



Management Plan 2021

EUROPEAN PERSONNEL SELECTION OFFICE

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INTRODUCTION

Client centricity is pivotal to all operations of the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO). In its daily activities, EPSO seeks to meet the recruitment needs of EU institutions efficiently and with quality by providing talented laureates through generalist and specialist competitions.

The year 2020 has challenged some aspects of EPSO's business model. Due to national contingency measures seeking to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus, competitions were put on hold while EPSO developed adequate remote delivery tools and adapted its test catalogue accordingly. As with every challenge, new opportunities were seized to innovate parts of EPSO's activities and to create the basis for long-lasting transformation. This Management Plan will cover a year of change – 2021 – leading up to the 20th anniversary of EPSO on 26 July 2022.

Under the strategic oversight of the [EPSO Management Board](#), EPSO will incorporate into its change management the recommendations of the inter-institutional [Special Working Group](#), and of the [European Court of Auditors'](#) special report on EPSO (published on 29 October 2020). For this purpose, EPSO set up in mid-2020 [five internal task forces](#) looking into key areas of action, notably, [candidate diversity](#), [the language regime](#), [selection board functioning](#), [transparency and client relations](#).

Furthermore, structured reflection in close collaboration with client EU institutions will continue on [two priority topics](#): the [geographical balance](#) of the candidate pool and the [duration of competitions](#). The outcome of all these efforts will also feed into ongoing work to build a “[new EPSO](#)” guided by three core principles: [precision](#), [agility](#) and [speed](#).

Therefore, while pursuing the objectives set out in our Strategic Plan for 2020-2024, EPSO will also implement a set of concrete measures aimed at sharpening the focus of its client relations and outreach with candidates to deliver the right set of tests for different needs. Such concrete measures include setting up a regular feedback system with EU institutions, designing and piloting a new fast track specialist competition, putting in place a new targeted communication and outreach strategy as well as moving to fully remote delivery for all parts of the testing cycle. In order to improve its agility, EPSO will reinforce its internal coordination, project management and planning capacity. For this purpose, a reorganisation will be required. In addition, the Office will continue to collaborate closely with DG HR and DIGIT to build an efficient and modular underlying IT system.

Many of EPSO's activities in 2021 have path-breaking potential: remotely delivered tests in all phases of selection; a diversity and equality monitoring tool; a new language regime; targeted transparency measures; more foresight in staffing assessments, as well as more focussed outreach activities. At the same time, EPSO will continue to strengthen its own organisational capacity backed by project management workflows and keep track with fast-paced innovations in the business of talentspotting. In short, 2021 will lay the foundations for multiple changes in EPSO, all of them for a greater good – to ensure that recruiting EU institutions are able to cater sooner for current and future needs with a pool of highly talented laureates.

In 2021 EPSO will also contribute to the definition of the new HR strategy of the Commission and actively participate in the various strands (on talent and attracting the right candidates, diversity, selection and recruitment, and technology).

PART 1. Delivering on the Commission's priorities: main outputs for the year

In terms of client centricity, EPSO will continue to monitor the delivery rates for both open competitions and tailored selections completed during 2021. Furthermore, the aim in 2021 is to enhance cooperation with client EU institutions so that EPSO can offer increased flexibility and deliver faster outcomes than in previous years, including the provision of access to various statistics and further development of EPSO's planning and reporting tools.

In parallel, endeavours will focus on establishing new parameters for measuring delivery and performance under this objective, such as the diversity of the candidate pool as well as cost-efficiency and timeliness of selections, in line with the recommendations of the Special report 23/2020¹ by the European Court of Auditors (ECA), in particular. These and other ideas will be part of a comprehensive inter-institutional consultation with a view to developing a regular feedback system. Longer-term planning of staffing needs based on future-oriented competencies is also on the radar screen this year.

The permanent selection model for contract staff offers a pool of candidates and a more cost-efficient approach to testing: only pre-selected candidates are tested and the scores remain valid for a predefined period. Testing is organised continuously throughout the year. To meet specific recruitment needs of stakeholders, EPSO remains committed to further improve this selection model, for example, by adding new profiles and corresponding tests, as well as IT developments to improve functionality and usability of our tools. In 2021, the current CAST Permanent Call will be reinforced by a series of new profiles such as security and building management. A dedicated task force will be established to look into solutions to counteract competency test content exposure.

Regarding the Certification selection, EPSO aims to further improve the delivery of the examinations and to modernise and rationalise the procedure. Possible improvements to the test content and delivery modes will be explored together with the EUSA.

Following a decision by EPSO's Management Board on a new selection model, EPSO will launch a number of calls for tender in order to implement needs for new tests in this context. Also, EPSO will need to launch further calls for tender due to the specific situation caused by Covid-19 and the need to adapt working methods and delivering tests and assessments remotely.

¹ [Special Report 23/2020](#): The European Personnel Selection Office: Time to adapt the selection process to changing recruitment needs.

General objective 7: A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission

Specific objective 1: Highly qualified staff is made available to all EU institutions by organising open competitions and selection procedures in an inter-institutional context – covering thereby the services' evolving needs.

