



# Management Plan 2023

## EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE (OLAF)

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## INTRODUCTION

The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) is the central service of the Commission that according to its mandate and mission is in charge of **protecting EU revenue and expenditure** through independent administrative investigations into instances of suspected fraud, corruption and any other illegal activity involving EU funds. OLAF is also responsible for **investigating serious misconduct** by EU staff and members of the EU Institutions. Besides its investigative work, OLAF coordinates the implementation of the **Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy** and develops **fraud risk analysis and anti-fraud policy measures** to support all Commission services in preventing and fighting fraud and irregularities as well as in building a legal framework for better protection of the EU budget.

**OLAF's mission and political priorities** are guided by the Treaty and further defined by the political framework for the Commission services set out in the President's six headline ambitions and in a seventh horizontal objective: 'A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission'.

OLAF's work contributes to EU taxpayers' money being spent in line with Union objectives to support a **sustainable and resilient recovery with green and digital priorities**, to create jobs and to repair the damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It also contributes to upholding the **rule of law in the EU**, and to strengthening citizens' trust in the EU institutions and, ultimately, in the EU project.

This management plan presents the **main priorities and challenges for OLAF in 2023**, based on the OLAF Strategic Plan 2020-2024 <sup>(1)</sup>. The current political and economic realities in the context of the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine and the energy crisis, as well as a new anti-fraud landscape will continue to affect OLAF's investigative and policy work. OLAF will maintain its business continuity measures to ensure operational resilience and investigative work without interruption.

To protect **the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027 and the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)** against irregularities, fraud and corruption, OLAF will continue cooperating closely with other Commission services as well as EU bodies such as the European Court of Auditors (ECA), the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO), EUROJUST and EUROPOL. OLAF will also pursue working closely with Interpol, Ameripol, the World Customs Organization and other partners.

OLAF will make use of the experience it gained from screening the national Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) plans to continue the ongoing engagement with Member States. During the implementation of the plans, OLAF will investigate irregularities and instances of suspected fraud and corruption, as it does in all areas of EU funding. OLAF will support the Member States with prevention activities such as strategic analysis and training as well as

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<sup>(1)</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/publications/strategic-plan-2020-2024-european-anti-fraud-office\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/publications/strategic-plan-2020-2024-european-anti-fraud-office_en)

with financial support from the new EU Anti-Fraud Programme. Drawing on 20 years of investigative experience, OLAF will help the Commission design efficient audit strategies of Member States' internal control systems.

Furthermore OLAF will strive to protect the emergency spending in Ukraine and to protect the EU funds used for reconstruction. Further to the engagement during the past months, OLAF will pursue its efforts to enhance the capacity of the administrative structures in Ukraine to detect, prevent and investigate fraud.

In 2023, OLAF will continue to refine its investigative procedures and practices, maintaining its ambitious targets. In recent years OLAF has intensified monitoring the outcome of recommendations it addresses to EU bodies and Member States, which is coordinated by a dedicated monitoring and reporting unit.

2023 will be an important year to strengthen OLAF's support to Member States in enforcing the EU legal framework. In the revision of the Waste Shipment Regulation in 2021, the Commission proposed to strengthen the EU's overall enforcement capacity in this sector. This includes strengthening OLAF's capabilities to support national authorities in the fight against illegal waste shipment.

OLAF will pursue its efforts in working in the area of combating and preventing **money laundering**. Since September 2021, OLAF has hosted 'FIU.net', the IT system used by the EU Financial Intelligence Units to exchange information and match data on suspicious transactions to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.

OLAF will continue its positive engagement with its **Supervisory Committee** in a new composition in 2023, in accordance with the working arrangements signed on 21 October 2021.

OLAF will also engage with the newly established 'Controller of procedural guarantees' appointed on 3 May 2022 and who took up her duties on 13 September 2022.

**Communicating to the public** on how OLAF protects the interests of European citizens serves not only to raise awareness of OLAF but to boost confidence and trust in the EU and its institutions. Given its independent investigative mandate, OLAF has its own Spokesperson's team which liaises directly with media on matters pertaining to the investigative process.

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

OLAF's output is grouped around the following seven specific objectives demonstrating how OLAF intends to contribute to the achievement of the headline ambitions of the von der Leyen Commission. These specific objectives are in line with the Strategic Plan 2020-2024 and serve all six headline ambitions as well as the seventh horizontal objective.

**1: Efficient and effective management of OLAF's investigations** - investigative work and recommendations

**2: Compliance with legal obligations under Regulation (EU) 2018/1725** - requests for access to personal data

**3: Cooperation between OLAF and the EPPO to ensure better protection of the EU's financial interests**

**4: Strengthening EU framework to combat customs fraud**

**5: Strengthening EU framework to fight illicit tobacco trade**

**6: Implementation of the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy (CAFS) to protect the EU's financial interests**

**7: Protection of the EU's financial interests through the EU Anti-Fraud Programme**

### **Specific objective 1: Efficient and effective management of OLAF's investigations**

The Office's core business is marked by investigations. They will continue to be impacted by various challenges in 2023 such as the operational cooperation with the EPPO, the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility, illicit trade patterns abusing trade facilitation tools and e-commerce, and fraud in the health and environment sectors.

OLAF's operational work in 2023 will continue to rely on OLAF's extensive cross-agency cooperation with partners at EU level (especially with the EPPO, EUROPOL, EUROJUST) and internationally (such as INTERPOL, AMERIPOL, the World Customs Organization), as well as with the administrative bodies, customs authorities and police and judicial services across the Member States as well as in third countries worldwide.

OLAF activities under this objective cover the selection of cases, conduct of investigations and coordination activities, as well as assisting recipients in the implementation of recommendations issued by OLAF as a result of its investigative activities and monitoring the extent to which such recommendations have been implemented.

In the selection phase, OLAF establishes whether it is competent to investigate. If this is confirmed, the available information is examined in accordance with Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 883/2013, to determine whether there is sufficient suspicion of fraud, corruption, any other illegal activity affecting the financial interests of the Union or serious wrongdoing by EU staff or a member of an IBOA. Where the selection process establishes a criminal conduct in respect of which the EPPO could exercise its competence, the case is dismissed and a report to the EPPO prepared. When OLAF selectors have established OLAF's competence and the existence of sufficient suspicion, they proceed to the analysis of further criteria, of (i) proportionality, (ii) efficient use of investigative resources and (iii) in particular with regard to internal investigations, the institution, body, office or agency best placed to conduct them. The opening and carrying out of an investigation is done by OLAF in full independence, without instructions from any government, institution, body, office or agency. <sup>(2)</sup>

The consultation and the reporting to the EPPO has a direct impact on the selection process. OLAF consults the EPPO during the selection process to guarantee the 'non duplication' of investigations. The preparation of the reporting of each case for which the EPPO competence has been established also has an impact on the process. Another factor with an impact on the duration of the selection phase is the reduction in staff. Moreover, it is difficult to forecast the additional volume of new incoming information that OLAF is starting to receive in the context of the Recovery and Resilience Facility. Despite this, the Office intends to maintain the target for the average duration of closed selections at 2.1 months.

