants and follow the corporate procedures; the harmonisation plan targets the differences including the use of bank or third-party guarantees rather than the Mutual Insurance Mechanism implemented for Horizon and ex-post audits.

A new Centre of Excellence in handling bankruptcies of grant beneficiaries will further improve the Agency's overall management of bankruptcy cases and its timely registration of claims with liquidators, thereby limiting the potential financial losses arising from such cases. REA is well prepared for a possible increase in the number of bankrupt beneficiaries, as the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic materialises.

In addition, REA may need to make adjustments to follow up two IAS engagements that are taking place in 2021:

- While the principal methodology underlying the calculations of the Horizon 2020 error rates is defined at R&I family level, where relevant REA complements the common indicators to give more detailed reporting on the legality and regularity of the operations it manages. These activities will need to take account of the recommendations of the IAS limited review on the methodology for calculation of the error rates of Horizon 2020.

- The ongoing IAS audit on the implementation of Horizon 2020 grants' ex-post audit findings may also recommend changes to current practices.

C. Fraud risk management

The R&I family Anti-Fraud Strategy (RAFS), agreed by the CIC Executive Committee, addresses fraud risks shared by the various bodies implementing research framework programmes. Common communication activities, training for operational staff, intelligence analysis and risk-based audit preparation and selection ensure a consistent and efficient approach. REA takes an active part in the development and the implementation of the RAFS, through its participation in the Fraud and Irregularity in Research (FAIR) Committee.

REA has developed and implemented its own anti-fraud strategy since 2011, on the basis of the methodology provided by OLAF. It has been updated so far biannually. It was last updated in October 2019 following the adoption of the updated Commission Anti-fraud Strategy in April 2019. Its implementation is monitored and reported quarterly to REA management. The main purpose of REA's anti-fraud approach is to translate the strategic priorities into operational measures which address risks that are particularly relevant for the operations managed by REA. Awareness raising remains the main preventive measure. All necessary actions, except the drafting and updating of internal guidelines, have been implemented. The implementation of the missing actions is in progress; their completion is expected in 2021 (these are listed in the table of main outputs in Annex 1).

The forthcoming update of the REA anti-fraud approach will take into account the new structure of the Agency resulting from the new incoming programmes, notably as regards the fraud risk assessment and the compendium of red flags, to be updated also from the compendium of OLAF's recent REA cases.

In January 2021, the Internal Audit Service (IAS) of the Commission concluded that the anti-fraud framework in place in the R&I family for the prevention, detection and handling of fraud-related cases is adequately designed and effectively implemented. REA will act upon two recommendations for improvement in its use of an IT module.

D. Digital transformation and information management

Data management and security

REA mainly uses EC corporate business processes and IT systems (eGrants and eProcurement IT tool suites) for programme implementation, and fully participates in their respective governance structures (Common Implementation Centre, Steering Committees, User Groups, etc.).

Local IT developments are limited and mainly focus on those processes for which no central tools are available. In the development of its own local IT systems, REA will continue to apply a 'privacy-by-design' approach and the 'need-to-know' principle as regards access to local systems and data.

In 2021 and 2022, REA will do further work on ensuring data security due to the increasing number of cloud services (such as MS 365 and conferencing tools used by external stakeholders). The Agency will also follow-up the data preservation strategy and recommendations that the Secretariat-General of the EC issued in 2020.

Document management and security

Following the integration of the Qualified Electronic Signature (QES) in the ARES document registration system, the vast majority of REA's administrative processes are now paperless. In 2021, there will be further refinements to simplify the encoding and increase the visibility of the QES. The processes of the few document types (e.g. VAT exemption for experts) that are still signed manually will also be reassessed. As a result of the reduction in the amount of mail and paper signatories, the organisation of REA's mail service will be reconsidered. Also during the year, a 'sensitive personal data' flag will be introduced in ARES.

REA will revise its guidance and training material on the handling of classified information. This revision will implement the recommendations made by IAS in its January 2021 audit report on Grant management - phase III, in particular addressing REA's handling of classified information. The main purpose is to raise awareness among the various internal and external actors and to make sure that implementing rules and guidance documents and templates are well followed.

Protection of personal data

As in previous years, REA plans several activities in 2021 to increase the capacity of its staff to respond to different data protection issues that may arise in their work. A specific presentation on data protection will be designed for and delivered to newcomers, but also open to other REA staff.

Furthermore, the REA Data Protection Officer (DPO) will deliver a webinar on applying the REA data protection record for external events related to grant management. The DPO will prepare this training in close collaboration with the REA Network of Project Officers. In addition, REA plans an all-staff event on the topic of data breaches, including a specific section for data controllers.

REA will continue complying with the European Data Protection Supervisor's (EDPS) instruction for all services to monitor and report any transfers of personal data outside of the EU/European Economic Area (EEA). Data controllers in REA will notify any potential international transfer of data to the DPO, who will make case-by-case "transfer impact assessments" to identify whether an equivalent level of protection

as provided in the EU/EEA exists in the destination third country. If necessary, REA will put in place appropriate safeguards and supplementary measures under the guidance of the EDPS.

During 2021 new REA internal rules on the restriction of data subjects' rights will enter into force, as foreseen under Article 25 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725¹⁶. The rules specify a limited number of cases in which REA can restrict data subjects' rights. The rules were drafted in consultation with the EDPS and the other EU executive agencies, which have coordinated their approaches. Their entry into force will require REA to revise its data protection records, notices, and other documents, and to establish an internal implementing procedure. These changes, and others resulting from the new REA mandate, will be reflected in updates to the REA inventory¹⁷ of data protection records and notices.

Also during 2021, REA will adopt the DPO implementing rules under Article 45.3 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725. The DPOs of the EU executive agencies jointly drafted these rules and subsequently consulted the EDPS.

E. Sound environmental management

Executive agencies (starting with the ones located in Commission-buildings) will gradually become EMAS-registered during the coming years.

With the note sent to the EC Director-General of Human Resources and Security - Ares(2019)7228838, the Research Executive Agency formally requested its inclusion in the EMAS Register. As a follow-up of this request, REA has completed the first part of the EMAS registration audit in 2020.

The Agency is very much committed towards a more sustainable work environment and will support the Commission's commitment to implement the objectives of the Green Deal for its own administration, including becoming climate neutral by 2030.

This will include the promotion of EMAS corporate campaigns at local level and the setting up of practical actions and initiatives covering daily activities as well as longer-term operations.

Section E of Annex 1 contains the list of local activities planned for 2021 and related indicators and targets.

¹⁶ Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data.

¹⁷

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/register_of_records_of_personal_data_processing_activities_in_rea.pdf

Considering the nature and scope of the planned activities, the list could be redesigned/adjusted during the year, in function of the future evolution of the Covid-related restrictive measures.

F. Initiatives to improve economy and efficiency of financial and non-financial activities

The cost-benefit analysis that was conducted to support the delegation of the management of activities to executive agencies¹⁸ calculates the number of staff allocated to agencies for 2021-2027 based on targets for efficiency gains through economies of scale of at least 15%. This means that the workload per staff member will increase considerably in the coming years.

