



ECDC Management Board

Minutes of the Forty-ninth Meeting 17 June 2020 (via audio conference)

Adopted by the ECDC Management Board at its Fiftieth meeting, 25 November 2020

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Summary of Proceedings – ECDC Management Board Meeting

The Forty-ninth meeting of the ECDC Management Board convened as a virtual meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic on 17 June 2020. During the meeting, the Management Board:

- ❖ adopted the programme of the meeting;
- ❖ adopted the minutes of the Forty-eighth meeting of the Management Board;
- ❖ took note of the summary of discussions held at the 43rd meeting of the ECDC Audit Committee;
- ❖ approved the Final Annual Accounts 2019, including Report on Budgetary and Financial Management
- ❖ approved the Report on Implementation of the Work Programme 2020 up until present;
- ❖ approved the Management Board's Conclusions and Recommendations of the Third External Evaluation of ECDC;
- ❖ approved the ECDC Strategy 2021-2027;
- ❖ discussed the Key Performance Indicators for the ECDC Strategy 2021-2027, and agreed that the document presented would be used as a basis for further developing the KPIs to be presented in November 2020;
- ❖ took note of the update on ECDC activities related to COVID-19;
- ❖ discussed the ECDC Single Programming Document 2022;
- ❖ approved the ECDC Management Board meeting dates for 2021, and took note of the proposed meeting dates for 2022;
- ❖ approved the draft Management Board decision on the selection and remuneration of external experts.

Opening and welcome from the Chair (and noting the Representatives)

1. Anni Virolainen-Julkunen, Chair of the ECDC Management Board, welcomed all the participants to the Forty-ninth meeting of the Management Board. A special welcome was extended to Silvia Dehler, newly appointed member, Liechtenstein, and Øystein Riise, newly appointed member, Norway.
2. Apologies had been received from Bulgaria (proxy given to Romania), Luxembourg (proxy to the Netherlands), and Portugal (proxy to Sweden). In addition, the following countries/organisations did not attend the meeting: Hungary, Iceland, Slovakia, and DG RTD, European Commission. The Chair informed the Management Board that two representatives of the ECDC Staff Committee would participate as observers in the discussions on the ECDC Strategy 2021-2027 and the Key Performance Indicators for the Strategy.

Welcome from the Director, ECDC

3. Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, warmly welcomed the Management Board members and noted that she was looking forward to having fruitful and inspiring discussions during the meeting.

Adoption of the draft programme (and noting the declarations of interest and proxy voting, if any) (*Document MB49/01 Rev.1*)

4. One MB member representing the European Parliament mentioned that there had recently been another phishing attempt using email addresses of MB members, and asked whether ECDC could address this matter under Any Other Business. With this addition, the draft programme was adopted.
5. Following the adoption of the programme, the Chair asked each member whether s/he wished to add any oral declaration(s) of interest to her/his Annual Declaration of Interest (ADoI) submitted previously. None were declared.

The Management Board adopted the draft programme.

Adoption of the draft minutes of the 48th meeting of the Management Board (Stockholm, 26 March 2020) (*Document MB49/02*)

6. The Management Board adopted the draft minutes without amendments.

The Management Board adopted the minutes of the Forty-eighth meeting of the Management Board.

Summary of discussions held at the 43rd meeting of the ECDC Audit Committee (16 June 2020), including its recommendations

7. Johan Carlson, Chair of the ECDC Audit Committee, MB Member, Sweden, provided a summary of the discussions held in the 43rd Audit Committee (AC) meeting, which took place via audio conference on 16 June. Concerning the regular update on audit activities, he noted that no new final observations had been received. One observation had been closed by ECDC in Q1 2020. Five observations were currently open, with two having target dates in Q3 2020, and three in Q4 2020. The AC had also received an update on the revised ECDC Internal Control Framework. The AC noted that a revision of the indicators had been performed, as agreed. The indicators had functioned well, and only some small changes had been proposed by the Director. The AC has no objections to the proposed changes. It further endorsed waiting with the survey-based indicators to next year, and looked forward to the assessment of the ICF at the end of 2020.

