

Management Plan 2026

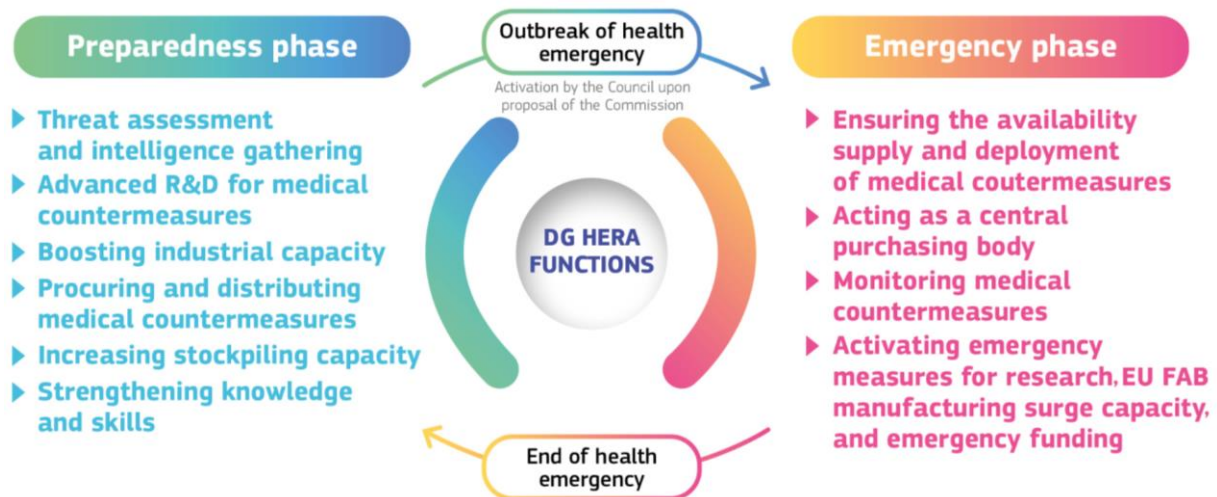
Health Emergency Preparedness and Response
Authority

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PART 1. Introduction

The mandate of the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (DG HERA) is to strengthen Europe's ability to prevent, detect, and rapidly respond to **cross-border health emergencies, by ensuring the development, manufacturing, procurement, and distribution of key medical countermeasures (MCMs)** ⁽¹⁾. DG HERA is a Commission Directorate-General under the leadership of Commissioner Hadja Lahbib.



Strategic planning and programming is the cornerstone of the **Commission's performance management framework**. The [Commission's strategic plan for 2025-2029](#) translates the [political priorities](#) set in the [Political Guidelines of President von der Leyen](#) into general objectives. This process ensures institutional coherence, enhances accountability, and aligns the actions of all Commission services with the strategic vision of the mandate.

Within this framework, each Commission service has developed a **strategic outlook for 2025-2029** in [management plan 2025](#). This outlook defines a set of multiannual objectives and indicators to measure progress towards their achievement. These will be used for planning and reporting on performance throughout the period.

The **2026 management plan** sets out what DG HERA intends to deliver this year to contribute to these multiannual objectives (part 2). It also describes how DG HERA will contribute to the common objective of building a modern and sustainable public administration (part 3). The main outputs with their indicators and targets are presented in Annexes 1 and 2.

The charts below illustrate the performance framework for DG HERA.

⁽¹⁾ [Commission Decision of 16 September 2021 establishing the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority 2021/C 393 I/02](#)

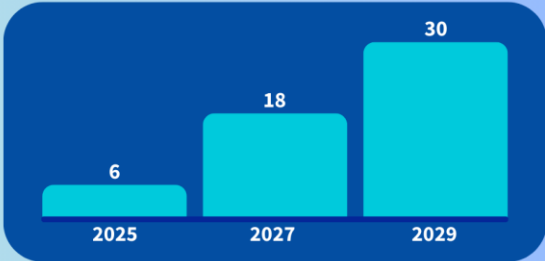
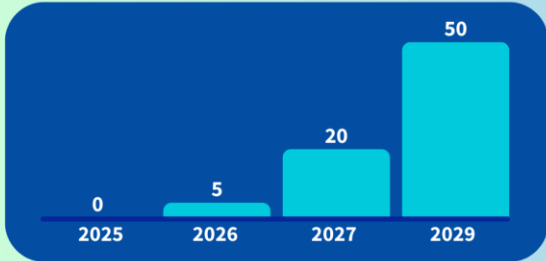
GENERAL OBJECTIVE 1: A NEW PLAN FOR EUROPE'S SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY AND COMPETITIVENESS

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1.1:
ECONOMIC SECURITY THROUGH SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT SUPPLY CHAINS OF MCMs

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1.2:
INVESTING IN PREVENTION THROUGH INNOVATIVE MCMs

KPI: Number of selected MCMs (excluding critical medicines) assessed using the vulnerability assessment methodology during the 2025 - 2029 period

KPI: Sum of the number of R&I projects related to DG HERA's mission funded per year and the number of new MCMs brought to the market thanks to DG HERA's funding per year



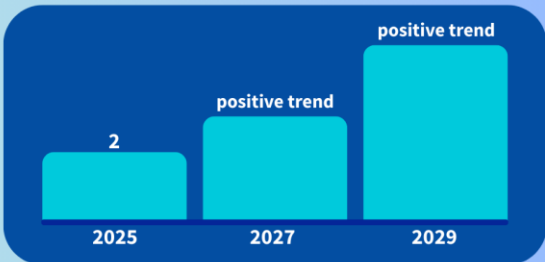
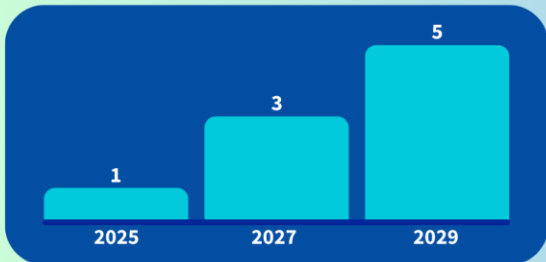
GENERAL OBJECTIVE 2: A NEW ERA FOR EUROPEAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.1:
EUROPEAN PREPAREDNESS FOR HEALTH EMERGENCIES

