



# Management plan 2021

DG I.D.E.A.  
(Inspire, Debate,  
Engage and  
Accelerate Action)

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## INTRODUCTION

I.D.E.A. (Inspire, Debate, Engage and Accelerate Action) is the European Commission's in-house advisory service, established by Presidential Decision on 1 December 2019<sup>1</sup>.

According to its mission and mandate, I.D.E.A.'s main tasks include to provide ideas and inspiration for the core priorities of the President as laid out in her Political Guidelines, and specific policy advice on ongoing and future priorities; to debate and engage around new evidence-based policy alternatives in the community of think tanks, academia, research, and other institutions through active outreach; and to accelerate the conversion of these ideas and engagements into concrete action to help the Commission deliver in a fast-changing context.

In the context of the current situation and ongoing crisis derived of the pandemic, 2021 will be a particularly challenging year for I.D.E.A.

The service will be further developed in 2021 in the best and most effective and efficient possible way, to be able to respond quickly and pro-actively advice and assist in the delivery of the updated political agenda as outlined by the President following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the priority accorded to the economic and social recovery anchored in the growth strategy for the EU set by the European Commission, and the Commission work programme for 2021.

As a Presidential service, in 2021, I.D.E.A. will contribute to achieving the general objective of a modern, high-performing and sustainable Commission through the strategic objectives defined in its Strategic Plan 2020-2024, as well as the objectives, outputs and actions defined in this 2021 Management Plan, as illustrated in part 2.

This Management Plan defines the outputs of I.D.E.A for 2021 to deliver on the objectives set in the Strategic Plan 2020-2024, and is divided in two parts:

Part 1 presents how the new Commission's advisory service intends to plan and organise its activities in 2021 in order to deliver strategic analysis and forward-looking advice on the Commission's core ongoing and future priorities.

Part 2 refers to the internal structure put in place to ensure that its working methods are as effective and efficient as possible, and contribute to the general objectives of the European Commission led by President von der Leyen.

I.D.E.A. is placed under the direct authority of the President's Cabinet and reports directly to the President of the European Commission.

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<sup>1</sup> P(2019)5 – Communication from the President to the Commission

I.D.E.A.'s set up reflects the Commission's priorities as it is organised in five clusters, namely: 1. Geopolitics and Europe in the Global Order; 2. Green Deal; 3. Digital, Technology and Innovation; 4. Social Market Economy and 5. The Future of Europe and the EU's institutions. While each cluster contributes to the respective initiatives from the Commission's work programme 2021, the clusters also work together, collaboratively, to ensure an interdisciplinary, cross-cutting approach, in order to overcome policy silos and warrant the necessary coherence and, where appropriate, a "whole-of-government" approach.

I.D.E.A. is composed of a professional staff of advisers, policy analysts and support staff with appropriate experience, in order to provide professional, relevant and targeted policy advice to the President. I.D.E.A.'s staff is organised around different teams, working in the horizontal unit I.D.E.A. 01 (Management and Resources), which provides support to the whole service, or in the thematic clusters as listed and defined in the paragraph above.

As per its mandate, I.D.E.A. works in a highly collaborative framework, with internal and external actors, seeking to engage the best talents, experts, thought leaders, and solicit the most outstanding ideas, with emphasis on evidence-based analysis and serving as a sounding board for new proposals and initiatives. I.D.E.A. works in close cooperation with the other Presidential services. Moreover, depending on concrete initiatives, I.D.E.A. works closely with the Commission's central services, and, on an ad hoc basis, with all other relevant Commission services. Externally, I.D.E.A.'s key counterparts include think tanks, research institutes, and academia as well as analysts, thought leaders and policy practitioners.