8. The AC had then discussed the First Supplementary and Amending Budget 2020. The AC had noted the changes made under the responsibility of the Director, and had taken note of the additional EC funds of €3.6M for 2020, to be presented to the MB as an amended budget for written procedure shortly. The AC had also discussed the updated IAS Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2018-2020 noting that the IAS had decided to perform “a limited review of the implementation of the Internal Control Framework” in 2020/2021. The AC had taken note of the fact that the preferred audit on IT Security Management could not be performed due to lack of IT audit resources in the IAS. The AC concluded to endorse the choice of audit subject, but agreed that there would have been important benefits of having an IT security management audit in 2020/2021 especially considering COVID-19.

9. Following the presentation, Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, clarified that the additional EC funds of €3.6M would be used to recruit 20 short-term Contract Agents (five for support functions and fifteen scientific officers) to support the work on COVID-19.

The Management Board took note of the summary of discussions held at the 43rd meeting of the ECDC Audit Committee.

Final Annual Accounts 2019, including Report on Budgetary and Financial Management (*Document MB49/03*)

10. Anja Van Brabant, Head of Section Finance and Accounting, ECDC, presented the Annual Accounts 2019. She recalled that the Provisional Accounts had been presented to the Management Board during the last meeting in March 2020. The accounts were audited by an external audit firm (E&Y) during 2-6 March 2020. ECDC received the Court of Auditors report with preliminary observations on 19 May 2020; no corrections had to be made to the accounts following the audit report. Two disclosures were added to the final accounts 2019, one related to Brexit and one related to the COVID-19 outbreak. These were highlighted in yellow in the document for ease of reference (*cf.* point 5, page 17). The proposed draft opinion of the Management Board on the annual accounts 2019 was presented for MB approval.

11. Johan Carlson summarised the Audit Committee conclusions and explained that ECDC had clarified that the disclosures regarding Brexit and COVID-19 had no direct effects on the Annual Accounts 2019. The Audit Committee recommended the Management Board to approve the proposed MB opinion on the Annual Accounts 2019.

The Management Board approved the Final Annual Accounts 2019, including Report on Budgetary and Financial Management.

Report on Implementation of the Work Programme 2020 up until present (*Document MB48/04*)

12. Philippe Harant, Planning and Monitoring Manager, Executive Office, ECDC, presented the current status of implementation of the Work Programme 2020. He explained that, as of 15 June 2020, 3% of the SPD 2020 activities had been implemented, 48% had started and were on schedule, 20% were delayed due to COVID-19, 1% was at risk, 2% had not started, 21% were proposed to be postponed to 2021, and 5% proposed to be cancelled. He added that there was no change to the Work Programme compared to the previous version approved by the Management Board via written procedure at the beginning of June, and no change in the Financing Decision. The only change was in the additional work programme for COVID-19 activities; at the request of the European Commission (DG NEAR), a paragraph had been added to indicate that, to the extent possible, ECDC will extend the planned activities under the COVID-19 work plan to the Western Balkan region (i.e. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia). The changes were highlighted on page 2 and 6 in the document.

13. Following the presentation, the floor was opened for comments. Referring to the recent written procedure on the Work Programme 2020, one of the MB members representing the European Commission recalled the specific request of the Commission to continue work on AMR (e.g. indicators and

mortality/morbidity estimates and regular surveillance). He further noted that the budget would need to be amended to take into account the additional EC funds of €3.6M, as well as the top-up grant from DG NEAR (€1.5 M) to be provided for COVID-19 related work with the Western Balkans.

14. Concerning AMR, Andrea Ammon responded that many experts in this area were currently contributing to the work on COVID-19, and there were unfortunately not enough resources to cover all the activities. This being said, AMR continued to be on the radar, but it was difficult to give a definite outlook for AMR work at this point of COVID-19 pandemic. Regarding the additional EC funds, she clarified that a written procedure would soon be sent to the Management Board including information on how these funds are planned to be used. Concerning the grants, she noted that she would provide specific information on this matter during her update on COVID-19.

15. One MB member representing the Member States inquired about activities carried out in other areas, such as AMR and vaccination, and asked whether an update could be provided in September. Another MB member asked what was planned for ECDC's own after action review on COVID-19, and if this was included in the 2020 or 2021 work plan.