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.2:
CRISIS RESPONSE TO HEALTH EMERGENCIES

KPI: Number of strategic locations where wastewater and environmental monitoring is performed

KPI: Number of managed cases when a crisis occurs



PART 2. Delivering on the Commission's priorities in 2026

General Objective 1: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness

Specific Objective 1.1: Economic security through sustainable and resilient supply chains of MCMs

As part of the broader effort to support **a new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness**, DG HERA will advance the actions set out in the **Medical Countermeasures Strategy** ('MCM strategy'). Adopted by the College on 9 July 2025, the MCM strategy is one of the first deliverables of the Preparedness Union Strategy. Its 17 key actions draw upon Sauli Niinistö's and Mario Draghi's reports, reinforcing the European Union's (EU) preparedness, competitiveness and economic security in a strategic health sector. In order to align implementation with realities on the ground, DG HERA will organise an implementation dialogue in 2026. Such effort strives to build **economic security through sustainable and resilient supply chains of MCMs**.

Specifically, to strengthen supply chain security, DG HERA will conduct **vulnerability assessment of supply chains for priority MCMs**, focusing on therapeutics that are not critical medicines ⁽²⁾ as well as personal protective equipment (PPE), diagnostics, CBRN products ⁽³⁾, and conflict scenario-relevant MCMs.



DG HERA will also set up a **RAMP UP** network ⁽⁴⁾, which is a key initiative under the MCM strategy. RAMP UP is a voluntary network of EU-based MCMs manufacturers, innovators, and suppliers, designed to create a rapid-response industrial capability to protect citizens during health crises. In 2026, RAMP UP will be launched with a focus on fostering information exchange, incentivising supply chain matchmaking, and developing targeted solutions to overcome production bottlenecks.

In line with President von der Leyen's mission letter to Commissioner Lahbib calling for strengthening tools such as joint procurement, DG HERA also intends to continue its role in the **procurement of MCMs**. DG HERA will commence work on the revision of the [Joint Procurement Agreement](#) in order to streamline the process and reflect the changes brought by the recast of the Financial Regulation. The work in 2026 will focus on mapping the necessary articles to be revised and consulting other DGs and participating countries. DG HERA will also

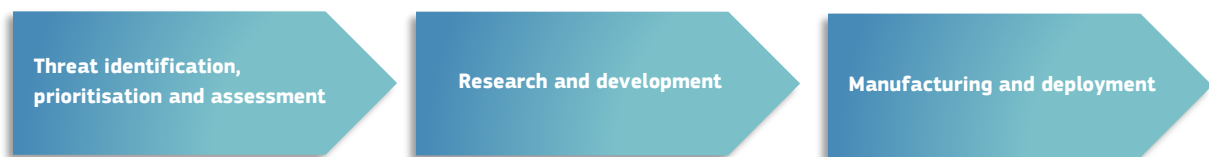
⁽²⁾ Hence, these products are not covered by the vulnerability assessment of [the EU pharmaceutical legislation](#)

⁽³⁾ Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear

⁽⁴⁾ Rapid Agile Manufacturing Partnerships for Union Protection

organise a series of workshops with regional entities and partner organisations to share best practices on joint and pooled procurement of MCMs. Lastly, DG HERA will also start preparing the ground for future procurements as foreseen in the [Critical Medicines Act](#).

With a focus on economic security at all times, DG HERA will continue supporting innovative companies in the EU through **HERA Invest**, an initiative that provides financial tools to ensure the necessary capital to accelerate the development and commercialisation of breakthrough technologies. Such action additionally reinforces the competitiveness of EU MCMs manufacturers. A strong pipeline has already been established and DG HERA, in line with the MCM strategy, will increase the HERA Invest budget by EUR 40M in 2026, before further expanding the scope of support in the next period ⁽⁵⁾.



Reinforcing Europe’s sustainable prosperity and competitiveness requires strong public-private partnerships. Building on the success of the previous edition, DG HERA will organise the second edition of the [HERA Industry days](#), which will take place at the end of 2026. The event will foster networking, knowledge-exchange and business relationships, strengthening collaboration and alignment of efforts. As part of the event, a communication initiative with the participation of expert influencers will be set up to amplify DG HERA’s key messages.

DG HERA will further engage with industry through the [Joint Industrial Cooperation Forum \(ICF\)](#), where both Member States and industry stakeholders are represented. In September 2025, the mandate of the Forum was renewed for another three years. The ICF will continue to work across the full MCMs lifecycle and actively contribute to the implementation of the MCM strategy. The renewed activities of the ICF will be launched with an in-person meeting planned for 6 February 2026.

Following its success and significant expansion in the past years, the [Stakeholders’ Hub platform](#) will remain at the centre of stakeholders’ engagement. To encourage wider use of the platform and participation in its matchmaking functionalities, DG HERA will release a tutorial video and further develop the Stakeholders’ Hub functionalities to support the operationalisation of aforementioned RAMP UP network. Additionally, DG HERA is preparing for the integration of the Hub with ATHINA ⁽⁶⁾, strengthening evidence-based policy decisions and improve information-sharing capabilities at DG HERA.

⁽⁵⁾ Specifically, loans are planned to be signed with 3 additional companies in 2026 and the HERA Invest budget is envisioned to reach EUR 200 million by 2027.

⁽⁶⁾ IT system developed by DG HERA. More information on ATHINA can be found on page 11.

Specific Objective 1.2: Investing in prevention through innovative MCMs

By **investing in prevention through innovative MCMs**, DG HERA drives demand for European industrial leadership in cutting-edge technologies and reinforces Europe's ability to respond swiftly to cross-border health threats.

To ensure agility and robust actions at the European level, DG HERA will prioritise investment in innovative MCMs that address the four major threat categories identified in its MCM strategy and the associated [2025 Health Threat Prioritisation Assessment](#):



Respiratory or contact-based viruses with pandemic potential

Highly transmissible viruses with a history or likelihood of causing large-scale outbreaks

Outbreaks of infectious diseases with the potential to cause widespread, sustained transmission are becoming increasingly frequent, complex and severe. Addressing these health threats requires a strong and integrated One Health approach, including dedicated MCMs.

