European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

EU-OSHA MULTI-ANNUAL STRATEGIC PROGRAMME (MSP) 2018-2023

Final draft - January 2019
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# Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMP</td>
<td>Annual Management Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLP</td>
<td>Classification, Labelling and Packaging (EU Regulation)</td>
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<td>ECHA</td>
<td>European Chemicals Agency</td>
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<td>EEN</td>
<td>Enterprise Europe Network</td>
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<td>EIGE</td>
<td>European Institute for Gender Equality</td>
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<td>ESENER</td>
<td>Enterprise Survey on New and Emerging Risks</td>
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<td>EU-OSHA</td>
<td>European Agency for Safety and Health at Work</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
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<td>IPA</td>
<td>Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance</td>
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<td>MSD</td>
<td>Musculoskeletal Disorder</td>
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<td>MSP</td>
<td>Multi-annual Strategic Programme</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>OiRA</td>
<td>Online interactive Risk Assessment</td>
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<td>OSH</td>
<td>Occupational Safety and Health</td>
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<td>REACH</td>
<td>Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (EU Regulation)</td>
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<td>SLIC</td>
<td>Senior Labour Inspectors Committee</td>
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<td>SME</td>
<td>Small and Medium-sized Enterprises</td>
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Foreword

EU-OSHA is one of the key players in the delivery of the EU’s OSH policies. This has been recognised in key documents such as the EU Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Strategic Framework 2014-2020 and the Commission’s 2017 Communication “Safer and Healthier Work for All – Modernisation of the EU Occupational Safety and Health Legislation Policy”.

When it comes to OSH, the aim for the EU is clearly formulated in the European Pillar of Social Rights which states that workers have the right to a high level of protection of their health and safety at work and that they have the right to a working environment adapted to their professional needs and which enables them to prolong their participation in the labour market. The Governing Board of EU-OSHA is very conscious of the important role the Agency plays in delivering on the EU policy objectives and has therefore decided to adopt this long-term strategy to ensure a consistent focus of the Agency’s work over the coming years.

The current Multi-annual Strategic Programme (MSP) is an updated and extended version of the MSP 2014-2020. In 2016 and 2017 an evaluation was carried out of the 2014-2020 MSP concluding that the MSP had been helpful for the programming of the Agency’s activities and that the framework continued to be valid. It is on this basis that the Board adopts the current document which will set the framework for the three-year Programming Documents that have to be developed.

The document is also adopted with the understanding that a number of forthcoming events may make it necessary to revise the MSP. These include the new multi-annual financial framework after 2020, potentially revised EU policy objectives after 2020, and the follow-up from the four agencies’ evaluation commissioned by the Commission.

The focus in the MSP is on the type of activities the Agency will develop. The actual OSH topics to be covered will be decided by the Board at a later stage to ensure their relevance to the needs at any given moment.

As always, the Agency’s network will play a key role in delivering this MSP. It is through its networks that EU-OSHA has been able to demonstrate a sustained high impact in its work and the Agency will continue to depend on these networks for the success of the current MSP.

Christa Sedlatschek
Director


1. EU-OSHA’s mission, vision and values

When the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) was established, with the
adoption of its founding regulation in 1994\(^3\), it was with the aim of providing the EU bodies, the
Member States, the social partners and those involved in the field with useful technical, scientific
and economic information relating to safety and health at work. This aim has guided the work of
EU-OSHA since then, and also forms the framework for the current Multi-annual Strategic
Programme (MSP).

In order to fulfill the aim defined in its founding regulation, EU-OSHA collects, analyses and
disseminates technical, scientific and economic information on occupational safety and health.

To ensure a clear focus for its activities over the period of the previous MSP, EU-OSHA’s Governing
Board defined the Agency’s mission and vision (below) in 2013. That mission and vision remain as
relevant today as they were in 2013 and will therefore guide the work of EU-OSHA over the next
years. The mission and vision are an adequate answer to the challenges and opportunities facing
EU-OSHA over the coming years as is also confirmed in the 2017 external evaluation of the Multi-
annual Strategic Programme 2014-2020.

With the formulation of the Multi-annual Strategic Programme 2014-2020 a clear definition of the
nature of EU-OSHA’s work and contribution to OSH in Europe was reached. This has been valuable
in utilising the available resources in the most effective way and also in managing expectations
regarding the Agency. The mission and vision statements stress the Agency’s facilitator role in
information development and exchange, and cover the active role of the Agency in communication
and networking. In line with this, the Agency also stresses the important role that intermediaries
play in its work.

The mission is a brief statement of the fundamental purpose of EU-OSHA. The statement makes
clear what the Agency provides to its users, and informs staff and stakeholders about the overall
goal of the Agency:

\[
\text{We develop, gather and provide reliable and relevant information, analysis and tools to advance}
\text{knowledge, raise awareness and exchange occupational safety and health (OSH) information}
\text{and good practice which will serve the needs of those involved in OSH}
\]

The vision is a precise statement defining the ultimate goal for the MSP period as regards EU-
OSHA’s contribution to OSH in Europe:

\[
\text{To be a recognised leader promoting healthy and safe workplaces in Europe based on tripartism,}
\text{participation and the development of an OSH risk prevention culture, to ensure a smart,}
\text{sustainable, productive and inclusive economy}
\]

While the mission and vision statements define the content and purpose of the Agency’s work, the
values set out the way that EU-OSHA operates:

\[
\text{Pan-European}
\]

We create European added value by bringing together actors from across Europe and by
providing the tools to create a common approach to occupational safety and health while
respecting national specificities

\[
\text{Relevant}
\]

We ensure that our activities are relevant to the most pressing OSH needs in Europe and
contribute to the realisation of wider EU policy objectives

\(^3\) Council Regulation (EC) No 2062/94 of 18 July 1994
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tripartite</th>
<th>We work on the basis of, and promote, tripartism as the cornerstone of our work</th>
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<tr>
<td>Partnership- and network-based</td>
<td>We participate in and connect networks and build communities to create European added value</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reliable</td>
<td>We see the quality assurance of our work as a key condition for success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsive and innovative</td>
<td>We are responsive to new OSH developments and innovative in addressing them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good governance</td>
<td>We place great importance on accountability and transparency towards our stakeholders and efficiency in the use of our human and financial resources</td>
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2. The context: challenges, opportunities and EU-OSHA

EU-OSHA operates in a constantly evolving context. This context includes several dimensions which together contribute to shaping the work of the Agency. One important dimension is the recovery from the economic crisis and the contribution of OSH to that recovery based on quality jobs and sustainable growth at the same time as the United Kingdom is expected to leave the EU after more than 40 years of membership. In parallel, OSH challenges are changing and the policy environment has become more clearly defined with the EU OSH Strategic Framework from 2014, the European Commission communication on OSH from 2017 and the European Pillar of Social Rights. In addition, the Agency is also developing, and has by now a rich experience from which to draw lessons. To ensure that the resources that EU-OSHA has available are used in the best way, the Agency’s activities must be matched against the needs that it aims to meet. This chapter provides a brief overview of key elements in the Agency’s environment and in the profile of the Agency itself. These factors have been decisive in defining both the mission and vision statements in the previous chapter, and the strategic objectives and priority areas described in the following chapters.

2.1. The policy context

The policy context for the EU-OSHA (MSP) is dominated by the clear objectives at the European level that are set out in different policy documents. The European Commission has set out an ambitious agenda with the European Pillar of social rights. It clearly states that workers have the right to a high level of protection of their health and safety at work and that they have the right to a working environment adapted to their professional needs enabling them to both prolong and improve their participation in the labour market. By requiring a high level of protection the pillar goes beyond the existing EU legislation and will be taken into account in the future work of the Agency. The aim is to have an accident-free and a casualty-free working environment. At the same time, the importance of individual occupational needs is stressed as well as the increasing importance of safe and healthy ageing. EU-OSHA is given an important role in implementing the principles, and its Healthy Workplaces Campaigns, particularly the 2016-2017 campaign on Healthy Workplaces for All Ages, are highlighted. The following campaign in 2018-2019 on dangerous substances is also mentioned as an important contribution to the fight against occupational cancer.