Main outputs in 2021:

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
Completed open competitions: new reserve lists are established for all categories of officials (AD, AST and AST/SC).	Delivery rate of successful candidates, as set out in the legally binding texts (notices of competition) completed during 2021.	≥90% of the cumulative target figures of successful candidates for reserve lists of open competitions completed by 31 December 2021.
Completed tailored selection procedures: 1) new lists of aptitude established for temporary agents 2) new reserve lists established for internal competitions and testing organised for Junior Professionals Programme (JPP).	Delivery rate of successful candidates, as set out in the legally binding texts (notices of competition or calls for expression of interest) completed during 2021.	≥90% of the target figures for each tailored selection procedure completed by 31 December 2021.
CAST Permanent selection (regular testing of pre-selected candidates and introduction of new profiles).	Candidates pre-selected by the institutions are tested and results uploaded in the database. This database of candidates (both applicants and already tested candidates) across all profiles is available to the recruiting services of EU institutions (Recruiter Portal).	100% of candidates pre-selected by the EU institutions are tested within agreed deadlines throughout 2021.
	In order to meet the EU institutions' needs, EPSO will introduce new profiles into CAST P (with appropriate test content).	New profiles/ new test content added at the request of EU institutions.
Dedicated task force to look into solutions to counteract competency test content exposure.	Regular meetings to discuss and analyse impact. Proposal to be presented to EPSO's Management Board.	Works finalised by third quarter of 2021.
Certification: reserve lists of certified officials established.	Delivery of Certification examinations in compliance with the EU institutions' requirements.	100% timely and accurate delivery of list of certified officials according to the deadlines set by EU institutions.
New framework contracts following a decision in 2021 by EPSO's Management Board regarding a new competition model and EPSO's shift in late 2020 to remote on-line testing due to the Covid-19 situation.	Procurement procedures launched (in collaboration with DG HR.R1) and contracts in place on time.	Draft technical specifications and other tender documents finalised by end 2021.

EPSO communicates with EU citizens in view of:

- informing them about career opportunities at the EU institutions in a targeted manner
- increasing awareness of the EU as an employer of choice amongst the target audience
- ensuring constructive candidate relations throughout the selection process.

Communication with citizens and candidates

The **Candidate Contact Service (CCS)** deals with one-to-one communication on specific issues between candidates and EPSO. In 2021, the aim is to stabilise the number of queries received by regularly updating the FAQs (available in 24 languages), archiving outdated ones and adding new ones whenever necessary, in light of the on-going and foreseen changes to EPSO procedures, particularly by moving to remote and online testing.

New colleagues in charge of or contributing to correspondence with candidates will be trained to use the CCS relationship management tool, Issue Tracker.

The cooperation with the Europe Direct Contact Centre (EDCC) for more general applicant and candidate questions will be maintained. In 2021, the contractor managing the EDCC on behalf of DG COMM will change. In light of this change and the ensuing likely replacement of most contact centre staff, EPSO expects increased documentation and training needs compared to previous years (at least 3 training sessions). As soon as the new centre is fully operational, EPSO will plan quality control reviews on the EDCC's replies (e.g., content, respect of deadlines).

EU Careers website

Attracting more than 12 300 visits per day, the **EU Careers website** continues to be one of the most visited europa.eu sites and the number one source of information for citizens/applicants interested in a career in the EU institutions. Despite the fact that there were no new publications of competitions on the website for several months, the number of visits remained high during 2020 (4 647 928 visits from 1 Jan 2020-16 Dec 2020, compared to 4 520 000 in 2019). In 2021, EPSO will increase the visibility of its website by reaching out to targeted audiences (e.g. different age groups, different professional specialisations) via specific campaigns (dedicated webpages per competition and selection procedure, news items, targeted social media posts). In 2021, new content about remote testing, updates of sample tests will be published for specific competitions. Also, certain remote assessment centre documents will be shared on each competition's web page prior to the assessment centre. Additionally, there will be a strong focus to incorporate all future improvements and changes in the new Drupal 8/ Drupal 9 website (revamping the EPSO website and migrating to the new platform as mandated by DIGIT and DG COMM). The migration and revamp of the site will run until end of 2021/beginning of 2022. There will also be further improvements related to accessibility features to achieve WCAG 2.1, Conformance Level AA.

Social Media strategy and initiatives

In 2021, EPSO will continue to deliver targeted communication campaigns to promote competitions and selection procedures via a number of **social media** channels. It will also increase cooperation with other EU institutions and bodies by promoting their campaigns, traineeships and vacancies on EPSO channels.

Targeted outreach

The implementation of the **EU Careers outreach activities** both in-house and among key stakeholders will be reinforced and clearly set as one of the main priorities of EPSO in order to ensure that the message of the EU institutions as an employer of choice will be conveyed to the right audience.

In 2021, EPSO will put significant efforts into targeting audiences in **under-represented countries**. These are EU Member States from where EPSO persistently encounters challenges to attract sufficient numbers of candidates. EPSO will continue to work in close partnership with national authorities to ensure maximum outreach via a variety of different measures and actions (e.g. Focus Country seminars, surveys amongst potential candidates from Focus Countries, monitoring the implementation of the national action plans of the Focus Countries). EPSO will increase its efforts to measure the impact of its outreach actions via automated and non-automated feedback collection.