On respiratory viruses (7), DG HERA will support the development of antivirals and immune modulators to address the current gap in effective therapeutics for acute viral infections, as well as strategies to counteract the rapid emergence of viral resistance after specific antiviral treatments, or therapeutics for ARDS and sepsis.

On filoviruses (8), DG HERA will support R&D preparedness, both to ensure access to investigational doses of vaccines and therapeutics, as well as means to advance their development through the implementation of related clinical trials, particularly during outbreaks. To ensure an end-to-end approach, DG HERA will continue supporting the work of the World Health Organization (WHO) R&D Blueprint for Epidemics.



Vector-borne or animal-reservoir viruses with epidemic potential

Viruses (such as those transmitted through mosquitos) whose spread is accelerated because of climate change and other environmental factors.

Climate change, rising temperatures, and changing precipitation patterns are enabling the emergence and expansion of vector-borne diseases in regions that used to be considered low-risks. This includes Europe – the fastest warming continent (9). DG HERA will support a study that will analyse current and emerging vector control methods in the EU, alongside factors delaying new MCMs. This study aims to identify the barriers and enablers affecting the

(7) Respiratory viruses are microscopic infectious agents that target the respiratory system, causing symptoms related to breathing. This includes mild colds, pneumonia or COVID-19.

(8) Filoviruses represent a group of viruses that can cause severe and often fatal illnesses in humans. Two members of the family that are commonly known are Ebola virus and Marburg virus.

(9) [Europe is not prepared for rapidly growing climate risks | Press releases | European Environment Agency \(EEA\)](#)

introduction and uptake of innovative vector control methods in the EU market. DG HERA will additionally aim to contribute to various actions under EU4Health programmes, including a joint action on scaling up national vector surveillance and control systems, and supporting preparedness for vector-borne diseases outbreaks through enhanced diagnostics and treatments.



Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

A rising global concern that threatens the efficacy of existing treatments and increases the burden of infectious diseases.

AMR is one of the top global public health and development threats, claiming more than 35,000 lives every year in the EU/EEA ⁽¹⁰⁾. DG HERA is committed to supporting the development of the necessary diagnostic tests and antimicrobials treatments against this priority threat.

To this effect, DG HERA will build on progress toward developing a new antibiotic class for resistant gonorrhoea and a new tuberculosis vaccine, to further advance innovation in antimicrobials, alternative treatments, diagnostics and vaccines targeting AMR. DG HERA will notably continue organising targeted calls to speed up innovation to address priority bacterial and fungal pathogens as well as to support the work of the One Health AMR Partnership. In line with the MCM Accelerator initiative, DG HERA will aim to contribute to a specific action focusing on supporting access to innovative antibiotics.



Armed conflict related threats, including CBRN threats

Targeting the deliberate and accidental release of CBRN threats, including state-sponsored ones

In today's volatile security environment, the boundaries between peace and conflict are increasingly blurred. Emerging technologies and CBRN threats heighten the risk of severe humanitarian, environmental, and geopolitical consequences. Concrete actions in ensuring access to key MCMs are therefore essential for both European and global security.

DG HERA will work closely with other Commission services and agencies on armed conflict-related threats, including providing recommendations for Member States and at the European level. DG HERA expanded its threat assessment activities to the CBRN threats and in 2026, DG HERA will broaden the scope of the CBRN work strand to emerging threats in this area, especially those linked to increasing bioengineering and chemical engineering capabilities. The EU4Health funding is intended to be used to incentivise innovation and achieve broader coverage of conflict-related threat priorities, such as biotoxins. The 2026 initiatives will further build on the on-going activities from the past year, such as a launched call for proposal to support development of MCMs against CBRN threats for which there currently are no or only limited treatment options.

⁽¹⁰⁾ As a direct consequence of an infection due to antibiotic-resistant bacteria. More available here: [Health burden of infections with antibiotic-resistant bacteria in the EU-EEA](#)



Addressing the above threats necessitates the availability of state-of-the-art MCMs capable of delivering a timely and effective response. The **Medical Countermeasures Accelerator** aims at providing an integrated and simplified framework to accelerate the development of MCMs, designed to support innovators throughout the development cycle, from research to market entry. The first pilots of actions under this framework have been already launched and, in 2026, DG HERA intends to start the work under the contracts signed towards the end of 2025.

Based on the experience with the [European Vaccines Hub](#), DG HERA will also launch a new **European Diagnostic Hub** in 2026. The Diagnostics Hub will bring together academia, industry, and other key stakeholders involved in the development of diagnostic tools for priority threats. The Hub will contribute to innovation and development, but also to evaluation and validation in addition to support for manufacturing scale up – complementing existing initiatives in this area.

Finally, emerging technologies are powerful assets for the development of MCMs. DG HERA is committed to strengthening **innovation and technological enablers**, including artificial intelligence (AI) and big data, across research, manufacturing, and supply chains of the MCMs. Building on [recent studies examining the potential of AI](#), DG HERA will assess how to support best the uptake of these technologies across the MCMs lifecycle.

General Objective 2: A new era for European defence and security

Specific Objective 2.1: European preparedness for health emergencies

As stated by Commissioner Lahbib ⁽¹¹⁾, *'preparedness is about keeping society running when crisis hits, making sure the lights stay on, transport continues, hospitals function, and supply chains do not break'*. In line with this goal, DG HERA will contribute to **a new era for European defence and security ⁽¹²⁾** by building **European preparedness for health emergencies**. To ensure the availability of the necessary tools and mechanisms to respond quickly to possible emerging health threats, DG HERA will provide a substantial contribution to the **Global Health Resilience Initiative**, as announced in the State of the Union 2025.

Key to health preparedness is robust **threat assessment and intelligence gathering**. In close cooperation with relevant actors in the area of surveillance, including notably ECDC, DG HERA will continue to conduct its threat prioritisation exercise to identify priority areas requiring dedicated actions to ensure availability of, and access to, MCMs. This will be supported by further mapping of relevant MCMs and assessment of gaps and needs, associated with adjacent activities like determining the quantities of MCMs needed to address cross-border health threats. In addition, DG HERA will continue to systematically gather intelligence and assess emerging and ongoing health and MCMs-related signals.