The 2014 EU OSH Strategic Framework and the 2017 European Commission Communication defines the challenges and goals in the area of occupational safety and health. For EU-OSHA it is essential to continue playing a key role in the delivery on these EU priorities and they will continue to be reflected in the work of the Agency.

In particular the OiRA (Online interactive Risk Assessment) project contributes to meeting the challenge of improving the implementation of OSH legislation in Europe by facilitating the implementation of good quality risk assessments, especially in small and micro enterprises. It is known that particularly micro and small enterprises face challenges in complying with OSH legislation, and therefore EU-OSHA’s activity in respect of this group of enterprises is particularly useful and highlights the added value of its tripartite governance which embeds the agency’s work into the economic and social reality of 21st century workplaces.

The major OSH Overview activities on work-related diseases and musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are key elements in addressing the challenge of better preventing work-related diseases. The 2018-2019 campaign on dangerous substances will also be an important contribution to stepping up the fight against occupational cancer and dealing with dangerous substances, as identified in the January 2017 European Commission communication.

And finally, the campaign starting in 2020 on musculoskeletal disorders will be a key element among the actions to help enterprises comply with occupational safety and health regulations.

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4 Communication from the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Safer and health work for all – modernisation of the EU occupational safety and health legislation and policy”, Brussels, 10 January 2017. COM(2017)12 final
2.2. The macro-economic and employment context

OSH forms an integral part of the EU labour market and is a key element of its social protection institutions. Therefore, the MSP must reflect developments affecting the EU labour force.

The signs of economic recovery seen at the end of the previous MSP period indicate continued growth with steadily decreasing headline unemployment and a more stable outlook for business. These improvements are, however, slow and far from uniform. Long-term unemployment remains high among certain groups, such as the young, and affecting some regions and economic sectors more than others. A lack of decent work contributes to workplaces that are less safe to work in.

The speed and depth of change that is currently affecting the world of work will continue and probably will increase. These changes range from new global production patterns, organisation of work across borders and increased competition, to digitalisation, automation and new ways of working facilitated by technological developments. While offering opportunities, such as new types of job, greater accessibility to employment and more flexible employment and career patterns, these changes also create uncertainty and the risk of vulnerability relating to working conditions, employment rights and access to welfare.

Longstanding demographic trends suggest that the EU’s capacity to grow will increasingly depend on its capacity to increase productivity; by developing high value ‘knowledge jobs’ and by increasing further the participation of women, the young and the old into the workforce. It is likely that we will continue to see increasing diversity in the European workforce. The challenges that many workers still face in the aftermath of the economic crisis, and their possible implications for OSH, deserve special attention. For example, the difficulties that those in certain groups (such as young people or migrant workers) have in entering or remaining in the labour market may mean that they accept jobs where OSH risks are higher. Despite 2017 marking the highest ever recorded employment rate for the EU, persistently high youth unemployment in several Member States suggests that the benefits of the economic recovery are not being felt uniformly across the EU.

Another aspect of an increasingly diverse workforce is the growing number of working women and the decreasing employment rate gap between men and women. Employment rates were 66.5 per cent for women and 78 per cent for men in 2017. The age composition of the employed population will also continue to change, with the workforce gradually becoming older. Achieving the Europe 2020 objectives as regards employment rates to some extent means that people will have to work longer, but to help bring this about we need to ensure that employees’ health allows them to work longer. While the employment rate of 25 to 54-year-olds has remained stable in the EU over the last decade and that of younger workers (15-24) has fallen slightly, the rate for workers aged 55-64 has risen by ten percentage points.

Among the working population and across the EU there are important differences in the forms of work carried out. In 2017, one in five workers worked part time, with large difference between member states, from 2% of the workforce in Bulgaria to 47% in the Netherlands. There are also significant differences between the share of women and men working part-time, and not all part-time work is chosen voluntarily. Involuntary part-time work can have clear implications for the ability of workers to challenge unsafe work practices.

Levels of temporary work have not changed significantly in recent years, with 13% of workers on fixed-term contracts. Within this, however, there has been a growing rate of those working part-time because they could not find full-time employment. In 2017, 7.8 per cent of those employed were involuntarily working on temporary contracts, representing over two thirds of those on temporary contracts. The

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5 EU-OSHA, Literature Study on Migrant Workers
6 The EU employment rate for persons aged 20 to 64 stood at 72.2% in 2017, the highest rate ever recorded for the EU.
7 From 44.5% in 2008 to 57.1% in 2017: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Employment_statistics#Employment_rates_by_sex_2C_age_and_educational_attainment_level
8 EUROSTAT Involuntary temporary employment https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tesem190&plugin=1
demand for a skilled labour force is likely to continue; the most recent forecasts indicate that between 2016 and 2025 about 15 million jobs requiring high educational attainment will be created, while low-qualified jobs will decline by more than 6 million⁹.

The demand for more flexibility has resulted in the emergence of new forms of employment, which are transforming the traditional employer – employee relationship and are characterised by unconventional work patterns and places of work, or by the irregular provision of work. While some of these new forms of employment can contribute to labour market innovation and make it more attractive to both employers and a wider range of potential workers, some arrangements pose a challenge to the implementation of OSH legislation.

In terms of the sectors of economic activity, according to latest EUROSTAT figures, services account for the two largest shares of the enterprise population with 28.4 per cent of the 22 million enterprises in the EU’s non-financial business economy classified to distributive trades (motor trades, wholesale trade and retail trade) and 17.2 per cent in professional, scientific or technical activities. Many businesses have benefitted from the outsourcing of non-core work, which may explain, in part, the structural shift towards services. In terms of employment, the highest numbers are in distributive trades (32.7 million persons) and in manufacturing (29.9 million persons), followed in third place by professional, in fourth by administrative and support services and then construction and in fifth place, with scientific and technical activities in sixth.

The overwhelming majority (99.8 %) of enterprises active within the EU-28’s non-financial business economy are micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) — some 22 million — and more than 9 out of 10 (93.0 %) of enterprises are micro enterprises (employing less than 10 persons). Together, SMEs provide employment for two-thirds (66.8 per cent) of the workforce; and in particular in the distributive trades, manufacturing and construction. Micro enterprises employ more people than any other enterprise size class in all service sectors, with the exception of transport and storage and administrative and support service activities. By contrast, in mining and quarrying as well as electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply large enterprises employ more than half of the workforce, as also in administrative and support service activities.

### 2.3. The OSH challenges

The period covered by the previous MSP saw a significant reduction in the state-level resources dedicated to OSH in some countries as measures were taken to manage the impact of the recession. As the member states’ economies recover, it remains to be seen whether resourcing of labour inspectorates, the provision of OSH advice and guidance and research activities on OSH will be restored to ‘pre-crisis’ levels.

According to the last estimates made by the ILO led group in which EU-OSHA participated¹⁰, work-related ill-health and injury costs the EU 3.3 % of its GDP, or €476 billion every year, which could be saved with the right occupational safety and health strategies, policies and practices. Work-related illnesses account for 98 per cent of all deaths related to work in the EU and 7 million DALY (disability-adjusted life years) are lost as a result of work-related injury and illness. Of these, 3.4 million are accounted for by fatalities and 3.7 million by disability. Among the most burdensome work-related illnesses are cancer (accounting for 25 per cent of the DALY), musculoskeletal disorders (15 per cent) and circulatory diseases (12 per cent), compared with non-fatal injuries that account for 12 per cent.