I.D.E.A.'s specific objectives are defined by the Political Guidelines of President von der Leyen, and the priorities that have developed in time and compose the agenda of the Commission, namely those emanated from the COVID-19 crisis and the ensuing responses to address the pandemic and its impacts. Importantly, **in this context, the current Management Plan could be subject to potential necessary adjustments in terms of outputs in 2021, in light of developments following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, for I.D.E.A. to be able to respond, advice and support quickly, and in the best possible way, in the delivery of the updated political agenda as outlined by the President.**

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

I.D.E.A. is a Presidential Service providing the President with strategic analysis and forward-looking advice on the Commission's ongoing and future priorities. It actively engages with internal and external actors, including namely think tanks, academia, research institutes,

and other institutions on new, evidence-based policy alternatives. Its role is also to accelerate the conversion of these ideas and engagements into concrete and bold action to help the EU Commission deliver to its citizens in a fast-changing context.

Its role is to support the President and the Commission to respond quickly to challenges like the COVID-19 crisis and its social and economic impact, and other external factors to ensure high quality and delivery of the objectives through strategic policy advice, policy briefs and notes as well as the organisation of workshops, roundtables and brainstorming sessions, among many others. In this respect, I.D.E.A. will provide support to the President on concrete initiatives, as well as policy advice of a more long-term nature.

However, I.D.E.A. contributes in particular to the general objective **7 “A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission.”**

The theme of a Europe that emerges stronger from the pandemic and leads the way towards a new vitality, put forward in President von der Leyen’s 2020 State of the Union Address will provide a guiding logic to all I.D.E.A. projects. These will be designed to respond to the important challenges that the Union will face in 2021, paying particular attention to issues highlighted in the speech, including by enabling Europe to become green, digital and more resilient, and socially just, while responding more assertively to global events and deepening EU’s relations with its closest neighbours and global partners.

Furthermore, I.D.E.A. contributes to a more modern, more high-performing Commission by being a nodal point between the European Commission’s policymaking process and the relevant stakeholders of the think tank, academic, research and practitioners’ communities. I.D.E.A.’s strategy targets are to provide value added to the European Commission’s policymaking process through its interdisciplinary and forward-looking nature, and its qualitative high-level collaborative, efficient working methods.

In 2021, I.D.E.A. will continue to work around the thematic clusters identified in its foundational Decision, namely: Geopolitics and Europe in the Global Order, Green Deal, Digital, Technology, and Innovation, Social Market Economy, The Future of Europe and the EU’s institutions. These topical clusters will work on a fully coordinated and integrated approach, and will be supported by an organisational, horizontal team (Management and Resources Unit). This horizontal unit is in charge of administrative, organisational and human resources activities, and will provide assistance along three main strands for action, including among others support with foresight, data and policy outputs; support with thought provoking seminars and event management, dissemination of policy ideas, findings and proposals, and outreach; and support with evaluation of impact of ideas.

In 2021, the outputs defined in the Strategic Plan are mainly based **on ad-hoc requests of the President’s Cabinet**, due to the ongoing setting-up of the service, which impacts the definition of its specific objectives. While reflecting the 3 specific objectives of the Strategic Plan, the current list is not exhaustive.

**Specific Objective 1.1**

**To provide the President with strategic analysis and policy advice related to the political guidelines set by the Commission**

- Support the President’s Cabinet for the delivery of the 2021 Commission’s Work Programme and the preparation of the 2022 Commission Work Programme,
- Support the President’s Cabinet in the preparation of the President’s State of the Union speech.

**Specific Objective 1.2**

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

- Contribution to the ongoing reflections linked to the Commission’s priorities,
- Support the development, promotion and communication of relevant initiatives related to the President’s priorities.

**Specific Objective 1.3**

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

- External outreach events, policy briefings and roundtables.