⁽¹¹⁾ [Speech by Commissioner Lahbib at the European Parliament ENVI and SANT Committees](#)

⁽¹²⁾ General Objective 2: A new era for European defence and security

In accordance with above, DG HERA will draft **industrial MCMs roadmaps for specific health emergency scenarios** relating to these priorities. These operational plans will identify what steps are needed at the European level to ensure availability of specific MCMs for the priority threats. The first set of plans is expected to be completed by 2026.

As outlined in the MCM strategy, in 2026, DG HERA will develop and publish the first version of the **EU List of MCMs for Priority Threats**. This will include the relevant MCMs identified in the “threat-specific MCMs plans”, as well as horizontal MCMs that might be necessary for preparedness and response to health emergencies.

As part of the Preparedness Union Strategy and, more specifically, the **Medifence** initiative presented in the MCM strategy, DG HERA has initiated a specific preparedness and response plan to address mass casualty events. This includes the development of the **MCMs list for mass casualty events**, relevant for the clinical management of such scenarios. In 2026, DG HERA will continue its efforts in this area and engage with the Member States and other relevant stakeholders to validate planning assumptions and provide recommendations for Member States and at the European level.

The work of DG HERA related to conflict scenarios reflects the Commission's priority on enhancing **civil-military collaboration**. DG HERA's work in this area is conducted in full cooperation with the Member States and other Commission Services. This includes close cooperation with NATO ⁽¹³⁾ and integrating the civil-military elements in DG HERA trainings and exercises. In 2026, DG HERA will also support R&D, as well as procurement and, where appropriate, stockpiling of MCMs with dual-use potential.



DG HERA will continue supporting Member States in addressing MCMs characterisation and innovation strengthening through **DURABLE**, the consortium of first-class laboratories. In 2026, the call for **DURABLE 2.0** will be launched, as planned in the MCM strategy. The objective will remain to deliver high-quality biological intelligence and operational research activities to accelerate the development of MCMs. DG HERA aims to expand the scope of the current grant thematically and geographically.

To collect intelligence on health threats requiring MCMs and on vulnerabilities in the supply of MCMs, DG HERA has designed the IT system **ATHINA**. A minimum viable product is currently being developed. Additionally, to facilitate interoperability between information systems, DG HERA is developing an ontology ⁽¹⁴⁾ together with Joint Research Centre (JRC) and is engaged in the EU-HIP project ⁽¹⁵⁾.

⁽¹³⁾ DG HERA will actively contribute to the EU-NATO structured dialogue on resilience, participate in staff-to-staff exchanges with NATO, and attend meetings of NATO's Joint Health Group.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Ontology organises different relevant terms and concepts related to the system in a clear and consistent manner.

⁽¹⁵⁾ EU interoperability with the HERA IT Platform – project to facilitate interoperability between the relevant systems of national authorities from Member States with ATHINA.

Epidemic Intelligence from Open Sources (EIOS) is another important tool that supports early warning systems. Renewed support will be provided to the WHO with the new agreement signed under EU4Health 2025 to ensure further improvements to the system. The contribution agreement will also fund other WHO projects improving global intelligence gathering capacities, including the [WHO Collaboratory](#) and the [Pandemic Simulator](#).

A **joint action on genome sequencing** will support Member States to sustain and improve national whole genome sequencing capacity, and to consolidate further integration of genomics-based methods into routine disease surveillance and outbreak preparedness and response. DG HERA will continue to support global activities in this area, especially through grants to the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and its Pathogen Genomics Initiative (PGI), as well as Asia PGI.

The joint action **EU-WISH** will continue to support Member States in advancing the institutionalisation of wastewater surveillance. The project will produce a report on the wastewater surveillance state of the art and future priorities in the Member States. In parallel, in collaboration with the JRC, DG HERA will continue the operations of the EU Wastewater Sentinel System, as announced in the MCM strategy, including its expansion to non-EU countries.



In 2026, DG HERA and the JRC will also implement the **GLOWACON Aviation Programme**, consisting of testing activities at airports and on aircraft at around 30 locations worldwide. Potential use of the tool for mass gathering events will also be explored further in 2026. Efforts to strengthen wastewater surveillance capacity will also be expanded globally, acknowledging that threats transcend borders, in particular through collaboration with Africa CDC, Asia PGI and Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

All these activities will contribute to expanding the **GLOWACON** network, the global consortium for wastewater and environmental surveillance for public health. GLOWACON serves as platform to institutionalise wastewater-based epidemiological surveillance as a core component of global health security.



Preparedness hinges on a comprehensive, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. Accordingly, DG HERA continues to prioritise **strong engagement with Member States and civil society** through its established governance structures. Central to this effort is the HERA Board, which assists and advises the Commission in the formulation of strategic decisions and ensures close cooperation with Member States. The HERA Advisory Forum and its sub-groups ⁽¹⁶⁾ will continue to serve as a platform for gathering input from key stakeholders.

Capacity building for preparedness and response to complex crisis, including health, are amongst the priorities listed in the Niinistö Report and the Preparedness Union Strategy. In line with the MCM strategy, DG HERA will continue to roll out its training programme in 2026,

⁽¹⁶⁾ Joint Industrial Cooperation Forum and Civil Society Forum

covering the whole life cycle of MCMs, through a diversified set of actions. DG HERA will organise two simulation exercises in 2026, including the testing of the upcoming crisis procurement guidelines ⁽¹⁷⁾, complying with a recommendation issued by the Court of Auditors. Additionally, DG HERA will pilot in 2026 the first eLearning modules focussed on crisis management and crisis procurement ⁽¹⁸⁾ and establish 2 communities of practice ⁽¹⁹⁾. DG HERA has also been working on designing a Joint Action on an Exchange Programme, which will focus on staff and experts exchange, country visits, and other twinning activities between institutions based in different Member States. Based on a proposal, the Joint Action is planned to commence in the second half of 2026.

DG HERA prioritises the development of a comprehensive and effective **stockpiling system** for MCMs. Several concrete actions will be implemented in 2026 to advance these objectives. In particular, DG HERA will develop in collaboration with Member States a compendium of MCMs suitable for EU stockpiling and will explore options for the development of EU MCMs kits that could be prepositioned across Europe to ensure rapid access to treatment.