The significant decreases in accident rates seen in recent years are to some extent due to the decrease in activity resulting from the recession, in particular in construction. As the economic recovery gains momentum, Europe must be vigilant that this positive trend does not reverse.

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⁹ Cedefop 2016 skills forecast

¹⁰ https://visualisation.osha.europa.eu/osh-costs/
With regard to work-related illness, the picture is less clear. Although the percentage of EU workers reporting that work affects their health negatively decreased between 2010 and 2015 by 13%, there are indications that occupational risk factors are not decreasing uniformly:

Exposure to noise, for example, has decreased in the EU28 significantly while exposure to chemical and infectious products has increased. While work intensity has remained more or less unchanged, it disproportionately affects workers in the health sector, construction, industry, financial services and commerce and hospitality. The most widely reported risks are ergonomic—in particular, repetitive hand and arm movements—which are reported by some 61 per cent of workers and which contribute to musculoskeletal disorders. The exposure of men and women to physical risks differs markedly, pointing to sectoral and occupational segregation in the workplace.

Work intensity, such as working at high speed and under time pressure, and experiencing emotional demands, such as dealing with angry clients is reported most frequently by workers in the health sector. Overall, one-third of workers in the EU work to tight deadlines and at high speed.

The changing patterns of work described in the previous section, in particular the new types of job, the more flexible employment and career patterns and the increasing employment in micro firms, pose challenges to OSH in terms of monitoring exposures and outcomes, of awareness-raising and of enforcement.

Micro and small enterprises differ widely in their approach to OSH, but a significant proportion can be considered as ‘hard to reach’ and not considering OSH. It will therefore be increasingly important to take a targeted approach drawing on a variety of strategies and mechanisms to promote preventive action. It will be important to continue providing micro and small enterprises with adequate support to manage OSH efficiently while minimising their administrative burden.

A higher proportion of older workers tend to be affected by long-term health problems, and their needs are a particular issue if we are looking to encourage people to continue working longer. But the proportion in the younger working population should also raise concerns: the younger working population now is the ageing workforce of the future, and so to prevent long-term OSH problems we need to target prevention efforts at this group in particular. This all represents a considerable economic cost. There is, however, still a significant need for better data on the economic aspects of OSH, in terms of the costs of under-investment in OSH, and in terms of the business case for OSH.

At the national level, some features of job quality, such as weekend and night work, are stable or seeing slight decline across Europe. Yet they remain at historically high rates in comparison to ten years ago. Particular attention is needed to address the OSH challenges posed by digital platform work. Some workers’ rights have improved in terms of consultation and information on hazards, however other negative job quality features—such as jobs with poor learning opportunities, poor access to training, unpredictable working schedules, a lack of autonomy and higher work intensity—are on the increase in almost all countries.

For dangerous substances, current systems for the assessment of health risks as well as for the workplace risk management may have to be adapted to address the risks posed by nanomaterials. While REACH and CLP are a valuable input to knowledge about chemical substances, and promote communication up and down the supply chain, there is a need to consider wider issues (such as how to measure exposures to workers with multiple jobs or who work on temporary contracts, how to assess exposures to the increasing number of maintenance workers whose work is outsourced, how to assess exposures to part-time and shift workers, etc.).

Additionally there is a need for better assessment and better understanding of the link between the health effects and workplace exposure in relation with reprotoxic and neurotoxic effects, and the effects

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12 For weekend work, see EUROSTAT data: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsa_goe_3b3&lang=en and EUROFOUND for night work: https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurowork/industrial-relations-dictionary/night-work

13 EUROFOUND, Sixth European Working Conditions Survey – Overview report
of combined exposures, including low-dosage exposures. Adapted methodologies for toxicological and epidemiological assessment should be provided, as well as tools to manage these risks at company level, and improving monitoring systems for these exposures and effects.

Changes to the way that work is organised and to industry structures have an impact on exposures and patterns of exposure, and are a particular challenge to the implementation of current legislation by authorities, and at the enterprise level.

Finally, nearly 80% of establishments in the EU-28 identify at least one psychosocial risk factor as being present in their workplace. At the same time, only one-third of establishments across the EU-28 report having an action plan to prevent work-related stress. Preventive measures are particularly lacking in small enterprises. Over 40% of establishments admit that they do not have enough information on how to include psychosocial risks in risk assessments and a significant share of establishments report lacking adequate preventive tools to deal with psychosocial risks. A ‘reluctance to talk openly about these issues’ has been identified as an important obstacle when dealing with this topic, highlighting the need to combat stigma and to increase understanding of work-related determinants of mental health14.

2.4. Building on EU-OSHA’s experience

EU-OSHA is in a good position to meet these challenges. The Agency has continually delivered on the objectives defined for it. This is both the case when it comes to objectives set by the Board in its Strategies and Programming Documents and when it comes to tasks given to it by the European Parliament or the European Commission. The achievements of the Agency are widely recognised.

There is a solid knowledge base for the update of the MSP. In addition to previous evaluations carried out, a mid-term evaluation of the 2014-2020 MSP was carried out in 2016-17. The conclusions of the evaluation were very encouraging and, in particular, it was concluded that the MSP 2014-2020 had been a very beneficial document helping to set the strategic direction.

The conclusions from the evaluations carried out over the recent years have been that the activities of the Agency are relevant and useful to its key audiences, that the information provided is reliable, that the Agency is very good at achieving its objectives (effectiveness) and that the Agency provides added value.

There is therefore a very positive basis on which to further develop EU-OSHA’s MSP. The Agency has proved that it can deliver relevant activities, meet objectives, and add value to the activities of its key stakeholders. At the same time, it should be recognised that EU priorities regarding occupational safety and health beyond 2020 still have to be defined, and the resource situation after the end of the current Multi-annual Financial Framework is unknown. For these reasons, the current update of the MSP to a large degree takes the form of an extension to 2023 of the MSP 2014-2020.

2.5. How can EU-OSHA contribute to meeting the challenges?

Reflecting on the experience that it has gained and the challenges ahead, the Agency works on six priority areas. These are all areas where there is a particular need for action and where the Agency’s profile allows it to add considerable value. The basis for the continuation or development of the activities under this MSP has been an assessment of the intended beneficiaries’ needs, as meeting these needs is the ultimate success criterion for the Agency. From the analysis in this chapter, the Agency would focus on the following topics throughout the different priority areas and activities:

- New ways of working, technological change, automation and digitisation of the economy.
- Increasing employment levels, work quality and prolonging people’s working lives based on safe and healthy work at all ages
- OSH Management at enterprise level, in particular for micro and small sized enterprises

14 EU-OSHA, Management of psychosocial risks in European workplaces: evidence from the Second European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER-2)
- Dangerous substances, both in terms of OSH management at enterprise level, and the need for research, monitoring and policies and strategies
- Work-related diseases: including the development of instruments for monitoring and support for workplace level management (including MSDs, diseases linked to psychosocial risks and to dangerous substances)
- Women and OSH, ensuring a gender neutral approach to prevention, monitoring and research
- Migrant workers as part of an increasingly diverse workforce, more likely to encounter poor working conditions and suffer adverse health outcomes.
- New technologies (e.g. nanomaterials, biotechnologies, technologies involving electromagnetic fields)
- Economic aspects of OSH, including the value of OSH to society, as well as the benefits of effective prevention at the company level
- Mainstreaming OSH into other policy areas, such as public health and transport
- Supporting regulatory development through identification of OSH strategies and programmes and provision of a reliable evidence base.

The current Multi-annual Strategic Programme update assumes that resources remain more or less unchanged over the programming period. If this assumption proves wrong, if new tasks are given to the Agency or if the network is enlarged further, the implication would have to be considered and may lead to deviation from the current document.