In 2023 OLAF will finalise and implement more detailed guidelines on investigation procedures (GIPs) and relevant work forms. The comprehensive guidelines on investigation procedures include working arrangements signed between OLAF and EPPO setting out rules on how to **combine the investigative and other capacities of the two offices**, in the interest of protecting the financial interests of the EU to maximise the recovery of damages. The aim of the agreed procedures is to ensure seamless and efficient cooperation with the EPPO and takes into account the recommendations of OLAF's institutional stakeholders.

Performance indicators with regard to the conduct of investigations are the average duration of closed investigations and the percentage of ongoing investigations lasting more than 20 months. The targets regarding the two investigative outputs will remain at the same level as for 2022 (24.3 months and 29% respectively). This is slightly above the interim milestones from the Strategic Plan 2020-2024 (24.0 months and 28% respectively). This prudent approach is due to the impact of the EPPO operations on OLAF's work, the COVID-19 pandemic and decreasing OLAF resources.

As a result of its investigations, OLAF issues recommendations to the EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies as well as the Member States. These recommendations aim at recovering money unduly spent on projects affected by irregularities as well as customs duties or other levies illegally evaded to the detriment of the EU budget (financial

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<sup>(2)</sup> See Article 17(3) of Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 883/2013.

recommendations), at improving procedures or tightening the follow-up of individual cases of irregularities (administrative recommendations), at sanctioning misconduct inside EU institutions and bodies (disciplinary recommendations) or at prosecuting fraudsters under Member States' criminal law (judicial recommendations <sup>(3)</sup>). OLAF provides assistance to the recipients in implementing the recommendations and monitors their follow-up.

In recent years OLAF has intensified its monitoring activities, which are coordinated by a dedicated monitoring and reporting unit. Comprehensive stocktaking exercises for financial and administrative recommendations issued since 2012 and 2016 respectively, were carried out with the aim to identify possible obstacles to their implementation and distil lessons for an even more effective fight against fraud. This process of evaluation and optimisation will continue in 2023, with strong support from the European Commission and in close cooperation with the recipients of OLAF's recommendations. Resources allowing, judicial recommendations should also be monitored more closely.

A performance indicator pertaining simultaneously to the conclusion of investigations, to assistance provided to recipients of OLAF's financial recommendations and to monitoring the implementation of those recommendations is the ratio between, on the one hand, the total of amounts that the recipients of OLAF's financial recommendations claimed back for the EU budget during the two years preceding the programming/reporting year and, on the other hand, OLAF's administrative budget spent during the same period. The amounts claimed back for the EU budget should be at least double the amount of OLAF's administrative expenditure. <sup>(4)</sup>

On the basis of its investigative, operational and fraud prevention functions, OLAF can provide advice and support to Commission services on anti-fraud issues. The outcome of this advice are notably administrative recommendations, *ad hoc* notes and replies to inter-service consultations. OLAF's output serves as a performance indicator (number of instances where OLAF provides advice on anti-fraud matters); the target has been set higher for 2023 (80) as compared to the Strategic Plan 2020-2024, which sets the target at 50.

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<sup>(3)</sup> Mainly for non-EPPO countries.

<sup>(4)</sup> This indicator was redefined in the Annual Activity Report 2020 compared to the Strategic Plan 2020-2024 and Management Plan 2020. The target ratio was also modified from 3.5 to 2. Methodological explanation in [Annex 2 \(FN 7\) to OLAF's Annual Activity Report 2020](#).

<b>Specific objective 1: Efficient and effective management of OLAF's investigations</b>		Related to spending programme(s): No
<b>Main outputs in 2023:</b>		
<b>Other important outputs</b>		
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Speedy initial assessment of whether a case should be opened	Average duration <sup>(5)</sup> of closed selections (in months)	2.1 months
Reasonable duration of investigations	Average duration of closed investigations (in months)	24.3 months
Reasonable duration of investigations	Percentage of ongoing investigations lasting more than 20 months	29%
Implementation of OLAF's financial recommendations	Financial impact Average of the amounts established by EU Authorising Officers and Member State authorities for recovery and prevented from being unduly spent or evaded in year N-1 and year N-2, compared to OLAF's average administrative budget for the same period	Ratio > 2 / 1
Provision of advice on anti-fraud matters to Commission services through administrative recommendations, ad hoc notes and interservice consultations	Number of instances where OLAF provides advice on anti-fraud matters	80

## External communication

Protecting the interests of European citizens is at the heart of what OLAF does. Communicating its work to the citizens of Europe raises awareness of OLAF and boosts confidence and trust in the EU and its institutions by:

- explaining OLAF's unique and crucial role in defending both financial and other interests of European citizens, as well as in helping to keep Europe and its citizens safe,
- increasing transparency and visibility of OLAF's activities, whilst maintaining a high level of protection for procedural guarantees.

The main messages that OLAF aims to pass with its communication activities are:

- OLAF is a professional and highly competent body,
- OLAF protects the EU's recovery and growth,
- Fraud with EU funds is not a victimless crime.

In 2023, OLAF's external communication activities will remain targeted towards media and expert stakeholders, with a continued effort to create more synergies with other Directorate

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<sup>(5)</sup> The duration being the time between the decision to open a selection and the decision of the Director-General to either open an investigation or dismiss the case



Generals, partners such as the EPPO, Eurojust, Europol, as well as the Commission Representations in the Member States.

In addition to the traditional communication mix consisting of increasingly proactive press and media relations, together with the publication and promotion of the annual OLAF Report, the planned OLAF communication activities also include:

- developing a solid narrative on the results of OLAF’s work, in order to create easily quotable content without running into risks of legal claims,
- continuing to increase presence on social media, with the support of appealing and engaging audio-visual content,
- organising physical, virtual or hybrid events targeted to the general public (such as the annual Open Days) and/or specific stakeholders.

<b>Objective: OLAF communicates in a clear and engaging way to raise awareness of its operations and mandate, strengthening the reputation of, and trust in, OLAF, the European project and the EU institutions</b>		
<b>Main outputs in 2023:</b>		
<b>External communication actions</b>		
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Popularity of OLAF’s external website	Number of sessions on OLAF’s external website	> 350,000 (306,128 in 2022)
Impact generated by communication material	Number of page views of Media corner section of OLAF website	> 75 000 (66,734 in 2022)
Global reach via social media platforms	Aggregate Number of impressions [social media metric]	> 450,000 (428,362 in 2022)
	• LinkedIn	> 175,000 (150,202 in 2022)
	• Twitter	> 300 000 (278 160 in 2022) tentative*

\* The target for Twitter is tentative. The changes in the platform’s algorithm during the course of 2022 have impacted the performance of official accounts across the Commission. OLAF cannot control any further changes that may be implemented by the platform, particularly in view of the recent change in owners and consequently any horizontal approach which may be adopted by the Commission central services in this regard.