EPSO's active on-campus presence ensured by the **EU Careers Student Ambassadors**, as well as through targeted participation in career events, fairs and other activities, will also be maintained, with additional emphasis in 2021 on the choice of activities, the need to target the right profiles and on reaching out to high quality audiences in a diverse and inclusive manner. Moreover, EPSO will continue to organise a yearly seminar for university career services across all Member States in order to help them better support the EU Careers Student Ambassadors in their efforts to attract fellow students to an EU Career.

EPSO will maintain its interactive engagement with social media followers, by replying to comments, promoting shares and placing an emphasis on personalised content. This implies the direct involvement of the **EU Careers Staff Ambassadors**, who provide regular contributions on what it is like to work in the EU institutions.

Diversity & inclusion

To support greater diversity amongst candidates, a new targeted communication strategy will be implemented in 2021 including amongst other actions an extended call for cooperation to all EU diversity organisations, aiming to build partnerships with expert organisations and associations representing minorities. More specifically, in the context of the EU action plan against racism, EPSO will pilot an equality and diversity survey allowing to analyse the diversity of its applicant pool (including ethnicity), to identify potential gaps in representation and define target groups and possible actions. EPSO has established a network of diversity and inclusion coordinators from all EU Member States. With their help, EPSO hopes to get closer to the target groups, to better understand their potential blocking factors, how to address them and ultimately encourage more applications for jobs in the EU.

EPSO will continue to be represented in inter-institutional and Commission-wide task forces related to equality, disability, and diversity and inclusion. Additionally, it will uphold the work of its internal cross-unit task force on diversity and inclusion.

EPSO will further continue to resolve flagged accessibility issues on the EU Careers website in order to achieve level AA of the Web Content Accessibility guidelines.

Legal Matters

In 2021, the Legal Sector will continue to ensure that the applicable legal framework is observed throughout EPSO's activities – from policy development to the operation of individual competition procedures. The team will continue to provide high quality legal advice to management, staff and selection boards. It will also continue to ensure timely and effective handling of administrative complaints under Art. 90 of the Staff Regulations, requests for access to documents under Regulation (EC) No. 1049/2001, complaints to and queries from the European Ombudsman and of legal files related to the protection of personal data. The Legal Sector will continue to work closely with the Commission's Legal Service for litigation concerning EPSO before the EU Courts. The team shall maintain regular contact with other services (in particular with the European Ombudsman's Office, the European Data Protection Supervisor's Office, the Legal Service and the Secretariat-General of the Commission). In addition to the above, in 2021 the Legal Sector will continue its active involvement in the works of EPSO's Transparency Task Force, with particular focus on exploring new avenues to discourage candidate complaints through a clearer explanation of EPSO's functioning and selection procedures, and better managing candidates' expectations.

In 2021, the overall aim of the Legal Sector will remain the efficient management of the above legal procedures with strict observation of applicable deadlines and the delivery of legally sound advice contributing to the success of EPSO's core operations and strategic projects.

Specific objective 2: EPSO's communication and outreach with potential candidates is proactive and targeted in order to reach a pool of diverse talent in an inclusive manner according to the needs of the recruiting institutions.

Main outputs in 2021:

External communication actions

Output/ Result	Indicator	Target
Communication with citizens and candidates		
E-mail queries by individual candidates and citizens are answered in 24 official EU languages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ratio of queries per application dealt with by EPSO's Candidate Contact Service (CCS). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2021, average number of queries comparable to 2020 figures, i.e. one query per 4 applications.
Maintenance of the candidate relationship management tool (Issue Tracker) for candidate questions and issues in all 24 EU official languages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of colleagues trained in using the tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of selected colleagues trained in using the tool.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of colleagues using the tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of selected colleagues using the Issue Tracker tool.
FAQs available on EU Careers website are regularly reviewed and updated, new ones added as new processes are implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of FAQs reviewed/updated/added. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 10 new FAQs added in view of changes related to remote assessment and new methods of testing.
Structured cooperation with Europe Direct Contact Centre (EDCC) to manage general queries from candidates in all 24 official EU languages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ratio of queries per application dealt with by EDCC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the ratio of queries per application, i.e. 1 query per 100 applications.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of training sessions per year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 3 training sessions per year organised for the EDCC agents.
EU Careers website		
Increase visibility of website in view of reaching targeted audiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Above 5 000 000 by end 2021.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication of landing web pages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish one landing web page per