DG HERA will also continue to support the implementation of the rescEU medical and CBRN grants in full coordination with DG ECHO and the Member States. Additionally, a study will be launched to explore the benefits and added value of stockpiling of unfinished products at EU level. Together with the European Medicines Agency (EMA), DG HERA is piloting a shelf-life extension programme to assess whether this initiative could enhance sustainability and cost efficiency within the stockpiles.



As stated by Commissioner Lahbib ⁽²⁰⁾ ‘*when we prepare together, we are safer together*’. In line with the MCM strategy, in 2026 DG HERA will strive to develop standardised procedures for MCM sharing agreements with global partners and strengthen **international cooperation** in this area. In 2026, DG HERA will build upon its ongoing collaboration with international partners, including through the implementation of existing administrative arrangements ⁽²¹⁾, with a focus on increasing global access to and availability of MCMs.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Please see page 14 for more information on this action.

⁽¹⁸⁾ This will be made accessible through the EU Academy platform.

⁽¹⁹⁾ One of which will be dedicated to the Crisis Liaison Officers network, and the other will support the improvement of HERA’s training programme, ensuring that its actions and activities respond to effective needs from Member States.

⁽²⁰⁾ [Speech by Commissioner Lahbib at the European Parliament on the EU Preparedness Union Strategy](#)

⁽²¹⁾ This includes existing administrative arrangements with the public health agencies/services in the United States, Japan, Republic of Korea, as well as the Africa Centre for Disease Control (Africa CDC) and the most recent one signed in 2025: the Health Emergency Readiness Canada (HERC) and Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

DG HERA will also strive to establish new collaborations – it will work towards the establishment of a legal framework with the EEA EFTA countries and, together with DG SANTE, it will work towards cooperation arrangements with the United Kingdom in the area of health security. Together with DG ENEST, DG HERA will also work towards increased participation of EU candidate countries and potential candidates in DG HERA’s activities and EU mechanisms.

Finally, in a severe health emergency, the deliberate spread of **misinformation and disinformation** can cost lives and must be effectively countered. DG HERA will contribute to the Commission-wide efforts in this area. Such actions will include the launch of a study to identify best practices as well as the development of podcasts and informative blueprints on the use of MCMs in critical situations. DG HERA will explore the establishment of a network of senior communication professionals from national health authorities to exchange best practices and strengthen collective resilience against health-related disinformation. Other efforts aimed at promoting awareness include DG HERA’s participation in the 2026 Europe Day, kick-off event of the European Youth Week as well as the Citizens’ Dialogue.

Specific Objective 2.2: Crisis response to health emergencies

In 2026, DG HERA will continue to ensure that it is fully prepared to implement the [emergency framework](#) if needed, and ensure rapid **crisis response to health emergencies**. The working arrangements signed with EMA and ECDC have established specific methods and procedures for coordinating actions when a public health emergency is recognised within the EU. With the simplification principle in mind ⁽²²⁾, DG HERA will follow the [recommendation from the Court of Auditors](#) to further enhance and optimise cooperation between these entities.

DG HERA’s **emergency response protocol**, which outlines the processes and steps to follow while responding to an emergency, will be updated in 2026 to reflect new information and lessons learned. In 2026, DG HERA will organise an internal exercise for its staff to test cross-team coordination and decision-making, with a view to ensuring an efficient and effective response to a public health crisis. The coordination of MCMs-related response is also reflected in the Union Prevention, Preparedness and Response Plan ⁽²³⁾ and DG HERA will also align its processes with actions under the Preparedness Union Strategy.

Ensuring rapid access to critical products during emergencies will remain a key priority in 2026. Support for the **EU FAB network** of ‘ever-warm’ vaccine production facilities helps maintain sufficient manufacturing capabilities for mRNA, viral vector and protein-based vaccines. DG HERA intends to investigate the potential for expanding the EU FAB concept beyond vaccines or to rely on other equivalent mechanisms such as capacity reservation contracts to also cover PPE, reagents, medical devices and potentially medicines.

In response to recommendations from the European Court of Auditors, DG HERA will finalise **guidelines on crisis procurement** of MCMs in 2026. This initiative will also contribute to simplification of procedures applicable during health emergencies and reduce the administrative burden on the Member States.

⁽²²⁾ DG HERA will contribute to the 2026 Annual Progress Report on Simplification, Implementation, and Enforcement of Commissioner Lahbib to report on such efforts.

⁽²³⁾ Article 5 of the Regulation (EU) 2022/2371 on serious cross-border threats to health

PART 3. A modern and sustainable public administration: outputs in 2026

The internal control framework supports sound management and decision-making. In particular, it ensures that risks to the achievement of objectives are addressed and reduced to acceptable levels through cost-effective controls.

DG HERA has established an internal control system tailored to its particular characteristics and circumstances. The effective functioning of this internal control system will be assessed on an ongoing basis throughout the year and will be subject to an annual assessment covering all internal control principles.

A. Human resource management

The draft budget 2026 foresees the maintenance of DG HERA's total allocation of 104 FTEs, well below the initially estimated necessary workforce (130 FTEs). DG HERA will need more staff to effectively carry out its work, notably on joint procurement ⁽²⁴⁾, implementation of the MCM strategy, as well as dual use MCMs and civil-military cooperation, due to its growing importance. DG HERA will explore and propose where possible adjustments in its organisation to address better its emerging priorities through a reorganisation, ideally to be implemented end of Q2 2026.

DG HERA will maintain or increase the 50 percent of female middle management in accordance with the principle of balanced first appointments at middle management level (SEC (2023) 200). DG HERA has appointed a female colleague to the new Management development programme for future managers. 58 percent of staff in DG HERA are women and recruitments always aim at equal competence at reaching a better gender balance. Furthermore, the involvement of the DG HERA HR team in all recruitment panels guarantees that diversity considerations, extending beyond gender, are thoroughly evaluated when selecting candidates of equal merit.

In 2026, the strategic approach for DG HERA HR management will be to further improve organisational development aspects with a focus on knowledge and information sharing, boosting digital skills and the knowledge and uptake of AI. In DG HERA, the level of autonomy and responsibility of individuals is higher than in more established DGs. This is a strong factor of engagement. A particular attention has been put in having a high response rate in the 2025 staff survey and the results will be subject to a solid follow-up process like in 2023.