**Specific objective 2: Compliance with legal obligations under Regulation (EU) 2018/1725**

Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 <sup>(6)</sup> requires controllers to respond to a data subject’s request for access to his/her own personal data, rectification, erasure thereof, blocking or objection to the processing thereof, without undue delay and in any event within one month of receipt of

<sup>(6)</sup> Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC (OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39).

the request. That period may be extended by two further months where necessary, taking into account the complexity and number of the requests. Within the scope of its investigative function, OLAF acts as a controller independently from the Commission. OLAF’s legal advice unit handles these requests in close cooperation with the units directly involved in the investigative activities.

Requests for access to personal data may involve the scrutiny of many and large files, containing sensitive information collected during OLAF investigations. OLAF checks carefully whether any restrictions to the data subjects’ rights specified in Decision (EU) 2018/1962 <sup>(7)</sup> apply as it is extremely important to protect the identity of informants and other persons relevant to OLAF investigations, to safeguard the investigation activities of OLAF and related activities of EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies (IBOAs) and Member States’ authorities, as well as information which could impinge on the integrity and reputation of interested parties. Likewise, OLAF handles incoming consultation requests from Commission services and executive agencies in accordance with Decision (EU) 2018/1962 and from other IBOAs following their own respective internal rules, without undue delay to assist in responding to the time limits equally set to all IBOAs.

OLAF aims to carry out this analysis with due diligence and to involve all relevant stakeholders. Nevertheless, the time-limits set by Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 are tight in practice. This can lead to a small number of requests being responded to after the expiry of the applicable time-limits, due to particular circumstances. In any event, OLAF aims to respond positively to access to personal data requests as promptly as possible, while taking into account any necessary applicable restrictions specified in Decision (EU) 2018/1962.

<b>Specific objective 2: Compliance with legal obligations under Regulation (EU) 2018/1725</b>		<i>Related to spending programme(s): No</i>
<b>Main outputs in 2023:</b>		
<b>Other important outputs</b>		
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Timely replies	Percentage of replies to data subjects’ requests (access to personal data, rectification, blocking, erasure, objection) within at most 3 months from registration	85%

<sup>(7)</sup> Commission Decision (EU) 2018/1962 of 11 December 2018 laying down internal rules concerning the processing of personal data by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) in relation to the provision of information to data subjects and the restriction of certain of their rights in accordance with Article 25 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 315, 12.12.2018, p. 41).

### **Specific objective 3: Cooperation between OLAF and the EPPO to ensure that the EU's financial interests are better protected**

In 2023, the EU anti-fraud landscape and response to fight against crimes affecting the EU's financial interests will continue to be reinforced by the cooperation between OLAF and the EPPO.

OLAF will pursue a close relation with the EPPO to ensure that all available means will be used to fight the fraud and corruption harming the EU's budget. OLAF cooperation with the EPPO follows the provisions of the working arrangements that both offices concluded on 5 July 2021 as well as the provisions of the EPPO and the amended OLAF Regulation. Three established output indicators will measure OLAF's performance as regards the operational cooperation with the EPPO to ensure efficient exchanges of information and reporting of cases following preliminary evaluations of incoming information.

OLAF will be a strong partner that supports and complements the EPPO in its investigations for which the EPPO is competent. At the same time, particularly in Member States where the EPPO is not competent, OLAF will continue conducting investigations with the possibility of issuing judicial recommendations. Furthermore, OLAF will be at the forefront of anti-fraud action in cases not taken up by the EPPO but calling for administrative action.

Complementarity of OLAF and EPPO mandates ensures efficient reactions to fraud. It is essential that OLAF administrative channel is systematically used to its full potential, allowing for the adoption of precautionary measures, suspension of payments, early recovery of the funds and exclusion of economic operators from EU financing. Complementary investigations are essential for the protection of the financial interest of the EU.

The detailed rules on complementary investigations in the amended OLAF Regulation, further specified in the OLAF-EPPO working arrangements, allow for the continued action of OLAF for financial recovery or administrative precautionary measures, while ensuring that the EPPO can carry out its own investigations, where applicable in close coordination with OLAF. In addition, OLAF will position itself as a strong partner for the EPPO by providing support, where necessary and at the EPPO's request, taking into account the feasibility of the measures including the availability of resources required to perform the activities in the required schedule.

A well-functioning exchange of information and mutual reporting of cases is essential, with both offices reporting to each other allegations in their respective area of competence. OLAF and EPPO are important sources of cases for each other and complement each other's mission, but should not duplicate their activities. The cooperation between the two offices aims ultimately at ensuring that no case of fraud related to the EU's budget goes un-investigated. For this purpose, a well-functioning hit/no-hit system will continue to be used to ensure no duplication of action is ongoing and to fine-tune cooperation between OLAF and EPPO.

<b>Specific objective 3: Cooperation between OLAF and the EPPO to ensure that the EU's financial interests are better protected</b>		Related to spending programme(s): No
<b>Main outputs in 2023</b>		
<b>Other important inputs</b>		
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Compliance with OLAF's duty to report to the EPPO without undue delay, as established in Article 12c of the OLAF Regulation	Average duration of a preliminary evaluation of an allegation in the framework of a selection process before reporting to the EPPO	2 months
Swift cooperation with the EPPO to ensure hit/no-hit verifications in OLAF's case management system	Average duration of the initial hit/no-hit verification upon request by the EPPO	15 working days
Swift cooperation with the EPPO in handling requests for information	Average duration for all requests of information from the EPPO (except if the WA EPPO – OLAF stipulate a specific timeframe)	20 working days

## Strengthening anti-fraud policy and legislation

In 2023, OLAF will continue to protect the EU's financial interests through anti-fraud policy and legislation as described in the specific objectives below.

OLAF will maintain traditional fraud prevention activities, such as anti-fraud training and fraud-proofing and will contribute to the Commission's Early Detection and Exclusion System. OLAF continues to build on the analysis performed on fraud risks related to COVID-19 spending, the health care sector, the Recovery and Resilience Facility as well as on its strategic foresight activity. Finally, the Office will cooperate with Member States and other partners and support them through the new EU anti-fraud programme.

In 2020-2021, the Commission adopted several policy communications <sup>(8)</sup> with action points related to OLAF's activities in different areas. On that basis, the Commission proposed to strengthen the EU's overall enforcement capacity to tackle illegal waste shipment, including strengthening OLAF's capabilities to support national authorities in this sector. The Office will continue contributing to other policy initiatives announced by President von der Leyen in her 2022 SOTEU address.