16. Responding to the comment on non-COVID activities, Andrea Ammon mentioned that this work was summarised in the info note that had been circulated ahead of the meeting. She encouraged the MB members to look at this document, but added that an update could be provided in September. She shared the concern that some other topics might not be addressed fully due to COVID-19. One example of continuing work was the European Vaccination Information Portal launched in April, which had not received the attention it would have deserved. Concerning the after action reviews, she confirmed that ECDC will provide support to Member States for this exercise, but ECDC will also contract a strategic review on its response to COVID-19 starting in the coming month. One issue to look at is how the ECDC work is placed in relation to activities carried out by other actors such as WHO and DG RTD in order to avoid duplication. More information will be provided during the next MB meeting in November.

17. Following the discussion, the Management Board approved the proposed changes in the work programme 2020.

The Management Board approved the proposed changes in the Single Programming Document 2020.

Third External Evaluation of ECDC: Conclusions and Recommendations of the ECDC Management Board External Evaluation Recommendations Drafting Group (Document MB49/05)

18. Anne-Catherine Viso, Chair of the MB External Evaluation Recommendations Drafting Group, MB Alternate, France, recalled that the conclusions and recommendations of the third external evaluation had been circulated to the Management Board for approval via written procedure in January 2020. Germany had suggested an amendment in the last paragraph of the document relating to the extension of the mandate. With the current pandemic, the context had changed, and the European Commission was now suggesting a slightly amended wording for the last paragraph of the document. In addition, a minor change was proposed under recommendation 7B (page 15) for the purpose of clarity.

19. John F Ryan, MB Member, European Commission, explained that the lessons learned so far from the current pandemic had identified the need to introduce strengthening mechanisms in the area of preparedness and response as a matter of urgency. The Commission will examine how this should be translated into Decision 1082 as well as the ECDC Founding Regulation. It was therefore suggested to amend the last paragraph in the document by indicating that the Management Board is requesting the European Commission to propose how to put forward the question of the mandate. The proposed text was displayed to the participants. It was further suggested that the MB Chair would draft a letter to be sent to the European Commission together with the final recommendations of the external evaluation in order to explain the evolved context in which the recommendations had been approved, and the request of the Management Board arising due to this situation.

20. Gesa Lücking, MB Alternate, Germany, confirmed that Germany agreed with the proposal from the European Commission. She added that this was in line with the German Presidency, which had also stressed the need of strengthening the role of ECDC in this area.

21. Following these clarifications, the Management Board endorsed the two suggested amendments. It was agreed that ECDC would prepare a short draft explanatory note to highlight the specific context in which the conclusions and recommendations have been approved, and will share it with the External Evaluation Drafting Group for review before posting the document and the external evaluation report on the ECDC website.

The Management Board approved the Conclusions and Recommendations based on the Third External Evaluation of ECDC.

ECDC Strategy 2021-2027 - updated version (*Document MB49/06*)

22. Andrea Ammon presented the updated ECDC Strategy 2021-2027. She explained the operational framework of the Strategy, and how the strategic roadmap and Single Programming Documents are derived from it. A mid-term evaluation of the roadmap is foreseen to take place in 2024. She then described the work carried out since November, noting that the MB comments had been addressed to the extent possible, and the document now included a stronger link to the Commission priorities and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Following MB approval, the document will go through a visual update before being communicated to partners and stakeholders. A more detailed roadmap and Key Performance Indicators will be presented to the Management Board in November. The outcomes of the COVID-19 evaluations will be included in the strategic roadmap, multi-annual SPD, and annual work plans as relevant. In case of major changes in the mandate of ECDC, the Strategy will be reviewed and modified.

