



European
Commission

Strategic Plan 2020-2024

**I.D.E.A. - Inspire,
Debate, Engage and
Accelerate Action**

Contents

- INTRODUCTION 3
- PART 1. Delivering on the Commission’s priorities 4
 - A. Mission statement 4
 - B. Operating context..... 5
 - C. Strategy..... 6
 - D. Key performance indicators..... 7
- PART 2. Modernising the administration..... 10
 - A. Human resource management 11
 - B. Sound financial management 13
 - C. Fraud risk management 15
 - D. Digital transformation and information management..... 16
 - E. Sound environmental management..... 18
- ANNEX [if applicable]: Performance tables 19

INTRODUCTION

I.D.E.A. is the Commission's in-house advisory service to the President of the Commission and her team. Set up on the basis of the Communication of the President to the European Commission P(2019)5, I.D.E.A.'s purpose is to provide support to the President on concrete initiatives, as well as policy advice of a more long-term nature.

The three priorities of I.D.E.A. -Inspire, Debate, Engage, and Accelerate Action involve providing the President with:

- Ideas and inspiration, through foresight, data, and policy outputs;
- A space for debate and engagement through thought provoking seminars and events, dissemination of policy ideas, findings and proposals, and outreach;
- Accelerated action, through support with evaluation of impact of ideas.

I.D.E.A.'s strategy is defined through general objectives (the headline ambitions) and specific objectives describing the concrete contribution of I.D.E.A to the Commission's priorities. Specific objectives are measured through indicators reflecting the performance against set targets.

The current strategic plan is structured in two parts:

Part 1 - Delivery of the political priorities of the Commission

Part 2 - Efficiency and modernisation of the Commission administration

I.D.E.A acts under the direct authority of the President to deliver strategic analysis and forward-looking advice on the Commission's policy initiatives, which implies that the management planning must be agile, responsive and adaptable. The Service is still in a start up phase, therefore, flexibility remains the key word for the definition of its specific objectives and indicators, which will evolve alongside the highly volatile political context and the ad-hoc requests of the President's Cabinet.

Working across the spectrum of the President's Political Guidelines as outlined in 'A Union that Strives for More. My Agenda for Europe', I.D.E.A.'s activities are or may be relevant for any Treaty obligations.

PART 1. Delivering on the Commission’s priorities

A. Mission statement

I.D.E.A. (Inspire, Debate, Engage and Accelerate Action) is the European Commission’s in-house advisory service established by a Presidential decision on 1 December 2019¹.

According to its mandate, I.D.E.A:

- a. Provides ideas and inspiration for the core priorities of the President as laid out in her political guidelines presented to the European Parliament on July 16 2019, helping to provide the compass that should inform the Commission’s policies (e.g., strategic analysis and foresight, bold ideas but also specific policy advice on ongoing and future priorities).
- b. Debates and Engages around new evidence-based policy alternatives in the community of think tanks, research, and other institutions through active outreach (e.g., Conference on the Future of Europe, connectivity with the leading thinkers and doers across Europe, different formats for different purposes – from “brown bag seminar” to large tech summit).
- c. Accelerates the conversion of these ideas and engagements into concrete and bold Action to help the EU Commission deliver to its citizens in a fast-changing context (e.g., provide options, best practices).

¹ P(2019)5 – Communication from the President to the Commission

B. Operating context

I.D.E.A. reports directly to the President and operates under her authority.

I.D.E.A. is composed of a professional staff of advisers, policy analysts and support staff with appropriate experience and track record, in order to provide professional and targeted policy advice to the President, I.D.E.A.'s activities include:

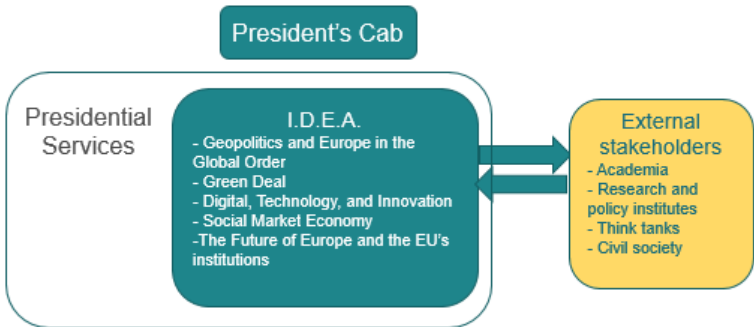
- a mandate to work in a collaborative spirit, with internal and external actors, seeking to engage the best talents, experts, thought leaders, and solicit the most outstanding ideas;
- an emphasis on evidence-based analysis and serve as a sounding board for new proposals and initiatives;
- an interdisciplinary, cross-cutting approach, aiming to overcome policy silos, address trade-offs and ensure coherence and, where appropriate, a 'whole-of-government' approach; and,
- the organisation of thought provoking seminars to disseminate policy ideas, research findings, and engage in outreach with think tanks, research institutes, and academia as well as analysts, thought leaders and policy practitioners.

Based on the Commission's priorities I.D.E.A's organisation chart includes five clusters², namely: Geopolitics and Europe in the Global Order; Green Deal; Digital, Technology, and Innovation; Social Market Economy; The Future of Europe and the EU's institutions.

Institutionally, the President and her cabinet are the main interlocutors for I.D.E.A.

Given its mandate to debate, engage and accelerate action, I.D.E.A. works in close cooperation with the other Presidential services. Moreover, depending on concrete initiatives, I.D.E.A. works on an ad hoc basis with all other relevant Commission services.

Externally, I.D.E.A.'s key counterparts include think tanks, research institutes, and academia as well as analysts, thought leaders and policy practitioners.



² P(2019)5 – Communication from the President to the Commission

C. Strategy

As a Presidential Service, I.D.E.A. is set to contribute and intellectually accompany virtually all Commission initiatives, across its priorities and objectives. To this end, it contributes to a certain extent to all six of the Commission’s general objectives - the von der Leyen headline ambitions as set out in her Political Guidelines. However, I.D.E.A. selected as general overarching objective for the service objective 7, ‘A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission’. I.D.E.A. supports the President and the Commission to respond quickly to challenges like the COVID-19 crisis and other external factors to ensure high quality and delivery of the objectives set in the Political Guidelines .

General objective: A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission

The Commission seeks to be an attractive public administration that hires skilled and motivated staff. More than ever, the impact of the European Union’s policies is important for the public opinion and citizens. I.D.E.A. contributes to a more modern, more high-performing Commission by being a nodal point between the European Commission’s policymaking process and the relevant stakeholders of the think tank, academic, research and practitioners’ communities. I.D.E.A.’s strategy targets are to provide value added to the European Commission’s policymaking process through its interdisciplinary and forward-looking nature, and its qualitative high-level collaborative working methods

General objective 7. A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission		
Impact indicator 1: Image of the European Union		
Explanation: This indicator is based on the question ‘In general, does the EU conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or negative image?’ The indicator gives the share of positive and fairly positive views on this question		
Origin of the indicator: Eurobarometer		
Source of the data: [Eurobarometer ³]		
Methodology for calculating the indicator: NA		
Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
36.85%	Increase	Increase
Impact indicator 2: Staff engagement index of the Commission		
Explanation: Staff engagement measures staff’s emotional, cognitive and physical connection to the job, organisation and the people within it		
Origin of the indicator: European Commission Staff Survey		
Source of the data: European Commission		
Methodology for calculating the indicator: NA		
Baseline	Interim milestone	Target

³ Please follow the applicable guidelines on referencing statistical data: [Ares\(2019\)4092651](#).

(2019)	(2022)	(2024)
69%	Increase	Increase

Specific objective 1.1: To provide the President with strategic analysis and policy advice related to the political guidelines set by the Commission

I.D.E.A collaborates actively with the President’s Cabinet and the other Presidential Services to provide value added to the European Commission's policymaking. The Service supports the translation of the President’s political priorities into concrete deliverables for the Commission Work Programme and also contributes to the preparation of the President’s State of the Union speech.