In order to handle the increasing workload, REA reviewed the tools, procedures and processes that the Agency uses, whether established at Commission level or internally, during the second half of 2020. Colleagues from other executive agencies and from the CIC of DG RTD were involved in this analysis. The analysis resulted in two strands of proposed measures to generate efficiency gains: 1) those to be implemented internally; 2) those that required approval and implementation at corporate level.

Concerning the first strand, the REA review identified 20 internal changes leading to greater efficiency. In 2021, REA will revise the allocation and methodology of certain checks, in order that they are carried out by the most appropriate actor. REA will also create internal knowledge hubs, which will support colleagues when they are feeding project results into policymaking or managing bankrupt beneficiaries. Units implementing the MSCA will better coordinate their operational activities and exchange good practice. A number of internal training modules will be launched, in order to support REA staff to work more efficiently.

Concerning the second strand, which goes beyond REA and concerns the whole R&I family, executive agencies worked in partnership with the CIC to define a set of agreed actions. These actions have the potential to offer efficiency gains in the processes and IT tools for the submission and evaluation of proposals and the management of grants. According to the commitment taken by the CIC, some of these actions will be rolled out in 2021 and others in 2022.

REA will follow closely the implementation of both the internal and external action plans, whose roll-out is expected to have a visible impact as of 2022. In addition to its practical benefits, this REA-wide reflection helped to develop a common understanding of future challenges, as well as harnessing the expertise and creativity of staff.

¹⁸ Staff Working Document SWD(2021)20 accompanying the Communication to the Commission C(2021) 946 of 12.2.2021

ANNEX 1: Performance tables

Delivering on the Commission's priorities: main outputs for the year

A. Implementation of Horizon Europe - Excellent science - Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) and predecessor actions (DG EAC)

General objective:
EUROPE FIT FOR THE DIGITAL AGE
Specific objective:
DG EAC 2.3 - Through the Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, promote excellence in research, generate innovation and strengthen skills, training and career development for researchers notably through excellent international doctoral networks
From 2020-2024 Strategic Plans

Main outputs in 2021:

Horizon Europe

Output	Indicator	Target
Events to ensure successful implementation of the programme and to promote funding opportunities (organised by REA)	Number of events organised by REA	2 (REA trainings for MSCA NCPs on Horizon Europe)
Calls for proposals	Number of calls	7*
Evaluation sessions	Number of sessions	6**
Number of individual proposals evaluated	Estimated number of proposals to evaluate	12157
Number of grants signed	Number of grants	15 (all other grants will be signed in 2022)
Procedures for selection by the Commission (where necessary)	Number of procedures	0 (expected only early 2022)
Pre-financing payments	Number of payments	0
Interim payments/progress reports	Number of payments	0
Final payments/final reports	Number of payments	0

Horizon 2020

Output	Indicator	Target
Events to ensure successful implementation of the programme (organised by REA)	Number of events organised by REA	7 (5 MSCA coordinators days + 2 cluster events - Cancer and Green Deal)
Evaluation sessions	Number of sessions	3 (1 NIGHT 2020bis + 2 SNLS cut offs)
Number of individual proposals evaluated	Estimated number of proposals to evaluate	169

Number of grants signed	Number of grants	1866
Procedures for selection by the Commission (where necessary)	Number of procedures	4
Pre-financing payments	Number of payments	1918
Interim payments/progress reports	Number of payments	399
Final payments/final reports	Number of payments	878
FP7		
Interim payments/progress reports	Number of payments	0
Final payments/final reports	Number of payments	14

* Two additional 2021 calls will be launched in 2021 but will be closed only in spring 2022, therefore they will be counted in the next year AWP

**The ERA Fellowships call will be evaluated within the Postdoctoral fellowships call, there will be no separate evaluation (therefore there are only 6 evaluation exercises while the number of calls is 7).

B. Implementation of Horizon Europe - Excellent science - Research infrastructures and predecessor actions (DGs RTD, DG CNECT)

General objective:

EUROPE FIT FOR THE DIGITAL AGE

Specific objectives:

DG RTD 2.2: The revitalised European Research Area sets directions for societal, economic and ecological transitions in Europe and contributes to spreading excellence, closing research and innovation gap and working out a common global response to emerging challenges

DG CNECT 2 A European single market for data where data can flow for the benefit of all and where the rules for access and use of data are fair, practical and clear

From 2020-2024 Strategic Plans

Main outputs in 2021:

Horizon Europe

Output	Indicator	Target
Events to ensure successful implementation of the programme and to promote funding opportunities (organised by REA)	Number of events organised by REA	1 (info day)

Calls for proposals	Number of calls	8 ¹⁹
Evaluation sessions	Number of sessions	4 ²⁰
Number of individual proposals evaluated	Estimated number of proposals to evaluate	101 ²¹
Number of grants signed	Number of grants	50 ²²
Procedures for selection by the Commission (where necessary)	Number of procedures	1
Pre-financing payments	Number of payments	1
Interim payments/progress reports	Number of payments	-
Final payments/final reports	Number of payments	-
Horizon 2020		
Output	Indicator	Target
Events to ensure successful implementation of the programme (organised by REA)	Number of events organised by REA	-
Evaluation sessions	Number of sessions	1 (Green Deal)
Number of individual proposals evaluated	Estimated number of proposals to evaluate	12
Number of grants signed	Number of grants	30
Procedures for selection by the Commission (where necessary)	Number of procedures	-
Pre-financing payments	Number of payments	32 ²³
Interim payments/progress reports	Number of payments	32 ²⁴
Final payments/final reports	Number of payments	1

¹⁹ 3 calls (13 topics)+ 2 actions under Art. 195.b of the Financial Regulation 2018/1046 + 2 actions under Art.195.e of the Financial Regulation 2018/1046 + 1 Dest.2-EOSC (6 topics on European Open Science Cloud, EOSC)

²⁰ 1 Art.195 of the Financial Regulation 2018/1046 + 2 (Ad Hoc ICRI/ESFRI)+ 1 INFRA 2021 (08/06/2021)

²¹ 33 (EOSC) + 57 (RI) + 9 proposals under Art. 195.b of the Financial Regulation 2018/1046 of the Financial Regulation 2018/1046

²² 11 (EOSC) + 35 (RI) + 2 grants under Art. 195.b of the Financial Regulation 2018/1046 +2 grants under Art.195.e of the Financial Regulation 2018/1046

²³ (29 INFRA+3 Green Deal)

²⁴ 5 (INFRAEOSC-5b) + 27 for RIs (interim and final payments included) (not accounting for projects which have requested an extension, figure may be subject to change)

C. Implementation of Horizon Europe - Global challenges and European industrial competitiveness - Cluster 2: culture, creativity and inclusive society, and predecessor actions (DGs RTD, EMPL, EAC)

General objectives:

AN ECONOMY THAT WORKS FOR PEOPLE

A NEW PUSH FOR EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY

Specific objectives:

DG RTD 3.1: Research and innovation actions, increased R&I investments and the R&I component of the European Semester boost economic growth and jobs creation