B. Digital transformation and data management

Digital transformation

⁽²⁴⁾ In light of the extended mandate stemming from the proposal for a Critical Medicine Act.

To enhance **digital culture**, DG HERA will promote general IT training and consult EU Learn. DG HERA will promote CyberAware campaigns and encourage staff to participate in cybersecurity awareness training. Furthermore, DG HERA will promote collaborative tools such as Teams and M365.

Committed to **digital-ready policymaking**, DG HERA will involve local IT roles and DIGIT's central advisory service in the early design of policy initiatives. With the local digital strategy still in development, DG HERA nonetheless, ensures alignment with the corporate digital strategy and its principles integrated into our policymaking processes.

Business-driven digital transformation is driven by the ATHINA projects, which will improve business process modelling and automation, data openness, maturity, and interoperability, and promote innovation and artificial intelligence. DG HERA will also promote AI training and encourage the use of Commission-wide general-purpose AI solutions.

To achieve a **seamless digital environment**, DG HERA will improve its digital landscape, IT legacy, and cloud adoption by further developing ATHINA, which is mapped to business and technical capability models. The onboarding of ATHINA in the Commission-wide European Crisis Management Platform will ensure that DG HERA follows the corporate architecture for information systems.

DG HERA will promote **green, secure, and resilient infrastructure**. DG HERA will continue to work with DIGIT S to reduce risks and implement priority controls in ATHINA and set up an operational IT Security Team for red teaming and response. Additionally, DG HERA will balance reducing risk with enhancing maturity.

Data management

In 2026, there is no data about DG HERA on the Corporate Data Maturity Dashboard. DG HERA have appointed its Local Data Correspondent in October 2025, and thus no specific Data Governance Policies have been adopted yet. With the development of ATHINA, a first draft of the HERA Data Strategy has been defined which still needs to be consolidated and approved.

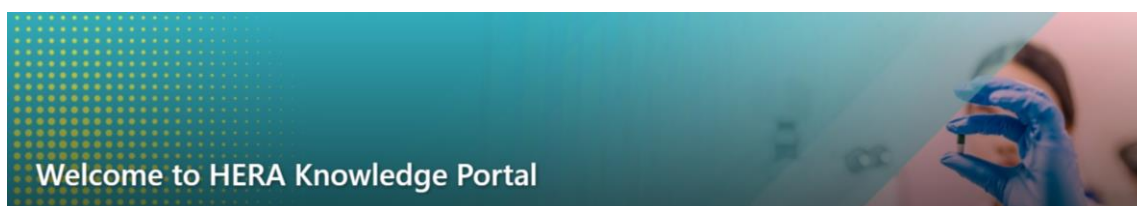
The maturity level of data management is basic. In 2026, a critical mass of ATHINA features will go live, which will allow DG HERA to manage data in a more structured format, and an inventory of data assets will be generated. The purpose of the inventory is to report data assets systematically in the EC Data Catalogue when relevant to do so and to be informed of the data acquisition policies.

Maturity level of ownership and responsibilities is basic. DG HERA has an appointed data governance team ⁽²⁵⁾. In the ATHINA project, the roles for ownership and responsibilities for data governance and data management have been identified, but there are no persons yet assigned to those roles. In 2026, DG HERA will assign dedicated persons to roles and responsibilities and set the first steps in establishing data governance. In this way DG HERA will be able to ensure data quality, recording of metadata, and applying the FAIR principles.

⁽²⁵⁾ The team includes the data protection coordinator, local data correspondent, document management officer, and local security officer.

Maturity of data quality and FAIRness is basic. The FAIR principles are considered but not currently applied. This is also the case for the use of metadata and master/reference data. In 2026, a critical mass of features of ATHINA are expected to go live, where the data will be handled according to the Data Strategy.

Maturity level of data skills is basic. Due to strong engagement with the industry, DG HERA staff are aware of the importance of managing the business-related data with care. The data competencies regarding data governance and management however are limited to DG HERA IT staff. In 2026, DG HERA will set the first steps towards a structured approach for developing data competencies by encouraging staff to engage in corporate training on data management.



DG HERA will also continue developing and curating the content of the HERA Knowledge Portal – a SharePoint Online site that serves as the internal repository of high-relevance documents. In 2026, DG HERA will organise an information session for all colleagues to promote the portal's features and encourage active engagement. In addition, a dedicated communication and marketing campaign will be launched to boost the use of the portal and the regular uploading of documents.

Finally, DG HERA remains committed to ensure full compliance with data protection rules and rigorous implementation of therein-embodied principles. DG HERA will promote participation in the data protection courses (baseline: 28% in 2025) and organise internal awareness sessions, while newcomers will be specifically given an introductory course on data protection compliance. DG HERA will map the implementation of data protection rules and increase monitoring capabilities, in particular by promoting record-keeping activities.

C. Sound financial management

In 2026, DG HERA budget will be composed of contributions from the EU4Health and Horizon Europe programmes. DG HERA puts specific focus on ensuring close contact and coordination with partner DGs to have DG HERA's priorities met through full budget execution, including keeping the estimated risk at payment below 2% of relevant expenditure (baseline: 0.46% in 2024). DG HERA management is informed about budget implementation and control results to monitor budget execution indicators on a regular basis.

In 2026, DG HERA will implement part of its EU4Health budget directly with the assistance of DG SANTE for financial initiation and verification. DG HERA does not have a financial unit and with regard to the quality of the accounting data and the relevance of the control systems for budget implementation, it is assisted by DG SANTE on the basis of a memorandum of understanding.

DG HERA will co-delegate major part of its 2026 EU4Health budget to the Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA) and will closely supervise the budget implementation tasks transferred to the HaDEA. DG HERA will also cooperate closely with DG RTD for the implementation of its 2026 Horizon Europe budget. In 2026, under the lead of DG BUDG, DG HR and SG, DG HERA will contribute to the cost-benefit analysis (CBA) for the direct programme implementation 2028-2034.

DG HERA's Internal Control Framework (ICF) supports sound management and decision-making and notably ensures that risks to the achievement of objectives are considered and reduced to acceptable levels through effective and efficient controls.