Specific objective 1.1: To provide the President with strategic analysis and policy advice related to the political guidelines set by the Commission		Related to spending programme(s): N/A]
Result indicator: Policy relevance of I.D.E.A.’s advice and events		
Explanation: Timeliness, relevance and impact of I.D.E.A.’s input		
Source of data: NA		
Baseline (2020)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
100%	100%	100%

Specific objective 1.2: To follow-up on the President’s priorities through interdisciplinary, cross-cutting, inclusive and interactive ways of working across intellectual, policy and institutional silos

As an advisory service operating directly under the authority of the President, I.D.E.A. can offer a wider and comprehensive understanding of issues and formulation of responses; stress-test existing initiatives against emerging trends – with the aim of making them more sustainable and resilient; anticipate future opportunities and align them with the Commission’s strategic objectives; and strategically connect institutional and intellectual perspectives across Commission initiatives

Specific objective 1.2: To follow-up on the President’s priorities through interdisciplinary, cross-cutting, inclusive and interactive ways of working across intellectual, policy and institutional silos		Related to spending programme(s): N/A
Result indicator: Level of interaction with Presidential services and other Directorates General of the Commission, including in project teams, inter-service groups, internal workshops and ad hoc meetings		
Explanation: Timeliness, relevance and impact of I.D.E.A.’s interaction with the Commission services.		
Source of data: NA		

Baseline	Interim milestone	Target
(2020)	(2022)	(2024)
100%	100%	100%

Specific objective 1.3: To provide the President with effective outreach to relevant stakeholders in the academic, research, think tank, and practitioner’s communities

Outreach activities are one of the strengths of I.D.E.A’s mandate, which provide a unique space within the European Commission for organising thought-provoking seminars and events to share diversity of views and opinions with its relevant stakeholders. The role of I.D.E.A. is to encourage the dissemination of policy ideas outside and inside the Commission, in order to accelerate the conversion to new proposals and initiatives.

Specific objective 1.3: To provide the President with effective outreach to relevant stakeholders in the academic, research, think tank, and practitioners' communities		Related to spending programme(s): N/A
Result indicator: Inclusion of political, geographical, institutional, sectoral and multi-disciplinary diversity of views and stakeholders		
Explanation: Timeliness, relevance and inclusiveness of external outreach through a wide range of vectors including participation in meetings, webinars/seminars, events, discussions.		
Source of data: NA		
Baseline	Interim milestone	Target
(2020)	(2022)	(2024)
100%	100%	100%

D. Key performance indicators

To assess I.D.E.A.'s contribution and performance, the following key performance indicators are proposed:

- Timeliness and relevance of advice to the President's Cabinet;
- Timeliness and relevance of evaluation of ideas and proposals for concrete follow-up actions;
- Timeliness, relevance and inclusiveness of outreach activities;
- Presence at all meetings (100 %) of the Presidential Services;
- Reply to relevant consultations to Commission DGs and Services within deadlines.

PART 2. Modernising the administration

This section of the strategic plan describes the efforts of the I.D.E.A. to modernise its way of working and to ensure the most efficient and effective use of its resources. In the framework of the Commission's corporate strategies, I.D.E.A will develop its local strategies and take measures and actions in order to contribute to the achievement of the institution's objectives.

As a modern public administration, the Commission implements an internal control framework inspired by the highest international standards. The Commission's system covers all the principles of internal control identified in the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission 2013 Internal Control framework, including financial control, risk management, human resource management, communication and the safeguarding and protection of information. I.D.E.A. has established an internal control system tailored to its particular characteristics and circumstances and regularly assesses its implementation and overall functioning. This assessment is based on indicators, the most strategic of which are listed in this section of the strategic plan.

A. Human resource management

Objective: Service I.D.E.A. employs a competent and engaged workforce and aims to contribute to gender equality at all levels of management to deliver effectively on the Commission's priorities and core business.

I.D.E.A.'s guiding principle is that its staff is its main capital, and therefore, more than a resource. Recruitment is crucial to ensure an adequate staffing of the five clusters defined in I.D.E.A.'s organisation chart. The main challenge in the coming years will be to build the culture of the Service, which will welcome a majority of new comers.

I.D.E.A has no target for percentage of female representation in middle management, even though there is a committment to ensure gender balance across the Directorate. I.D.E.A. also aims to be at the forefront of the Commission's efforts to undertake a diversity and inclusion strategy.

In the management of human resources, I.D.E.A. will focus on maintaining a strong staff engagement (78%) and efficient use of resources for delivery of the political priorities of the Commission. I.D.E.A. will make constant improvements, and adjustments whenever required, to best serve the President and the Commission.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated one of the biggest working transformations in decades. I.D.E.A. is embracing this as an opportunity to adapt ways of working to changing circumstances, needs and possibilities. For this, it is making the most of the digital tools that are increasingly available while also being particularly mindful of the environmental impacts and opportunities provided by telework, teleconferencing, etc.