	for competitions and selection procedures.	competition and selection procedure.
Layout, content and functionalities are improved on current and new website. These will include a redesigned job search field, improved search criteria, use of primary buttons, accessibility of search filter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New functionalities, improvements on the website to improve user experience (UX). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> January 2021.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and update the specific "Covid-19" news page. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least once a month in 2021.
Accessibility of EU Careers website		
Continuous improvement of EU careers website accessibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Test 10 sample web pages and achieve WCAG 2.1. conformance level AA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid 2021.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further improve accessibility features on the new website (ongoing migration to Drupal 8/Drupal 9) and achieve WCAG 2.1, conformance Level AA . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve conformance by end of 2021 or beginning 2022 (when new website is launched).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement all recommendations of usability and accessibility reports by Novacomm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End of 2021.
Social Media strategy and initiatives		
Enhance visibility on social media, by increasing the number of followers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of followers on social media. 	<p>By end 2021, target number of followers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook: 450 000 Twitter: 38 000 LinkedIn: 150 000 Instagram: 40 000 YouTube: 7 000
Increase engagement on social media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of interactions (shares, likes, clicks, comments). 	<p>Target interactions (monthly average):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook: 2 200 Twitter: 250 LinkedIn: 1 300 Instagram: 4 000
Specific media campaigns are run for open competitions via social media (mainly Facebook and LinkedIn).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of EU citizens reached. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60 000 EU citizens reached per €500 spent.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clicks on a link. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 800 link clicks per €500 spent.
Increase synergies with the other EU institutions (sharing material, visuals, campaigns, posts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of posts promoting campaigns, vacancies and traineeships of other EU institutions, bodies, agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 3 posts per channel monthly.
Outreach		
Maintaining the EU careers outreach network as an arena for planning actions to improve client satisfaction. The network consists of high-level HR and communication representatives of all EU institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of attendees at the network meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 participants (two per EU institution).
Attractiveness of promotional and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of attendees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 000 visitors/attendees per year

outreach events (in-person and online events.)		across all events (virtual and/or in-person).
Targeting audiences in under-represented countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of seminars. • Number of representatives per under-represented country. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two seminars per year. • At least one representative per under-represented country.
EU Careers Student Ambassadors		
Maintain or increase the number of universities represented in all Member States with a focus on high quality, and with a special emphasis on under-represented countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of universities from across all EU Member States participating in the programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of universities represented to 144.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of Student Ambassadors in under-represented Member States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80 % of Student Ambassadors come from the under-represented Member States.
All Student Ambassadors receive initial training (physically in Brussels or in the Member State, or remotely).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of student ambassadors receiving training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 % Student Ambassadors are trained by EPSO staff.
All Student Ambassadors offered continuous training via online master classes (addressing diverse topics and hosted by diverse colleagues, senior student ambassadors, staff ambassadors etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of student ambassadors attending master classes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33 % of Student Ambassadors attending master classes.
EU Careers Staff Ambassadors		
Bi-monthly newsletter (via email) to share information and encourage Staff Ambassadors to spread the word and be multipliers within their networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of newsletter subscribers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 130 subscribers in 2021
Increasing collaboration with the Staff Advocacy Programme of DG HR.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of volunteers to take part in events (speed networking/events organised by EU Careers Ambassadors). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150 volunteers in 2021
To maintain and/or increase the diversity of staff ambassadors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Staff Ambassadors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 124 staff ambassadors by end of 2021 covering all Institutions and all MS, with a special focus on under-represented Member States.
Staff Ambassadors to provide concrete job descriptions and testimonials to be used for the EPSO website and social media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of job descriptions and testimonials obtained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 by end of 2021
Diversity and Inclusion		
Extend the call for cooperation to EU diversity and inclusion organisations in order to build a network of partners and expert groups involved in the promotion and welfare of citizens from diversity groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up of the call for cooperation to EU and national diversity and inclusion organisations (including the call to disability organisations launched end of 2019). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One call of interest or reminder published in 2021.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify the types of collaboration, projects and/or services offered to diversity organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid 2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messages/information sent to the registered organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share 100% of the selection procedures with the organisations

		in the data base who have expressed this wish.
Set-up of a network of Diversity and inclusion Coordinators from all Member States for further collaboration and benchmarking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of names and contact details of diversity coordinators of the MS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A completed list with at least one coordinator for each Member State by end 2021.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The call for cooperation is distributed in each Member State to help EPSO increase reach out to diversity national organisations and potential candidates from minority groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular contacts based on EPSO's needs throughout 2021. National statistics on diversity is available to EPSO by end 2021.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPSO is provided with relevant information from the Member States allowing to move forward with its targeted communication plan aiming at attracting more diverse talent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Input and regular feedback from organisations on the potential blocking factors to the EU careers throughout 2021.
Implement the EU action plan against racism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft a targeted communication plan aiming at attracting more talent from ethnic groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of the targeted communication plan in first quarter 2021.
Introduce tools to collect data about candidates of various diversity strands and monitor outreach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot the equality and diversity survey on closed competitions, and based on its results, develop the equality and diversity monitoring tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of the results of the pilot survey available by end 2021.
Improve inter-institutional collaboration and liaise with other diversity and inclusion services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in inter-institutional and/or Commission-wide Task Forces/working groups and meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPSO set up an inter institutional Task Force on diversity and inclusion matters in 2020, Continuous progress expected throughout 2021.
Legal Matters		
Timely and effective handling of Article 90 and Ombudsman complaints, access to documents requests, and EDPS complaints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of contributions/ decisions prepared within the set deadlines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2021, 95% of procedures completed within set deadlines.
Exploring new avenues to discourage candidate complaints through a clearer explanation of EPSO's functioning and selection procedures, and better managing candidates' expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report of the Transparency Task Force finalised and outcome and recommendations presented to EPSO's management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By end 2021.
Other important outputs		
Output	Indicator	Target
Analysis of candidate satisfaction survey results		
Analysis of candidate satisfaction survey results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of overall satisfaction rate of all candidates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ≥ 90% of candidates who completed the AC survey are satisfied.
The results of the candidate satisfaction survey (sent to all participants shortly after the AC) are analysed, reviewed and followed up internally by the operational units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send candidate feedback analysis to the operational units in EPSO. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three times in 2021.

concerned.		
Adapt and/or update the survey questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up-dated questionnaire reflecting changes in selection procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throughout 2021.
Communications and outreach strategy		
Validation and implementation of EPSO's new Communication and outreach strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of the Communication and outreach strategy by EPSO's management, the Working Group and Management Board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption in first quarter of 2021. Implementation of various actions throughout 2021.