DG RTD 6.1: European research and innovation support citizens' involvement, social inclusion and equalities in Europe, including through communication of the European research and innovation added value

Indirect contribution to specific objectives:

DG EAC 2.1 - Increase the use of digital technologies for teaching and learning to support both quality and inclusive education

DG EAC 2.2 - Invest in the development of digital skills for all

DG EAC 3.1 - Ensure effective and efficient European cooperation and develop optimised strategic investments for modernised, high quality education and training systems fostering EU social cohesion and economic

DG EAC 5.6 - With the support of the Creative Europe programme, promote European cooperation on cultural and linguistic diversity

DG EAC 4.1 - Promote and strengthen international cooperation in the fields of education, training, youth, sport, culture, and research and innovation

DG EAC 6.1 - Provide European young people opportunities to participate in civic society and democratic life

DG EMPL 2.1 - A digitally skilled workforce

DG EMPL 3.1 - Effective support to Member States in their structural reforms and investments in the context of the European Semester

DG EMPL 3.3 - Decent and safe working conditions for all

DG EMPL 3.5 - Greater social fairness and more effective social protection

DG EMPL 5.1 - A skilled workforce to master the green and digital transition

DG EMPL 5.2 - Vocational education and training effectively addresses the labour market needs and prepares people for the green and digital transition

From 2020-2024 Strategic Plans

Main outputs in 2021²⁵:

Horizon Europe

Output	Indicator	Target
Events to ensure successful implementation of the programme and to promote funding opportunities (organised by REA)	Number of events organised by REA	2 (info days)
Calls for proposals	Number of calls	3
Evaluation sessions	Number of sessions	4 ²⁶
Number of individual proposals evaluated	Estimated number of proposals to evaluate	620
Number of grants signed	Number of grants	2
Procedures for selection by the Commission (where necessary)	Number of procedures	1
Pre-financing payments	Number of payments	2
Interim payments/progress reports	Number of payments	0
Final payments/final reports	Number of payments	0

Horizon 2020

Output	Indicator	Target
Events to ensure successful implementation of the programme (organised by REA)	Number of events organised by REA	9
Evaluation sessions	Number of sessions	1
Number of individual proposals evaluated	Estimated number of proposals to evaluate	169 received proposals, 163 retained for evaluation, 2 procurement
Number of grants signed	Number of grants	5 - 7 ²⁷
Procedures for selection by the Commission (where necessary)	Number of procedures	3
Pre-financing payments	Number of payments	46
Interim payments/progress reports	Number of payments	60 ²⁸
Final payments/final reports	Number of payments	26

²⁵ The estimates cover the eGovernment and Digital cultural heritage projects that are under the management of REA.

²⁶ Including the evaluation session for two Horizon Europe topics in Q2-Q3 2021.

²⁷ Including one operational procurement action

²⁸ Including one operational procurement action

D. Implementation of Horizon Europe - Global challenges and European industrial competitiveness - Cluster 3: civil security for society, and predecessor actions (DGs RTD, HOME)

General objectives:

A EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

EUROPE FIT FOR THE DIGITAL AGE

A STRONGER EUROPE IN THE WORLD

PROMOTING OUR EUROPEAN WAY OF LIFE

Specific objectives:

DG RTD 1.1: High-quality science, knowledge and innovative solutions support climate policies and help to preserve biodiversity, ecosystem and natural resources

DG RTD 2.1: High-quality science, knowledge and innovative solutions facilitate a digital transition in Europe, including a new European approach to Artificial Intelligence

DG RTD 5.1: Regional research and innovation strategies and broader association policy contribute to promoting common European R&I values and creating a global Research and Innovation Space

DG HOME 5.1 Strengthened Internal Security

From 2020-2024 Strategic Plans

Main outputs in 2021:

Horizon Europe

Output	Indicator	Target
Events to ensure successful implementation of the programme and to promote funding opportunities (organised by REA)	Number of events organised by REA	-
Calls for proposals	Number of calls	5
Evaluation sessions	Number of sessions	5
Number of individual proposals evaluated	Estimated number of proposals to evaluate	400
Number of grants signed	Number of grants	-
Procedures for selection by the Commission (where necessary)	Number of procedures	-
Pre-financing payments	Number of payments	-
Interim payments/progress reports	Number of payments	-
Final payments/final reports	Number of payments	-

Horizon 2020

Output	Indicator	Target
Events to ensure successful implementation of the programme and to promote funding opportunities (organised by REA)	Number of events organised by REA	-
Evaluation sessions	Number of sessions	-

Number of individual proposals evaluated	Estimated number of proposals to evaluate	-
Number of grants signed	Number of grants	45
Procedures for selection by the Commission (where necessary)	Number of procedures	8
Pre-financing payments	Number of payments	45
Interim payments/progress reports	Number of payments	48
Final payments/final reports	Number of payments	31

E. Implementation of Horizon Europe - Global challenges and European industrial competitiveness - Cluster 6: food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and environment, and predecessor actions (DGs RTD, AGRI, ENV)

General objectives:

A EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

A NEW PUSH FOR EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY

Specific objectives:

DG RTD 1.1: High-quality science, knowledge and innovative solutions support climate policies and help to preserve biodiversity, ecosystem and natural resources

DG RTD 1.3: Co-creation of Horizon Europe and its missions and partnerships increases awareness of the key role of research and innovation for achieving climate neutrality

DG AGRI 3: Enhance market orientation and increase competitiveness, including greater focus on research, innovation, technology and digitalization

DG AGRI 5: In line with the Farm to Fork Strategy, improve the response of EU agriculture to societal demands on food and health, including safe, nutritious and sustainable food, food waste, as well as animal welfare through the Common Agricultural Policy

DG RTD 6.1: European research and innovation support citizens' involvement, social inclusion and equalities in Europe, including through communication of the European research and innovation added value

From 2020-2024 Strategic Plans

Main outputs in 2021:

Horizon Europe

Output	Indicator	Target
Events to ensure successful implementation of the programme and to promote funding opportunities (organised by REA)	Number of events organised by REA	1 ²⁹
Calls for proposals	Number of calls	8
Evaluation sessions	Number of sessions	8
Individual proposals evaluated	Estimated number of proposals to evaluate	1200

²⁹ 1 info-day - joint event for the Cluster 6.

Grants signed	Number of grants	0
Procedures for selection by the Commission (where necessary)	Number of procedures	0
Pre-financing payments	Number of payments	0
Interim payments/progress reports	Number of payments	0
Final payments/final reports	Number of payments	0
Horizon 2020 - Societal Challenges (SCs) 2 & 5		
Output	Indicator	Target
Events to ensure successful implementation of the programme (organised by REA)	Number of events organised by REA	4 for SC2 grants ³⁰ 8 for SC5 grants ³¹ 1 for Green Deal grants (TBC) ³²
Evaluation sessions	Number of sessions	3
Individual proposals evaluated	Estimated number of proposals to evaluate	261 SC2 538 SC5
Grants signed	Number of grants	54 grants SC2 25 grants SC5 ³³
Procedures for selection by the Commission (where necessary)	Number of procedures	14 (SC2) ; 6 (SC5)
Pre-financing payments	Number of payments	70 (SC2) ; 36 (SC5)
Interim payments/progress reports	Number of payments	118 (SC2) ; 50 (SC5)
Final payments/final reports	Number of payments	41 (SC2) ; 50 (SC5)

³⁰ 1 SC2 coordinators' day. Two other events are tbc as possible cluster sessions (e.g. earth observation). 1 cluster meeting was already organised.