The contribution of internal communication activities to this objective would be achieved thanks to a two-way communication process, which supports an open and constructive working environment.

In order to ensure the effective management of human resources and to optimise the capacity to deliver on priorities in this strategic plan, I.D.E.A. will develop a local HR strategy with a medium to long-term outlook (3–5 years) consistent with the overall corporate HR strategy.

Objective: I.D.E.A. employs a competent and engaged workforce and contributes to gender equality at all levels of management to effectively deliver on the Commission's priorities and core business.

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

Source of data: P(2019) 5

Baseline (female representation in middle management)	Target
(12/2019)	(2022)
(100%)	The Commission has not adopted any target for I.D.E.A. regarding female middle management positions

Indicator 2: IDEA staff engagement index

Source of data: Commission staff survey

Baseline	Target
(2018)	(2024)
78%	Maintain

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

I.D.E.A manages a small administrative budget (around 750,000 EUR), which covers specific objectives, namely seminars/event management (physical and virtual), dissemination of policy ideas, evaluation of impact of ideas and outreach activities. The organisation does not have spending programme and policy expenditure.

The control system is centralised in the Management and Resource Unit and the verification functions are performed by the Finance team (staff with experience and know-how). The ex-ante control coverage is 100%, before the award of contract or authorisation of payment, which prevents errors and non-compliance with the requirements of the Financial Regulation. The overall cost of control is estimated to 50 % of a full time post, taking into account the division of tasks and the implementation of the "four eyes principle".

The average error rate is very low (0.5 % in the 2019 AAR). There is, therefore, no need for ex-post control, which could impact the estimated overall amount at risk and the estimated amount of future corrections.

In total, the costs of control represents approximately 17 % of the expenditure, but the quantifiable benefits are very difficult to evaluate and are mainly of qualitative nature due to the risk of reputational damage to be underlined in the particular context of I.D.E.A operating directly under the responsibility of the President's Cabinet.

The main objective for I.D.E.A's financial management is to keep the good results achieved in the past by maintaining the current estimated overall amount at risk at closure. The other objective is to keep stable the overall cost of control.

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 1: Estimated risk at closure

Source of data: 2019

Baseline (2018)	Target (2024)
0.5 %	Maintain

C. Fraud risk management

Maximum length: **1 page**

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

The budget in DG I.D.E.A. is exclusively administrative (running costs) and amounts to approximately 750,000 EUR per year. All expenditure is submitted to ex-ante controls; financial circuits are updated regularly; and, a register of exception/non compliance events is updated in case any irregularity is detected. Therefore, the risk of financial fraud is considered very low due to the nature of the administrative budget managed within the global envelope.

While the financial risk is very low, the nature of operations in I.D.E.A. as a Presidential Service gives rise to potentially high reputational risk. Given the future organisational structure of DG I.D.E.A., which should involve the recruitment of new internal and external staff, particular attention should focus on keeping high ethical standards in the next update of the anti-fraud strategy during 2020. In order to contribute to the common objective of protecting the EU budget it will be important to raise awareness on ethics rules, advise on staff rules relating to external activities, and manage conflicts of interest for newcomers and existing staff.

The internal DG anti-fraud strategy will be updated every three years unless prior significant changes are needed.

Objective: The risk of fraud is minimised through the application of effective anti-fraud measures and the implementation of the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy⁴ aimed at the prevention, detection and correction⁵ of fraud

Indicator: Implementation of the actions included in [the service's] anti-fraud strategy over the whole strategic plan lifecycle (2020-2024)

Source of data: IDEA annual activity report (2019) and anti-fraud strategy (2018)

Baseline (2018)	Target (2024)
29th June 2018	100% of action points implemented in time

⁴ 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'.

⁵ 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: I.D.E.A. is using innovative, trusted digital solutions for better policy-shaping, information management and administrative processes to forge a truly digitally transformed, user-focused and data-driven Commission

It is important to underline that the organisation does not own any IT tools or databases and does not have a budget for digital solutions. I.D.E.A has a Service Level Agreement with the Secretariat General, provider of its general IT support. The system used for the financial management is the Corporate tool ABAC developed by DG BUDGET.