Communication and outreach strategy

Once adopted, EPSO's communication and outreach strategy 2021-2023 will be shared with staff and stakeholders, and implemented. Additional actions may be added throughout the year.

Annual communication spending:	
Baseline (2020)	Estimated commitments (2021)
€300 000	€350 000

As a follow-up to the EPSO Management Board meeting of 30 June 2020, EPSO established five internal task forces to move work forward in five key areas, and ultimately to improve EPSO's service delivery to its clients, the EU institutions. This work builds mostly on the recommendations of the inter-institutional Special Working Group as well as on the recommendations of the Special report by the European Court of Auditors.

The **five Task Forces** cover the following areas:

Task Force 1 - Diversity of the candidate pool

Task Force 2 - Language regime

Task Force 3 - Optimal functioning of selection boards

Task Force 4 - Increased transparency of the selection process

Task Force 5 - Enhancing cooperation with the client institutions

2021 will be dedicated to finalising the output of these task forces as well as on a cross-cutting reflection on how to shorten the overall duration of EPSO competitions. Feedback from client EU institutions will be included in the task force outputs. The different work streams covered by the task forces are mutually compatible and are geared towards strengthening more coherent organisational development outcomes within EPSO and informing a reorganisation due in 2021.

In 2021, EPSO will start delivering remotely proctored internet-based testing and roll out this way of delivering tests and assessments where possible.

Based on a decision (to be taken by EPSO's Management Board in 2021), EPSO will review the test portfolio and propose new or adapted tests to cater for a smooth implementation of the new competition model.

In order to reflect the changing work environment and evolving needs of the institutions, EPSO will discuss with client EU institutions and propose changes to update the inter-institutional competency framework. Based on inter-institutional decisions as a result, the relevant test content will be modified accordingly as soon as feasible in 2021 or later, if needed.

Continuous testing in CAST selection procedures will increase efficiency in the recruitment procedures of contract agents. Individual procedures will no longer be dependent on pre-determined testing windows and can advance as soon as the relevant candidates obtain their test result. However, as the implementation of continuous testing is very much linked to other IT developments, in the initial stages EPSO will mainly focus on providing a tool to recruiters to keep track of their requests for testing (the 'shopping cart' component).

In 2021, EPSO will implement a revised and improved procedure for reasonable accommodations, based on candidates' feedback, performance and best international practices together with a practical toolbox for selection board members and other staff involved in the definition, organisation and implementation of reasonable accommodations in the selection tests.

A new e-learning module on equality and diversity in staff selection will be developed and made compulsory for selection board members under the EU action plan against racism.

Specific objective 3: Improve EPSO's selection methods.

Main outputs in 2021:

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
Introduction of a new language regime with an adapted competition structure for generalist, linguists and large-scale specialist competitions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to approval by EPSO's Management Board, EPSO will start the preparations towards an introduction of a new language regime together with an adapted competition structure to cater for multilingualism (ECA recommendation nr.1). 	Spring 2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A timeline for introduction will be established and well communicated both to the EU institutions and to external stakeholders and candidates, based on operational and organisational feasibility. 	Mid 2021
Introduce a new selection framework for specialist competitions (ECA recommendation nr.2).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPSO will identify one specialists' selection procedure to pilot the new framework. Results of the pilot will be thoroughly analysed and assessed to provide a solid basis for a proposal for a new competition model for specialist competitions. 	Mid-2021 Discussions on the new framework will start towards the third quarter of 2021 based on first analysis and outcome of the pilot project.
Measure EU institutions' satisfaction with the selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a formal mechanism for measuring EU institutions' satisfaction with the successful 	End 2021