D. Fraud risk management

In 2026, DG HERA will identify lessons-learnt from the past years' anti-fraud strategy and start work on a new strategy, as well as an action plan for the years to come ⁽²⁶⁾. DG HERA will also continue to contribute to the objectives of the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy and its revised Action plan of 2023. An assessment of the risks of fraud will be included in the annual risk management exercise.

DG HERA will pursue its commitment to ensure integrity and ethical values. The staff shall ensure full transparency and equal treatment regarding the relations between the Commission and the MCMs producers, including the strict implementation of the Transparency Register and of the Code of Good Administrative Behaviour. DG HERA will focus on increasing attendance to trainings on ethics and anti-fraud matters. Newcomers will be prompted to take part in available trainings on EU Learn, and a general reminder will be sent to all staff to join the courses as well. Similarly to previous years, DG HERA will explore opportunities to organise internal activities to foster its staff's understanding of ethics and anti-fraud issues.

E. Sound environmental management

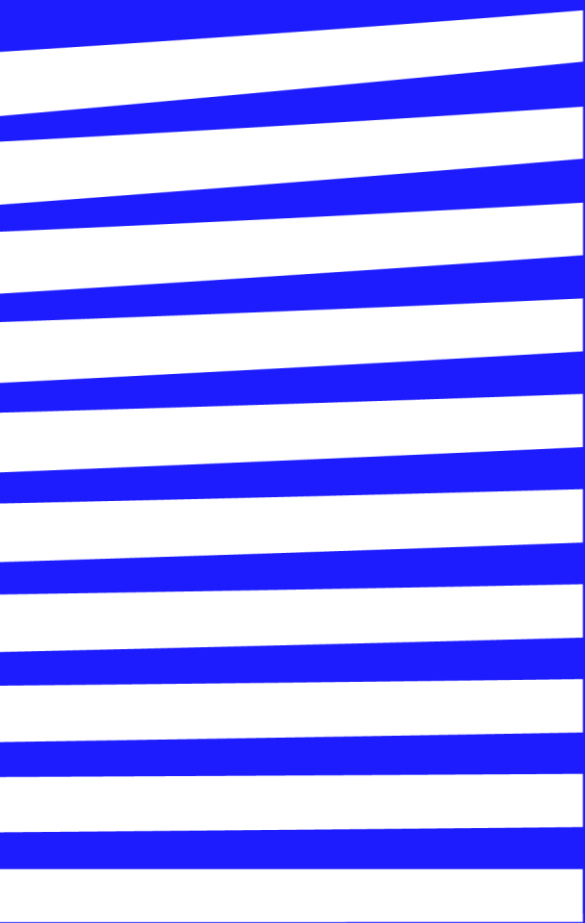
DG HERA's long-term building location is being planned, with a move scheduled for 2028. DG HERA will begin its full integration into EMAS (Commission Eco-Management and Audit Scheme). An EMAS correspondent was appointed in October 2025. DG HERA will aim to set up staff awareness and communication actions in line with the two corporate campaigns and promote sustainable events by the inclusion of EC Guidelines for sustainable events in 100% of DG HERA's major events.

Regarding the missions and business travel of staff and experts, teleworking and videoconferences have intensively been used, and DG HERA will continue these practices throughout 2026 to further implement the Pledge for the Greening of missions and meetings signed by DG HERA in 2022, including the efforts in reducing the emissions from staff professional travel (baseline: 378779.27 ~ in 2024). DG HERA is committed to decrease by 50% its staff missions' emissions until 2030.

⁽²⁶⁾ Please see page 24 for this year's objectives.



ANNEXES



ANNEX 1: Performance tables – delivering on Commission priorities in 2026

General objective 1: A new plan for Europe’s sustainable prosperity and competitiveness

Specific Objective 1.1: Economic security through sustainable and resilient supply chains of MCMs

Related to spending programme(s): EU4Health, Horizon Europe

Main outputs in 2026:

Support the Initiatives linked to regulatory simplification and burden reduction

Output	Indicator	Target
Implementation Dialogue	Organisation of an Implementation Dialogue with Commissioner Lahbib	1 dialogue organised by Q4 2026

Major implementation activities and enforcement actions

Output	Indicator	Target
RAMP UP	RAMP UP platform fully functional and accessible online	HERA Stakeholders Hub functional for RAMP UP in Q2 2026
Revision of the Joint Procurement Agreement	Revised version of the Joint Procurement Agreement shared and discussed with participating countries	Q4 2026

Other major outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
Conduct a study to gather comprehensive knowledge of MCMs availability and supply chain	Provide preliminary analysis results	Q4 2026
HERA Industry Days	Second edition organised	December 2026
Joint Industrial Cooperation Forum	Number of meetings organised	3 meetings in 2026
HERA Stakeholders Hub	Number of organisations registered	Increased number of organisations registered by 10% by the end of 2026
A series of workshops on joint and pooled procurement of MCM	Workshops organised	3 workshops organised by the end of 2026

General objective 1: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness

Specific Objective 1.2: Investing in prevention through innovative MCMs chains of MCMs

Related to spending programme(s): EU4Health, Horizon Europe

Main outputs in 2026:

Major implementation activities and enforcement actions

MCMs accelerator: CBRN MCM supported	Published call for tenders to develop innovative MCM formulations (i.e. autoinjectors) and improved rapid response and field detection and diagnosis	Q4 2026
	Published call for tenders to develop and standardize diagnostic and detection methods for CBRN threats	Q4 2026
European Diagnostics Hub	Launch of the pilot	Q4 2026

Other major outputs

Study on barriers and enablers for the introduction and adoption of innovative vector control MCM in the EU market	Publication	Q4 2026
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General objective 2: A new era for European defence and security

Specific Objective 2.1: European preparedness for health emergencies

Related to spending programme(s): EU4Health, Horizon Europe

Main outputs in 2026:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
Global Health Resilience Initiative  (27)	Adoption	Q2 2026

Major implementation activities and enforcement actions

Joint procurement of MCMs	Launching joint procurement procedures	4 joint procurement procedures launched in 2026
Industrial MCMs roadmaps for specific health emergency scenarios	First set of plans completed	Q4 2026
EU List of MCMs for Priority Threats	Publication	Q4 2026
Medifence	Development of a MCMs list for armed aggression	Q2 2026

(27) This icon indicates that the initiative is included in the Commission work programme 2026.

