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Three-year work programme of the EMCDDA for 2007–2009

Summary

The strategy for the next 3-year work programme is a straightforward one: to concentrate on the core business of monitoring the drugs phenomenon and to ensure that maximum value is secured from investments made in this area. The aim is to build upon the success that has already been achieved in developing the information tools and mechanisms that now provide a sound foundation for information collection at the European level, ensuring that maximum analytical value is derived from the data collected, and that this information is effectively disseminated in products tailored to the needs of the EMCDDA's key audiences.

In accordance with the decisions taken by the EMCDDA Management Board on the Reitox operating framework, the Reitox focal points were involved at an early stage in the preparation of the proposed work programme.

Pursuant to article 8 of the EMCDDA founding regulation, the EMCDDA Scientific Committee, the European Commission and the Council of the European Union have been formally consulted.

Budgetary effect

In accordance with the financial regulation applicable to the EMCDDA, the resources to be earmarked for the implementation of the proposed 3-year work programme will be defined with the adoption of its annual work programmes and budgets relating to the period concerned.

Decision

The Management Board is asked to adopt the proposed EMCDDA work programme for 2007–2009.

EMCDDA strategy and work programme (2007–2009)

A sound framework for drugs monitoring in Europe

FINAL

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Strategic overview

Drug use remains a key issue within Europe, and the EU's response to drug use has a profound impact on the health, well-being and security of its citizens. The use of illicit drugs remains a complex policy area to address as it spans public health, criminal justice and community safety issues. The EMCDDA's role is to provide reliable, comparable and relevant information and thereby to support informed and evidence-based policies and actions.

The strategy for the next 3-year work programme is a straightforward one: to concentrate on the core business of monitoring the drugs phenomenon and to ensure that maximum value is secured from the investments made in this area. The aim is to build upon the success that has already been achieved in developing the information tools and mechanisms that now provide a sound foundation for information collection at the European level, ensuring that maximum analytical value is derived from the data collected, and that this information is effectively disseminated in products tailored to the needs of the EMCDDA's key audiences.

Following, and in line with the results of, the evaluation of the EMCDDA's 2005 activities, as carried out by its Management Board, the proposed strategy and work programme for 2007–2009 reflect the need to streamline the EMCDDA's objectives in order to cope effectively both with the current and expected budgetary constraints and with the priorities set by the defined EU strategy and action plan on drugs.

A better understanding of drug use in Europe

This work programme will result in improvements in the information available on drugs in Europe and in the analytic insights that can be drawn from this information. This will be evident in an improved and more comprehensive annual reporting exercise comprising the following main products:

- *Annual report on the state of the drugs problem in Europe* in at least 22 languages;
- *annual report website* in at least 22 languages, offering online versions and downloadable PDF files of the report as well as detailed national reports produced by the Reitox network;
- *selected issues* exploring three topics of policy relevance in detail each year;
- *statistical bulletin* presenting all EMCDDA quantitative data and offering about 200 statistical tables, 100 graphics and 29 country data profiles with country-specific graphics as well as an explanation of methods and definitions.

In addition, a number of new analyses of topics of policy importance will be undertaken, the aims of which will include:

- achieving a better quantification and delimitation of the size of the European drug problem (for example by estimating the intensive and problematic use of opiates, cannabis, cocaine and other stimulants);
- obtaining a more detailed understanding of the dynamics of drug use in Europe and how it is reflected in the provision of services for drug users;
- elaborating the relationship between drug use and broader mental health issues;
- modelling how the chronic and intensive use of different drugs impacts on health and social problems at both the level of the individual (relative risk) and the society level (population risk);
- formulating a statistical model for the spread of HIV and hepatitis C among drug users and thus achieving a better understanding of what level of services is likely to be necessary to prevent new infections (including a review of prevention and harm reduction activities);
- sharing experiences on best practice on drug prevention and responding to the needs of those most at risk;
- reviewing how advances in genetics and neuroscience will affect the way we work with drug problems in the future;
- determining what we know about best practice and therapeutic options for treating problems caused by cannabis, cocaine and amphetamines;
- improving reporting on the levels of and responses to poly-drug use problems;
- improving identification of new drug trends and threats;
- undertaking a cost analysis and forming public expenditure estimates to provide a better understanding of the costs associated with the use of drugs and how much European Member States are spending on drug problems;
- obtaining a better estimate of the size of the drug market through a synthesis of supply and demand data.

Key outputs

This work programme will deliver an enhanced gateway to information on the drugs problem in Europe, with information tools and resources configured to the needs of each of the EMCDDA's target audiences.[1]

- For the *policy-maker* – summaries and analyses on key questions.
- For the *scientist and researcher* – access to data sets, analysis and details on new research initiatives.
- For *practitioners* – evidence on what works, access to planning, implementation and evaluation tools and dissemination of lessons learned from best practice.
- For the *citizen* – up-to-date information on the European drug situation and a direct link to national data and information sources.

Summary of key outputs and their intended audience				
Output/product		Other target audiences		
	Policy	Science	Practice	Citizen
Annual report	✔	✔	✔	✔
Statistical bulletin (web based)	✔	✔		
Fonte (EMCDDA/Reitox data collection, validation,storage and retrieval system)		✔	✔	
Drug profiles (web based)		✔	✔	✔
Country situation summaries and data profiles (web based)	✔		✔	✔
Country intervention profiles (web based)	✔			✔
European overview report on interventions and policy	✔		✔	✔
Articles/papers in peer-reviewed scientific journals		✔	✔	
Drugs in focus policy briefings	✔			
EMCDDA Insights	✔		✔	
EMCDDA Manuals			✔	
EMCDDA scientific monographs		✔	✔	
Technical data sheets (in-depth analysis of trends)	✔	✔		
Technical papers and European situation snapshot in support of the EU action plan	✔			
Guidelines for risk assessment of new psychoactive substances		✔		
EDDRA and EIB	✔		✔	
ELDD and legal topic overviews	✔	✔	✔	
Online instrument database			✔	
Up-to-date overview of drug-related research (web based)	✔	✔		
Drugnet Europe newsletter	✔	✔	✔	✔
Participation in conferences	✔	✔	✔	

[1] The EMCDDA's founding regulation (Council Regulation (EEC) 302/93 of 8 February 1993) states in article 2 that exchanges of information should be facilitated between decision makers, researchers, specialists and those involved in governmental and non-governmental organisations.