The Service, therefore, relies on the priority actions defined by the Secretariat General for the most important IT solutions and follows the implementation guidelines of DG BUDGET for the use of the future accounting and financial IT tool (SUMMA). I.D.E.A.'s data protection policy is consequently linked to the corporate data governance policies and development of digital solutions of the Secretariat-General. Due to its specific mandate, I.D.E.A. handles few personal data, mainly linked to events organisation.

I.D.E.A. is a very small service, but due to its versatile nature is likely to be consistently in a recruitment phase. Therefore, there is a real need to regularly raise awareness on data protection rules. New-comers, as well as the current staff, should participate in general trainings organised centrally by the Data Protection Officer. The Data Protection Coordinator will explore the option of internal tailor-made trainings, if it is proved to be pertinent to the needs of the Services.

Objective: I.D.E.A is using innovative, trusted digital solutions for better policy-shaping, information management and administrative processes to forge a truly digitally transformed, user-focused and data-driven Commission

Indicator 1: degree of implementation of the digital strategy principles by the most important IT solutions⁶

Source of data: SG

Baseline	Interim milestone	Target
(2018)	(2022)	(2024)
Refer to SG SPP	Refer to SG SPP	Refer to SG SPP

Indicator 2: Percentage of I.D.E.A.'s key data assets⁷ for which corporate principles for data governance⁸ have been implemented

Source of data: SG

Baseline	Interim milestone	Target
2018	(2022)	(2024)
Not applicable for I.D.E.A	N/A	N/A

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

Source of data: I.D.E.A.

Baseline	Interim milestone	Target
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⁶ The European Commission Digital Strategy (C(2018)7118) 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. At the beginning of the year N+1, the Solution Owner and IT Investments Team will assess the progress made on the basis of the proposed modernisation plan. For each of the 3 solutions, a table will reflect – per principle - the progress achieved during the last year.

⁷ 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.

⁸ This indicator follows up on the progress of services in implementing corporate data governance and data policies for their key data assets included in the EC data inventory. See [Ares\(2019\)4441343](#) in the context of the [DataStrategy@EC action plan](#). In summary, this means that for each key data asset, services should assess if the following principles have been respected:

- Identify and designate the data owner and the data steward(s).
- Instruct their data stewards to share the metadata of their data assets in the Commission's data catalogue and to keep them up to date.
- Design and document processes for data collection/creation, acquisition, access, sharing, use, processing preservation, deletion, quality, protection and security. Information concerning these processes should be made available to anyone interested, as long as any confidentiality restrictions are respected.
- Make any necessary changes and updates to the IT systems used for storing, managing and disseminating these data assets to implement the aforementioned requirements and processes.

A data governance hub will shortly offer a single point of access on the intranet for related guidance and information. It will be complemented by further practical guidance in the course of 2020.

(2020)	(2022)	(2024)
All staff newly recruited should be trained as well as current staff 0%	50% of staff	100% of staff

E. Sound environmental management

Objective: I.D.E.A. 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

I.D.E.A. is a small organisation located in the Berlaymont building which follows the EMAS guidance put in place by the Central Services.

The team in charge of events organisation is particularly attentive of all logistical aspects to avoid any waste, to ensure materials used for events are/ can be recycled and re-used as appropriate.

Moreover, given the valuable experience gained during the exceptional confinement period related to the COVID-19 pandemic, alternative solutions are actively considered so as to maximise the use of digital tools for meetings wherever possible, and minimise non-essential travel (and related CO2 emissions).

I.D.E.A. will pay a particular attention to the following performance indicators:

- Improved waste management, starting with waste sorting stations installed in 2019 and to be further developed in 2020-2024;
- Water bottles were replaced with water fountains to reduce plastic use;
- Promotion of paperless working methods, such as e-signatories and electronic financial circuits to contribute to reducing office paper consumption in 2020-2024;
- Raising awareness of staff to promote pro-environmental behaviour. Action will be taken in line with the main corporate campaigns and based on key themes of importance identified for DG I.D.E.A.
- Promote, as much as possible, the online events option to primarily reduce transport related emissions as well as other consequent negative impacts

ANNEX [if applicable]: Performance tables

NOT APPLICABLE