Other major outputs		
Output	Indicator	Target
EU-WISH report on the wastewater surveillance state of the art and future priorities in the MS	Publication	Q4 2026
Study to identify best practices to address mis and disinformation on MCMs	Launch	Q1 2026
Development and production of elearning modules focussed on crisis management, a crisis procurement and joint procurement	Number of elearning modules organised	At least 4 by the end of 2026
Organisation of training sessions related to MCMs	Number of training sessions/workshops organised	At least 5 by the end of 2026
Organisation of simulation exercises	Number of simulation exercises organised	2 exercises in 2026
A first version of the Compendium finalised	Version approved by Member States	Version approved by Q4 2026
Meetings organised with Member States on the implementation of the Stockpiling plan	Number of meetings organised	At least 3 by the end of 2026
Projects on kits and stockpiling of unfinished products are on track	Calls launched	2 calls by the end of 2026
Cooperation arrangements with the United Kingdom	Arrangements signed	Q3 2026
Civil Society Forum	Number of meetings organised	2 meetings by the end of 2026

General objective 2: A new era for European defence and security

Specific Objective 2.2: Crisis response to health emergencies

Related to spending programme(s): EU4Health, Horizon Europe

Main outputs in 2026:

Support the Initiatives linked to regulatory simplification and burden reduction

Output	Indicator	Target
Guidance on procurement of medical countermeasures in a health crisis	Commission Communication adopted	Q2 2026
Major implementation activities and enforcement actions		
Output	Indicator	Target
Pilot Capacity Reservation for PPE	Published call for tenders	Q2 2026
Other major outputs		
Output	Indicator	Target
A new version of the emergency protocol is issued	Document finalised	Q3 2026

Output	Indicator	Target
Internal training for DG HERA staff on the emergency protocol	Number of training sessions organised	At least 1 by the end of 2026

ANNEX 2: Performance tables – A modern and sustainable public administration

A. Human resource management

Objective: DG HERA employs a skilled, diverse and motivated workforce to deliver on the Commission's priorities.

Main outputs in 2026:

Output	Indicator	Target
Reorganisation of DG HERA	Proposal and implementation	Q2 2026
Regular interactive town hall meetings with the Director-General and other managers to ensure staff are well informed of the latest developments in the department	Number of policy breakfast organised during the year	8 policy breakfasts by the end of 2026
Organisation of knowledge hours to learn about developments in other part of the organisation	Number of Knowledge Hours organised during the year	6 Knowledge Hours by the end of 2026

B. Digital transformation and data management

Objective: DG HERA is using innovative, trusted digital solutions for better policymaking, data management and administrative processes to create a digitally transformed, user-focused and data-driven Commission.

Main outputs in 2026:

Digital Transformation

Output	Indicator	Target
DIGITAL Culture: Communication (mails) for promotion on general IT Training. CyberAware campaigns/use of collaborative tools like Teams and M365	Number of communications	4 communications by the end of 2026
Digital Ready Policy Making: Automated or configured business processes in ATHINA, to be used by DG HERA policy officers	Number of new business processes	5 new business processes by the end of 2026
Business Driven Digital Transformation: AI Knowledge hours to promote AI training and encourage the use of Commission-wide general-purpose AI solutions	Number of sessions organised	2 sessions by the end of 2026
Seamless Digital environment: Mapping of our information systems to business and technical capability models	% of DG HERA Information systems mapped to business and technical capabilities	100% by the end of 2026
Promotion for green, secure and resilient infrastructure (including EMAS)	Number of communications	4 communications by the end of 2026

Data Management

Output	Indicator	Target
Knowledge Hour presenting again the portal to all colleagues and encouraging ongoing collaboration	Number of sessions organised	1 session by the end of 2026
Meetings between Knowledge Portal owners and focal point colleagues on each unit	Number of meetings	3 meetings by the end of 2026
The creation of an inventory of the data assets to improve data management	Number of data asset inventories	1 inventory by the end of 2026

Output	Indicator	Target
Encouraging staff in engaging in corporate training on data management to strengthen data skills	Number of communications	2 communications by the end of 2026
Data Protection		
Output	Indicator	Target
Attendance of data protection awareness-raising activities	Increased participation in the 'Introduction to data protection at the European Commission'	60% staff members participate in the course in 2026
Timely review of public records of processing operations	Percentage of public records of processing operations reviewed	80% of records reviewed (4 records)

C. 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.

Main outputs in 2026

Output	Indicator	Target
Effective controls: legal and regular transactions	Estimated risk at payment	remains < 2 % of relevant expenditure ⁽²⁸⁾
	Estimated risk at closure	remains < 2 % of relevant expenditure
Efficient controls	Budget execution	remains 95% of payment appropriations

⁽²⁸⁾ For the Research, industry, space, energy and transport family of departments, it is necessary to make a distinction between Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe since they have different materiality criteria. The relevant departments should use a common approach.

D. 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 ⁽²⁹⁾ aimed at the prevention, detection and correction ⁽³⁰⁾ of fraud.

Main outputs in 2026:

Output	Indicator	Target
Update of the anti-fraud strategy	Updated anti-fraud strategy	Updated anti-fraud strategy by Q3 2026

E. Sound environmental management

Objective: Reaching climate neutrality by 2030 and a reduced environmental footprint for the Commission.

Main outputs in 2026

Output	Indicator	Target
Actions to reduce emissions from staff professional travel	2 (emails sent to all staff reminding them to use train as much as possible, and especially when the distance to the mission place is less than 500 km + DG HERA welcome pack for newcomers)	Q4 2026

⁽²⁹⁾ Communication from the Commission 'Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy: enhanced action to protect the EU budget', COM(2019) 176 of 29 April 2019; Communication from the Commission "Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy Action plan – revision 2023" [COM\(2023\) 405](#) of 11 July 2023 – “the Communication on the 2023 revision” – and the accompanying revised action plan, [SWD\(2023\)245](#)– “the revised Action Plan”.

⁽³⁰⁾ Correction of fraud is an umbrella term, which notably refers to the recovery of amounts unduly spent and to administrative sanctions.