A sound framework for drugs monitoring in Europe

I. Making the right choices – principles and priorities

The strategy of the EMCDDA for the 2007–2009 work programme is a straightforward one: to concentrate on the core business of monitoring the drugs phenomenon and to ensure that maximum value is secured from the investments made in this area whilst at the same time reconfiguring and fine-tuning its work to meet the challenges posed by the evolving European drug situation.

The success of the work of the EMCDDA to date has been grounded in taking a long-term and developmental perspective. To have available a comparable and high-quality reporting tool requires long-term investment and commitment. Thus, many of the activities that form a core part of this work programme are not new. The Centre will continue with the ongoing tasks necessary to maintain, consolidate and, where necessary, further develop the existing reporting system. The working methods used to accomplish these tasks will also not change significantly. The Centre will continue to work closely with national technical experts, the Reitox network, and its other partners to undertake the tasks necessary to improve the quality, comparability and availability of data on drugs at both national and European level.

To achieve this aim, this work programme is structured around three core priorities and informed by three transversal principles.

Transversal principles

The Centre has an underlying key commitment to quality and continued improvement in its working methods that cuts across all areas of work. The EMCDDA believes that these core values need to be clearly operationalised in the new work programme in the form of underlying principles so that they can provide an ongoing point of reference for the development of both scientific and administrative activities. These principles will be reflected in an accompanying quality assurance strategy that will include specified performance indicators.

There are three underlying transversal principles.

1. **A commitment to scientific excellence**. The credibility of the EMCDDA as an agency working in the sphere of information is dependent on the scientific quality of its work. Maintaining a commitment to scientific standards and independent and impartial analysis is especially important as the drugs issue is controversial and politically sensitive, and because it encompasses a broad range of scientific disciplines in which new developments are constantly occurring. Resources and capacity limitations at the level of the EMCDDA's partners and networks should, as much as possible, be counterbalanced through priority setting and sound management decisions. The EMCDDA needs to be aggressive in its pursuit of excellence in this area. The long-term success of the EMCDDA will be assured only if a commitment to maintaining scientific quality is the first guiding principle for its work.

2. **A commitment to partnership.** For the EMCDDA to act successfully as a European-level interface for information exchange between the worlds of policy, science and practice, a commitment to partnership must also be a central guiding principle for its activities. Data analysed and disseminated by the Centre are the product of the work of the Reitox network and national experts and of the commitment of Member States and the European Community to invest in information collection. A close and ongoing

dialogue with the Centre's information providers and target audiences is necessary if products are to be tailored to their needs. Moreover, the EMCDDA has a duty to ensure that duplication of effort is avoided and best value is obtained from investments made in establishing a sound information base for understanding the drugs phenomenon. For all these reasons a commitment to partnership must underpin the work programme.

3. **A commitment to good governance and efficiency.** A commitment to scientific quality and to partnership will be undermined if the organisation itself is not well governed and tools are not put in place to monitor the quality of its work. The most important resources of the Centre are its staff, but the quality of their work can easily be undermined by management failings. Similarly, its partners' confidence in the Centre can also easily be undermined by poor performance on this front. This is why the Director has made clear his objective to have the EMCDDA recognised not only for its scientific excellence but also as a model of a well-run agency. To this end a management action plan has been prepared which is informed by the recent recommendations made by the Commission's Internal Audit Unit. The explicit commitment to good governance in the work programme will be supported by a quality assurance strategy which will provide concrete indicators so that progress in this area can be monitored. A key aspect of good governance that applies to both the administrative and scientific work of the EMCDDA is that resources should be used as efficiently as possible so as to gain maximum value from the investment made in the Centre's work.

Top-level priorities

Three top-level priorities have been identified for this work programme.

1. To focus on the core business of the Centre by making it an explicit top-level priority **to consolidate monitoring and reporting activities** and the related activities to support capacity building and ongoing improvements in data quality and compatibility. The aim here is to build upon the existing information tools and mechanisms, which now provide a sound foundation for information collection at the European level and to ensure maximum possible implementation and thereby data availability.

2. To ensure that maximum analytical value is derived from the data collected by making it a explicit top-level priority to **enhance the analysis of data** to inform policy-relevant questions and needs. This will involve greater work with national experts, increased investment in analytical activities within the EMCDDA and increased emphasis on statistical modelling and transversal and multi-indicator data synthesis. This priority takes forward the working approach reflected in the recent reorganisation of the Centre's scientific programmes.

3. Greater data availability and improved analysis is not of great value if it does not find its way into appropriate products and outputs. To **communicate more effectively with key target audiences** is the third top-level priority of the new work programme. All current investments will be scrutinised to ensure that they have the potential to be included in an EMCDDA product. A new communication strategy will also delineate different audience needs and products and set minimum performance targets. Emphasis will be placed on ensuring that information is effectively disseminated in products tailored to the needs of the EMCDDA's key target audiences.

Table 1: Summary of transversal principles and top-level priorities			
	Consolidate monitoring and reporting activities	**Enhance data analysis**	**Communicate more effectively**
Scientific excellence	Scientifically sound reporting system and tools Support for capacity building and training in Member States External cooperation and information and expertise exchange with other international organisations and monitoring institutions EMCDDA guidelines and methodological know-how established as a monitoring quality standard worldwide Identification of emerging issues Improved data management and validation procedures and tools (including Fonte)	Analytical power through combined and cross-indicator analysis and statistical modelling EU comparative studies Greater transversal analysis and trend analysis over time Knowledge transfer from science to policy and practice Evidence-based practices and evaluation guidelines Information and expertise exchange with the scientific community	Clear, efficient and mutually agreed technical guidelines for data reporting activities (between the EMCDDA and its technical partners) Improved website structure and dissemination, tailored to audience needs Better and more analytical products tailored to audience needs (policy, science and practice) Comprehensive presentation of available data through statistical bulletin, data archive and web-based elements including downloadable tables and interactive graphics
Commitment to partnership	Synergy with other international and EU public health and statistical reporting organisations (e.g. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, Eurostat, Europol) Avoid duplication of effort with other reporting agencies (e.g. Europol) Contribute to international dialogue as a specialised data provider for Europe Technical backstopping for EU capacity building and knowledge transfer programmes (when requested)	Trend and comparative analysis in support of EU action plan objectives and actions Contribution to implementation of current EU action plan (2005–2008) in close cooperation with European Commission and Europol Scientific and technical support, when requested and appropriate, to EU institutions' and Member States' drug-related activities	Regular consultation and established communication channels with key partners (EU institutions, Management Board, Scientific Committee, Member States, national focal points, scientific community, etc.) Clear and efficient editorial strategy, with well-defined identities for the different products Revisited and regularly reviewed memoranda of understanding Joint publications with other agencies Presentation of the European situation at appropriate international fora
Good governance and efficiency	Rationalised (cost-effective) data collection requests, in close consultation with national focal points and European experts Data quality management strategy implemented Data collection networks management improved and more cost-effective Scientific work supported by responsive administrative processes	Peer-reviewed analytical outputs as much as possible Increased EMCDDA Scientific Committee input into implementation of scientific work programme EU expert support on strategic scientific decisions and outputs Indicators for quality assurance	Rationalised organisational chart and working processes Improved internal communication Improved management methods Increased transparency of management rules and their application