³¹ 3 cluster events - ICT4water annual event, Plastics/CE and Water-energy nexus projects (future REA B3); 2 NBS cluster events (future REA B3); 2 Eurogeo and Polar cluster (future REA B4); 1 joint SC2 & SC5 Coordinators day.

³² Depending on the date of joint SC2 & SC5 Coordinators day, and the progress of the Green Deal call's proposal evaluations, it could be possible to include coordinators of selected Green Deal projects in that event. If not a separate event will be held for them during last quarter of 2021. To be noted that this may be a joint launch event/ info day for all Green Deal projects across EC services, given the specific focus of these projects (delivering tangible results in a short time frame).

³³ Figures include the Green Deal call grants where the final figure will depend on budget available, based on past submission.

F. Implementation of Horizon Europe - Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area - Widening participation and spreading excellence (DG RTD)

General objective: EUROPE FIT FOR THE DIGITAL AGE

Specific objective:

DG RTD 2.2: The revitalised European Research Area sets directions for societal, economic and ecological transitions in Europe and contributes to spreading excellence, closing research and innovation gap and working out a common global response to emerging challenges

From 2020-2024 Strategic Plans

Main outputs in 2021:

Horizon Europe

Output	Indicator	Target
Events to ensure successful implementation of the programme and to promote funding opportunities (organised by REA)	Number of events organised by REA	1
Calls for proposals	Number of calls	5
Evaluation sessions	Number of sessions	5
Number of individual proposals evaluated	Estimated number of proposals to evaluate	1060
Number of grants signed	Number of grants	1
Procedures for selection by the Commission (where necessary)	Number of procedures	0
Pre-financing payments	Number of payments	1
Interim payments/progress reports	Number of payments	0
Final payments/final reports	Number of payments	0

Horizon 2020

Output	Indicator	Target
Events to ensure successful implementation of the programme (organised by REA)	Number of events organised by REA	0
Evaluation sessions	Number of sessions	0
Number of individual proposals evaluated	Estimated number of proposals to evaluate	0
Number of grants signed	Number of grants	0
Procedures for selection by the Commission (where necessary)	Number of procedures	0
Pre-financing payments	Number of payments	1
Interim payments/progress reports	Number of payments	72

Final payments/final reports	Number of payments	13
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G. Implementation of Horizon Europe - Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area - Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system (DG RTD)

General objective:

EUROPE FIT FOR THE DIGITAL AGE

Specific objective:

DG RTD 2.2: The revitalised European Research Area sets directions for societal, economic and ecological transitions in Europe and contributes to spreading excellence, closing research and innovation gap and working out a common global response to emerging challenges

From 2020-2024 Strategic Plans

Main outputs in 2021:

Horizon Europe

Output	Indicator	Target
Events to ensure successful implementation of the programme and to promote funding opportunities (organised by REA)	Number of events organised by REA	To be determined
Calls for proposals	Number of calls	1
Evaluation sessions	Number of sessions	1
Number of individual proposals evaluated	Estimated number of proposals to evaluate	300
Number of grants signed	Number of grants	25
Procedures for selection by the Commission (where necessary)	Number of procedures	0
Pre-financing payments	Number of payments	0
Interim payments/progress reports	Number of payments	0
Final payments/final reports	Number of payments	0

Horizon 2020

Output	Indicator	Target
Events to ensure successful implementation of the programme (organised by REA)	Number of events organised by REA	0
Evaluation sessions	Number of sessions	2
Number of individual proposals evaluated	Estimated number of proposals to evaluate	43
Number of grants signed	Number of grants	29
Procedures for selection by the Commission (where necessary)	Number of procedures	2
Pre-financing payments	Number of payments	52

Interim reports	payments/progress	Number of payments	36
Final reports	payments/progress	Number of payments	25

H. Implementation of the research programme of the Research Fund for Coal and Steel (DG RTD)

General objective:
A EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL
Specific objective:
DG RTD 1.1: High-quality science, knowledge and innovative solutions support climate policies and help to preserve biodiversity, ecosystem and natural resources
From 2020-2024 Strategic Plans

Main outputs in 2021:

Current programme

Output	Indicator	Target	
Events to ensure successful implementation of the programme and to promote funding opportunities (organised by REA)	Number of events organised by REA	7	
Calls for proposals	Number of calls	1	
Evaluation sessions	Number of sessions	1	
Number of individual proposals evaluated	Estimated number of proposals to evaluate	140-200	
Number of grants signed	Number of grants	25-30	
Procedures for selection by the Commission (where necessary)	Number of procedures	0	
Pre-financing payments	Number of payments	25	
Interim reports	payments/progress	Number of payments	33
Final reports	payments/progress	Number of payments	36

Legacy programmes

Output	Indicator	Target	
Final reports	payments/progress	Number of payments	56

I. Implementation of the information provision and promotion measures concerning agricultural products, and predecessor actions (DG AGRI)

General objectives:

A EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

A STRONGER EUROPE IN THE WORLD

Specific objectives:

DG AGRI 5: In line with the Farm to Fork Strategy, improve the response of EU agriculture to societal demands on food and health, including safe, nutritious and sustainable food, food waste, as well as animal welfare through the Common Agricultural Policy

DG AGRI 9: Promote Europe's high quality agri-food standards worldwide (incl. strengthening the system of geographical indications)

From 2020-2024 Strategic Plans

Main outputs in 2021: GRANTS

Under the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027

Output	Indicator	Target
Events to ensure successful implementation of the programme and to promote funding opportunities (organised by REA)	Number of events organised by REA	0
Calls for proposals	Number of calls	2
Evaluation sessions	Number of sessions	15
Number of individual proposals evaluated	Estimated number of proposals to evaluate	220
Number of grants signed	Number of grants	30
Procedures for selection by the Commission (where necessary)	Number of procedures	1
Pre-financing payments	Number of payments	20
Interim payments/progress reports	Number of payments	0
Final payments/final reports	Number of payments	0

Under the multiannual financial framework 2014-2020

Output	Indicator	Target
Events to ensure successful implementation of the programme (organised by REA)	Number of events organised by REA	1
Evaluation sessions	Number of sessions	0
Number of individual proposals evaluated	Estimated number of proposals to evaluate	0
Number of grants signed	Number of grants	0
Procedures for selection by the Commission (where necessary)	Number of procedures	0
Pre-financing payments	Number of payments	5