### Specific objective 4: Strengthening EU framework to combat customs fraud

Regulation (EC) No 515/97 is the cornerstone of mutual assistance in customs and agricultural matters, allowing Member States' national authorities to exchange information among themselves and with the Commission (OLAF) to ensure the correct application of the

<sup>(8)</sup> The Single Market Enforcement Action Plan, the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Biodiversity Strategy, the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability and the Intellectual Property Action Plan.

EU legislation. The Regulation enhances administrative cooperation between customs and reduces the administrative burden associated with such cooperation. OLAF will continue to ensure an effective implementation of this Regulation.

At the international level, as goods imported into the EU must be subject to the applicable taxes and duties, and measures of restriction, prohibition or control in respect of EU rules, the Commission (OLAF) will continue to negotiate mutual administrative assistance provisions as well as effective anti-fraud measures in trade agreements with its third country partners.

To support the mutual assistance activities in the anti-fraud area, Regulation (EC) No 515/9797 establishes several IT systems (CIS – Customs Information System, FIDE – Customs File Identification database, CSM – Container Status Message directory, and IET – Import, Export, Transit directory), which are accessible to competent Member State authorities and designated Commission departments. The Commission has recently developed an automated system for the exchange of mutual assistance requests and replies (Mutual Assistance System, MAS). All these applications are available under the umbrella of the Anti-Fraud Information System (AFIS). In 2023, OLAF will continue developing an analytical platform in AFIS (AFIS FraudAP) to increase its analytical capacity to support the OLAF investigators as well as the Member States in their operational work, and to improve OLAF's ability to detect and prevent customs fraud.

On the operational side, OLAF plays a key role organising or supporting Joint Customs Operations (JCOs) in close coordination with Member State customs authorities and other stakeholders to fight internationally organised smuggling. Taking into account the number of joint customs operations coordinated successfully by OLAF in the past, the OLAF's target is to continue to initiate JCOs on an annual basis. OLAF will, in addition, provide support to the JCOs requested by the Member States as well as other international organisations, as it has done in the past.



During 2023, OLAF and the Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) will continue to work in the different workstreams of the project 'Customs anti-fraud emerging technologies' (CAFET) funded under the Union Anti-Fraud Programme. This project is intended to help Member States make best use of the data at their disposal in existing databases and IT systems, and strengthen their analytical capacities in the customs anti-fraud area. A series of online 'seminars' presenting various aspects of the CAFET work will be organised in 2023. The new AFIS data analysis platform will facilitate the analytical work developed under CAFET.

A series of online 'seminars' presenting various aspects of the CAFET work will be organised in 2023. The new AFIS data analysis platform will facilitate the analytical work developed under CAFET.

While OLAF is in the technical lead for some of these activities, the achievement of this objective depends also on the readiness and the capacity of the partners in the Member States, (potential) candidate countries and other non-EU countries, to cooperate to this end.

<b>Specific objective 4: Strengthening EU framework to combat customs fraud</b>		Related to spending programme(s) No
<b>Main outputs in 2023:</b>		
<b>Other important outputs</b>		
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Ensure protection of EU budget and citizens through effective anti-fraud provisions in international agreements	Number of additional third countries having negotiators' tentative agreement on bilateral customs anti-fraud provisions	4
Support customs mutual assistance through the provision of secure information exchange tools for Joint Customs Operations	Number of Joint Customs Operations organised or supported by OLAF	6
Support customs mutual assistance through the provision of secure information exchange tools for specific customs anti-fraud information exchange modules and databases (CIS, FIDE, MAS, VOCU)	Number of Mutual Administrative Assistance (MAA) information made available in relevant AFIS applications (CIS, FIDE, MAS, VOCU)	22 750
Support and contribution to the anti-fraud analytical capabilities of OLAF and Member States	Continue the development of a data analysis platform under AFIS for customs anti-fraud purposes	By end of 2023

**Specific objective 5: Strengthening the EU framework to fight illicit tobacco trade**

In 2022, the Commission prepared a report on the implementation of the **2<sup>nd</sup> Action Plan to fight the illicit tobacco trade 2018-2022**. All the actions in the Plan have been implemented and the objectives set out were achieved. After two dedicated action plans covering more than 8 years of activity, the illicit tobacco landscape has changed significantly, giving the EU effective tools to fight the illicit tobacco trade. The FCTC Protocol to eliminate illicit trade in tobacco products, in force since September 2018, which is a key tool to fight the illicit tobacco trade at the global level, has today 66 parties including the EU and 18 Member States. Moreover, most actions of the Second Action Plan targeting long-term key objectives have been covered by other EU strategic initiatives adopted by the Commission since 2018.



The fight against the illicit tobacco trade is and will remain a priority for the Commission and OLAF who will continue supporting the effective implementation of the Action Plan. This will include *inter alia* operational activities such as investigations, coordination of Member State activities and organising or supporting joint customs operations in this area, the operation of the laboratory facility for the analysis of seized cigarettes (TOBLAB), and the participation in the Working Group on Track & Trace under the FCTC Protocol with a view to establishing a roadmap to assess the needs and the resources for a phased implementation of an effective Global Information Sharing Focal Point (GISFP). The EU will be fully compliant with its obligations by the next meeting of the Parties scheduled by the end of 2023 (MOP3) in which the GISFP will be established. In 2023, given that the actions planned under the 2<sup>nd</sup> Action Plan have the most part been completed, it is proposed to close the 2<sup>nd</sup> Action Plan. However, based on the implementation report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Action Plan, OLAF will reflect with the Member States on possible new priorities and orientations in the fight against the illicit tobacco trade.

<b>Specific objective 5: Strengthening EU framework to fight illicit tobacco trade</b>		Related to spending programme(s) No
<b>Main outputs in 2023:</b>		
<b>Other important outputs</b>		
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Reflect with Member States on possible new priorities and orientations in the fight against the illicit tobacco trade	Dedicated meeting with Member States	By end 2023
Operation of the laboratory facility for the analysis of seized cigarettes (TOBLAB)	OLAF and the JRC will organise a workshop on TOBLAB facility in 2023 with participation of at least 15 Member States. OLAF will report to Member States on TOBLAB activities and results at least twice in 2023	By end of 2023
FCTC Protocol	1. Retain a leading role in the Working Group set up to carry out the international work on implementation of the FCTC Protocol as regards tracking and tracing system and the 'Global Information Sharing Focal Point' 2. Preparing and defending the EU and Member States' position in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Parties (MOP3)	By end of 2023

## **Specific objective 6: Implementation of the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy (CAFS) to protect the EU's financial interests**

In 2019, the Commission adopted its **Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy (CAFS)**<sup>(9)</sup>, in preparation for the new Multiannual Financial Framework. The CAFS provides a policy framework for the prevention, detection, investigation and reparation of fraud at the level of the Commission and its executive agencies. It emphasises anti-fraud governance in the Commission and the collection and analysis of fraud-related data.