II. Building on achievements and adapting to changing circumstances

A sound model for European-level data collection

When the EMCDDA started its work to develop a European-level information system on drugs, very little information allowing comparison between Member States existed, approaches to the topic varied greatly and in many countries capacity for drug monitoring was extremely limited. It was not at that time possible to talk meaningfully about the European drug problem or to identify with confidence trends and emerging problems. It was also not really possible to have an insight into the responses implemented by Member States to cope with national problems.

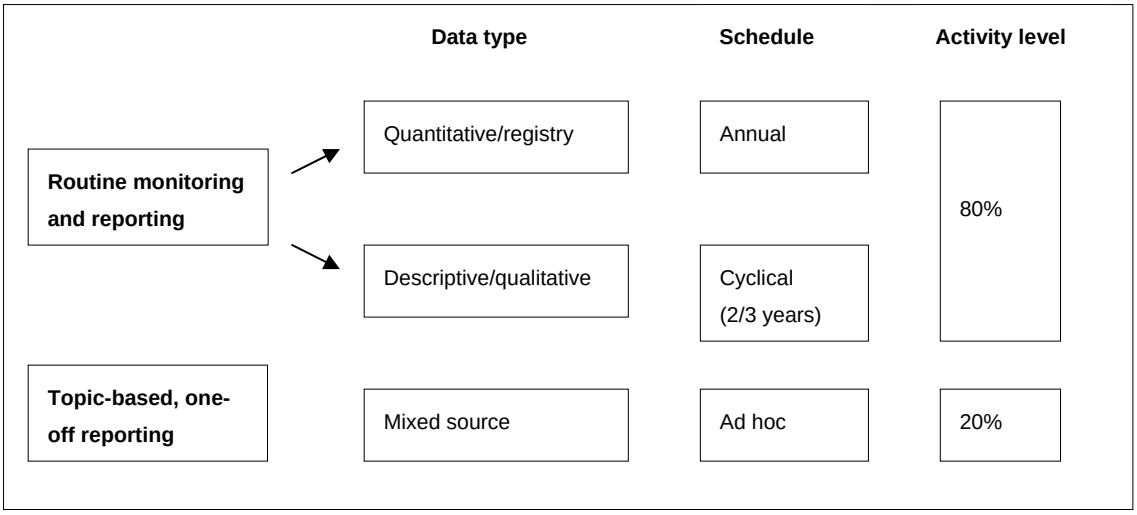
The first task was to work with Member States and national experts to establish the mechanisms and methodological tools to support European-level data collection and analysis. This approach required sustained investment over time and a commitment to collecting information in a scientifically rigorous fashion. It also required the parallel development of a reporting structure that was sensitive to the differing national contexts within the Member States but also normative in promoting common protocols and practices. Over time this developmental approach has borne fruit. Whilst it is undeniable that much work remains to be done, both the reporting tools and the Reitox network that support them have become recognised as representing the 'gold standard' for how to establish a regional drug monitoring capacity. Both globally and within other areas of social and health monitoring in Europe, the EMCDDA approach is increasingly viewed as a model of good practice. Today, we can talk with far more confidence about patterns and trends in drug use in Europe, we can better describe the nature and scale of responses, and we can even identify what appear to be promising approaches. A common information framework is now available to support the European debate on drug use, which has itself become both richer and more productive. These achievements are a result of the investments made by the Member States in data collection, the insights and scientific progress made by European experts working together and the work by the European institutions and Member States to develop a coordination framework for working at European level to address drug problems.

Setting priorities for ongoing monitoring

Information collection is costly and ongoing monitoring requires sustained investment over time. This work programme recognises that information collection needs to be done in the most effective manner possible, focusing on those areas most useful for informing policy development. Furthermore, the EMCDDA affirms that it must provide added value in its European-level reporting that cannot be accrued from individual national data sets.

The starting point for this 3-year work programme is to focus on the core business of monitoring key aspects of the drugs phenomenon. The founding regulation gives clear guidance in this respect and forms the basis for the EMCDDA's current conceptual framework for information collection. The current reporting framework covers the drug situation, based principally on epidemiological key indicators; responses by Member States, in particular tracking service development and an evolving understanding of what constitutes good practice; and policy and legal developments. The monitoring strategy is not intended to extend the reporting framework to new areas. Rather the strategic priority is to concentrate efforts on those key areas that are suitable for long-term monitoring, essential for understanding the drug issue and achievable at national and European level. Such data provide a foundation for more complex analysis and the reliable identification of trends over time. This approach will also free up capacity within the system to look at important and topical issues on a timely one-off basis. It is envisaged that an appropriate balance for operational efficiency would be a target of 20% of operational activity devoted to ad hoc topic-based activities, with routine monitoring requirements absorbing the remaining 80%.

Figure 1: Balance between systematic and ongoing monitoring and one-off topical analysis



EMCDDA regulation and the EU drug strategy and action plan

As always, the EMCDDA's work programme is founded on its regulation. In this respect, the emphasis remains the provision of comparable and high-quality information on the drug situation. However, the planned recast of the regulation is anticipated here and influences some of the detail of the activities proposed. In particular, the following developments are likely: the explicit mention of poly-drug use, the need to elaborate tools for evaluation, more emphasis on identifying and disseminating evidence-based best practice and the explicit mention of the need to provide information resources in support of the EU drugs action plan.

Work in support of the Commission in its evaluation of the EU action plan on drugs (2000–2004) formed an important component of the work of the EMCDDA during that period, If anything, the more specific and detailed list of indicators in the action plan (2005–2008) that supports the new EU drugs strategy places greater demands on the EMCDDA as an information provider and technical resource. This challenge is recognised as a central element of the new work programme, which is informed by the clear mention of the EMCDDA in the action plan document as well as the need to provide analyses of long-term trends to support an impact assessment.