23. The floor was opened for comments. One MB member welcomed the fact that COVID-19 was referred to in the updated version. He further noted a minor typo in the header of the document. One of the representatives of the European Commission raised some concern as to how the Strategy will be communicated externally; there was a need to communicate that the response to the pandemic will be subject to a lessons learned exercise, and that the Strategy should not be seen as a response to the ongoing crisis. One MB member agreed with this statement, but stressed the need to move forward with the approval of the Strategy. She asked for a clarification regarding the roadmap and how it will be monitored. One of the MB members representing the European Parliament agreed that the external communication was very important, in particular with the ongoing pandemic. Concerning the mid-term evaluation of the roadmap, she suggested that an evaluation should perhaps be carried out earlier than 2024 given the fast moving environment in which ECDC is operating, and depending on the results of the lessons learned. Another MB member noted that the mid-term evaluation should be well thought of so that it can feed into the next external evaluation of ECDC, which will cover the period 2018-2022.

24. Responding to the comments received, Andrea Ammon agreed that the communication needed to be prepared in a prudent way. Concerning the monitoring of the roadmap, she noted that an annual review will be done in any case to determine whether the roadmap is still relevant, or whether there are other topics (e.g. new Commission priorities), to take into account. At this stage, the roadmap was still in draft format; it was included to give a flavour of the final roadmap to be presented in November.

The Management Board approved the ECDC Strategy 2021-2027.

Key Performance Indicators for the ECDC Strategy 2021-2027 (*Document MB49/07*)

25. Andrea Ammon presented the Key Performance Indicators for the ECDC Strategy 2021-2027. She explained that the aim of the strategic key performance indicators (SKPIs) was to provide periodic information on the degree of achievement of expected outcomes and mid-term impact of the Centre, and to provide an overview of the progress achieved. With the exception of the indicators under Strategic Objective 5 (SO5), the SKPIs are outward looking, i.e. focusing on outcomes and intermediary impact on

external stakeholders and society, rather than ECDC capabilities. The purpose was not to cover all aspects of the Strategy, but to highlight key messages. She clarified that what was presented to the Management Board at this stage was the proposed titles of the strategic KPIs with a brief description of the indicators they are composed of. The question posed to the Management Board was whether these indicators will provide a sufficient picture/level of information/assurance on the impact of the implementation of the ECDC Strategy. For the next steps, a more detailed fiche for each indicator will be prepared, and the full set of SKPIs will be presented to the MB in November. A stakeholder survey will be introduced to collect data/information, and an IT tool will be selected for automated measurement of the different types of indicators. A first report of SKPIs is foreseen in March 2023, when the data for 2021-2022 will be presented.

26. In the discussion that followed, some MB members raised concern regarding the feasibility of documenting the impact, in particular concerning the indicators under SO2, and the risk that the necessary data collection would cause an additional burden on Member States. Referring in particular to the indicator on use of ECDC outputs, one MB member felt that the weight of the indicator was missing and that, in general, it would be necessary to operationalise the indicators further. One of the representatives of the European Commission pointed out that the proposed SKPIs should not be different from the indicators in the multi-annual part of the SPD, to avoid creating confusion or risk of duplication. It was further mentioned that the indicators should take into account the lessons learned on COVID-19.

27. Andrea Ammon thanked the MB members for their feedback. She agreed that defining suitable indicators was challenging, but it was necessary in order to be able to capture whether the work carried out was relevant and useful for the stakeholders. Based on the comments received, it was perhaps preferable to reduce the number of indicators in the first phase, and to develop a larger set at a later stage. Responding to the comment from the European Commission, she stressed that the indicators in the SPD measured different things compared to the strategic KPIs. In simple terms, the strategic indicators are meant to measure whether ECDC is doing "the right things", while the operational indicators in the SPD measure whether "things are done right", i.e. whether the activities are carried out efficiently and effectively.

28. The Chair summarised the discussion noting that the Management Board seemed to be in favour of the general approach, but some further work on the indicators was necessary before the document could be approved. She suggested using the current document as a basis for developing a revised proposal taking into account the comments from the MB members as well as the workload associated with the data collection. The Management Board agreed with this suggestion.

The Management Board discussed the Key Performance Indicators for the ECDC Strategy 2021-2027, and agreed that the document presented would be used as a basis for further developing the KPIs to be presented in November 2020.