Interim reports	payments/progress	Number of payments	22
Final reports		Number of payments	9
Main outputs in 2021: PROCUREMENT			
Under the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027			
Output		Indicator	Target
Number of promotional events outside the EU organised		Number of events	3
Number of on-going communication campaigns		Number of campaigns	2
Number of market research reports published		Number of reports	0
Number of open calls for tender published		Number of calls for tender	1
Interim reports	payments/progress	Number of payments	2
Final reports		Number of payments	4
Under the multiannual financial framework 2014-2020			
Output		Indicator	Target
Number of promotional events outside the EU organised		Number of events	10
Number of on-going communication campaigns		Number of campaigns	10
Number of market research reports published		Number of reports	6
Interim reports	payments/progress	Number of payments	15
Final reports		Number of payments	14

J. Support tasks delegated to the Agency

REA provides support according to the Annex VIII of the Delegation Act.

i. Participant management for grants/tenders and management of the Research Enquiry Service

General objective:

A MODERN, HIGH PERFORMING AND SUSTAINABLE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Specific objective:

RTD 7.1 - The Common Implementation Centre and Common Policy and Programming Centre provide user-friendly services and tools to the European Commission for effective and efficient planning, programming and implementation of the Research and Innovation Framework Programme and other EU programmes

From 2020-2024 DG Strategic Plans

Main outputs in 2021:

EU funding under SEDIA

Output	Indicator	Target
Tasks related to participant validation - legal validation		
Legal entity validation (for all EU funding programmes under SEDIA)	Number of validations	10000
LEAR validation	Number of validations	10000
UTRO validations and ICM	Number of validations	400 UTROs 60 ICMs
Requests for change or additional corrections*	Number of requests	40000
Bank account validations	Number of validations	9000
Tasks related to participant validation - SME validation/mid-cap assessment/third country control assessment		
SME validations	Number of validations	120
Mid-capitalisation assessment	Number of assessments	10
Third-country control assessments	Number of assessments	230 ³⁴
Tasks related to participant validation - preparation of financial capacity assessment		
Preparation of financial capacity assessment	Number of assessments	6000
Tasks related to the management of Research Enquiry Service		
Replies to RES questions (directly by the RES team, the service provider and the local helpdesks)	Number of replies	11.000
Tasks related to Frequently Asked Questions in the Funding and Tenders Portal		
FAQs approved	Number of FAQ	1.000

³⁴ This is the estimated target for assessments under Horizon Europe and Digital Europe programmes, according to REA's current mandate.

* Expressed in number of LEAR requests for updates of the participants' data, includes the ex-post verifications carried out by REA as well as other maintenance.

ii. Administrative and logistical support services

General objective: : A MODERN, HIGH PERFORMING AND SUSTAINABLE EUROPEAN COMMISSION		
Specific objective: RTD 7.1 - The Common Implementation Centre and Common Policy and Programming Centre provide user-friendly services and tools to the European Commission for effective and efficient planning, programming and implementation of the Research and Innovation Framework Programme and other EU programmes		
From 2020-2024 Strategic Plans		
Main outputs in 2021:		
Horizon Europe		
Output	Indicator	Target
Validation of experts' legal entity and bank account files	Files are validated within 25 working days of the approval of the pool of experts.	100%
Contracts signed with experts	Contracts are signed within 10 calendar days of the launch of the contract signature process.	100%
Payments made to experts	Payments are made within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the cost claim from the expert.	100%

K. External communication

General objective: A MODERN, HIGH PERFORMING AND SUSTAINABLE EUROPEAN COMMISSION		
Main outputs in 2021:		
Horizon Europe		
Output	Indicator	Target
Reach on the website (source: website statistics)	Total average page views per month	20.000
Reach on social media (source: social media statistics)	Twitter average impressions ³⁵ per post	10.000
Reach via info days	Average satisfaction rate	80%

³⁵ Impressions: number of times a tweet shows up in people's feed

(source: participant surveys)

Modernising the administration: main outputs for the year

A. Human resource management

Objective: REA employs a competent and engaged workforce and contributes to gender equality at all levels of management to effectively deliver on the agency's priorities and core business.

Indicator 1: ³⁶Number and percentage of first female appointments to middle management positions³⁷

Source of data: DG HR (12.02.2021)

Baseline (female representation in middle management positions) (31/12/2020)	Final Target 50% in 2024 ³⁸
8 female middle managers, being 40% of the total middle management population	2021 Target (31/12/2021) 45% ³⁹ of the total middle management population is female

Indicator 2: REA staff engagement index

Source of data: Commission staff survey

Baseline 2018 European Commission Staff Survey 69%	Target 2021 European Commission Staff Survey Equivalent result to the EC average
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Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Executing the planned staffing of the Agency	Occupation rate of the establishment plan	>95%
Ensuring that all staff has attended mandatory training	REA newcomers and other staff that did not yet attend.	>90% (availability of training sessions in 2021 as limitative factor, reaching 100% attendance by 2023)

³⁶ Seconded middle managers are part of the seconding DGs' staff: The responsibility for achieving the targets is at DG level. The Agency is responsible for providing a regular overview to its parent DGs and to DG HR of the gender representation in middle management within the Agency and coordinate between them.

³⁷ The functions of head of unit and head of department are hereby defined as middle management functions.

³⁸ DG HR communicated this target, as well as the 2020 status and 2021 forecast for REA, to executive agencies and their parent DGs on 12.02.2021

³⁹ Equal to the 2021 forecast for REA presented by DG HR on 12.02.2021 (see previous footnote)

Supporting selection panel members	REA selection panels in 2021 with at least one panel member trained in competency based interviewing methods	100%
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B. Sound financial management

Objective: The authorising officer by delegation has reasonable assurance that resources have been used in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and that cost-effective controls are in place which give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of underlying transactions

Indicator: Estimated risk at closure

Source of data: ABAC as source of financial data, error rates used in the calculation are provided by the Common Audit Service (CAS) of DG RTD

Baseline (2020)	Target (2021)
1.68% of relevant expenditure	< 2% of relevant expenditure

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Effective controls: Legal and regular transactions	Risk at payment	Becomes < 2 % of relevant expenditure
	Estimated risk at closure	Remains < 2 % of relevant expenditure
	Implementation of H2020 audit findings	80% by 31/12/2021
	Implementation of H2020 extensions of audit findings	80% by 31/12/2021
Effective controls: Safeguarded information	Number of security incidents with impact on the confidentiality, integrity or availability of EMI (ECS) or PDM systems	No reported incident is categorised as major
Efficient controls	Budget execution and time-to-pay	Remains 100% of operational payment appropriations and remains 100% of operational payments (in value) on time
Economical controls	Overall estimated cost of	Remains stable ⁴⁰

⁴⁰ For the parts of the REA mandate where a comparison with the 2020 baseline is possible.

controls

C. Fraud risk management

Objective: The risk of fraud is minimised through the application of effective anti-fraud measures and the implementation of the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy (CAFS)⁴¹ aimed at the prevention, detection and correction⁴² of fraud

Indicator: Implementation of the actions included in REA's anti-fraud strategy over the strategy's lifecycle

Source of data: Action plan 2019 for implementing the REA anti-fraud approach

Baseline 2018	Interim milestone 2020	Target 2021
0% of action points implemented	86% of action points (12/14) implemented in time	100% of action points (14/14) implemented in time

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Anti-fraud training sessions (made compulsory within 1 year from entering the service)	No. of sessions to organise	3 or more if necessary
EDES and bankruptcy training	No. of sessions to organise	2
REA Quarterly Reports "State of play of cases under OLAF investigation for serious irregularities"	Number of internal reports per year	4 (2 are externalised to parent DGs)
Drafting of REA internal manual setting up an anti-fraud procedure in REA	Publication of manual	2021
Update of the internal REA EDES guide	Publication of updated guide	2021
Streamline the reporting on recoveries and sanctions stemming from implementation of OLAF reports and their financial impact	New reporting tool (database)	2021

⁴¹ Communication from the Commission "Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy: enhanced action to protect the EU budget", COM(2019) 176 of 29 April 2019 - 'the CAFS Communication' - and the accompanying action plan, SWD(2019) 170 - 'the CAFS Action Plan'.