Exploiting the gains made in the 2004–2006 work programme

The commitment to enhance knowledge management made in the 2004–2006 work programme will be consolidated and built upon in the 2007–2009 work programme. In its first phase, work in this area has focused on the mechanisms for data acquisition and on reporting structures. The focus of attention will now shift to ensuring that data are available for analysis and to the mechanisms for retrieving and disseminating information.

The 2004–2006 work programme saw a significant revision of the tools, methods and electronic services that support the data collection, cleaning and validation, perennial storage, data mining and production processes, with interfaces and formats adapted to the different actors and work processes. The purpose of this was to secure a solid basis for sustainable growth in knowledge management. Much energy and many resources have gone into assessing the technical needs/requirements of the different actors and targets involved, and to conceptualising and designing the appropriate and efficient solution. The project which has been developed as the new infrastructure for data acquisition and management, Fonte, will be fully implemented during the course of the new work programme.

Enlargement and capacity building

A key challenge faced by the EMCDDA in the last 3 years has been to integrate the new members to the European Union into the data reporting cycles. The working practices of the EMCDDA have been adapted to cater for a larger membership, and support has been given to capacity building within the new Member States to allow them to participate fully in the EMCDDA work programme. Although data collection is still less developed in some of the new Member States, considerable progress has been made in achieving their integration into EMCDDA activities and working processes. This is evidenced by the fact that in the Centre's 2006 reporting exercise it is no longer meaningful to talk about the new Member States as a homogeneous grouping.

Valuable lessons have been learned in supporting integration. Amongst these are the recognition that investment in quality control and establishing a closer dialogue with national focal points to better understand the specific detail of the national data collection situation are key requirements for capacity building. Therefore, targeted support will be offered to address identified needs, both structural and technical, using materials already developed for the Reitox Academy. Both old and new Member States require support to improve the overall availability of data on the drug situation in Europe.

Meeting the challenges of an evolving drug situation and a changing policy landscape

Although well served by its existing model for data collection, the EMCDDA does need to reconfigure its activities to take into account the challenges presented by an evolving drug situation and a changing policy landscape. In significant respects the nature of the drug problem has become more heterogeneous. This has been matched by an increasing development of responses and accompanied by a policy framework at European level that puts growing demands on the provision of high-quality, reliable and timely information.

This places a number of demands on the work of the EMCDDA if it is to fulfil its remit as the central reference point for information on drugs in Europe. Among the key challenges for the EMCDDA are to extend the monitoring of problem drug use beyond the current focus on opiate use and injecting.

As drug problems have evolved in Europe, so too have the level and diversity of interventions that Member States have made in response. Many of the recent reporting tools developed by the EMCDDA have focused on better describing demand reduction actions by providing a conceptual framework for reporting on prevention, treatment and harm reduction-oriented services. The new structured questionnaire reporting format was specifically developed to allow for descriptive reporting of this sort of activity and benefits from permitting more flexible reporting cycles. However, an important but currently underdeveloped area of work for the EMCDDA is to place the descriptive data in the context of identifying and sharing information on best practices. At the centre of the EMCDDA's approach here has been the EDDRA (Exchange on Drug Demand Reduction Action) database, which is currently under review and which will be re-engineered to provide enhanced capacity for disseminating the lessons that have been learned by Member States in developing effective demand reduction interventions.

New Council Decision on psychoactive substances

Since June 1997, the EMCDDA and Europol have been tasked with the implementation of the Joint Action concerning the information exchange, risk assessment and control of new synthetic drugs. The two organisations have developed a mechanism for the rapid exchange of information – an early-warning system (EWS) on new synthetic drugs. This is supplemented by a procedure for assessing possible risks, including health and social risks, caused by the use of and traffic in new synthetic drugs, and possible consequences of prohibition. Six new synthetic drugs have been made the subject of control at EU level since the mechanism

has been launched, and the EWS provides additional value through the provision of information to the EU institutions and Member States.

New challenges were set by Council Decision 2005/387/JHA of 10 May 2005 on the information exchange, risk assessment and control of new psychoactive substances, which broadened the scope of the mechanism. It will provide the framework for the EMCDDA both to improve the efficiency of the current mechanism, especially in terms of timely reporting, and to develop the linkage to the ongoing work of the Centre to better identify emerging trends.

Towards a comprehensive understanding of the drug situation: information on public safety, the drug market and its supply

Although the data collected by EMCDDA are predominantly public health orientated, data on supply-side issues, particularly drug law offences, market information and measuring perceived drug availability, have historically been important. Core data collection in this area already includes data on drug seizures and drug law offences and monitoring of legal developments and frameworks. Drug markets, legal and criminal justice issues, and drug availability questions have played an important part in recent EMCDDA reports. However, this area of work needs to be more strategically integrated into the monitoring and reporting activities of the Centre, with greater emphasis placed on improved and transversal analysis. Important here will be closer cooperation with Europol, building upon the recently agreed action plan for the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement, which clearly identifies areas of responsibility and also commits the parties to sharing appropriate information. In the context of the EU action plan on drugs (2000–2004), the two organisations worked successfully on developing a conceptual framework for exploring the relationship between drug use and criminality, which provides a useful basis for future work in this area.

III. Goals and outcomes

For each strategic priority, a number of specific goals have been defined. These goals and their expected outcomes are elaborated below and summarised in the supporting tables.

III.1 Consolidate monitoring and reporting activities (priority 1)

Further improvement of data collection tools

After 10 years of developing monitoring capacity and expertise on the drugs phenomenon, the EMCDDA has developed a set of methodological guidelines, protocols and data collection instruments that allow the collection of information covering the key aspects of the phenomenon, ranging from key epidemiological information to policy instruments such as coordination mechanisms or laws. Today, a common language is available to describe both the epidemiological situation and the responses and policies to the drugs phenomenon, although in general information sources are currently less developed in the areas of interventions and policies.

Among the key challenges for the EMCDDA is to extend the monitoring of problem drug use beyond its current focus on opiate use and injecting to encompass a broader set of problem behaviours. Included in this question are the complex issues of poly-drug use and the difficulties of reporting on those who have problems with both licit and illicit psychoactive substances. Methodological protocols and data collection tools have to be adapted and developed so as to better account for the changing patterns of drug use and its consequences observed across Europe. The estimation techniques currently used need to be developed such that they become more sensitive to the range of drugs being used. Although problematic opiate use remains an important facet of the European drug problem, we are now facing a more heterogeneous situation that requires the Centre's instruments to be fine-tuned and its analytical perspective on how drug problems are quantified to be developed. As the nature of the chronic drug problem evolves in Europe, so too do the responses made by Member States to it. For example, treatment activity targeting cannabis, cocaine and amphetamines has increased but is poorly served by existing reporting tools. Therefore, a parallel development in monitoring tools is required to ensure that the EMCDDA analysis of responses remains appropriate.