It should also be recognised that EU-OSHA’s success to a large extent depends on the resources available in its network, in particular the network of focal points and the national networks. If the network partners don’t have the resources necessary to contribute actively to the work of the Agency, it will have an impact on the results that can be achieved.
3. EU-OSHA’s strategic objectives

On the basis of the mission and vision (chapter 1), six strategic objectives and corresponding priority areas have been identified. These objectives are based on the challenges that we face and on the opportunities that we have, as well as on the Agency’s founding regulation, and the experience that the Agency now has. Our strategic objectives attempt to use our mission and vision statements to guide our activities within each of our priority areas (see next chapter). It has been very important for us to come to a clear understanding of the role that the Agency plays, and this role is expressed in our objectives. Taken together our objectives implement our mission and vision statements in the best way possible, given the resources that we expect to be available. The strategic objectives will be the reference for the actual activities that will be included in the future Programming Documents.

**Strategic objective 1: The provision of credible and good quality data on new and emerging risks that meet the needs of policy-makers and researchers and allow them to take timely and effective action**

The Agency will aim to identify new and emerging risks in occupational safety and health, to provide a basis to set priorities for OSH research and actions and to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of preventive measures. Following the Community Strategy 2002-06, which said that “anticipating new and emerging risks, whether they be linked to technical innovation or caused by social change, is vital if the risks are to be brought under control”, the agency has already piloted forecast and foresight techniques as the best available instruments to identify new and emerging OSH risks.

**Strategic objective 2: The provision of an accurate and comprehensive picture of current OSH risks, their health effects, and how they can be prevented and managed, to allow a better understanding of these issues among policy-makers and researchers**

Decision-makers need to have an accurate and comprehensive picture of OSH risks, their health effects, and how they can be prevented and managed in order to set priorities. The Agency’s regulation requires it to “supply the Community bodies and the Member States with the objective available technical, scientific and economic information they require to formulate and implement judicious and effective policies designed to protect the safety and health of workers”. Tools such as ESENER, EU-OSHA’s European survey of enterprises on new and emerging risks and its large-scale OSH Overviews, aim to contribute to such an evidence base for policy-makers and researchers. These tools can be complemented with data from other sources, such as estimates of the occupational burden of disease and injury, or the costs of under-investing in OSH, to better guide decision-making and the allocation of resources.

**Strategic objective 3: The provision of relevant tools for smaller workplaces to manage health and safety, and the engagement of intermediaries in the further development and dissemination of these tools**

Risk assessment is the cornerstone of health and safety management and OSH legislation, but its implementation and quality need to be improved: the evidence\(^\text{15}\) shows that there are major shortcomings in complying with essential elements of EU health and safety legislation among SMEs, especially micro- and small enterprises, and particularly with regard to risk assessment. It is essential therefore to provide tools for smaller workplaces to manage health and safety, and the Agency aims to do so through its Online interactive Risk Assessment (OiRA) tool, and its collaboration with other developers of similar tools (Interactive Risk Assessment Tool (IRAT) network). The OiRA tool has tripartism at its core, in the way that it involves the social partners, as well as governments, in its development and diffusion.

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Strategic objective 4: To get the occupational safety and health message across to multiple beneficiaries by raising awareness about workplace risks and how to prevent them, together with the Agency’s intermediaries

Getting the occupational safety and health message across to multiple target groups and beneficiaries, including policy-makers, researchers, social partners and others, and raising awareness about workplace risks and how to prevent them, are key elements in the creation of a culture in which occupational safety and health risks are prevented. The Agency’s Healthy Workplaces Campaigns, and its more focused promotion and communication activities on specific topics, play an important role in reaching this goal by bringing the available information to the different target groups, primarily intermediaries and other message multipliers, with the ultimate aim of benefiting people in European workplaces. The Agency develops and maintains a range of multilingual communication channels, vehicles and tools to communicate a wide range of information to a broad group of intermediaries and beneficiaries.

Strategic objective 5: Supporting the OSH community through new tools to promote and facilitate the generation and maintenance of a body of high quality knowledge

A key role for EU-OSHA is to “collect, analyse and disseminate technical, scientific and economic information” on risks, good practices and research aspects of occupational safety and health. This represents a very broad remit which – combined with different information needs across the Member States, the goal of supporting multilingualism, and the ever-growing task of maintaining the currency of the information – represents a considerable challenge. The agency’s OSHwiki represents a comprehensive resource of high quality information on OSH that is integrated into the agency’s website. It facilitates the dissemination of results from other activities and the collaboration with the research community through contributions from ‘approved’ authors. Through its workshops on e-tool development, the agency is able to share best practice in this rapidly evolving field.

Strategic objective 6: To develop and implement networking activities to ensure that the Agency’s activities meet the needs of its key stakeholders, to promote tripartism at European and Member State level, and to enable networks to take an active part in the Agency’s activities

EU-OSHA is a small Agency working with information and knowledge. This makes networking decisive for achieving its objectives. Networking activities are a way of ensuring the relevance of the Agency’s work and creating a multiplication effect in the implementation phase. Of particular importance is the tripartite character of the key networks.

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16 Beneﬁciaries are those who an activity is designed to support or help. The Agency, in most cases, does not work directly with beneficiaries but with other intermediaries (target groups) who are in contact with or can influence the beneficiaries. The Agency, in most cases, aims at increasing the capacity and understanding of target groups (e.g. by providing them with tools) for them to better help and support beneficiaries.
4. EU-OSHA’s priority areas

4.1. Priority area 1: Anticipating change and new and emerging risks to occupational safety and health

This priority area involves anticipating future challenges to OSH linked to changes in the world of work, in order to provide policy-makers, researchers and workplace intermediaries with reliable data, allowing them to set priorities for OSH research and actions and to implement timely and effective prevention (see strategic objectives, chapter 3). Effective prevention that is able to respond to the rapid changes affecting the world of work is needed if the ambitions of the European Social Pillar are to be fulfilled. Therefore, better risk anticipation is essential for improving prevention and consequently for sustainable working lives and higher employment rates in the medium- to long run.

Over the period of this MSP, the Agency will build upon the foresight studies that it has carried out and will continue anticipating new and emerging risks and challenges to OSH through different ‘futures’ methodologies. The specific benefits that this will deliver include the provision of useful information which will allow policy-makers, researchers and workplace intermediaries more generally, to decide whether to take action, and to set priorities.

This priority area relates directly to one of the three key elements of EU-OSHA’s mission (advancing knowledge), as well as to the Agency’s vision statement in terms of creating an OSH risk prevention culture.

4.1.1. Foresight activities

During the period of this MSP, EU-OSHA will carry out futures activities aimed at identifying and addressing future OSH challenges that are likely to result from the important changes affecting the world of work, in particular associated with the introduction of new technologies (such as ICT, converging technologies, new substances), the digitalisation of the economy, new forms of work, new business and employment models, as well as the changing nature of the workforce (increasingly diverse and dispersed workforce). Major strategic and policy developments, in particular related to the European Pillar of Social Rights and the development of the Digital Single Market, having an influence on work and OSH will be taken into account.