The CAFS was accompanied by an Action Plan with 63 action points for the Commission. In September 2022, the Commission took stock of the implementation of the CAFS Action Plan in its Report on the protection of the EU's financial interests: 59 of the 63 actions have been implemented while the few outstanding actions need to be reviewed.

OLAF has consulted the Commission services and the Corporate Management Board on the need to review the Action Plan. The strategy itself is still valid, but the associated Action Plan needs to be reviewed in 2023 and updated both to take account of new priorities and to build on the good work already done.

The revised Action Plan will focus in particular on the new Multiannual Financial Framework, the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the overriding need for digitalisation based on data sharing and inter-operability. The aim is to have a high impact and targeted revised Action Plan published in the third quarter of 2023.

The Commission's Fraud Prevention and Detection Network (FPDNet), a forum of anti-fraud experts from all Commission departments and executive agencies, will continue meeting in 2023 to discuss topics of interest to the anti-fraud community. Notably the FPDNet will serve as the inter-service group for the revision of the CAFS Action Plan. The FPDNet subgroups will have targeted exchange of views on issues in smaller circles. To support and guide the services with their local anti-fraud strategies, OLAF will continue the systematic review of anti-fraud strategy updates put forward by Commission departments and executive agencies. OLAF will monitor the implementation of such anti-fraud strategies, thus contributing to corporate oversight.

OLAF equally monitors the follow-up of recommendations issued as a result of its investigations (see also under specific objective 1). With regard to Commission departments and executive agencies, such monitoring further strengthens corporate oversight and is in turn supported by the Commission's Secretariat-General and other central services, especially with the aim to increase the recovery rates linked to OLAF financial recommendations. Guidance on fraud-related recoveries in direct and indirect management, issued by the Commission's Accounting Officer in 2022, is reshaping the workflow in the follow-up of

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<sup>(9)</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the Court of Auditors of 29 April 2019, Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy: enhanced action to protect the EU budget, COM(2019)196.



OLAF's financial recommendations. Taking first practical experiences into account, OLAF will revise its own procedures for the monitoring of financial recommendations in 2023.

In parallel, OLAF will maintain, and bolster where appropriate, traditional fraud prevention activities, such as anti-fraud training, anti-fraud advice and fraud-proofing<sup>(10)</sup>, while contributing to the Commission's Early Detection and Exclusion System<sup>(11)</sup>. Through this wide range of activities, OLAF plays an important role in the fight against fraud, not only as an investigative but equally as a fraud prevention body.

The Irregularity Management System (IMS) is the system through which cases of irregularities and fraud are reported by Member States and candidate countries. In 2022, a study was finalised to better understand the needs and preferences of IMS users and other stakeholders, and to improve data quality and usage. In 2023, OLAF will implement the next steps for IMS to ensure that the system contributes to its fullest to the digitalisation and reinforcement of the fight against fraud.



OLAF is also a lead service for drafting the Commission's annual report on the Protection of the EU's financial interests, adopted under Article 325 TFEU (the "PIF Report"). This report is prepared in cooperation with the Member States in the framework of the Advisory Committee for the Coordination of Fraud Prevention (COCOLAF) and offers an overview of the measures adopted and the results achieved in the fight against fraud and irregularities in the EU. Efforts to further improve the report will continue in 2023.

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<sup>(10)</sup> Optimising the legal framework for the implementation of the budget to make it more resilient to any attempts at fraud, for instance by replying to consultations from other Commission services.

<sup>(11)</sup> The Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) database is run by the Directorate-General for Budget with important input from OLAF. Results of OLAF investigations (as well as audit findings established by EU institutions and bodies) feed into action taken by Authorising Officers to exclude unreliable tenderers and grant applicants from EU funding and to flag suspicions in this respect. Such exclusion or flagging is recorded in the EDES.

<b>Specific objective 6: Implementation of the CAFS</b>		Related to spending programme(s) No
<b>Main outputs in 2023</b>		
<b>Stakeholder communication</b>		
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Organise COCOLAF plenary and sub-group meetings (AFCOS <sup>(12)</sup> , OAFCN <sup>(13)</sup> ), Fraud prevention, Reporting and analysis of fraudulent and other irregularities)	Number of COCOLAF meetings	Six
	Number of attendees	At least 60 attendees in plenary and 40 attendees in sub-group meetings
	Attendees' satisfaction rate	At least 80%
Organise FPDNet meetings	Number of FPDNet plenary meetings	Two
	Number of FPDNet subgroup meetings	Six
	Number of attendees in plenary	At least 60 attendees
	Attendees' satisfaction rate in plenary	At least 80%
Organise AFCOS seminar with Candidate Countries and Potential Candidates	Number of AFCOS seminars	One
<b>Other important outputs</b>		
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Reply to inter-service consultations through DECIDE, the Commission's all-in-one IT system to handle its decision-making processes	Percentage of consultations for which deadlines were met	90%
Revised CAFS Action Plan	Publication of the Action Plan	3rd quarter 2023
Annual Report (under Article 325(5) of TFEU) by the Commission to the EP and Council on the Protection of the EU's financial interests	Adoption of the report	3rd quarter 2023
Support Member States and Candidate Countries' users of IMS	IMS user satisfaction rate	At least 70%
Fraud awareness trainings for internal and external stakeholders	Participant satisfaction rate	75%
Review of OLAF's financial monitoring guidelines in consultation with the Directorate-General for Budget and the Commission's FPDNet	Revised guidelines adopted	In the course of 2023

<sup>(12)</sup> Anti-fraud coordination services.

<sup>(13)</sup> OLAF Anti-Fraud Communicators' Network

## **Specific objective 7: Support to national authorities and other partners in the protection of the European Union's financial interests through the EU Anti-Fraud Programme**



The year 2023 will mark the third year implementing the Union Anti-Fraud Programme (UAFP), based on Regulation (EU) 2021/785 establishing the UAFP. The UAFP is the successor of the former Hercule III Programme of the previous Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF).

The general objectives of the Programme are (1) to support the protection of the EU's financial interests and (2) to support mutual administrative assistance, including operational activities, between Member States' customs authorities and cooperation with the Commission.

The first objective is addressed through a spending programme similar to Hercule III. The second one refers to the Anti-Fraud Information System (AFIS) on mutual administrative assistance between customs authorities and cooperation with the Commission, as well as to the Irregularity Management System (IMS), in which Member States and candidate countries report irregularities to the EU budget in shared management and pre-accession funds.

