

ECHA's Ambition towards 2025

44th meeting of the Management Board 13-14 December 2016

Proposal

The Management Board is invited to endorse ECHA's draft Ambition towards 2025. The draft Ambition provides the overall strategic and operational direction for and represents an interim step in preparing ECHA's next multi-annual strategic plan.

The document aims to strike a balance between providing a direction and helping to make strategic choices. It avoids being overly vague or general. At the same time, it doesn't provide excessive details on elements that will be described in depth in the Programming Document.

Background

ECHA's current five-year strategy, adopted in September 2013, reaches its end-date in 2018.

In order to start shaping the future strategic vision of ECHA for the post-2018 period, the Management Board held its first workshop in June 2015, where Members took stock of societal, technological and consumer trends relevant to ECHA's future. In particular, the fundamental opportunities, trends and threats for ECHA were identified.

During its 40th meeting in December 2015, the Management Board launched a strategic orientation exercise¹ aimed at producing a document setting out ECHA's strategic objectives for the period 2019-2023, according to set milestones.

As the first milestone, the Management Board held a workshop on 22 June 2016, where Members discussed four potential future trends (Evolution, Interaction, Integration and Enabling) which describe different ways for how authorities, regulations and stakeholders could interact. Based on the four trends, Management Board members identified a number of key elements for ECHA's future vision, as well as a process by which this future vision should be achieved, with a timeline extending to 2025.

Rationale

Further to the input received from the Management Board and ECHA's management team, a Drafting Group was established within ECHA's management to work on a draft proposal setting out ECHA's strategic orientation towards 2025. The proposed draft builds on ECHA's achievements to date, carried out in cooperation with its key partners and stakeholders, taking account of ECHA's current role and competences and planned developments in ECHA's operating environment.

A previous draft of the document was consulted with the MSCA Directors at their meeting in Helsinki on 17 November and in the Working Group Planning and Reporting meeting of 23 November. The feedback on both occasions was positive and allowed to refine the proposal.

After the Management Board's endorsement of ECHA's Ambition towards 2025, the next step is the identification of the most attractive strategic objectives for ECHA. The Management Board will be invited to adopt the first outline of strategic objectives in June 2017 (MB 46), followed by the endorsement of ECHA's draft strategy in December 2017 (MB 48). The work stream would then conclude with the adoption of a strategic orientation document at the latest in June 2018,

¹ MB/49/2015

after a public consultation.

Alternative options

A clear alternative is only producing 3-year Programming Documents on an annual basis, which could, sequentially and gradually, allow for extending the planning overview to multiple years (reflected in the multi-annual section of ECHA's Programming Document).

The Management Board opted, however, in favour of a coherent strategy development exercise encompassing a wider and longer time-frame that coincides with the first mandate of the next Executive Director. This approach, which is in line with the practice in other agencies, allows for a thorough strategic reflection in different steps and will also include a broad stakeholder consultation. The endorsement of ECHA's Ambition towards 2025 is part of this exercise.

Drawbacks

The major drawback is related to the difficulty to foresee the changes in ECHA's regulatory and operating environment. These uncertainties include but are not restricted to EU-level political developments, to the REACH Review, to the ECHA Review, to the availability of future resources (in particular post-2020), to the evolving expectations of ECHA's stakeholders and to potential future tasks that ECHA might be entrusted with. The Secretariat is of the opinion that this risk can be mitigated with a step-wise and dynamic process, which allows for adapting to the changing environment and for revision at every step of the strategic exercise.

Attachment:

- ECHA's Ambition towards 2025

For questions: geert.dancet@echa.europa.eu with copy to mb-secretariat@echa.europa.eu

Annex

ECHA's ambition towards 2025

ECHA's current five-year strategy reaches its end-date in 2018. The present document aims to outline the strategic and operational ambition of the Agency towards 2025, as an interim step in the process of drafting ECHA's next strategic plan¹. It builds on ECHA's achievements to date, carried out in cooperation with its key partners and stakeholders, taking account of ECHA's current role and competences and planned developments in ECHA's operating environment. The ambition will continuously evolve and reflect institutional developments, such as the upcoming Environment Council conclusions on the protection of human health and the environment through the sound management of chemicals², as well as the REACH review and REFIT exercises.

Setting the scene for 2019-2025

At the start of this time-period, ECHA has managed the 2018 REACH registration deadline. This goes a long way in completing the data-gathering process on substances on the European market, resulting in the most comprehensive chemicals database in the world. Acknowledging this major asset, ECHA keeps building on this unique database to ensure optimum use of the knowledge acquired.

Significant efforts are still needed to achieve the 2020 goals set by the World Sustainable Development Summit in 2002 and other international EU commitments related to chemicals safety, including those of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The data provided by industry, in particular those related to long-term effects on human health and the environment is of lower quality than was expected. This hinders, for industry, appropriate communication in the supply chain and, for authorities, effective decision-making on the need for further risk management measures, and, ultimately, ensuring safer substances, mixtures and articles on the EU market.