⁴² Correction of fraud is an umbrella term, which notably refers to the recovery of amounts unduly spent and to administrative sanctions.

D. Digital transformation and information management

Objective: REA is using innovative, trusted digital solutions for better information management and administrative processes to become a truly digitally transformed, user-focused and data-driven Agency

Indicator 1: Degree of implementation of the digital strategy principles by the most important IT solutions⁴³

Source of data: REA

Baseline (2021)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
60% The most important REA IT tool has been evaluated: OMEGA ⁴⁴	70%	95%

Indicator 2: Percentage of REA's key data assets⁴⁵ for which corporate principles for data governance have been implemented

Source of data: REA

Baseline (2021)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
Data governance and data policies will be put in place during 2021	50% (minimum two principles implemented out of four)	80% (targeting 100%)

Indicator 3: Percentage of staff attending awareness raising activities on data protection compliance

Source of data:

Baseline (2020)	Interim milestone (2021)	Target (2024)

⁴³ The European Commission Digital Strategy (C(2018)7118):

<https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/3/2018/EN/C-2018-7118-F1-EN-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>

calls on Commission services to digitally transform their business processes by developing new innovative digital solutions or make evolve the existing ones in line with the principles of the strategy.

⁴⁴ The full name of the IT tool is *Operational Management of E-Grants Activities*

⁴⁵ A key data asset is defined as any entity that comprises a source of data based on projects or administrative processes, structured or semi-structured in an information system, a database or a repository of data or corpora of text. A data asset can include multiple datasets or files somehow linked, e.g. by common codes or metadata. Commission key data assets have been documented in the data inventory Ares(2019)2586155.

25.5% of staff registered for a REA awareness raising activity on data protection compliance. In addition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approx. 85 staff of the REA participant validation services unit participated in a data protection awareness session • 21 REA managers received a presentation by members of the office of the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS)⁴⁶ 	50% of REA staff have since 2020 registered for a REA awareness raising activity on data protection compliance	100% of staff in post for 6 months or longer
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Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Actions to safeguard the data in REA-owned IT systems	Status of the security plans of the EMI (ECS) and PDM systems	The security plans of the EMI and PDM systems are up-to-date, there are no pending actions to take.
Filing of HAN documents in order to retrieve information more easily and enlarge documents visibility.	% of registered documents filed in HAN files	>95%

E. Sound environmental management

Objective: REA takes full account of its environmental impact in all its actions and actively promotes measures to reduce the related day-to-day impact of the administration and its work

Main results and outputs in 2021:

I. More efficient use of resources (energy, water, paper)

Output	Indicator	Target
Promote staff awareness actions about optimal energy use.	No. staff informed	All staff informed

⁴⁶ At the REA management meeting of 3.3.2020, minutes: Ares(2020) 1354898

Raise awareness about total energy consumption in the building (COV2 and COVE together) in collaboration with OIB; and communicate observed trends to staff (once per year) ⁴⁷ , based on verified data from Commission's Environmental Statement (<i>data - per building</i>).	No. staff informed	All staff informed
Participate in the end of the year energy saving action, by closing down EC-buildings during the Christmas and New Year's holiday period.	YES/NO	YES
Raise awareness about - office paper use in collaboration with OIB and communicate observed trends to staff), based verified data from Commission's Environmental Statement (<i>data - per building, and/or staff if available</i>).	No. staff informed	All staff informed
II. Reducing CO₂, equivalent CO₂ and other atmospheric emissions		
Promote staff awareness actions about sustainable commuting.	No. staff informed	All staff informed
III. Reducing and managing waste		
Raise staff awareness on waste generation in the building (COV2 and COVE together) in collaboration with OIB; and communicate observed trends to staff, based on verified data from Commission's Environmental Statement (<i>data - per building</i>).	No. staff informed	All staff informed
Promote the organisation of sustainable meetings and events (following the EC Guidelines for sustainable meetings and events).	No. staff informed.	All staff informed
IV. Promoting Green Public Procurement (GPP)		
Promote staff awareness about GPP.	No. staff informed.	All relevant staff informed
V. Supporting biodiversity		
N/A		

⁴⁷ For Brussels (for EAs located in EC-buildings managed by OIB): This refers to the consumption figures available via EMAS Environmental performance posters and the KPIs performance table disseminated by OIB Coordination Team to the EMAS Correspondents, following the successful annual EMAS verification exercise (in Sept-Oct).

ANNEX 2 Resources: staff and budget

A. Administrative budget

Programmes	Title 1 (€ million)			Title 2 (€ million)			Title 3 (€ million)			Total
	EU Budget	EFTA/ EEA	Third countries contrib.	EU Budget	EFTA/ EEA	Third countries contrib.	EU Budget	EFTA/ EEA	Third countries contrib.	
Horizon Europe and legacy										
Future and Emerging Technologies (FET Open) – CNECT*	1.31	0.000	0.00	0.24	0.000	0.00	0.02	0.000	0.00	1.56
Space Research – DEFIS*	0.73	0.000	0.00	0.13	0.000	0.00	0.01	0.000	0.00	0.87
Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (EAC)	19.10	0.564	0.00	3.66	0.110	0.00	0.50	0.091	0.00	24.03
Cluster 2: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society & Societal Challenge 6 (RTD)	3.48	0.112	0.00	0.67	0.022	0.00	0.10	0.018	0.00	4.40
Societal Challenge 6 (CNECT)	0.27	0.000	0.00	0.05	0.000	0.00	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.32
Subtotal Cluster 2	3.76	0.112	0.00	0.72	0.022	0.00	0.10	0.018	0.00	4.73
Cluster 3 & Societal challenge 7 & FP7 Security (HOME)	3.08	0.099	0.00	0.59	0.019	0.00	0.08	0.016	0.00	3.89
H2020 (CNECT)	0.20	0.000	0.00	0.04	0.000	0.00	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.24
Subtotal Cluster 3	3.28	0.099	0.00	0.63	0.019	0.00	0.09	0.016	0.00	4.13
Cluster 6: Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment & Societal Challenge 2 (RTD)	8.16	0.301	0.00	1.59	0.059	0.00	0.24	0.048	0.00	10.40
Societal Challenge 2 (AGRI)	0.84	0.000	0.00	0.15	0.000	0.00	0.01	0.000	0.00	1.00
Subtotal Cluster 6	9.00	0.301	0.00	1.74	0.059	0.00	0.25	0.048	0.00	11.40
Sharing Excellence	4.13	0.137	0.00	0.80	0.027	0.00	0.12	0.022	0.00	5.22
Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system	1.28	0.050	0.00	0.25	0.010	0.00	0.04	0.008	0.00	1.63
Research infrastructure & SWaFS(RTD)	1.68	0.046	0.00	0.32	0.009	0.00	0.04	0.007	0.00	2.10
Subtotal Horizon programmes	44.26	1.309	0.00	8.49	0.256	0.00	1.16	0.211	0.00	55.69
Agricultural promotion measures (AGRI)										
	1.42	0.000	0.00	0.28	0.00	0.000	0.08	0.000	0.00	1.78
Research fund for Coal and Steel (RTD)										
	1.65	0.000	0.00	0.32	0.00	0.000	0.06	0.000	0.00	2.03
Provision of administrative and logistical support services										
Expert management & support	5.67	0.168	0.00	1.09	0.03	0.000	6.06	0.027	0.00	13.05
Central validation Service	7.81	0.199	0.00	1.50	0.04	0.000	1.44	0.032	0.00	11.03