The overall stability of the data collection system, over time, remains a key condition for diachronic comparison and trends analysis. Nonetheless, the data collection system needs to be efficient, and so identifying poorly performing areas is a necessary activity. In particular, data collection tools that have been developed separately need to be checked to ensure that they are complementary and do not overlap in scope. It is also important, given the overall pressures on the system, to ensure that the reporting tools are realistic with regard to the availability of data at national level. Identifying and abandoning poorly performing tools can free up resources for more productive activity.

This review of tools is particularly timely as the EMCDDA and Reitox introduced a modified reporting system, which included a range of new reporting tools, during the 2004–2006 period. These new tools are currently being assessed, and work to rationalise the data collection system will be concluded in the new work programme. This will result in reporting tools that are not only methodologically sound but that also have a common format with clear instruction set, a suitable interface for online data submission and appropriate intervals and format. Efficiency will be improved by eliminating data requests in areas in which the information does not have the potential to contribute meaningfully to EMCDDA outputs.

A more efficient data management approach

The sound management of data is integral to the consolidation of the reporting system, and the emphasis to date has been on improving the efficiency of procedures, data quality checking and ensuring that the information collected has analytical value. However, considerable resources are currently consumed by data management tasks, and demands in this area are increasing as the EMCDDA data set grows. An improved data handling system is essential. To meet this challenge, the EMCDDA's new data management system, Fonte, a high priority project for the Centre and the Reitox network, will come on stream in 2007. It will remove the need for repeat validation of historical data and heighten efficiency in the Reitox/EMCDDA data submission and checking procedures as well as facilitate data retrieval. Fonte builds on the knowledge management approach established in the 2004–2006 work programme.

Supporting the development of reporting capacity

Consolidation of the monitoring framework needs to be supported by, and is dependent on, investment in capacity building. In this context, the EMCDDA will produce an annual audit on the state of the art in the implementation of the main areas of the reporting system, such as the epidemiological key indicators. This information is useful to identify priority areas for investment in data collection and areas in which the Centre can work with Member States to address technical and structural needs. The implementation of the key indicators is essential to monitoring trends in the European drug situation, and supporting Member States in this task is therefore a core activity for the EMCDDA. Assistance will continue to be provided to candidate countries to prepare for their membership of the Centre. In close consultation with the European Commission, and taking into account EMCDDA resources and priorities, additional technical support will be given to other non-EU countries on an ad hoc basis.

Taking a comprehensive approach

Although the majority of scientific resources and activities will be spent on consolidating and reviewing the data collection and management system, the EMCDDA also intends to develop its capacity for reporting on crime and supply issues. Data on drug seizures and drug law offences have always been an important part of the Centre's core data set and are well-developed areas that make an important contribution to reporting.

In the supply area, the EMCDDA to a large extent utilises information from other sources, with monitoring activities restricted to areas that are clearly not duplicative. The current need is not to extend monitoring, but rather to develop a clearer conceptual work plan, with the emphasis on improving analysis of the information available and its synthesis within the overall reporting of drug trends in Europe. Describing trends in the drug market and the availability of different types of substances provides important contextual information that complements the epidemiological data and contributes to an understanding of the likely public health impact of different patterns of consumption. Recent examples are drugs and driving, public nuisance, measuring the availability of drugs at street level and calculating European-level consumption estimates.

Analysis and reporting on supply issues need to be informed by a close dialogue with those with specialised technical understanding of drug control issues and developments. To this end the clarity provided by the Cooperation Agreement between Europol and the EMCDDA is important in underpinning the closer working relationship that both organisations are committed to.

Table 2: Consolidate monitoring and reporting activities (priority 1)	
Main goals	**Main outcomes**
Improve data collection tools (develop, implement and fine-tune monitoring tools as required) • epidemiological key indicator data • core data areas (markets and availability, youth and vulnerability, social exclusion, new trends and patterns of use, polydrug use) • action on new drugs (formally Joint Action on new synthetic drugs) • political and institutional framework and coordination arrangements • legal framework and practice • public expenditure, costs and funding arrangements • prevention • drug-related treatment and social reintegration • prevention of health consequences (infectious diseases and deaths) • assistance to drug users in the criminal justice system Develop situation assessment tools and methodological guidelines for monitoring activities necessary for EU action plan Improve data management system Increase coverage and quality of data for all Member States Prepare applicant countries for entry to the EMCDDA Improve data availability on supply issues Further develop the quality assurance policy for products/data submitted to the EMCDDA	Review of current reporting tools available to guide revision and fine-tuning exercise Rationalised and fine-tuned instruments (national reports, structured questionnaires and standard tables) to: • assure objective, reliable and comparable information from national focal points • optimise the cost–benefit ratio of data collected • define appropriate reporting intervals • improve harmonisation of national reporting activities • develop ad hoc reporting tools for one-off projects • ensure that data requests are of analytical value • provide standardised format and clearer methodological guidelines Audit of implementation level of key indicators Rationalised reporting requests to other information networks and sources and closer cooperation with other information providers (particularly in the area of supply) More active involvement of the Scientific Committee Streamlined online reporting interface implemented (Fonte) Targeted support provided to Member States for technical and institutional capacity building Rationalised set of training and technical guidance materials available online Active assistance programme delivered to candidate countries to EU Improved data submissions by Member States Improved reporting of best practice and research developments Comprehensive database with qualitative and quantitative data on drug-related situation, responses and policy at the disposal of policy makers, professionals and researchers in Member States Data requirements necessary for EMCDDA contribution to evaluation of EU action plan met

III.2 Enhanced analysis of data (priority 2)

Improvements in the quality of data will enable the Centre to better exploit the knowledge available and to focus more scientific resources on in-depth analyses. To fulfil its role as a catalyst for European-level data synthesis, the Centre will need to continue the process of developing in-house analytical capacity. Areas where internal expertise was lacking have and are being made a priority for recruitment. Increased analytical capacity will allow the Centre to be more ambitious in the planned scientific outputs for this work programme.