ECHA's central role in implementing the current key regulations - REACH, CLP, BPR and PIC - continues to be the backbone of its future activities. Therefore, building on its track record and strong reputation, ECHA remains focussed on ensuring sound regulatory decision- or opinion-making and advice. ECHA also continues optimising resources and achieving further synergies between its different tasks, further develops the core competences of its staff and adapts its regulatory and support processes to accurately reflect the advancing science and technology, changes in the regulatory environment and evolution of its role. With the consistent implementation of the core legislation on chemicals, ECHA contributes to provide an enabling framework for industry to comply with its obligations and thus stimulate competitiveness.

The ambition - ECHA is the main source of knowledge and advice on chemicals safety

ECHA aims to become, by 2025, the main source of knowledge and advice in the EU on chemicals, serving a wide range of policies and stakeholders. Industry is able to assume its responsibilities for the safe use of its substances within the supply chain, improve product quality and safety and create more sustainable business strategies. Authorities, and in particular ECHA, are in a better position to draw clear conclusions and focus their regulatory interventions where it matters most to protect human health and the environment. By disseminating the robust data

¹¹ The strategic plan will ultimately be integrated with the multiannual section of the ECHA (Single) Programming Document.

² 15046/16

from its unique database, ECHA improves transparency and allows all interested parties to make informed choices and to have confidence that the substances they use in their everyday life are becoming safer. By actively promoting improved synergies and efficiencies in implementing various pieces of EU legislation bring savings, clarity and predictability to all parties involved. ECHA works to achieve maximum impact by focussing on key strategic priorities where its interventions make the most difference for the benefit of human health and the environment. ECHA's impact is highly dependent on two factors: having access to sufficient financial and human resources and the effectiveness of the collaboration with the network of its key partners, the Member States, the European Commission and the accredited stakeholder organisations.

ECHA aims to foster the change that makes industry assume full responsibility for the safety of its products at all levels of the supply chain. While registrants remain the principal actors, ECHA and its regulatory partners play an important role in supporting companies to achieve this. ECHA will continue optimising its IT-tools and support services to enable companies to submit their applications, register new substances and to keep the existing registrations up-to-date.

ECHA strives for an optimal balance in fostering compliance through a combination of strong compliance control and a service-oriented approach. ECHA facilitates industry's efforts in shifting to safe chemicals and engages in areas where support and advice on substitution of dangerous substances is needed, responding to the general societal demand for sustainable production and use of chemicals and products. ECHA provides services to industry so that investments towards regulatory compliance become a leverage towards competitive and innovative business. In addition, ECHA actively encourages companies and sectors to improve data quality, sufficiency and usability, supply chain communication, promotion of alternatives and coherent self-classification. ECHA supports industry in its efforts so that fit-for-purpose information consistently flows along supply chains, facilitating better communication to end users.

In line with the policy goal of non-toxic environment, having sufficient information on the industrial chemicals on the EU market enhances the identification of substances requiring risk management by the authorities and safer alternatives by industry. ECHA intensifies its cooperation with its regulatory partners to identify substances of concern, and to identify and apply the most appropriate risk management measure in an integrated and timely manner. This also allows authorities to identify substances that are of low priority and where there is no need for intervention.

ECHA makes full use of its database, in which all interested parties can find information on chemicals safety. ECHA maximises the available information on safe use of chemicals towards workers and consumers and makes the impact of its work more visible for society. By optimising its resources, ECHA works together with its partners to become an EU and international reference point for regulatory authorities in the field of chemicals safety. In this context, ECHA also seeks possibilities to further enhance international convergence in the generation and use of chemicals safety data.

Building on its expertise and database, ECHA offers to facilitate an optimal interaction between REACH/CLP and other EU legislation and policies related to chemicals (including but not limited to waste and water legislation, industrial emissions directive, circular economy, occupational safety and health, plant protection products, biocidal products, food contact materials, cosmetics). Using the available data, ECHA provides feedback on the effectiveness of policies, analyses opportunities, develops proposals and signals emerging issues in the field of chemicals. It takes on new regulatory tasks and responsibilities which create synergies and fit in its remit, provided sufficient resources are made available.

Piloting selected examples of ECHA's expertise and making full use of its knowledge enable ECHA to expand its role as a service provider for the Commission, and other authorities, in relation to key topics on chemical safety, such as nano-materials or endocrine disruptors. Working together

with the relevant other actors, ECHA contributes to increasing the overall knowledge on substances under other legislations and creating consistency and synergies in identifying those substances that warrant regulatory intervention. ECHA has a strong capacity to facilitate dialogue between authorities under different EU legislations in terms of regulatory methodologies and data, and identifies holistic approaches to deploying regulatory instruments.

Subject to external policy developments, ECHA is open to exploring longer-term scenarios towards increasing integration and amalgamation of EU legislation related to chemicals. Here, ECHA could act as single point of contact/information for industry and its key partners. This could include offering a comprehensive portal for regulatory hazard and risk assessment, guidance, tools and advice for implementation of any substance-based legislation.