General objective: 7. A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission		
Specific objective 1.1: To provide the President with strategic analysis and policy advice related to the political guidelines set by the Commission		Related to spending programme(s) N/A
Main outputs in 2021:		
Other important outputs		
Output	Indicator	Target
Contribution to the President’s State of the Union speech and preparation of new initiatives for the forthcoming Commission Work Programme (with the President’s Cabinet)	Quality and timeliness of support and contribution to organisation Delivery Outreach	Q2-Q3-Q4

Ad- hoc policy briefs	Quality and timeliness of support Delivery	Ongoing
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### General objective 7. A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission

**Specific objective 1.2: To follow-up on the President's priorities through interdisciplinary, cross-cutting, inclusive and interactive ways of working across intellectual, policy and institutional silos** *Related to spending programme(s) N/A*

#### Main outputs in 2021

#### Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
A European Green Deal	Timeliness and relevance of evaluation of ideas and proposals for concrete follow-up actions	Ongoing
In house coordination of New European Bauhaus Project	Variable: Written inputs, Outreach to external experts Delivery of written inputs as requested, Organisation Active participation in events and meetings	Ongoing
A Europe fit for Digital Age	Timeliness and relevance of evaluation of ideas and proposals for concrete follow-up actions Variable: Written inputs Outreach to external experts Delivery of written inputs as requested, Organisation Active participation in events and meetings	Ongoing
An Economy that works for People	Timeliness and relevance of evaluation of ideas and proposals for concrete follow-up actions Variable: Written inputs Outreach to external experts Delivery of written inputs as requested, Organisation Active participation in events and meetings	Ongoing
A stronger Europe in the World	Timeliness and relevance of evaluation of ideas and proposals for concrete follow-up	Ongoing

	<p>actions</p> <p>Variable: Written inputs</p> <p>Outreach to external experts</p> <p>Delivery of written inputs as requested, Organisation</p> <p>Active participation in events and meetings</p>	
A new push for European democracy	<p>Timeliness and relevance of evaluation of ideas and proposals for concrete follow-up actions</p> <p>Variable: Written inputs</p> <p>Outreach to external experts</p> <p>Delivery of written inputs as requested, Organisation</p> <p>Active participation in events and meetings</p>	Ongoing

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

**Specific objective 1.3: To provide the President with effective outreach to relevant stakeholders in the academic, research, think tank, and practitioners' communities**

*Related to spending programme(s)*  
N/A

### Main outputs in 2021:

#### External communication actions

Output	Indicator	Target
Policy briefings for the Cabinet of the President on relevant topics	Variable	Q1-Q4
Roundtables with think tanks and experts on key priorities and new initiatives for the preparation of the Commission Work Programme	Organisation, active participation, delivery Number of participants depends on nature and scope of event	ad-hoc requests of the President's Cabinet
Roundtables with think tanks and experts to contribute insights and solicit new ideas for the President's State of the Union speech	Organisation, active participation, delivery Number of participants depends on nature and scope of event	ad-hoc requests of the President's Cabinet
Outreach events linked to President's priorities	Organisation, active participation, delivery Number of participants depends on nature and scope of event	ad-hoc requests of the President's Cabinet



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

The purpose of this section is to describe the actions put forward to create an innovative, high performing service, which will develop a modernised way of working in parallel with an efficient and effective use of its staff resources.

2020 was a very challenging year for I.D.E.A. In the context of a highly loaded and important agenda of the Commission in the first year of the mandate, developments such as Brexit and the work on the multiannual financial framework post-2020, and the impact of the COVID-19 crisis, I.D.E.A. had not yet finalised the recruitment process and development of the service at the end of 2020. **It is therefore important to point out that the majority of the objectives which were defined in the 2020 Management Plan remain valid for the service in 2021.**

The priorities for the set-up process of the Service are:

- The selection of staff to complete each cluster, as defined in the President's decision of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2019, to contribute to the achievement of the overall specific objectives defined in Part 1,
- The best possible match of staff competences and services needs in the recruitment process with the overall objective of a future coherent local HR strategy to contribute to the achievement of the Commission's core priorities,
- The update of the administrative and financial procedures upon the nomination of the new management in the context of the evolutive situation of the Service,
- The update and conclusion of the working arrangements with the President's Cabinet,
- The delivery of the outputs defined in line with the political guidelines and Commission work programme for 2021.