Update on ECDC activities related to COVID-19

29. Andrea Ammon gave an update on recent ECDC activities related to COVID-19. She described the main epidemiological developments, as well as the content of the latest ECDC risk assessment, and the options for response. The presentation also focused on recent ECDC guidance and other outputs related to COVID-19, the number of requests received and handled to date, and the media response provided. In terms of web statistics, she highlighted that the ECDC website had received 66% more visits in six months compared to the last 10 years combined. To date, the work on COVID-19 has involved almost every technical expert in ECDC at some point and in some capacity. Concerning work with non-EU Member States, and referring to the earlier discussions on the 2020 work programme, she clarified that ECDC will receive a top-up of €1.5 M from DG NEAR to the current IPA grant in order to extend the COVID-19 work to the Western Balkan countries. Lastly, she reported on the results of a recent situational survey on staff wellbeing, teleworking and return to work during the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey showed that 76% of the staff prefer to telework as long as there is a risk of infection. A weekly update from the Director has been introduced to inform staff about the developments, and to brief them about different initiatives and high-level meetings on COVID-19. This update has been highly appreciated by staff.

30. In the discussion that followed, several MB members expressed their appreciation of the work carried out by ECDC, and the support provided to Member States during the pandemic. Several members mentioned that ECDC outputs were used extensively in their country. The issue of travel advice to third countries was briefly discussed, and some MB members noted that there was surely a role for ECDC in providing expert advice in this area, even if the decisions on border closures or openings were then to be made at political level. Andrea Ammon noted that the ECDC position on this matter was that border closures were probably not efficient at this stage, but the important factor was how people behaved. Testing and contact tracing were also crucial in this phase of the pandemic. ECDC was already mapping the number of cases worldwide, and could look at trends on national level, but it was not possible to fully guarantee the validity of the data. Concerning staff, one of the representatives of the European Commission noted that the responses were very similar to the ones received from staff in the Commission. He agreed that the return to work had to happen gradually, and suggested that it would be useful to share experiences between EU agencies and the Commission on these matters.

The Management Board took note of the update on ECDC activities related to COVID-19.

ECDC Single Programming Document 2022 (*Document MB49/08*)

31. Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, presented the priorities for the ECDC Single Programming Document 2022-2024. The SPD is based on the structure of the ECDC Strategy 2021-2027. As the Multi-Annual Financial Framework 2021-2027 has not yet been approved, the resource allocation is based on the assumption that ECDC's budget will remain the same as for 2021 (61,679,000 M EUR in total of which 21,974,000 M EUR for operations), and that the permanent staff will be the same as for 2021 (280 statutory staff). In addition, 17 short-term Contract Agent posts are allocated for externally funded international relations projects. Concerning the timeline, she mentioned that the SPD will be sent for written consultation to ECDC stakeholders before the end of June. A more detailed SPD including resource allocation and performance indicators will be presented to the Management Board in November 2020.

32. The Director then provided an update on the SPD 2021 noting that the document had been prepared before the pandemic and was therefore outdated. As multiple activities planned for 2020 will now need to be postponed to 2021, it is foreseen that a revised version of the SPD 2021 will be prepared by 7 September, and circulated to the European Commission and the Member States for comments, with deadline for feedback on 1 October. Based on the input received, the final SPD 2021 will then be prepared for adoption during MB50 in November 2020. She asked the Management Board members whether they agreed with this proposal. The Management Board expressed its support for the suggested approach, while requesting to clearly highlight the changes made in the document compared to the previous version.

The Management Board discussed the ECDC Single Programming Document 2022. The Management Board agreed with the proposal to circulate a revised version of the SPD 2021 to the European Commission and the Member States in September to request written comments by 1 October 2020.

ECDC Management Board Meeting Dates 2021 and 2022 (*Document MB49/09*)

33. Maarit Kokki, Head of the Executive Office, ECDC, presented the suggested meeting dates for 2021 and 2022. The Management Board agreed with the proposed schedule of meetings in 2021 as below:

- MB51: 23-24 March 2021
- MB52: 15-16 June 2021
- MB53: 23-24 November 2021

In addition, the Management Board took note of the following meeting dates proposed for 2022:

- MB54: 22-23 March 2022
- MB55: 14-15 June 2022
- MB56: 15-16 November 2022

34. Responding to a question from one MB member, Maarit Kokki informed the Board that the Third Joint Strategy Meeting (JSM) had been postponed, and is now foreseen to take place on 12-13 May 2021. Further information on the Third JSM will be shared in due course.