Support is provided to Member States via the programme with an increasing focus on the expenditure side. The technical assistance component continues the financing of specialised equipment and tools via grants, while working in close cooperation with the new EU instruments supporting the purchase of technical equipment.

A third Financing Decision and associated Work Programme under the UAFP is set to be adopted by the Commission early in 2023 based on an OLAF proposal. As in previous years, two calls for proposals are foreseen - 'Technical Assistance' and 'Training, Conferences, Staff Exchanges and Studies'. The selection and implementation of these applications will continue throughout 2023. OLAF will also begin the roll out of grants awarded in response to the 2022 Calls, and continue to implement a number of on-going Hercule III grant projects from previous years.

During 2023, through OLAF, the Commission will continue to follow-up on the evaluation of the Hercule III Programme, which was finalised at the end of 2021. At the same time, preparatory work will begin on the mid-term evaluation of the UAFP, to be complete by end-

2024. To this effect, OLAF will be contracting an external study (Study project id: 17658 <sup>(14)</sup>). In parallel, OLAF will strengthen the monitoring of how grants are implemented, based on a risk-based analysis.

There is also a possibility that the UAFP will be implemented by at least one third country as from 2023, and more negotiations with other countries may be led by OLAF representing the EU.

Last but not least, a number of outreach initiatives are envisaged in 2023 to enhance the visibility of the UAFP, and to consolidate the impact that its support can bring.

<b>Specific objective 7: Support to national authorities and other partners in the protection of the Union’s financial interests through the EU Anti-Fraud Programme <sup>(15)</sup></b>		Related to spending programme(s): EU Anti-Fraud Programme
<b>Main outputs in 2023:</b>		
<b>Other important outputs</b>		
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
3rd Financing Decision and Work Programme	Adoption via a Commission Implementing Decision	1st quarter 2023
Annual overview of the results of the Union Anti-Fraud Programme in 2022	Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the PIF report 2022	3rd quarter 2023
High stakeholder satisfaction with the Programme	Satisfaction rate of activities (co-) financed by the Programme	80%
Sufficient geographical spread of programme activities	Percentage of Member States receiving support from the programme	65%

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

In 2023, the Office will further modernise its ways of working, and notably in areas such as human resources, fraud risk management, and digital transformation and information management. Active support to OLAF staff and managers will continue through various tools, also in view of maintaining full business continuity. In the same vein, OLAF Case Management System (OCM), having entered an evolutive maintenance mode since July 2022 will be kept operational and the Office will pursue other IT projects for a better access to data from different sources, of which the Directorate-General for Informatics (DIGIT) is fully aware.

<sup>(14)</sup> As registered in the interinstitutional EU Studies Database.

<sup>(15)</sup> For the result indicator related to the AFIS part of the programme, namely on the ‘Number of mutual assistance information made available and number of supported mutual-assistance related activities’, see indicator 4.4 above mentioned.

The internal control framework <sup>(16)</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.

OLAF has established an internal control system tailored to its particular characteristics and circumstances with special attention for safeguarding the sensitive information it handles. 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**

OLAF continuously streamlines its working methods, optimises allocation of its workforce and improves its efficiency by clearly establishing measurable targets and demonstrating results. The Office continues to do so in a context of post reduction due to the transfer of posts to the EPPO (45) and decrease of its establishment plan.

In 2022, OLAF concluded two specialised competitions <sup>(17)</sup> for investigators, analysts and digital forensic profiles in grades AD7 and AD 9. OLAF aims to recruit the talents included in the list of laureates in the context of optimisation of its resources.

The positive evolution of health and safety measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by the return to the Office in a hybrid working style, allowed OLAF to arrange a blend of physical, online and hybrid meetings, events and training programmes. This will continue in 2023 with an optimised plan aiming at striking the right balance between delivering results, flexibility, operability and high standards of training delivery. OLAF needs, however, to retain the physical space needed to bring back its whole staff to the office when required.

Following OLAF's small-scale reorganisation in 2022, and the continuous adaptation to the entering into operations of the EPPO, OLAF will continue in 2023 to provide specialised training to colleagues who are changing and/or taking-on new tasks and will support them to cope with change and challenges effectively while maintaining their well-being at work.

OLAF will also contribute to the Commission efforts of reinforcing staff in Luxembourg, by opening every vacancy to candidates based in Luxembourg, by calling for volunteers to be deployed in Luxembourg and by actively promoting recruitment of staff, laureates and externals already based in Luxembourg.

In 2023, OLAF will continue enabling its staff to perform, paying particular attention to digitalisation and modernisation of its working methods, and bearing in mind the new ways

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<sup>(16)</sup> [Communication C\(2017\)2373 - Revision of the Internal Control Framework](#)

<sup>(17)</sup> EPSO/AD/394/21 AD7 and AD9 Investigators – Anti-fraud investigations and operations in the field of EU expenditure and anti-corruption.

of working established by the Commission decision on working time and hybrid working in combination with the Office's specific needs, particularly in its investigative activities.

In 2023, OLAF will continue offering the newly established local Female Talent Development programme targeting female colleagues who aspire to be managers. In addition, coaching will continue to be offered to newly appointed managers (senior, middle, junior).

In 2022, OLAF adopted its Learning and Development (L&D) Strategy 2022-2025, which will be gradually implemented in 2023, to provide the best possible support to OLAF staff and managers based on focused guidance on learning and professional development.

In 2022, the OLAF Director-General adopted the revised local HR strategy for OLAF. In line with the Commission's HR Strategy, OLAF's strategy aims to maintain a modern, flexible and values-driven Office that empowers staff to deliver outstanding results and fulfil its mandate by protecting EU taxpayers' money. The strategy focuses on attractiveness and recruitment, staff engagement, health and wellbeing, equality diversity and inclusion and talent development. . It is accompanied by an action plan with 24 specific actions on strengthening collaboration, improving in-house skills and knowledge mapping, improving working methods, strengthening professional development for OLAF managers and staff.

The OLAF HR Strategy focuses on specific challenges:

- Attract the talent we need
- Efficient recruitment and selection of staff
- Induction, people development and performance management
- Foster more efficient flows of information across OLAF
- Retain specialists and key experts and ensure a smooth transition between job performers
- Ensure wellbeing and health of staff
- Improve work-life balance
- Align training with OLAF's priorities and objectives to achieve organisational goals
- Make OLAF a more equitable, diverse and inclusive office

The OLAF HR Strategy sets the course for the next four years, but it can and will be updated as needed, in view of new developments in OLAF as regards HR management.

Concerning equality, diversity and inclusion, OLAF will implement, in 2023, its Equality Mainstreaming Workplan and its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Charter adopted in June 2022. Compulsory training for managers and pre-managers will be organised to ensure that the Commission inclusion and diversity policies are duly implemented in daily business.