The internal control framework<sup>2</sup> 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.

I.D.E.A. 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 will be subject to a specific annual assessment covering all internal control principles.

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

## A. Human resource management

I.D.E.A. relies on the strong competence, commitment and dedication of its staff members and effective teamwork. **The efficient use of resources is essential for a small Service which is still in the recruitment phase.** I.D.E.A. is developing its local HR strategy with a medium to long-term outlook to enhance its capacity to deliver on the priorities. This strategy is being tailored to its specific needs and realities, while following the guidance of DG Human Resources in its Corporate Modernisation Strategy. In this context, I.D.E.A. is paying special attention to the 6 pillars of the HR strategy (Talent; Diversity and Inclusion; Leadership and Management; Workplace and Wellbeing; Technology and Culture and Organisation) and it is taking into account lessons learned from ways of working during confinement in COVID-19 crisis.

I.D.E.A. has currently no quantitative target for female first appointment to middle management functions, but will ensure gender balance across the different teams during its recruitment process.

**Integrating newcomers will be one of the main tasks of the Service in 2021** to develop a relevant and appropriate internal culture of service. Learning and development activities will therefore play a crucial part in the motivation and unity of teams to maintain a strong staff engagement. It will be essential to identify the corporate trainings to be followed by new staff members upon their arrival in the Service.

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

### Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Keep a very high score of staff engagement	Staff engagement index in staff survey	78 % or above
I.D.E.A HR strategy	Delivery	January 2021
Promote learning and development activities to build the internal culture of Service	Number of corporate trainings followed by new staff members	At least <b>2</b> corporate trainings per new member of staff before end of the year, with a focus on Ethics and Ares.

## B. Sound financial management

I.D.E.A manages a small administrative budget (around 730,000 EUR), which covers specific objectives, namely seminars/event management (physical and virtual), dissemination of policy ideas, evaluation of impact of ideas and outreach activities. The organisation does not manage spending programme or policy expenditure. It is also important to emphasize that the Service has no ex-post controls.

The start-up phase of the Service and the COVID-19 crisis which are still going on at the end of year 2020 will impact the budget consumption expected to be very low at the end of the year.

It is, therefore, predictable that the main objectives which were defined in the 2020 Management Plan, such as the update of the financial circuits and processes (check-lists and specific procedures), are to be achieved upon arrival of the new management in 2021.

The good results regarding the risk at payment and estimated risk at closure as well as time-to-pay are to be maintained due to the know-how and stability of the financial team which ensures the continuity of the accounting and financial processes. A particular attention will be paid to the cost of control which should remain approximately 17.82 % of the expenditure.

**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	Risk at payment	remains < 2 % of relevant expenditure
	Estimated risk at closure	remains] < 2 % of relevant expenditure
Efficient controls	Time to pay	Remains < 11 days
Economical controls	Overall estimated cost of controls	remains 17.82 % of funds managed

## C. Fraud risk management

In 2020, I.D.E.A's Anti-Fraud Strategy was not reviewed because of the delay in the start-up phase and recruitment of its new management, which should endorse the revision of the coherency between objectives, actions and indicators. **I.D.E.A. will therefore implement the outputs defined for 2020 in 2021** and will pay a particular attention to the traditional compulsory ethics training for newcomers, and the refresher training for active staff.

**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)<sup>3</sup> aimed at the prevention, detection and correction<sup>4</sup> of fraud

### Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Revised Anti-Fraud Strategy 2021	Revision of the objectives, actions and indicators .	Endorsement by the new management in 2021
Increased level of ethics and anti-fraud awareness	Number of appointed staff members who have followed the compulsory ethics training or the refresher	100 % .of the staff

## D. Digital transformation and information management

The extension of the start-up phase of the Service as well as the on-going recruitment process impacted the achievement of the objectives defined in the 2020 Management Plan. The major part of these objectives will therefore remain valid in 2021.