The Management Board approved the meeting dates for 2021, and took note of the provisional meeting dates for 2022.

Selection and remuneration of external experts (*Document MB49/10*)

35. Andrea Iber, Head of Section Legal Services and Procurement, Resource Management Services, ECDC, presented a draft decision on the selection and remuneration of external experts. She recalled that, in March 2007, the Management Board had adopted a decision on the indemnities for external experts participating in ECDC's working groups, panels and committees (MB9/9). Following the adoption of the EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046, and with the entry into force of the new ECDC Financial Regulation in August 2019, this decision had to be revised in order to be aligned with the current provisions governing the selection and remuneration of external experts.

36. Andrea Iber then presented the key aspects of the new decision. She noted that the expert indemnity would be adjusted from 300 to 450 EUR/day, which corresponded to the level applied in the European Commission and other EU agencies. In line with Article 237 of the EU Financial Regulation, it is proposed to expand the scope of the original decision to remunerated experts appointed to provide opinions and advice in specific cases/technical meetings. The experts are selected based on their professional capacity, following the publication of a mandatory public call for expression of interest. The draft decision also clarifies the selection and appointment process, and includes a reference to the ECDC independence policy. The upper limit for payment to individual experts is linked to the procurement threshold (currently EUR 139 000). Responding to a question on how the remuneration will be determined, she clarified that the amount will be based on the role and tasks to be performed by the external expert.

37. Following the presentation, the Management Board endorsed the proposed decision on the selection and remuneration of external experts.

The Management Board approved the decision on the selection and remuneration of external experts.

Any other business

38. As agreed at the beginning of the meeting, François Mestre, Head of Unit Digital Transformation Services, ECDC, addressed the issue of phishing attacks brought forward by one of the MB members. He mentioned that Management Board members had once again experienced phishing attacks by misused email addresses of other MB members. To counter-act this misuse of email addresses, he suggested the following measures: MB members would ask their respective organisations to provide them with a digital email certificate (preferred choice); if this is not possible, ECDC would provide the Management Board member with an ECDC email address that would be valid during their mandate as MB members. It was agreed that ECDC would share more detailed information in writing via the MB extranet.

39. The Chair informed the MB members that elections of Chair and Deputy Chair of the Management Board will take place at the next meeting in November. She referred the members to the document MB49/12 containing procedural information on the elections.

40. Lastly, the Chair thanked all the Board Members for their active participation and valuable contributions. The meeting was adjourned.

Annex: List of Participants

Country/Organisation	Representative	Status
Austria	Bernhard Benka	Member
Belgium	Lieven De Raedt	Member
Croatia	Bernard Kaić	Member
Cyprus	Irene Cotter	Member
Czech Republic	Jozef Dlhý	Alternate
Denmark	Bolette Søborg	Alternate
Estonia	Heli Laarmann	Member
Finland	Anni Virolainen-Julkunen (<i>Chair</i>)	Member
Finland	Taneli Puumalainen	Alternate
France	Anne-Catherine Viso	Alternate
Germany	Gesa Lücking	Alternate
Greece	Panagiotis Arkoumanas	Member
Ireland	Daniel Shine	Alternate
Italy	Francesco Maraglino	Alternate
Latvia	Jana Feldmane	Member
Lithuania	Audrius Ščeponavičius	Member
Malta	Patricia Vella Bonanno	Member
The Netherlands	Ciska Scheidel	Member
Poland	Dariusz Poznański	Member
Romania	Amalia Serban	Member
Slovenia	Mojca Gobec	Member
Spain	Pilar Aparicio Azcárraga	Member
Sweden	Johan Carlson	Member

European Parliament		
	Zofija Mazej Kukovič	Member
	Maria Eleni Koppa	Member
European Commission		
DG SANTE	Martin Seychell	Member
DG SANTE	John F. Ryan	Member
EEA Countries		
Liechtenstein	Silvia Dehler	Member
Norway	Øystein Riise	Member