Programmes	Title 1 (€ million)			Title 2 (€ million)			Title 3 (€ million)			Total
	EU Budget	EFTA/ EEA	Third countries contrib.	EU Budget	EFTA/ EEA	Third countries contrib.	EU Budget	EFTA/ EEA	Third countries contrib.	
Management and administrative support										
FET Open CNECT*	0.13	0.000	0.00	0.02	0.000	0.00	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.16
Space Research DEFIS*	0.07	0.000	0.00	0.01	0.000	0.00	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.09
Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions	1.81	0.052	0.00	0.35	0.010	0.00	0.05	0.008	0.00	2.28
Cluster 2: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society	0.36	0.010	0.00	0.07	0.002	0.00	0.01	0.002	0.00	0.45
Cluster 3: Civil Security for Society	0.31	0.009	0.00	0.06	0.002	0.00	0.01	0.001	0.00	0.39
Cluster 6: Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment	0.84	0.028	0.00	0.16	0.005	0.00	0.02	0.004	0.00	1.06
Sharing Excellence	0.39	0.013	0.00	0.07	0.002	0.00	0.01	0.002	0.00	0.49
Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system	0.11	0.004	0.00	0.02	0.001	0.00	0.00	0.001	0.00	0.14
Research infrastructure	0.17	0.004	0.00	0.03	0.001	0.00	0.00	0.001	0.00	0.21
Agricultural promotion measures	0.12	0.005	0.00	0.02	0.001	0.00	0.00	0.001	0.00	0.16
Research fund for Coal and Steel	0.14	0.005	0.00	0.03	0.001	0.00	0.00	0.001	0.00	0.17
Expert management & support	0.50	0.014	0.00	0.10	0.003	0.00	0.01	0.002	0.00	0.63
Central validation Service	0.64	0.015	0.00	0.12	0.003	0.00	0.02	0.002	0.00	0.79
Total per source of financing within each Title	66.40	1.84	0.00	12.75	0.36	0.00	8.96	0.30	0.00	
Total per Budget Title			68.23			13.11			9.25	90.60

B. Human resources

The following figures are indicative.

Programmes	Staff (EU budget)				Staff from other fund sources		Total all staff
	TAs	Of which seconded officials	CAs	Total staff EU budget	EFTA/ EEA	Third countries contrib.	
Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (EAC)	68,79	9,56	188,29	257,08		16,33	273,41
Operational staff for MSCA	62,28	7,39	173,71	235,98		14,24	250,23
Management and administrative support staff for MSCA	6,51	2,16	14,59	21,09		2,09	23,18
Cluster 2: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society	14,98	3,95	37,07	52,04		2,05	54,10
Operational staff for Cluster 2	13,69	3,53	34,18	47,87		1,64	49,51
Management and administrative support staff for Cluster 2	1,29	0,43	2,89	4,17		0,41	4,59
Cluster 3: Civil Security for Society (HOME)	14,64	1,85	31,38	46,02		1,93	47,95
Operational staff for Cluster 3	13,50	1,47	28,82	42,32		1,57	43,89
Management and administrative support staff for Cluster 3	1,14	0,38	2,56	3,70		0,37	4,06
Cluster 6: Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment	40,85	6,76	95,89	136,74		8,80	145,54
Operational staff for Cluster 6	37,43	5,62	88,21	125,64		7,70	133,34
Management and administrative support staff for Cluster 6	3,43	1,14	7,68	11,10		1,10	12,20

Programmes	Staff (EU budget)				Staff from other fund sources	Third countries contrib.	Total staff
	TAs	Of which seconded officials	CAs	Total staff EU budget	EFTA/ EEA		
Sharing Excellence (RTD)	15,65	3,17	47,45	63,10		3,29	66,39
Operational staff for Sharing Excellence	14,07	2,65	43,91	57,98		2,78	60,76
Management and administrative support staff for Sharing Excellence	1,58	0,53	3,54	5,12		0,51	5,63
Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system (RTD)	5,79	0,41	17,12	22,91		1,45	24,36
Operational staff for Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system	5,23	0,23	15,87	21,10		1,28	22,38
Management and administrative support staff for Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system	0,56	0,18	1,25	1,80		0,18	1,98
Research infrastructure	5,79	1,41	15,12	20,91		1,45	22,36
Operational staff for Research infrastructure	5,23	1,23	13,87	19,10		1,28	20,38
Management and administrative support staff for Research infrastructure	0,56	0,18	1,25	1,80		0,18	1,98
Agricultural promotion measures (AGRI)	5,52	2,32	20,65	26,17		0,00	26,17
Operational staff for Agricultural promotion measures	4,85	2,10	19,14	23,99		0,00	23,99
Management and administrative support staff for Agricultural promotion measures	0,67	0,22	1,51	2,18		0,00	2,18
Research fund for Coal and Steel (RTD)	9,85	6,55	20,31	30,16		0,00	30,16
Operational staff for RFCS	9,12	6,31	18,67	27,79		0,00	27,79
Management and administrative support staff for RFCS	0,73	0,24	1,64	2,37		0,00	2,37
Expert management & support	13,94	3,83	64,82	78,77		1,69	80,45
Operational staff for Expert management & support	12,18	3,23	60,98	73,16		1,11	74,28
Management and administrative support staff for Expert management & support	1,76	0,60	3,84	5,60		0,57	6,18
Central validation Service	16,21	1,18	97,90	114,11		0,00	114,11
Operational staff for Central validation Service	13,69	0,32	92,40	106,09		0,00	106,09
Management and administrative support staff for Central validation Service	2,52	0,86	5,50	8,01		0,00	8,01
Total	212,00	41,00	636,00	848,00		37,00	885,00

C. Delegated operational appropriations

Following the Internal Rules for the implementation of the 2021 General Budget, REA manages operational appropriations on the following budget lines. They do not only relate to grant management activities, but also include appropriations for experts.