Upon arrival of the new management, I.D.E.A. will pay particular attention to the [European Commission Digital Strategy](#) and will follow the guidance of the Secretariat-General to optimise its corporate processes, in particular in the domain of document management.

The COVID-19 crisis has impacted in a significant way the organisation of events. I.D.E.A will continue collaborating with DG SCIC to identify **efficient, sustainable and digital solutions** in the conference domain. The increase of **data awareness** by the management and staff should be ensured through participation in general trainings organised at corporate level, and tailor- made presentations will be organised every quarter

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<sup>3</sup> Communication from the Commission 'Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy: enhanced action to protect the EU budget', COM(2019) 196 of 29 April 2019 – 'the CAFS Communication' – and the accompanying action plan, SWD(2019) 170 – 'the CAFS Action Plan'.

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

and serve as a training, refresher and reminder of data protection principles during the staff and/or ad hoc (if necessary) meetings.

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

#### Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Training of staff on data protection awareness	Percentage of I.D.E.A staff attending	50% of staff
Transfer of closed files (EPSC-BEPA) to the Historical Archives	Number of closed file transferred to the Historical Archives after expiration of the retention period of 10 years	Positive trend at the end of 2021
Self-awareness on eDomec policy for new staff	Number of trainings and other awarenessraising activities per year	2

## E. Sound environmental management

As already mentioned in the introduction of Part 2, a number of outputs in 2020 have been postponed, following the impact of the COVID-19 crisis in the organisation and functioning of I.D.E.A. In particular, this has been the case as well in the EMAS domain, as the majority of staff is still teleworking. The ECOR will participate in cross-DG working groups and shall promote measures that can help reducing the environmental footprint of the Service.

**Objective:** Service I.D.E.A. takes full account of its environmental impact in all its actions and actively promotes measures to reduce the related day-to-day impact of the administration and its work

#### Main results and outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Bottle top collection	N° of bottle top collection boxes	>=1
Improve IDEAS's Waste Management	Implementation of Sorting Stations	End 2021
Inform all staff on how to reduce energy use, such as "switching off", to support the annual EMAS corporate campaign on resource efficiency (March) and/or awareness actions	100 % of staff informed	End 2021

about DG/service's total energy consumption in collaboration with OIB/OIL where appropriate.		
Staff awareness actions to reduce water use (for example ensuring that staff use the technical services hotline to report leaks), in line with the EMAS corporate action on resource efficiency (March) and/or awareness raising actions about DG/service's water consumption in collaboration with OIB/OIL where appropriate.	100 % of staff informed	End 2021
Staff awareness actions on reducing GHG emissions (such as actions on sustainable commuting during EU Mobility week (September) and VeloMai corporate events (May)) and/or, raise staff awareness in collaboration with OIB/OIL (on sustainable commuting: availability of bike parking facilities, lockers and showers, promote the reduction of parking spaces' use amongst staff for example)	100 % of staff informed	End of 2021
Reduction of professional trips (missions) in order to optimise and gradually reduce CO2 emissions (e.g. by optimising the number of participants in the same mission, promoting more sustainable travelling options, promoting videoconferencing/virtual events as an alternative).	# missions for DG	End of mandate

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

The target is to achieve more economy and efficiency by simultaneously reducing the environmental impact. Digital solutions are strongly encouraged in DG I.D.E.A. whenever possible and appropriate. The concrete examples of actions defined in 2020 are still valid in 2021, such as:

- Less missions
  - Considerable reduction on mission budgets and reduction of carbon foot print of the DG.

- Video conferencing for I.D.E.A. events
  - Considerable reduction on conferences' logistics expenditure, including travel and accommodation for speakers;
  - Considerable reduction in conference printing material (programmes, brochures, conference banners etc.);
  - Considerable reduction in food waste as no catering is required for video conference events.

## **ANNEX Performance tables**

NOT APPLICABLE