Supporting the EU action plan

Enhanced analytical capacity will be of particular relevance in the evaluation of the EU drugs action plan (2005–2008), to which the EMCDDA is requested to contribute. It will enable the Centre not only to better assist the European Commission in annually assessing the level of implementation of the actions foreseen in the action plan (annual review), but also to provide a more evidence-based and analytical contribution to the 2008 EU action plan final evaluation (impact assessment). The statistical analysis and synthesis of data on developments in the European drugs phenomenon produced in this exercise will facilitate discussion on impact evaluation and help the European Commission to gain a more precise insight into the results that have been achieved (in particular in the demand reduction field) and to identify the work that remains to be done.

Bringing together the European evidence base

The EMCDDA will continue to develop and strengthen partnerships with organisations that can provide it with supplementary information and expertise. It will also continue to develop its role as specialist information provider on drugs to other EU bodies. In particular, the Centre will cooperate closely with DG Sanco and with Eurostat to make available specialist information on drugs where required and will ensure that its work contributes to developing European public health initiatives, such as the public health portal and European-level surveys. The Centre will also look for synergy and complementarity with its sister agencies, in particular the European Centre for Disease Control and the European Medicines Agency.

Increased importance is given in this work programme to the synthesis of research and to establishing a closer dialogue with the scientific community across Europe. This is in recognition of the fact that research conducted both within the EU and internationally is important for informing EMCDDA reporting and that the role of the Centre is to provide European-level added value, not to replicate research activities better conducted at national level. A new Scientific Partners and Documentation Unit has been created to provide support to the EMCDDA's scientific units, to facilitate access to research findings, to enhance the visibility of the EMCDDA in the scientific community, and to facilitate information exchange on European research initiatives.

More attention will be paid to identifying the policy implications of research findings, such as new developments in genetics and neuroscience, and to reporting on major new research initiatives, which will be summarised annually.

Understanding what works

The rationale for better information on the drug situation is to develop effective interventions, and thus an important role of the Centre is to facilitate information sharing between Member States on their experiences of responding to drug problems. Identifying and disseminating information on best practice is therefore given special note in this work programme. This can be seen as a direct response to a need identified in the recast of the Centre's founding regulation and to the activities necessary for the EMCDDA's contribution to the implementation of the EU drugs action plan (2005–2008).

The Centre has been developing tools to collect better information on levels of activity in drug demand reduction (prevention, treatment and social integration and harm reduction). A stronger focus will now be given to monitoring evaluated interventions and to auditing quality standards developed in EU countries. The EDDRA database will be re-engineered to serve as a repository for best practice and evaluated actions with the intention of developing the Centre's role in encouraging the adoption of recognised quality standards. Important areas for analysis will be the synthesis of data from availability and coverage indicators, especially in the area of drug treatment, and reporting on effective responses to those groups identified as being most at risk.

An early warning on new threats and developments

Implementing the new Council Decision on psychoactive substances will require increased investment in the EWS network, including the introduction of new working methods at national level. A smooth transition from the joint action to the new mechanism has now been achieved and the system works well to facilitate the timely collection of information. The broadening of the scope of the work does mean that new types of substances and medicinal products are now likely to be included, and this will require both the modification of some existing working methods and closer collaboration with key partners (in particular Europol, the EMEA and the national focal points).

The EMCDDA and Europol have agreed to prepare new guidelines for the information exchange/early warning, which will be implemented during this work programme. The guidelines will assist the EWS partners in introducing new working methods, taking into account the individual countries' specific needs and situations. A more integrated approach to enable the collection, monitoring and exchange of information on emerging trends in the use of existing substances and on possible public health-related measures needs to be developed. This is facilitated by the reorganisation of the scientific departments at the EMCDDA, which allows greater transversal cooperation between the work undertaken for the Council Decision and the ongoing activities of the Centre to identify new trends in drug use and emerging threats to public health and safety.

Table 3: Enhanced analysis of data (priority 2)	
Main goals	**Main outcomes**
Improve and strengthen analysis on each key indicator area and core data including the development of multi-indicator models Improve analysis of trends in the European drug situation, including polydrug use and provide more sensitive information on emerging developments Obtain a more comprehensive picture of the EU drug situation through the synthesis of data from demand and supply Achieve a comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of the results from European and international research activity in relevant areas Identify the policy implications of the analyses arising from EMCDDA reporting and analysis Implement the Council Decision on new psychoactive substances effectively Implement better cooperation and information and expertise exchange with scientists, EU institutions, national focal points and international organisations Ensure a greater input from the Scientific Committee into EMCDDA's scientific outputs Form more developed links and joint analytical work with specialised technical and scientific networks Conduct analytical exercises necessary for the EMCDDA contribution to the evaluation of the EU action plan Identify and disseminate good and evidence-based practices Make the EMCDDA data set more accessible to the research community Analyse better the availability of demand reduction interventions and the extent to which they address needs (coverage) Achieve a greater impact of EMCDDA studies on the scientific community	Improved analysis and better exploitation of data to provide enhanced insight into: • emergence of new trends and their impact and consequences • scale of drug use (with its different patterns), and levels of associated problems • relationship between patterns of use and consequences • polydrug use • trends in treatment demand and supply and coverage of demand reduction activities • HIV and HCV trend model • risk/protective factors, individual and social factors, market and crime issues • diversity, availability, coverage, quality and effectiveness of responses and other interventions and instruments • implementation of laws, policy and coordination mechanisms • public expenditure and cost of illness and interventions • multi-indicator model of long-term trends in drug use in Europe • developments in European drug treatment capacity and need Literature reviews (internal and external) and synthesis of research results to complement EMCDDA data and analysis in key areas including a synthesis of intervention and drug policy evaluation studies External cooperation and information and expertise exchange developed and improved Early-warning system for detecting new psychoactive substances and emerging trends established and efficiently functioning Expert networks and relations with the scientific community established, developed and maintained Increased involvement of the Scientific Committee in analysis conducted by the EMCDDA Up-to-date overview of European research activities Re-engineered and rationalised EDDRA and EIB. A web-based resource area on evidence-based practices and evaluation guidelines for interventions available Contribution to annual reviews of current EU action plan (2005–2008) Statistical model of developments in European drug phenomenon to facilitate discussions on impact evaluation of EU action plan Contribution to the preparation of next EU action plan (2009–2012) Increased level of publication in scientific journals arising from EMCDDA activities

III.3. Communicate more effectively with key audiences (priority 3)

The data collected and analysed by the Centre are of little value if not disseminated in an appropriate fashion. Part of the added value that the EMCDDA's expertise provides is to interpret the complex and multifaceted information available in a way that is meaningful and useful for policy-makers and each of its other target audiences.