Building upon its previous foresight work and its 2018-2019 ex-post evaluation, EU-OSHA will organise a range of futures activities seeking to: [a] identify and anticipate new and emerging challenges to OSH linked to the changes mentioned above; [b] provide instruments for policy-makers, researchers and workplace intermediaries to address adequately the future challenges that are identified, and [c] explore how best to transfer the findings from its futures work into policy-making as well as into the setting of priorities for research and action. To achieve this, EU-OSHA will seek to strengthen mechanisms of systematic cooperation with key (EU level) bodies carrying out futures work (such as the Science and Technology Options Assessment panel of the European Parliament (STOA), the EU Agencies Network of Scientific Advice (EU-ANSA), the Partnership for European Research on Occupational Safety and Health (PEROSH)). Findings of other futures studies (including outside the area of OSH) commissioned by EU, governmental and other organisations will be taken into account, as well as relevant findings from major sources such as the European Working Condition Surveys and EU-OSHA’s European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risk. EU-OSHA’s futures exercise will be implemented through a combination of horizon scanning, reviews, qualitative research and consultation exercises (such as interviews, surveys, focus groups, workshops) involving EU-OSHA’s stakeholders, key thinkers and experts from various disciplines and backgrounds as relevant. Follow-up or more-in-depth work will be done on specific, novel issues identified by means of expert review articles, reviews or workshops. The implementation and scope of these futures activities will be decided in consultation with EU-OSHA’s stakeholders building upon an ex-post evaluation of its previous foresight work and a scoping study. The findings of the futures activities will be disseminated (through OSHwiki articles, seminars, etc.) to raise awareness of the challenges identified, stimulate debate and support transfer into priority-setting and policy-making.
Over the MSP period, the following actions will be undertaken: ex-post evaluation of EU-OSHA’s previous foresight exercise, a scoping study, a large-scale futures exercise, follow-up work, dissemination and a review period.

The specific objective is to produce new, timely and useful high quality data on new and emerging OSH challenges, and provide policy-makers and the broader OSH community, in particular researchers and workplace intermediaries, at EU and national levels with instruments to best address them as well as with a basis for priority setting for OSH research and actions.

4.2. Priority area 2: Facts and figures

Priority area 2: facts and figures deals with the provision of useful information to policy-makers and researchers (see strategic objectives, chapter 3), and relates directly to one of the three key elements in EU-OSHA’s mission statement (advancing knowledge) and also to the vision statement in terms of creating an OSH risk prevention culture. The specific benefit of this priority area is the provision to policy-makers and researchers, but also to workplace intermediaries, of the sound and reliable information they need to decide on action. This will be achieved through the continuation of the European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER), a series of large-scale comprehensive overviews of specific issues, and development of monitoring instruments, such as an EU OSH Information System in collaboration with the Commission.

4.2.1. European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER)

ESENER is among the tools contributing to an evidence base for policy-makers and researchers in the field of OSH. It aims to provide an accurate description of how OSH is currently being managed in European workplaces, in order to provide real-time, policy-relevant information. As a representative establishment survey looking at how safety and health risks are managed in European workplaces, it provides data to policy-makers and researchers at national and European level that is much needed, as there is no equivalent source of information.

Since the first edition in 2009, operating on a five year cycle, ESENER has played a key role in helping EU-OSHA to provide cross-nationally comparable information that can contribute to OSH policy-making. It provides information on general OSH risks and how they are managed; psychosocial risks such as stress, bullying and harassment; drivers of and barriers to action in OSH management and describes worker participation in OSH. The coverage of psychosocial risks means that the survey sheds light on under-explored and increasingly important areas of OSH and which are a growing concern for European workplaces.

Building on important improvements in the second edition of 2014, such as the inclusion of micro enterprises and the agriculture sector, the third edition of ESENER in 2019 will not only provide high quality data on the core areas of interest covered by previous surveys, but also provide information on changes over time.

The specific objective for ESENER is thus to provide a uniquely rich source of data for policy-makers and researchers on how companies manage OSH, on what their needs and weaknesses are, on what motivates and hinders them, and on how they involve their employees. It provides policy-makers and researchers with internationally comparable information and thereby contributes to the design, implementation and monitoring of effective OSH policies (whether regulatory, guiding or supportive) which support companies by being comprehensive, targeted, and focused on key issues. This is achieved not only through presentation of the findings in a series of reports, but also through follow-up studies, independent research and campaigns that draw on its data. As many of the issues explored in ESENER are closely linked with the context in which enterprises operate, ESENER also contributes to the evaluation of both the EU and national OSH strategies, by providing an additional indicator for monitoring the state of OSH. Additionally, by making available to researchers the comprehensive data that it captures, ESENER encourages further independent research and contributes to knowledge development.

Over the MSP period two ESENERs will be carried out with five years between each. In the time between the surveys, secondary analysis will be carried out, covering topics such as the management of OSH, drivers and barriers, and the importance of social dialogue and identification of trends. The
Agency will continue to develop synergies using ESENER data together with data from other relevant surveys and will strive to improve the methodology and therefore the quality of the survey from one cycle to the next.

Fieldwork for ESENER 3 will take place in 2019 and for ESENER 4 in 2024.

4.2.2. OSH overviews

Instruments such as ESENER can be complemented with data from other sources, to help inform policy development and the improvement of health and safety in relation to a specific area of concern.

Large-scale activities of three to four years’ duration will address different risks, sectors or workers’ groups or issues, such as work-related diseases and the occupational burden of disease and injury, the costs of underinvestment in OSH, and the benefits of good OSH. The scope of these activities will be determined in consultation with EU-OSHA’s stakeholders. Such activities will include the collection, analysis and dissemination of comprehensive information regarding policy, research and good practice. They will deliver an overview of: policies and strategies; trends in exposures, workers’ groups at risk and safety and health outcomes, as well as the monitoring tools that are available, and state-of-art research and research needs. They will also contribute to the development and sharing of good practice. Depending on the focus and scope of the project, they will involve a combination of literature reviews, case studies, interviews with key people at policy, research or company level, focus groups, workshops and seminars.

Over the MSP period several such overviews will be carried out, at least two of which will provide content for the Healthy Workplaces Campaigns that will be carried out over the period. The strong synergy achieved through the linking of the OSH Overview on MSDs that started in 2018 with the campaign that will start in 2020 draws on the positive evaluation of the link between the EP Pilot Project on older workers and the 2016-2017 Campaign: Healthy Workplaces for All Ages.

The specific objective of these overviews is to provide policy makers, researchers and intermediaries with useful high quality policy, research and good practice data, as well as examples and recommendations of what constitutes good strategies and practice, in order to help them to better guide decision-making and prioritise resources at policy, research and company level.

4.2.3. EU-OSH Information System

The development and provision of the EU OSH Information System is a long term activity of DG Employment in line with the current EU Strategic Framework 2014 to 2020. It aims at providing up-to-date online information for all interested parties and stakeholders about the status of OSH in the European Union. It consists of six major actions:

1. Definition and development of the complete IT framework of a tool for data visualisation involving also interactive options.
2. Provision of all specific content that is needed to fill the database.
3. Collaboration with the National Contact Points and EU Institutions and committees to organise a stable, reliable and continuous data transfer
4. Implementation of a stable framework based on agreements with national and European data providers.
5. Regular update and maintenance of the data including functional and content improvements.
6. Provision of a triannual report analysing the data and giving recommendations for future developments

Following the launch by the Commission of the pilot EU OSH Information System in 2018, which the agency contributed to in the design and development, the agency will collaborate with the Commission in its further development.

EU-OSHA will assist in the development of new indicators, drawing on its own sources such as ESENER, the estimation of work-related injury and illness burden and the mapping of national strategies. It will also support the Commission in identifying and if necessary adapting indicators from
other sources so that they are comparable and of sufficient quality. The agency will use its expertise in visual presentation of data and the development of dashboards to ensure that the EU OSH Information System results are presented in an attractive and user-friendly manner.

Over the programming period, the Agency may carry out further Facts and Figures activities pending available resources and agreement from the Governing Board.

4.3. Priority area 3: Tools for OSH management

The Agency’s founding regulation emphasises the need for “methods and tools for implementing preventive activities, paying particular attention to the specific problems of small and medium-sized enterprises”. Yet there is evidence that SMEs especially are failing to meet their legal obligations to carry out workplace risk assessments (see strategic objectives, chapter 3). The Agency will therefore continue to provide support to SMEs, and in particular micro- and small enterprises, in carrying out risk assessments and managing OSH, by developing the Agency’s Online interactive Risk Assessment (OiRA) tool. OiRA tools help micro- and small organisations to put in place a risk assessment process, and supports them in general risk management – from the identification and evaluation of workplace risks, through deciding on and taking action, to monitoring and reporting. Tripartism will remain a key factor in the development of the tool.