process (ECA recommendation nr.1).	candidates (laureats) delivered by EPSO.	
Improve coordination between EPSO and the EU institutions on the availability of selection board members (ECA recommendation nr.1).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the recommendations of internal discussions (task force) and with the EU institutions. 	End 2021
Introduction of monitoring arrangements to report on the cost of competitions (ECA recommendation nr.1).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce a cost monitoring tool. 	End 2021
Reduce the duration of competitions to 10 months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the current length of competitions . Review the business processes linked to selection procedures. 	End 2021
Introduce a regular review of the selection process to ensure EPSO's capacity to react to a fast-changing recruitment environment (ECA recommendation nr.3).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPSO's Management board to introduce a regular review mechanism. EPSO's capacity to react to a fast-changing recruitment environment is improved. 	End 2021
Adapt test portfolio according to the new competition model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPSO will review its available portfolio of tests and propose new or adapted tests to cater for future needs (subject to a decision taken by EPSO's Management Board). 	Start first quarter 2021
Review of the competency framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPSO will launch consultations with EU institutions to update the existing competency framework for recruitment, to take into account the evolving needs of the services. 	Start first quarter 2021
Delivery of remotely proctored internet-based tests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the COVID-19 situation, EPSO had to significantly speed-up preparations to deliver exams in a remotely proctored mode. Except for very specific cases, linked to specific tests or candidate needs, EPSO will roll out this delivery model during 2021, in a staggered approach, to all competition and selection procedures. 	Autumn 2021
Delivery of remote on-line assessment centres for open competitions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment centres for open competitions are delivered remotely on-line for all candidates. 	All 2020 and 2021 competitions will be progressively covered. Fully remote assessment centres by end 2021.
Delivery of continuous testing for CAST selection procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide the institutions with a possibility in 2021 to better follow-up on pre-selected candidates sent for testing. Ultimate goal is to eliminate the current set-up with the 10 separate testing windows per year, by allowing candidates pre-selected by the EU institutions to test according to the timing of 	End 2021

	their interview.	
Training module on equality and diversity in staff selection is prepared and made compulsory for selection board members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e-learning module developed and made compulsory for selection board members. 	Mid-2021
Reasonable accommodations procedure for candidates with disabilities and specific needs is improved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of an improved reasonable accommodations procedure. Development of a toolbox for all EPSO staff involved in defining, organising and implementing reasonable accommodations in the selection tests. 	Mid-2021 Last quarter of 2021

In 2021, an additional procurement procedure will be launched to secure a new framework contract for [third language testing](#), delivered in fully remote mode to candidates world-wide.

Specific objective 4: The linguistic abilities in a third language of staff eligible for a first promotion are evaluated in a harmonised, consistent and cost-efficient manner.

Main outputs in 2021:

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
Delivery of assessments of linguistic ability by EPSO and the evaluation committees to satisfy the requirements of Article 45(2) and Article 85(3) of CEOS.	Timely delivery of assessments concerning the diplomas and certificates submitted by the candidates.	100% evaluation of files (diplomas and certificates) submitted within the deadline.
Delivery of assessments of linguistic ability by EPSO and the external service providers to satisfy the requirements of Article 45(2) and Article 85(3) of CEOS.	Delivery of linguistic tests of level B2 in quarterly sessions.	100% satisfaction of requests received for testing third language capabilities.
Delivery of an online satisfaction survey for candidates processed during the year.	Satisfaction rate of candidates with the assessment of their third language abilities.	≥ 90% satisfaction rate of candidates who reply to the satisfaction survey.
Procurement processes for an additional framework contract.	Completion of the procedure (in collaboration with DG HR.R.1).	Completion expected in spring 2021.

PART 2. Modernising the administration: main outputs for the year

All information and data provided in part 2 of this Management Plan concern **both EPSO and EUSA**.

The internal control framework² 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.

EPSO has established an internal control system tailored to its particular characteristics and circumstances. The effective functioning of the service'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.

A. Human resource management

Since the implementation of the HR Modernisation initiative, HR services are delivered by an Account Management Centre (AMC). EPSO is supported by the AMC 7. The HR Business Correspondent team in EPSO (which also fully covers the European School of Administration) is responsible for defining the HR strategy in agreement with the management of the Office. The team accounts for 1.5 FTE, reports directly to the Director of EPSO and is fully integrated and active in the network of HR Business Correspondents.

Reorganisation of the office

A reorganisation of EPSO is necessary to ensure a smoother internal coordination and workflow, to clarify roles and responsibilities of each team, as well as to better respond to the evolving needs of recruiting institutions. A comprehensive consultation of staff will be organised. A steering board is established to coordinate and manage the process.

EPSO HR strategy

Following the appointment of the new Director on 16 May 2020, EPSO is moving forward with its own HR strategy. The needs arising from the evolution of the competition model will be taken into account in the HR strategy. Moreover, due to rapidly changing circumstances, EPSO is considering on-boarding of specific profiles, such as occupational psychologists and psychometricians to reinforce our test development capacity; data mining experts to contribute to data-based decision-making and to better respond to the requests of EU institutions and Member States as well as data protection experts due to increased complexity and relevance of this field given the business of EPSO and especially in relation to the remote delivery of different tests introduced in 2020.

² [Communication C\(2017\)2373 - Revision of the Internal Control Framework](#)

Gender balance in EPSO's management team

The revised objective set in the Commission's Decision SEC(2020)146 of 1 April 2020 for EPSO is to nominate one new female manager by 31 December 2022. In November 2020, 60% of EPSO's middle management were women (3 out of 5 Heads of unit). Notwithstanding, the Office will continue its effort to reach the target. According to the second set of measures adopted by the College on 30 September 2020, to reinforce the gender balance at the management level, a female Head of unit has been designated to deputise for the Director during her absence. EPSO will also ensure that, in its upcoming reorganisation, every unit will have a Deputy Head of unit and that these posts will be held in equal proportions by men and women.

Staff engagement, learning and well-being

Sustained efforts will be made to further reinforce the staff engagement and increase the index in the next staff survey.