This approach is evident in the key objectives of the EMCDDA's existing communication strategy, which are to:

- ensure that the information produced by the Centre is tailored to the needs of its target groups and that it is analytical, up to date, concise and in the right format;
- raise awareness of the European drug problem in general, and of the role of the EMCDDA in particular, via a broad yet targeted dissemination of the information produced by the Centre;
- promote the EMCDDA as a centre of excellence among drug experts, researchers and practitioners by producing information of a high scientific standard.

To help achieve these objectives, the Centre has designed a comprehensive set of communication tools, which are configured to the needs of particular user groups. An important aspect of the new work programme will be to review these tools, improve the linkage and coordination with the work of the scientific units and for the first time set minimum performance targets for outputs of the Centre (see Table 4).

Improving linkage between communication activities and scientific work

Improving the linkage of the communication strategy with the strategy for developing the scientific work of the Centre is a key part of an overall more efficient management of the resources of the organisation. An overarching vision is necessary, coordinating and linking the individual elements of data collection, analysis and reporting into a coherent process that results in a planned stream of clearly delineated outputs. Making this connection is part of the rationale for the recent development of the knowledge management and scientific coordination capacity of the Centre.

An important consideration in examining the linkage between the inputs to the Centre and the outputs is that it informs the ongoing work to rationalise the reporting framework. In simple terms, if information does not have the potential to inform the Centre's reporting activities then serious consideration must be given to stopping its collection, thereby freeing up capacity for more productive activities. However, there are two important caveats: some tools in the developmental and testing phase, while not currently useful, may have the potential to inform future reporting, and some limited information available within the EMCDDA is necessarily of a sensitive and confidential nature and not intended for further dissemination.

Tailoring products to information needs

The existing products of the Centre have been conceived with a user focus in mind. However, in recent years the EMCDDA has had to address the problem of insufficient scientific capacity while at the same time facing increasing demands on the scientific teams as they responded to the challenge of European enlargement. As a result, the focus of the Centre's work was on ensuring the quality of its main product, the annual report, whilst at the same time concentrating available resources on data processing and acquisition. With this work programme the Centre is now able to move forward and focus more attention on analysis and increase its outputs. To accomplish this there is now a need to take stock and to reinvigorate the existing products of the Centre so that an appropriate balance is achieved with respect to each target audience. The objective of the exercise is for the annual report package to be supported by a range of complementary products.

The information the Centre produces can be thought of having interest for four main audiences: policy-makers in the first place, but also scientists and researchers, practitioners and the general public. The task of the

Centre is to speak to each of these groups in an appropriate language and thereby provide them with information that is useful and accessible. Reporting on drug use often means that technically complex issues have to be addressed. Information sources are diverse, and all sources have their strengths and weakness. Moreover, the methods used to gather information in this area are themselves complex and influence how the data should be interpreted. The tools the EMCDDA works with are designed to produce methodologically sound and comparable data. They are not uniformly implemented and have to be adapted to the differing national context found in the European Member States. Thus, assessing the reliability of data and the extent to which it can be compared is a key and ongoing part of the work of the technical staff of the Centre. A further task is to interpret this complexity into dissemination products that do not misrepresent the data but at the same time are appropriate for the needs and interests of the target audience.

Speaking to policy

A principal task of the EMCDDA is to support evidence-based policy-making on drugs by providing the information necessary for an informed policy discourse. Policy-makers are therefore a key target group at both European and national level. Policy-makers have a need for highly synthesised information and for information addressing specific policy options in detail. Information on emerging threats and good practice is also of particular interest to them.

Among current outputs the annual report, the *Drugs in focus* policy briefing series, risk assessment reports, the European Database on Demand Reduction Actions (EDDRA) and the European Legal Database on Drugs (ELDD) are all intended to be directly relevant for informing the policy process.

The *Drugs in focus* policy briefings are designed specifically to provide a summary of key policy issues on selected topics. In the new work programme attention will be given to ensuring regular output of this series and more attention will be given to selecting issues to reflect either more complicated policy questions or issues that are of particular relevance.

Speaking to science

Scientists and researchers working on drugs issues are key partners for the Centre and represent an important audience for its products. This discourse is essential for informing the development of evidence-based policies as it is through scientific study and reporting that the evidence base is assembled. The EMCDDA is committed to respecting scientific principles of transparency and replication. An important part of dissemination to the scientific community is ensuring that the data tables are available to researchers and that the analysis done by the Centre is made public for technical scrutiny. The statistical bulletin provides access to all EMCDDA historical data sets. In the commentary to the statistical bulletin, a more technical discussion is available that supports the summary analysis found in the annual report. The EMCDDA technical working groups also are encouraged to publish in peer-reviewed scientific journals, the recognised standard for scientific quality. The EMCDDA scientific monographs, scientific reports, thematic papers and technical data sheets as well as presentations at scientific conferences are all of direct relevance for the scientific audience.

The new scientific support unit is intended to act as a bridge between the EMCDDA and the scientific world and will assist in fine-tuning products for this audience. Tailored online resources will be developed providing access to overviews of research, researchers and an update on scientific developments. A new review of important research studies conducted across the EU will be produced as a supplement to the annual report.

Speaking to practice

As greater investments are made across Europe in services both to meet the needs of those with drug problems and to prevent drug problems developing in the first place, the importance of sharing understanding

about what constitutes effective ways of working and good practice grows. It is anticipated that the recast of the EMCDDA regulation will explicitly mention the importance of disseminating best practice and in the new work programme increased emphasis will be placed on outputs geared to the need of those working in drug prevention, treatment and harm reduction services. EMCDDA activities in this area will include the dissemination of programme planning and development tools, streamlining access to the EDDRA database on demand reduction best practice and providing access to national guidelines for structuring drug treatment.

Examples of products designed to serve this audience are the EMCDDA Insights and Manual series as well as thematic topic-based analyses and websites such as PERK (Prevention Evaluation Resources Kit).

Speaking to the European citizen

The drugs issue is one that is of immense importance and interest to the citizens of Europe. Drug use is also an important topic of study for many young Europeans. As a result, the EMCDDA regularly receives requests for information from individuals across Europe on various aspects of the drugs problem. Although the resources of the Centre are limited, it responds positively to such requests. In the discharge of the 2003 EMCDDA budget the European Parliament welcomed the agency's communication strategy and its commitment to informing the general public.

The media campaigns and the annual report of the EMCDDA are intended to disseminate information to the wide population. Whilst respecting the important role of the EMCDDA as a specialist information centre and the need not to duplicate other information sources providing direct information on drugs, more attention will be focused on developing the online reporting tools to be user friendly and appropriate to non-specialists. There will be content synergy with the European public health portal – the gateway through which European citizens can obtain information on public health. Information will also be packaged with the needs of students in mind, building on the fact that colleges and universities across Europe are increasingly using EMCDDA dissemination tools as a study resource. Focal points also play an important role in communicating with citizens on the drugs issue.