4.3.1. Development of the Online interactive Risk Assessment (OiRA) tool

The Agency will continue to develop the OiRA tool, facilitating the development of more risk assessment tools at both the national and EU levels, and focusing particularly on the needs and challenges of micro- and small enterprises.

To do so, EU-OSHA will further encourage OiRA partners, EU and national (sectoral) social partners and other organisations (such as Government Ministries, Labour Inspectorates and OSH institutes) to develop and share their national or pan-European sectoral OiRA tools, and to put in place a (national) overall strategy to encourage companies to use the tools that have been developed. Collaboration with OiRA partners will ensure that the OiRA tools that are developed will meet the real needs of small organisations in a particular sector. Therefore social partner ‘ownership’ of the tool is crucial in encouraging widespread take-up and use of the tool at enterprise level. While other incentives can be introduced into the diffusion strategy, it is this ‘peer-to-peer’ communication that is central to encouraging the use of OiRA tools in Europe’s 22 million micro- and small enterprises.

The specific objective is to continue to adapt, improve and maintain the OiRA software, to promote the development of OiRA tools among intermediaries, to provide training and support to stakeholders, and to encourage information exchange amongst the OiRA partners through the setting up of an OiRA community. The potential of an OiRA tool to make a significant contribution to improving OSH in Europe’s workplaces lies as much in its development, diffusion and marketing as in its technical characteristics.

The outcome at company level should be an increase in (especially micro- and small) companies carrying out their own, good quality and up-to-date risk assessments through the provision of free of charge, easy-to-use, state-of-art OiRA tools adapted to the sectors in which the companies operate. Good quality risk assessment will help them to manage OSH efficiently and reduce administrative burdens, helping to improve productivity as well as OSH in micro- and small enterprises. The outcome for workers should be that they are properly involved in risk assessment and that the risks in their workplaces will be adequately assessed and managed. The outcomes for these beneficiaries are expected to be sustainable over the longer term. Better OSH in micro- and small enterprises, and fewer work-related accidents, cases of illness and related absences from work, are part of the expected longer-term outcomes.

4.4. Priority area 4: Raising awareness and communication

This area covers activities aiming to get the occupational safety and health message across to multiple intermediaries and beneficiaries by raising awareness about workplace risks and how to prevent them. This includes the Agency’s flagship Healthy Workplaces Campaigns, but also more focused promotion
and communication activities dealing with specific topics, which are often linked to actions by other stakeholders (e.g. the European Commission, SLIC, and the EU social partners). These activities bring information to different beneficiaries and, in particular, intermediaries, and the Agency will continue to explore all possible means to engage with these audiences, including the increased use of social media. To implement these activities the Agency develops and maintains a range of multilingual communication channels, vehicles and tools to communicate a wide range of information to a broad group of intermediaries and beneficiaries.

4.4.1. Healthy Workplaces Campaigns

The Agency's Founding Regulation article 3 (1) lays considerable emphasis on EU-OSHA's role in disseminating information, both about risks and about good practices to prevent them. Successive EU OSH Strategies have also requested the Agency to carry out awareness-raising actions, and in particular to target these at small and medium-sized enterprises.

The anticipated outcomes of the Agency's campaigning activities are principally increased awareness of risks and how to prevent them in European workplaces. To achieve this, a number of other outcomes need to be achieved, such as the engagement of networks and intermediaries.

Activities related to this area are likely to produce quicker results than activities under some of the other areas. The activity relates directly to the aims in the Agency's mission statement of raising awareness and helping to exchange information and good practice regarding OSH. Increased awareness is also one of the means of achieving EU-OSHA's vision of a culture where OSH risks are prevented.

All Healthy Workplaces Campaigns pursue the following specific objectives:

- Engaging stakeholders at all levels
- Raising awareness
- Providing information
- Developing and providing access to resources
- Encouraging activities which impact on the workplace
- Identifying and recognising good practice
- Sharing and implementing good practice

The Agency's awareness-raising activities give a European dimension to OSH-related work at the national level. It also can help push an issue which would not have been pushed if it was dealt-with at the national level alone. The fact that campaign activities take place all across Europe on the same topic helps to create a European identity in OSH.

Healthy Workplaces Campaigns are decentralised campaigns co-ordinated by the Agency, but they can be tailored by our focal points in the Member States, partner organisations and individual workplaces to fit their particular needs and priorities, allowing them to organise their own activities and produce their own materials.

The Agency will also further develop and strengthen the Campaigns' network-based approach, drawing on the support of several important networks of partners, including:

- the Agency's network of national focal points, which is responsible for coordinating the Campaigns at the national level;
- the European social partners, representing the interests of workers and employers at the European level;
- the Agency's network of official Campaign partners, consisting of pan-European or international organisations and a complementary network of media partners;
- the European institutions and their networks, in particular the incumbent Presidencies of the European Council, and
- the Enterprise Europe Network, which reinforces the Agency's link with Europe's micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises.
Each campaign involves two to three years of preparatory work and runs for up to 24 months. The 2018-19 campaign is targeting dangerous substances and the campaign to start in October 2020 will return to the topic of musculoskeletal disorders. The themes of the following campaigns are decided by the Governing Board three years in advance of the start of the campaign to allow time for preparations.

4.4.2. Awareness raising and communications

Alongside its Healthy Workplaces campaigns, EU-OSHA carries out additional awareness raising activities in cooperation with its network of national focal points as well as more focused promotion and communication activities dealing with specific topics. The latter are often linked to actions by other stakeholders (e.g. the European Commission, SLIC, and the EU social partners). Together, these activities aim to bring information to different beneficiaries and, in particular, intermediaries, and the Agency will continue to explore all possible means to engage with these audiences, including the increased use of social media and data visualisation.

Activities in this area will also include the participation of the Agency in the consortium of organisations responsible for the development and production of a series of short films featuring the popular animated character Napo. The Agency will maintain and further develop the Napo website and carry out promotion actions, such as the teachers’ toolkit, that exploit Napo films to take the OSH message to new audiences.

Other activities will include promotional seminars; participation in events and exhibitions; the organisation of competitions and award schemes, such as the Healthy Workplaces Film Award and associated screenings and debates of winning films; as well as further development of visual communication tools.

Effective communication has a key role to play in the delivery of the Agency's mission, and as such is very much a part of EU-OSHA's core business. As in other areas of the Agency's activities, networking and partnership are at the heart of our communications approach.

Over the period of the MSP, the focus of the Agency’s communication activities will be to reach appropriate intermediaries and message multipliers, who can take our information and messages into relevant professional, policy-making and research communities, and ultimately into Europe’s more than 25 million workplaces.

These intermediaries are many and diverse, and the target audiences for a particular Agency activity or project will depend on the objectives that are set. Our information offer must be designed to have the greatest impact on levels of occupational safety and health, and must be targeted at those areas where the Agency’s efforts can provide European added value, over and above the activities of our partners at national level.

EU-OSHA’s information is communicated to its key audiences through its own activities at European level, through its information and communication network, in which national focal points play a clear role and via its partners. This is done using a variety of information and communication channels and vehicles.

Over the period of the MSP, the Agency will maintain and further develop its other corporate communication channels and vehicles. These include the press office including media monitoring; customer relations management and distribution; corporate literature and promotion. The annual report will remain the main vehicle for corporate reporting.