EPSO will review its internal Learning and Development Framework in order to further develop in-house expertise and ensure that it matches the future needs of the Office. Its aim is to help all staff to contribute to the delivery of EPSO's objectives and those of the Commission and other EU institutions. This might include a structured re-skilling and re-training exercise launched in 2021. The yearly EPSO Management Potential Programme helping AD colleagues with a management potential to rapidly evolve in the organisation will be maintained in 2021. Job shadowing possibilities will be offered to reinforce cross-unit cooperation and to provide additional possibilities for internal mobility.

Additional tailor-made info sessions and workshops on well-being and fit@work/home activities will be organised in 2021. EPSO's internal communication function will continue to cooperate closely with DG HR to ensure that corporate messages are shared and followed up properly.

Objective: EPSO 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.

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
HR strategy	HR strategy approved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First quarter 2021
Achieve target on first female appointment.	% of first female manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One first female manager to be appointed
Review of the Learning and Development Strategy.	Learning and Development Strategy aligned with EPSO's specific needs approved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End of first semester 2021
Continuation of the implementation of the Action Plan approved as follow-up of the 2018 Staff survey.	Staff engagement index	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase participation in tailor-made training courses Encourage internal mobility Promote change and innovative thinking
Continuation and enrichment of EPSO's fit@work activities. Organisation of	Staff engagement index	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase well-being at work and better work/life balance

workshops/info sessions.	Registrations in EU-learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain staff engagement index above Commission average
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B. Sound financial management

In 2021, EPSO will handle a budget of around **€26.6M** (entirely under Heading VII – Administrative Expenditure), which also includes the budget of the European School of Administration (EUSA, approximately €6.0M).

Ex-post controls carried out in EPSO will be based on a similar approach to the one used in DG HR itself, implying two angles of control - hierarchy and HR.

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 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Effective controls: Legal and regular transactions	Estimated risk at closure.	Below 2 % of relevant expenditure.
Effective controls	Risk at payment	No financial transaction earmarked as “unacceptable” in approximately 60 ex-post controls by HR.R.1 and EPSO management.
Efficient controls	Budget execution and / or time-to-pay.	95% of payments on time.
Economic controls	Overall estimated cost of controls.	Below 9,1% of relevant expenditure.

C. Fraud risk management

EPSO is not in charge of implementing any operational appropriations (budget fully under Heading VII). Consequently, the risk of fraud with a direct financial impact for the EU remains very low.

EPSO will review in 2021 its Anti-fraud strategy (AFS), given the new ways of test delivery to be introduced. Advice will be sought from OLAF, where necessary, in order to ensure an optimal process. EPSO will continue to focus on awareness-raising activities throughout 2021, aimed at EPSO staff, Selection board members, candidates and also contractors.

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)³ aimed at the prevention, detection and correction⁴ of fraud.

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
EPSO's anti-fraud strategy is reviewed and updated.	New anti-fraud strategy taking into account all elements as advised by OLAF is approved by the Management of EPSO and communicated.	End 2021
Staff conscientiousness/ awareness on fraud-related issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of staff awareness • Availability of Ethics information package 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online survey exercise to be organised on fraud awareness as part of the preparation of EPSO's 2020 Annual Activity Report (AAR). • General effectiveness weighted percentage of 80% or above. • Ethics information package is made available to all staff.
Identification and follow-up of fraud related issues in EPSO/EUSA.	Identification of any possible fraud .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All fraud related issues identified on an operational level are brought to the attention of the Management team.

D. Digital transformation and information management

EPSO has engaged in the **modernisation process of its IT solutions** supporting the running of EPSO's selection procedures in an integrated HR management landscape. The change of IT systems represents a major opportunity for the implementation of the following principles, with a truly **digital, user-focused and data-driven transformation**:

- maintaining and improving quality of selection tools and optimising business processes.
- improving and streamlining the use of new technology and IT tools at all stages of the HR cycle, from attraction to selection, to career development and management.
- providing digital solutions that enhance the candidate and recruiter user experience (UX) and optimising data assets management, access and exploitation, in line with GDPR/IDPR.
- developing data analytics to actively promote candidate diversity and inclusion.
- increased agility: on the one hand greater organisational agility through a more responsive and flexible approach to staffing, better anticipating and responding quickly to future and changing requirements for knowledge, skills and competences; and on the other more flexible, tailor-made and fast selection and recruitment services to meet those needs.

³ 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'.

⁴ Correction of fraud is an umbrella term, which notably refers to the recovery of amounts unduly spent and to administrative sanctions.

- improve security, ensuring compliance with the Commission’s IT-security and information-security policies and standards.

In the context of the Strategic plan 2020-2024 the **key focus for 2021** will comprise:

- definition of EPSO’s business architecture
- HR Transformation (HRT) blueprint and roadmap:
 - EPSO is a key partner in the HR transformation programme, which will set a roadmap for the delivery of a full Talent Management system compliant with the EC digital strategy.
 - The pre-selection module covering EPSO’s selection functions will be addressed in the first phase during 2021.
- work will start on foundational IT components
- security plans update according to new methodology
- data protection training/stewards in line with corporate Data strategy
- improved searching tools:
 - Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to speed up the time and accuracy of vacancy matching.
- functional improvements to the Recruiter portal, based on an inter-institutional needs analysis.