Table 4: Communicating more effectively (priority 3) **Top-level summary of minimum output targets for 2007–2009 work programme (WP)**					
Output/product	Policy	Other target audiences			Timeframe and target
		Science	Practice	Citizen	
Annual report	✔	✔	✔	✔	Annual (three in WP)
Statistical bulletin (web based)	✔	✔			Annual (three in WP)
Drug profiles (web based)		✔	✔	✔	All major drug types by end WP
Country situation summaries and data profiles (web based)	✔		✔	✔	Annual update 29 countries
Country intervention profiles (web based)	✔			✔	Annual update 29 countries
Fonte (EMCDDA/Reitox data collection, validation, storage and retrieval system)		✔	✔		Operational end 2007
European overview report on interventions and policy	✔		✔	✔	Ad hoc, according to the cycles of reporting tools
Articles/papers in peer-reviewed scientific journals		✔	✔		Ad hoc
Drugs in focus policy briefings	✔				Three per year (nine in WP)
EMCDDA Insights	✔		✔		One per year (three in WP)
EMCDDA Manuals			✔		One per year (three in WP)
EMCDDA scientific monographs		✔	✔		One every 2 years (two in WP)
Technical data sheets (in-depth analysis of trends)	✔	✔			Ad hoc (four in WP)
Technical papers and European situation snapshot in support of EU action plan	✔				Every year (technical papers) and every 4 years (European situation snapshot)
Guidelines for risk assessment of new psychoactive substances		✔			Established in WP
EDDRA and EIB	✔		✔		Re-engineered best practice database. Fully operational 2008
ELDD and legal topic overviews	✔	✔	✔		Ongoing update (ELDD) and annual (three legal topic overviews per year)
Online instrument database			✔		Fully implemented in WP
Up-to-date overview of drug-related research (web based)	✔	✔			Ongoing
Drugnet Europe newsletter	✔	✔	✔	✔	Four per year (12 in WP)
Participation in conferences	✔	✔	✔		Ongoing

IV. Means and resources – adequacy and efficiency

In order to implement its work programme for 2007–2009, the EMCDDA needs to have adequate resources available and also to work at improving its efficiency and effectiveness.

In accordance with the financial regulation applicable to the EMCDDA, these resources will be defined and provided with the adoption of the relevant EMCDDA annual work programmes and budgets.

In its communication to the Council and the European Parliament on the establishment of a framework programme on Fundamental Rights and Justice for the 2007–2013 period (see COM(2005)122 final of 06/04/05), the European Commission (EC) foresaw a global amount of €110,600,000 for the EC annual subsidy to the EMCDDA budget over the same period (figure for EU-25). Following the last agreement on the 2007–2013 financial perspectives this amount is now estimated at €96,000,000.

Without presupposing the relevant decisions to be taken by the EU budgetary authority on this matter, this could be considered as a reference framework/ceiling likely to be taken into account for the definition of the EMCDDA annual budgets for the 2007–2009 period.

Improving efficiency and effectiveness

Improving efficiency and effectiveness will remain crucial to ensure that the EMCDDA is in a better position to meet the objectives set, while coping with budgetary constraints.

Further to the planned improvements in the processes relating to the EMCDDA core business (data collection, analysis, outputs, communication and dissemination) described above, the EMCDDA will pursue efforts to improve the internal processes and activities aimed at providing support to its core business. In this context, special attention will be paid to the effectiveness and efficiency of management and control processes, to enhance the EMCDDA's ability to function as a knowledge-based, service-oriented, best-practice public administration.

Further to the measures already taken in 2005 or launched in 2006 by way of follow-up of the audit carried out in 2005 by the Internal Audit Service of the EC (new streamlined organisational structure, measures to improve the execution of the EMCDDA work programme and budget, strengthening of the capacity for human resources management, improved processes for staff recruitment, appraisal and promotion, better delegation of the powers of the EMCDDA authorising officer, improved procedures for public procurements and segregation of roles in financial processes), this effort will aim in particular:

- to develop an internal capacity for risk assessment and internal audit;
- to enhance effectiveness and efficiency in the use of the assigned resources, namely by focusing available resources on priorities, further rationalising and standardising relevant processes, developing tools and procedures for integrated resources management and promoting external synergies, particularly with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA);
- to implement a more structured and effective human resources policy, namely developing the necessary legal and management tools and processes and adopting a 3-year staff policy plan geared to the specific needs of the EMCDDA and informed by the 'Guidelines on staff policy in the European regulatory agencies' adopted by the EC and aimed at all community agencies.

New and additional activities

Any possible need for implementing new or additional activities and tasks which are not covered by this work programme will require a prior feasibility evaluation to be carried out on the basis of an assessment and

possible revision and re-definition of the EMCDDA's overall working priorities. As a result of this exercise, an estimate of the actual needs for adequate supplementary resources or possible savings will be drawn up.

At the moment it is possible to anticipate that over the 2007–2009 period specific supplementary budgetary needs could be required for:

- the possible further enlargement of the European Union to new acceding countries (the EMCDDA 2007 preliminary draft budget adopted by the Management Board at the beginning of 2006 already takes into account the impact of the expected accession of Bulgaria and Romania, maintaining in 2007 the same total amount of appropriations earmarked under the 2006 budget for the EMCDDA financing of the REITOX National Focal Points);
- the need for the EMCDDA to cope with the request in the EU drugs action plan (2005–2008) to carry out some supplementary activities in the areas of prevention of drug-related crime, emerging trends, youth attitudes regarding drugs, expenditure on drug-related measures and research in the field of drugs (the EMCDDA 2007 preliminary draft budget adopted by the Management Board at the beginning of 2006 already takes into account the impact of this need – see document EMCDDA/05/06, annex no. 5);
- the installation of a new IT system for accrual accountancy (ABAC), as defined by the accountant of the EC, in accordance with the applicable financial regulation (expected in 2007);
- the expenditure for the new EMCDDA headquarters in Lisbon, namely for the removal to the new premises and the rental for their occupation and installation (IT and furniture), pursuant to the figures endorsed by the EU budgetary authority and taking into account the current schedule for the delivery of these premises (end 2007).

The EMCDDA is in close contact with the actors and services concerned, particularly at the EC, to assess, define and break down these supplementary needs as soon as possible.