The effectiveness of this communications’ approach will be evaluated both ex ante and ex post. Ex ante assessments will be carried out ahead of major planned developments. The Agency’s online strategy will ensure that usability and user testing are integrated into the development process. Web metrics – such as Piwik – will be used to monitor the use of the website and to inform future

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7 In 2018 the Governing Board has decided to run the campaign starting in 2020 on a three-year campaign-cycle. Depending on the experiences the Agency will either keep to a three-year campaigning cycle or revert to a two-year cycle for future campaigns.
developments. User satisfaction surveys will also be carried out periodically. This may take the form of surveys of website or OSHmail users, or user panels recruited for this purpose.

The specific objective for this activity is to make sure that the Agency’s intermediaries and – in some cases – beneficiaries are aware of the Agency, its activities and products.

4.4.3. Multilingualism

As a European Union OSH information agency running awareness raising campaigns in more than 30 countries, EU-OSHA subscribes to the language policy of the European Union and the aim of enabling EU citizens to receive appropriate information in their language. The activity “multilingualism” covers the planning and implementation of the multilingual aspect of EU-OSHA’s communication strategy. This includes the provision of translated texts as well as the review and revision of its multilingual practices. The Agency aims to maximise the effectiveness of its available budget for translations by involving its national focal points in the prioritisation of texts for translation (portfolio approach) and by working both with the Translation Centre (CdT) and the focal points to deliver high quality translations and to manage its multilingual websites and products.

One significant achievement under the previous MSP was the development of an automated translation management tool and associated workflow to manage the contents of its multilingual websites for which the agency received an EU Ombudsman award for good administration. The tool is being made available to other agencies and bodies also working with the Translation Centre.

For text-heavy information products – such as data visualisation tools – where it is economically not possible to translate the contents into all languages, the Agency will continue to develop the use of machine translation tools.

The Agency will also continue to explore and develop innovative approaches to meeting the challenge of communicating in a multilingual Europe. One example is the dissemination strategy for the OiRA tool, through which the Agency provides support and core translations to enable national partners to develop tools in their own languages, and adapted to their own national contexts.

4.5. Priority area 5: Networking knowledge

A key role for EU-OSHA is to “collect, analyse and disseminate technical, scientific and economic information” on risks, good practices and research aspects of occupational safety and health (see strategic objectives, chapter 3). The aim of this priority area is to promote exchange of knowledge on a variety of topics, such as the development of OSH ‘e-tools’, collaboration on priorities for research and mainstreaming OSH into different policy areas. It also provides an information resource to support and collaborate with the OSH policy and research communities; in particular through the OSHwiki activity. Through this priority area, the Agency will support its key stakeholders, such as the Commission in its follow-up to the evaluation of the OSH directives and the member states and social partners in the development of national strategies on OSH.

4.5.1. OSHwiki

The OSHwiki aims to complement the Agency’s OSH information produced through its other activities and to provide a space for collaboration with the OSH community. As a collaborative platform, it allows the Agency to make more efficient use of its resources: further editing and development of content (including translation into other languages) can be carried out by users.

Having completed the OSHwiki over the previous MSP, such that it offers a comprehensive information resource on OSH comprising over 500 articles, the next MSP will see the content consolidated, with a focus on ensuring that it is up to date and of high quality. Contributions from approved authors will continue to be encouraged, but the agency will manage the existing content, ensuring that it is sustainable in the long term.

The specific objective of this activity is to produce a wiki providing authoritative, in-depth and easily updated information in the field of OSH. It will provide those in the OSH community with a space in which they can read about and find knowledge on various subjects, as well as providing them with a
platform for collaboration and exchange. The OSHwiki will therefore contribute to the general objective of collecting and disseminating information intended to improve health and promote awareness, as well as fostering joint participation and the exchange of results among OSH research institutes.

4.5.2. Exchange of knowledge on ‘e-tools’

In order to strengthen support, for micro-enterprises and SMEs in particular, in the choice and implementation of prevention measures following the risk assessment process, the Agency will facilitate the exchange of knowledge among owners and developers of e-tools. The aims of this activity are to encourage wider use of e-tools as support for compliance among micro and small enterprises in particular. Valuable lessons are learnt with the development of an e-tool, ranging from approaches to design, to the best way of raising awareness and encouraging their use at the workplace. In providing an opportunity for collaboration, the agency fosters the sharing of key success factors and obstacles, so encouraging the success of such innovative approaches to support prevention among EU Member States and industrial sectors.

This, together with Activity 3.1, is a way of increasing awareness among micro-enterprises and SMEs of the need for OSH prevention, and to convince them that OSH management is not a burdensome process, and that practical solutions exist and can be easily implemented. This should empower micro-enterprises and SMEs and make them more autonomous in the way they manage OSH.

4.5.3. Other networking knowledge actions

In addition, the Agency will undertake activities to support the generation, exchange and dissemination of knowledge to support its key stakeholders, in particular the EU institutions, in their decision-making, and strategy and policy development and implementation by providing relevant evidence.

Activities will reflect and contribute to the agendas of the key stakeholders and it is therefore difficult to predict the specific activities that will be undertaken, but will include:

- Expert support to the Commission in its follow-up to the evaluation of the OSH directives, in particular in its revision of the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive (2004/37/EC).
- Support to the Commission and Member States through the mapping of national strategies on OSH, through the hosting of the Hazchem database and the Vesafe Guidance and support in the development of further guidance.
- Maintaining up to date information online regarding EU-OSH legislation and non-binding instruments as well as social dialogue initiatives.

4.6. Priority area 6: Networking

From the time that EU-OSHA was established, networking has been a key activity. The Agency is an information agency and it is therefore essential that it has networks in place that can provide, disseminate and exchange information, as recognised in articles 3 and 4 of EU-OSHA’s founding regulation.

The activities in this area mainly meet two needs:

1) OSH resources, including both financial and information resources, are scattered across Europe. As resources are limited, greater efficiency can be achieved by pooling resources and bringing about the effective exchange of information and experience. This is clearly recognised in the preamble to the Agency’s founding regulation.

2) In addition, the Agency is relatively small, with a little more than 60 staff members in 201. On its own what the Agency can achieve is limited. However, by engaging networks and ensuring that its work is relevant to intermediaries, the Agency has shown throughout its existence that it can achieve much more. In particular it is important to build on and support existing tripartite networks.
4.6.1. Strategic and operational networking

The Agency’s strategic networking actions will include the development and support of its governance networks and European networks. The actions will aim at reflecting the needs and priorities of the key stakeholders in the Agency’s activities, and will cover both input to EU-OSHA’s planning and the Agency’s need to account for its actions.

These strategic network actions are particularly targeted at those groups with a significant influence over the Agency: this means the groups represented on the Board, and EU-OSHA’s other key European stakeholders. The governance networks include the Agency’s Board, Bureau and Advisory Groups. All these networks involve governments, unions and employers’ associations, in addition to the European Commission. The European stakeholders include the EU Institutions and the European level social partners: special emphasis is given to maintaining close cooperation with DG Employment. The strategic networks represent a unique opportunity to engage key players across Europe in the work of the Agency.

The Agency will continue to cooperate closely with other European agencies, to create complementarity and synergies. Agreements are already established with Eurofound, EIGE and ECHA. In particular, with Eurofound there is a well-established ongoing dialogue to coordinate and exchange experiences.

EU-OSHA’s operational networking activity will include the development and support of the Agency’s focal point network, its expert networks, and its international networks. The main aim is to engage the different networks in the delivery of the Agency’s objectives. This is of key importance for the Agency to be able to implement the MSP, as the Agency’s own resources alone do not allow this. It is also an aim to share best practice and avoid duplications of effort.

The Agency’s focal points constitute its core network ensuring an effective presence in all Member States. The focal points set up national, tripartite networks involving national social partners, which allow the Agency to involve a broad range of OSH players in its work. The focal points and their national networks also provide a good vehicle for the Agency to ensure that its activities reflect priorities across Europe. The national networks are a key factor - due to their tripartite character - in delivering this MSP. Recognizing that active engagement of social partners in the national focal point networks is of key importance, the Agency will explore innovative ways in strengthening tripartism in the national networks in close collaboration with its Governing Board. This will include updated guidance from the Agency and identification of good practices across the Member States.