Since 2016, REA uses a single budget line which simplifies the management of its activities for contracting and paying of expert evaluators, including for Horizon calls not delegated to REA, while the expert reviewers/monitors remain, as previously, charged to the various budget lines for the delegated programmes. (Except for the Joint Undertakings (JUs), for which REA uses the relevant JU's budget line.)

It should be noted that the figures in the table below are the best estimate (based on the current arrangements between REA, the parent DGs and DG BUDG) and may vary due to the following elements:

- The Work Programme 2021-2022 may provide for delegation of selected calls/topics to REA different from what was planned at the time of establishing the Draft Budget.
- The voted General Budget 2021 (including the amending letters and amendments adopted by the Budgetary Authority) may be different from the Draft Budget and transfers of appropriations between the different co-delegated entities can occur.

Budget lines		Commitment appropriations (€ million)					Payment appropriations (€ million)				
		EU Budget*	EFTA/ EEA	FCA	Third countries contrib.	Total	EU Budget	EFTA/ EEA	FCA	Third countries contrib.	Total
Horizon Europe - Pillar I "Excellent Science"											
01 02 01 02	Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions	798.14	21.16			819.31		1.17			1.17
01 02 01 03	Research infrastructures	253.34	6.74			260.08		0.33			0.33
Horizon Europe - Pillar II "Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness"											
01 02 02 20	Cluster 'Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society'	154.10	4.10			158.20					
01 02 02 30	Cluster 'Civil Security for Society'	160.59	4.27			164.86		0.63			0.63
01 02 02 60	Cluster 'Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment'	950.98	25.30			976.27		0.42			0.42
Part "Widening Participation and Strengthening the European Research Area"											
01 02 04 01	Widening participation and spreading excellence	344.24	9.16			353.40	81.93				81.93
01 02 04 02	Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system	60.64	1.61			62.25					
01 02 05	Horizontal Operational Activities	58.45	1.55			60.00	60.00				60.00
Pilot projects and preparatory actions											
01 20 01	Pilot projects						0.36				0.36
Agricultural Promotion Measures											
08 02 03 03	Promotion of agricultural products - Multi-programmes and actions implemented by the Commission under direct management	96.90				96.90	99.59				99.59
Research Fund for Coal and Steel											
01 20 03 01	Research programme for coal and Steel			20.85		20.85			41.35		41.35

*EU Budget includes C1, C4 and C5

Budget lines		Commitment appropriations (€ million)					Payment appropriations (€ million)				
		EU Budget	EFTA/ EEA	FCA	Third countries contrib.	Total	EU Budget	EFTA/ EEA	FCA	Third countries contrib.	Total
Legacy - previous research framework programme											
01 02 99 01	Completion of previous research programmes (prior to 2021) H2020 - Strengthening research in future and emerging technologies (former 09 04 01 01)	0.13			0.09	0.22	0.34			0.02	0.35
01 02 99 01	Completion of previous research programmes (prior to 2021) H2020 - Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (former 15 03 01 01)	0.02			0.29	0.31	622.26	17.08		11.20	650.54
01 02 99 01	Completion of previous research programmes (prior to 2021) H2020 - Research infrastructures (former 09 04 01 02)						4.90				4.90
01 02 99 01	Completion of previous research programmes (prior to 2021) H2020 - Research infrastructures (former 08 02 01 03)						124.80			2.48	127.28
01 02 99 01	Completion of previous research programmes (prior to 2021) H2020 - Leadership in Space (former 02 04 02 01)				0.19	0.19	0.34			0.01	0.35
01 02 99 01	Completion of previous research programmes (prior to 2021) H2020 - Societal Challenge 2 - Securing sufficient supplies of safe, healthy and high quality food and other bio-based products - (former 05 09 03 01)	0.02			0.23	0.24	193.38	4.76		7.38	205.53

Budget lines		Commitment appropriations (€ million)					Payment appropriations (€ million)				
		EU Budget	EFTA/ EEA	FCA	Third countries contrib.	Total	EU Budget	EFTA/ EEA	FCA	Third countries contrib.	Total
Legacy - previous research framework programme											
01 02 99 01	Completion of previous research programmes (prior to 2021) H2020 - Societal Challenge 2 - Securing sufficient supplies of safe, healthy and high quality food and other bio-based products - (former 08 02 03 02)						132.73	3.83		10.75	147.32
01 02 99 01	Completion of previous research programmes (prior to 2021) H2020 - Societal Challenge 5 - Achieving a resource - and water efficient and climate change resilient economy and society - (former 08 02 03 05)				0.10	0.10	176.41			148.77	325.18
01 02 99 01	Completion of previous research programmes (prior to 2021) H2020 - Societal Challenge 6 - Fostering inclusive, innovative and reflective European societies - (former 08 02 03 06)						71.31	2.16		15.40	88.88
01 02 99 01	Completion of previous research programmes (prior to 2021) H2020 - Societal Challenge 6 - Fostering inclusive, innovative and reflective European societies - (former 09 04 03 02)				0.18	0.18	40.49			0.42	40.91
01 02 99 01	Completion of previous research programmes (prior to 2021) H2020 - Societal Challenge 7 - Fostering secure European societies - (former 18 05 03 01)				0.26	0.26	159.47	4.20		9.74	173.41
01 02 99 01	Completion of previous research programmes (prior to 2021) H2020 - Societal Challenge 7 - Fostering secure European societies - (former 09 04 03 03)						65.72			1.48	67.20

Budget lines		Commitment appropriations (€ million)					Payment appropriations (€ million)				
		EU Budget*	EFTA/ EEA	FCA	Third countries contrib.	Total	EU Budget	EFTA/ EEA	FCA	Third countries contrib.	Total
Legacy - previous research framework programme											
01 02 99 01	Completion of previous research programmes (prior to 2021) H2020 - Spreading excellence and widening participation - (former 08 02 04)	0.01			0.11	0.12	51.49	1.39		0.00	52.88
01 02 99 01	Completion of previous research programmes (prior to 2021) H2020 - Science with and for society - (former 08 02 06)				0.39	0.39	60.61	1.64		24.98	87.22
01 02 99 01	Completion of previous research programmes (prior to 2021) H2020 - Expert evaluators of the Joint Undertakings				0.26	0.26				0.28	0.28
01 02 99 01	Completion of previous research programmes (prior to 2021) H2020 - Horizontal activities - Experts evaluator				1.70	1.70	0.08			8.76	8.84
01 02 99 01	Completion of previous research programmes (prior to 2021) 7th Framework Programme - People Programme- (former 15 03 51)	0.07				0.07	0.67				0.67
01 02 99 01	Completion of previous research programmes (prior to 2021) 7th Framework Programme - Cooperation - Security theme - (former 18 05 51)						0.76				0.76
08 02 99 01	Completion of previous research programmes (prior to 2021) - 7th Framework Programme - SME Actions - (former 08 02 51)	0.14				0.14	0.42				0.42
Total of operational appropriations managed by the Executive Agency						2,976.31					2,268.72