In 2021, EPSO will continue to participate in corporate initiatives aiming at enhancing **information and knowledge management and advancing digital transformation**.

EPSO will organise its processes based on the updated EPSO collaboration and knowledge management strategy. This strategy foresees practical involvement in information and knowledge management activities of all EPSO teams via the so-called “**Smarties network**”, who will also have the competencies and a mandate to spread and support collaborative working practices. In-house training on available collaborative tools, as well as creation of digital learning path for EPSO staff, will support the move towards a **collaborative-by-default organisation**.

Objective: EPSO/EUSA 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.

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
New tools to improve planning, assessment and project management in EPSO.	Set-up a horizontal project team to identify and acquire better and efficient tools to support and facilitate EPSO’s procedures in terms of planning, assessment, project management, etc.	End 2021
Up-to-date security plans for all Information Systems in EPSO.	Plans updated in GovIS.	Third quarter of 2021
Data catalogue is up-to-date. Design and documentation of data related processes. Data protection related requirements of IT	Percentage of EPSO’s key data assets with data governance principles implemented.	50%

systems (when changed or updated) followed.		
Data Protection trainings/stewards.	Trainings completed for all data stewards in EPSO.	Mid-2021
Data protection trainings for EPSO/EUSA staff.	Percentage of EPSO/EUSA staff (exc. Management staff) attending awareness trainings on data protection.	60%
HRT blueprint and roadmap for the delivery of unified HR family Talent management system, with a common data and records management, and secure platform.	Blueprint (EPSO and inter-institutional needs included) and joint roadmap agreed.	Third quarter 2021
A series of foundational projects run as part of the HRT project (covering identity management, and data and records management).	Analysis and proof of concepts available.	End 2021
Improved data quality and searching capabilities functionalities in the Recruiter Portal.	Project deliverables deployed. Stakeholder satisfaction survey.	End 2021
Artificial Intelligence (AI) pilot results.	The AI proof of concept conclusions are available and successful.	End 2021
Smarties network are backbone of EPSO's knowledge management and collaboration strategy.	Each unit in EPSO has at least two committed smarties network members.	End 2021
EPSO staff followings trainings on collaborative tools other than confluence wiki.	Percentage of EPSO staff comfortable in using corporate collaborative tools.	70% of EPSO staff have followed MS teams or/and SharePoint training by end of 2021.

E. Sound environmental management

EPSO/EUSA will continue to promote the EMAS corporate campaigns at local level and identify local environmental actions. This is in order to support the Commission's commitment to reduce its day-to-day environmental footprint in compliance with the upcoming Commission action plan to become climate neutral by 2030.

In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic has forced the adoption of new ways of working.

Paperless working methods, such as e-signatures, use of collaborative working tools and of electronic files, has increased and will further develop with the new EPSO competition model introduced in 2021.

On-line meetings and teleworking have become the "new normal" and EPSO/EUSA aim to cut back further on their carbon footprints with the introduction of "remote testing" of candidates, significantly reducing the amount of missions by Selection board members and travelling to the various test centres for candidates.

In 2020, the number of colleagues commuting by bicycle has increased, in particular, to limit the use of public transport. This trend should be encouraged by targeted awareness-raising actions in 2021.

In line with the upcoming “greening the Commission” plan emphasis will also be placed on raising awareness on waste reduction and biodiversity.

Objective: EPSO/EUSA 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:

Output	Indicator	Target
Raise staff awareness about EPSO/EUSA paper use in collaboration with OIB.	Number of prints per staff member in C25 (EPSO) and DM24 (EUSA) compared to all buildings. Awareness campaign.	All EPSO/EUSA staff aware of this action. Reduce the number of prints per staff by 20% (compared to the first quarter of 2020).
Number of EPSO/EUSA staff missions is reduced and where possible missions are replaced by video-conferencing.	Number of missions.	Reduction of number of missions by 50% compared to 2019.
Raise awareness about reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (such as actions on sustainable commuting during EU mobility week (September) and VéloMay corporate events (May)) and raise staff awareness in collaboration with OIB on sustainable commuting.	Area dedicated to bikes in parking (n° m2). Awareness campaign.	The bike area is extended by 25%. All EPSO/EUSA staff aware of this action.
Raise staff awareness about waste reduction and sorting (such as the corporate EMAS waste reduction campaign (November-December)) and/or staff awareness actions about EPSO/EUSA's waste generation in collaboration with OIB where appropriate.	Increased waste sorting by EPSO/EUSA staff. Awareness campaign.	Increase waste sorting by 15%. (compared to first quarter of 2020). All EPSO/EUSA staff aware of this action.
Supporting biodiversity: Raise awareness about food (eat local, seasonal and organic).	Awareness campaign.	All EPSO/EUSA staff aware of this action.

F. Example(s) of initiatives to improve economy and efficiency of financial and non-financial activities

With the introduction of remotely delivered assessments for selection procedures run by EPSO in 2021 (both for computer-based tests and for assessment centre tests), EPSO foresees a significant reduction in payments on missions of Selection board members and also towards the travel expenses of candidates. Delivering tests remotely on-line is expected to further decrease the candidates drop-out rates across all assessments.