OLAF's Action Plan linked to the charter on diversity and inclusion is focused on the promotion of female in management positions, the provision of external training for female candidates and awareness raising on the issues amongst staff. OLAF's charter promotes equal opportunities without discrimination. OLAF continues to apply these principles in the context of recruitment, training, mobility, career development etc.

OLAF uses multiple forms of internal communication to enhance staff engagement. ‘My OLAF Intranet’ and a weekly OLAF news update, inform OLAF staff about issues pertaining to their work and professional development. These are complemented by a monthly internal newsletter, which together with the information screens, weekly video debrief by senior management (introduced in 2022) as well as regular OLAF debates, trainings and events, support staff awareness, motivation and engagement.

<b>Objective:</b> OLAF employs a competent and engaged workforce and contributes to gender equality		
<b>Main outputs in 2022:</b>		
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Implementation of the L&D Strategy	Action plan Targeted training plan, skills mapping and skills gap analysis External training activities matching strategic needs, and training budget absorption.	Q4 2023 All yearly actions implemented Training budget absorption 90% OLAF welcome session attendance 80% Investigative training path attendance 90%
Implementation of the HR Strategy	Action plan HR strategy  Recruitment of OLAF competition laureates	Continuous  All actions implemented Occupation rate of posts in the DG more than 95%
Staff engagement	Staff engagement percentage rate	At least equal to the Commission average
Implementation of the Charter on Equality	Equality and diversity statistics,  Awareness raising publications  Training statistics  Female representation in management -	Continuous

**B. Sound financial management**

In relation to the control effectiveness as regards legality and regularity, OLAF has set up the internal control processes with the purpose of ensuring adequate management of the risks relating to underlying transactions. The control objective is to ensure that the cumulative budgetary impact of any residual error rate does not exceed 2%. The capacity to detect and correct the errors having a financial impact is also a key element in the control strategy that is carefully monitored in OLAF. The indicators regarding the estimated overall amount at risk for the year for the entire budget under the DGs responsibility and the estimated future corrections are not key management indicators for OLAF but rather corporate ones. Therefore, OLAF is maintaining corporate targets for these indicators.

The atypical position of OLAF as the Office in charge of the fight against fraud pleads for a strong control environment. As the corresponding costs of control have been assessed as adequate over the past years, the same level is to be maintained for 2023.

<b>Objective:</b> 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		
<b>Main outputs in 2023:</b>		
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
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 > 95% of payments (in value) on time
Economical controls	Overall estimated cost of controls	Remains < 4 % of funds managed
Safeguarded assets Safeguarded information	Reputational events during the reporting year linked to issues of data protection and/or sensitive information	Between 0 and 0.2

**C. Fraud risk management**

The OLAF Anti-Fraud Strategy (AFS) 2021-2024 adopted in October 2021 has two strategic objectives:

- Promote the highest standards of professional ethics; and
- Maintain a high level of control for funds managed by OLAF

The OLAF AFS identifies the means and resources (actors involved and their responsibilities, IT tools, specific networks, procedures and guidelines) and includes an action plan to implement the OLAF's AFS, covering the period 2021 to 2024. For the first objective the Action Plan includes training and awareness raising on ethics, conflict of interest, mission expenses, and protection of sensitive information. For the second objective it includes prevention and detection measures to maintain a high level of control for funds managed by OLAF. While some of these actions require a continuous implementation, others have specific targets per year within the period covered by the OLAF AFS.

In 2023 OLAF will continue with the implementation of the OLAF AFS Action Plan focusing on regular staff awareness raising and training. Targeted controls will be performed on grants financed by the Union Anti-Fraud Programme and ex-post controls will be performed on mission expenditure declared by OLAF staff as well as on grants. The target for 2023 is to have implemented 85 % of the Action Plan.



**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>(18)</sup> aimed at the prevention, detection and correction <sup>(19)</sup> of fraud

**Main outputs in 2023:**

Output	Indicator	Target
Implementation of the action plan	Implemented actions	85%

## D. Digital transformation and information management

OLAF develops, operates and hosts on premises all information systems and IT services pertaining to the execution of its independent investigative function in a secure, OLAF-managed IT environment, while taking into account the Commission's Digital Strategy and IT Security Strategy 2023-24.

More specifically, OLAF will continue investing in improving the digital skills of all staff through training, including training for newcomers, Cybersecurity training, specialised training courses provided to OLAF's external partners and to internal and European Institutions staff such as the Digital Forensic and Analysis Training (DFAT) and awareness campaigns. OLAF will keep encouraging the development of a **digital culture** among investigators, data analysts and IT experts through sharing of data, digital tools and practises in support of the strategic objectives and operational needs of the Office.

OLAF has developed, operates and evolves IT systems **in support of policy implementation**, i.e. the **Anti-Fraud Information System (AFIS)** that allows partner administrations to exchange information on customs matters and the **Irregularities Management System (IMS)** through which Member States authorities report on fraud and irregularities affecting the EU budget.

In 2023 the interoperability of the AFIS platform will be further extended by developing a web service for the automated transfer of IPR seizure data from Member States national systems to the Customs Information System (CIS+) under the umbrella of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) signed with the EUIPO. This will facilitate the automated exchange of relevant information and contributes to the once-only principle, by avoiding situations in which the same information has to be entered multiple times in different systems by Member States' authorities. AFIS will be further extended with the implementation of a new module, i.e. a data analytical platform (**AFIS FraudAP**) which will improve the way AFIS contained data are collected, analysed and presented to shareholders. This will increase OLAF's capacity

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<sup>(18)</sup> 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'.

<sup>(19)</sup> Correction of fraud is an umbrella term, which notably refers to the recovery of amounts unduly spent and to administrative sanctions.

to undertake cross-border strategic and operational data analysis to support the detection, prevention and investigation of customs cases.

**IMS** will be further improved, technologically and functionally, on the basis of a study conducted in 2022 and following an internal OLAF consultation on how to optimise the impact the system could have on OLAF's operations.

OLAF is committed to a **digital transformation of its operational business needs**. This endeavour, incepted already years ago, led to the creation of the OLAF Case Management System (**OCM**) a highly secure IT system featuring an end-to-end electronic workflow, integrated case/document management, reporting and digital signing capabilities. OCM, completed as a project on 28 July 2022, has entered since then an evolutive maintenance mode and will continue integrating technical upgrades and user improvements driven by the needs of the Office. In parallel, OLAF will stand close to the developments of the corporate project Case@EC.

Over the medium term, OLAF will, in cooperation with the Directorate-General for Budget and other Commission services, set up innovative, performing and secure IT solutions for an efficient real-time exchange of information among services on the follow-up given to OLAF's financial and administrative recommendations.