The Agency will also continue collaborating with international network partners, such as the ILO, WHO and other international organisations as well as specific countries. The Agency’s international activities will be carried in the framework of its paper on international relations. The paper covers issues such as the different types of actors, reasons for engagement, limitations of engagement and the definition of priorities for international actions.

Finally, the continued development of cooperation with established communication networks such as the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) will be a priority. The EEN provides a good vehicle for reaching the enterprise level.

4.6.2. Specific programmes for countries outside the EU

EU-OSHA has implemented several programmes for Candidate and potential Candidate Countries prior to the enlargements from 2004 onwards allowing new Member States to participate actively from the date of accession – or even before. These programmes are financed via earmarked funds. EU-OSHA has also implemented programmes for earmarked funds in European neighbourhood countries. Over the period of the MSP the Agency may implement other similar programmes.
5. Governance and Management

This MSP is mainly about producing OSH outcomes and improving the state of OSH in the EU. EU-OSHA is, however, also part of the EU institutional landscape and a public body. This creates requirements and expectations not only regarding what the Agency delivers, but also how it delivers it.

There is a set of common principles for European public administrations and a number of more specific expectations in relation to the EU agencies expressed by the European Parliament, the Council, and the European Commission. These have been grouped together in a number of themes below which add up to good governance aims for EU-OSHA.

The Inter-institutional Working Group on decentralised agencies\(^{18}\) has stressed the importance of ensuring **effectiveness** and **efficiency** in agencies’ work. The Agency must ensure that it meets its objectives and produces outcomes and impacts (effectiveness) and it must do this without using more resources than needed (efficiency). The Agency carefully evaluates new activities before they are initiated (ex-ante evaluations) and involves the Governing Board to ensure that resources are spent on activities with an impact. The Agency also enhances efficiency – for example via a well-functioning network that can increase the impact of its work, but also through careful consideration of implementation arrangements.

**Transparency** is one of the key ingredients in good governance, as recognised both in the values of the Agency and by the OECD.\(^{19}\) It basically means that the Agency’s decisions, processes and actions are open to scrutiny by others. Transparency is essential for creating trust in the Agency. EU-OSHA makes the majority of its corporate governance documents available to the public via its website (for example minutes of the Governing Board meetings, programming documents, activity reports etc).

Closely linked to transparency is **accountability**, as is also expressed in the values of the Agency and recognised by the OECD. Accountability for the Agency means a willingness to show the extent to which its activities and results are consistent with clearly defined and agreed objectives. The key measure for EU-OSHA here is an annual Board meeting dedicated to looking backwards and analyse and assess the activity report, give an opinion on the accounts etc.

**User-orientation** is a further theme. It means that EU-OSHA’s start and end-point are the needs of the Agency’s users. It also means that the Agency is willing to change direction if needs change and to (re)examine its own role in meeting user needs. Various ways of involvement are in place – from stakeholder surveys to face-to-face discussions.

**Compliance** is a priority for the Agency: it means that the Agency carries out its operations in a legal and regular way. The positive reports from the Court of Auditors is one of the key indicators on the extent to which the Agency fulfils this value.

A final theme is **social and environmental responsibility**. The Agency will aim to carry out its work in a socially and environmentally responsible way, i.e. with the least possible impact on the environment and promoting recognised social objectives.

To integrate the themes outlined above into the work of the Agency a number of specific actions will be carried out. These actions will be fully developed in the Agency’s Programming Documents and in particular in the Annual Work Programmes, but some of the main ones are:

**Programming, monitoring and evaluation actions**: The Agency will continue its programming, monitoring and evaluation actions to provide the necessary evidence for learning, management and accountability. The actions will range from the provision of the necessary basis for the formulation of clear objectives to the assessment of whether objectives have been met.

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\(^{19}\) OECD, Principal elements of good governance. [www.oecd.org/gov/principalelementssofgoodgovernance.htm](http://www.oecd.org/gov/principalelementssofgoodgovernance.htm)
**Quality management:** Quality management will continue to be a priority. This will include documentation and review of key processes to ensure that there is a focus on users, as well as efficiency and effectiveness.

**Internal control and risk management:** The Agency has a well-established internal control system. It will continue to be a priority to ensure that the Internal Control Standards are applied in a way that ensures both compliance and efficiency and that risks are identified and managed.

**Management of resources:** Sound management of the Agency’s financial and human resources becomes more and more important in order to increase efficiency. The key objective is to ensure that the resources are available for achieving the objectives defined in the EU-OSHA MSP and the subsequent Programming Documents.

The Agency remains committed to social dialogue and will give a high priority to close involvement of staff and the staff representatives.
6. Monitoring and Evaluating the Multi-annual Strategic Programme (MSP)

A monitoring and evaluation system is in place to monitor and assess progress in implementing this MSP. The monitoring and evaluation system provides the necessary information to learn from on-going or finalised activities, to manage the implementation of the MSP, and to provide accountability. Building on the Agency’s legal requirements and Internal Control Standards, and on the conclusions of the Inter-Institutional Working Group on decentralised agencies, the monitoring and evaluation system provides information on the efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of EU-OSHA’s work. The tools to provide the necessary information will be a mixture of indicators and evaluations, as well as narrative reporting.

The monitoring and evaluation framework follows the logic model underlying the MSP, which describes how resources are converted into outputs via activities in the different priority areas. This part of the process is under the Agency’s immediate control. Intermediate and long-term outcomes are much less under the control of the Agency, but are necessary if EU-OSHA is to achieve its desired impact. The logic model underlying the MSP is illustrated below.

**Figure: Logic model underlying the MSP**

The monitoring and evaluation framework follows this logic model and describes what is measured (success criteria) at each step – see figure below. While indicators are an adequate tool for resources, products and actions, and outputs and outcomes, this is much less the case for long-term outcomes. For long-term outcomes, an evaluative approach will be used. It is important, however, not to see the indicators and the evaluations as mutually exclusive.

Indicators and targets are defined in the Programming Document.
### Success criteria

#### Long-term outcomes

The performance of EU-OSHA in terms of contribution to the development of a European OSH risk prevention culture, better informed policy-making, and better implementation of OSH policies and strategies.

**How performance is assessed**

Through evaluation

**The level of assessment**

At Agency level

#### Intermediate outcomes

The performance in six priority areas in terms of usage of data and information among intended intermediaries and beneficiaries, activity levels among intermediaries, and awareness of activities among intermediaries.

**How performance is assessed**

Through evaluation

**The level of assessment**

At Agency level and at priority area level

#### Outputs

Performance for each activity in terms of ensuring that the intended intermediaries have access to quality data, information and tools, and their levels of satisfaction.

**How performance is assessed**

Through analysis of output indicators and narrative reporting

**The level of assessment**

At Agency level, at priority area level, and at activity level

#### Products and actions

The delivery of foreseen products and actions.

**How performance is assessed**

Through analysis of delivery and action indicators

**The level of assessment**

At Agency level, at priority area level, and at activity level

#### Resources

Compliance with good governance principles.

**How performance is assessed**

Through analysis of good governance indicators

**The level of assessment**

At Agency level, at priority area level and at activity level

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**Figure: Monitoring and evaluation framework**
The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) contributes to making Europe a safer, healthier and more productive place to work. The Agency researches, develops, and distributes reliable, balanced, and impartial safety and health information and organises pan-European awareness raising campaigns. Set up by the European Union in 1994 and based in Bilbao, Spain, the Agency brings together representatives from the European Commission, Member State governments, employers’ and workers’ organisations, as well as leading experts in each of the EU Member States and beyond.

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