OLAF has a solid interest in making the best possible use of its main asset, "data" contained in IT systems (OCM, AFIS and IMS) and linked databases. Data will be used as the material to feed solutions that will generate intelligence in support of investigations. In 2023, OLAF will further pursue the **GETI (Get Intelligence)** and **GETI4ALL** projects that aim at allowing fast and easy access to combined datasets collected from different data sources (internal and commercial databases as well as open sources). As an additional objective, GETI and GETI4ALL aim at identifying, consolidating and integrating data from direct and indirect management projects across the EU, with a focus on RRF related data. In addition to the data side of the projects, the systems will focus on development of red flags and risk matrix with emphasis on algorithms for anomaly detection.

OLAF will further focus on data interoperability and standards in alignment with the Data@EC Strategy, with the aim to identify and obtain access to data assets that bring value for OLAF investigations, and can eventually be instrumental for identification of potential irregularities.

OLAF has put in place a solid **digital landscape** and takes concrete actions to ensure that the underlying principles of Commission's Governance apply. In this respect, OLAF will continue prioritising the reuse of corporate services and systems, e.g. the new **Secure Exchange Information Platform (SIEP)** for interactions with external partners. OLAF will continue to be among the biggest user of the EU Sign service. OLAF also works towards putting in place modern IT delivery models, i.e. development in Agile and application of DevSecOps as the new standard for all major projects.

OLAF maintains a locally managed hosting facility, based on a **secure and resilient infrastructure** for the conduct of its independent investigative work. OLAF designs its major new IT modules to be cloud-ready.

OLAF has expressed interest to DIGIT for migration to the **WELCOME** domain and expects talks to be intensified and migration completed by the end of 2023.

OLAF takes **security** and **personal data protection** very seriously. All IT systems are operational in nature and they contain sensitive non classified information and personal data. Related information and IT security risk assessment, requirements and measures are addressed in both their own project and security documentation such as IT security plans based on the corporate ITRMS methodology and system-specific security policies. In addition, in 2023 OLAF will continue developing IT security compliance assessment, management and monitoring, relying on the new corporate Governance, Risk and Compliance tool (GRC), and implementing the corporate IT priority controls on its information systems.

Data protection forms an integral part of the OLAF's business processes whenever these require the processing of personal data. A prerequisite for compliance with data protection is the staff awareness of data protection rules that are applicable to particular areas of their work (e.g. investigative activities at OLAF, anti-fraud policy areas, rules regulating document management or security of information in the Commission). By 2024, as part of a continuous effort, OLAF aims at delivering a dedicated data protection training for all investigative staff and awareness raising activities in this domain for all other staff. For 2023 the cumulative target is 90 % and 80 % of (not yet trained) staff respectively, although it should be duly noted that OLAF is not in a position to verify the targets unless the relevant data from EU Learn is duly provided to the OLAF HRC by DGHR. Furthermore, OLAF will ensure that the data protection rules under Council Decision 2009/917/JHA on the use of information technology for customs purposes, which creates the Customs Information System, are aligned with the provisions of Data Protection Law Enforcement Directive (EU) 2016/680 ('LED').

**Objective:** OLAF 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 2023:**

Output	Indicator	Target
Improved interoperability of AFIS with partner administrations' systems	Automatic exchange of anti-fraud cases and cash declarations in CIS+ with more partner administrations	Web service extended by the end of 2023 for the automated transfer of IPR seizure data from MS national Customs systems to CIS+
Close follow up and cooperation on EC Data Inventory, regular analysis of OLAF's data assets and continuous update of OLAF's input in the EC catalogue/inventory	% of OLAF's key data assets for which corporate principles for data governance have been implemented	90%
Explore the existing publicly available data relevant to OLAF in order to corroborate with operational information	Interoperability New resources added	>5 resources added
Implement state-of-the-art software and make use of open sources software to analyse the data	Corporate tools New tools added	>1 tool/technique added
Keep IT Security Plans updated	Review performed	Annually
OLAF staff to attend IT and cybersecurity training	Attendance registered via EU Learn	90% of staff following at least one training
All OLAF staff to attend awareness raising activities or targeted personal data protection training	Attendance registered via EU Learn	80%*
OLAF investigative staff to attend trainings on personal data protection	Attendance registered via EU learn	90%*

\* Monitoring of the targets will be possible under the condition that OLAF gets appropriate attendance data in EU Learn.

## E. Sound environmental management

OLAF has set up in 2018 a Green Team, an open cross-directorate group, aiming at supporting the goals of Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) correspondents launching local actions beside the EMAS framework and raising staff's awareness. The activities of the Green Team are coordinated with the EMAS team and hierarchy accordingly.

In 2023, OLAF will continue its active support to EMAS corporate campaigns at local level and launch actions for its own administration and activities, fitting its needs or specificities. OLAF’s priority is to give a more visible structure to the EMAS-related actions through a regular reporting to Senior Management to ensure their support and participation. OLAF’s actions will consist of inter alia monitoring resource (electricity, gas and water) and paper consumption, combining this with awareness raising campaigns to link the impact of personal behaviours with a reduction of resource consumption. OLAF will also focus on the reduction of CO2 emissions following EMAS instructions and guidelines. It will also raise awareness of staff on waste reduction and waste management. For its actions, OLAF intends to organise meetings in person combined with environmental activities, debates, draft articles in OLAF’s newsletter, or ad hoc activities concerning greener approach both in the private and professional spheres.

<b>Objective: OLAF 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</b>		
<b>Main results and outputs in 2023:</b>		
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Monitor the consumption of resources: electricity and gas	Number of kWh of electricity and gas per person	Reduction of 5%: 7268,74 kWh (baseline 2018: 8054 kWh)
Monitor the consumption of resources: water	Number of cubic meter water per person.	Reduction of 3%: 7,52 m <sup>3</sup> (baseline 2018: 8m <sup>3</sup> )
Promote staff awareness about eco-tips in OLAF’s newsletters	Articles with eco-tips in OLAF’s newsletters	≥3
Raise staff awareness through events and actions organised by the EMAS correspondents or the OLAF Green Team	Number of conferences, campaigns and activities	2

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

In OLAF’s new structure, flexibility and adequate prioritising of all activities, by combining some tasks and creating synergies, has progressed remarkably throughout the whole Office. For instance the centralisation of the procurement related tasks managed by the Office’s budget and finance unit should entail a more robust control structure to further reduce the time-to-pay targeting >90%. In fact OLAF’s average payment time of over 98% shows that the new initiatives of improved monitoring and sharing responsibilities between the business units and OLAF’s budget unit, appear to be effective.

Further to this new structure, an improved back-up procedure for senior management, investigators, desk officers and file managers has been put in place. The new structure foresees the substitution of OLAF staff members, as well as for the replacements of the substituting agent (level 2). This new system has many advantages, such as business continuity, as there are no interruptions during short or long absences. Since the risk of

interruptions is removed, the risk of not respecting deadlines, - e.g. payment time, has been mitigated.