NEXT GENERATION

ECDC

Rationale for the reorganisation

2019-11-11

Introduction

A report commissioned by the ECDC Director shortly after her appointment and authored by Ipsos MORI, indicated that several aspects need to be reformed in order to enhance ECDC's organisational performance. As described in figure 1, the report highlighted four areas which should be addressed with priority. Similar insights were also gathered from the 2017 staff survey. One working group was put in place for each of the four areas under a transformational programme named "Next Generation ECDC". The review and finally change of the organisational structure is part of this programme and is expected to support the smooth implementation of the ECDC strategy 2021-2027 as well as further enhance the overall performance of the Agency.

IIt should be emphasised right at the beginning that changing the structure will not be sufficient to increase the efficiency of ECDC's organisational performance to the desired level. A thorough review and re-engineering of ECDC's systems and processes will be necessary. This work in ongoing and is planned to be finalised by the end of 2020. The ongoing external and other evaluations may contribute with additional elements.

The preparation of the reorganisation was supported by two project managers (internal), an Advisory Committee1 and by external consultants for organisational design and change management. Suggestions stemming from the simulation exercises and from staff via different channels have been considered and taken on board where appropiate. Some of these suggestions pertained more to the implementation than the structure itself and will be reviewed again during the implementation phase.
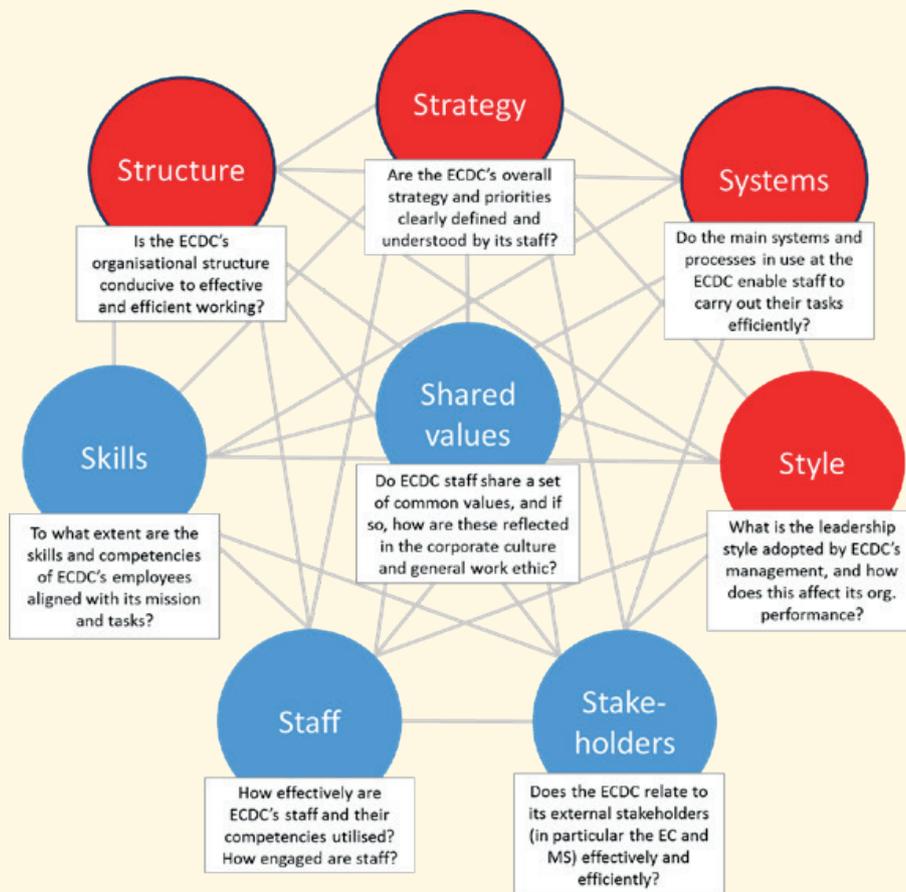

Figure 1: Main problem areas as identified in the Ipsos MORI Diagnostic Report

General principles

Process

Guiding principles for the restructuring were developed by the working group on structure and published on the intranet. Design criteria for the new structure, options for the future structure and simulation exercises were developed for three key ECDC processes carried out on three structural options with the support of external consultants. In parallel, managers received training in change management. The option judged most suitable was then taken as basis for the final organisation model.

Management

A reduction of the current number of middle managers was seen in the Ipsos MORI report as one element that could contribute to the organisational efficiency. The new structure will have 13 managers less than the current one.

The new management structure kept in mind an increased span of control (number of direct reports for each manager); however, the main aspect was to ensure the proper function of a certain organisational entity, resulting in different Group/Section/Unit sizes.

Involvement of RMC and ICT in the reorganisation

ICT

ICT has an ongoing transformation process that includes a change of the current ways of working (in progress) as well as a review of the structure of the Unit in 2020. A review of the current managerial set-up will be part of the transformation process.

RMC

The Quality Management Section and the Internal Control Coordinator have already been moved out from RMC into the Executive Office in order to strengthen the oversight and coordination of implementing the ECDC strategy. With the Eurosurveillance Editorial Office and Internal Content and Knowledge Services two more Sections will be moved out of RMC as part of the reorganisation. The transfer of the two Sections to the Scientific Methods and Standards Unit will ensure a closer collaboration and cross-fertilization with the operational Units, ensuring that knowledge is promoted, harnessed and shared. The new Resource Management Services Unit will thus comprise four Sections performing core resource management tasks. RMC will be very much involved in the overhaul of systems and processes and thus will thus be contributing to the increase in efficiency of ECDC's work.

Secretarial support

The redistribution of the office assistants was necessary due to the different configuration of Units and the subsequent difference in tasks. The main principle for the reassignment was that the office assistants followed their current tasks. Further adjustments were made to ensure the balance of the secretarial support with the new tasks of the Units. The attribution of staff to certain work areas was done to ensure that all areas are covered and can of course be rearranged by the Head of Unit.

Transversal activities (TVA) and projects

ECDC's work inherently requires collaboration between the different organisational structures. While the matrix as it was introduced in 2011 did not meet these expectations, transveral cooperation needs to be ensured in the new structural model. Each Head of Unit will be responsible for one transversal activity (TVA). Related projects to each of the TVAs should be developed within the TVA. The detailed governance and resourcing of the TVA will be part of the implementation plan for the new structure. A TVA does not encompass the day-to-day collaborative tasks and structures. It is a cross-organisational activity involving at least two Units that will contribute to the implementation of the ECDC strategy, i.e. it will last from 2020/21-2027. Projects under each TVA will be part of the annual prioritisation with IRIS in the AF before being added to the SPD.

Implementation plan and roadmap

The new structure will abandon the formal matrix. Nonetheless, what was behind the decision to create the matrix in 2011, was the fact that on most of the topics cross-organisational collaboration is needed. That has not changed. Also the new structure will require cross-organisational collaboration and this will be a central part of the implementation plan.

The Implementation Roadmap aims to ensure the smooth transition and implementation of the new organisational structure. It was constructed via the joint effort of 60+ staff members who participated in, or helped prepare the two imple-mentation workshops. Regarding the future collaboration and the need for cross-Unit groups, the roadmap will give specific focus to ensuring how collaboration in everyday activities can be implemented. This collaboration needs to begin with the planning of activities and continue to the implementation and evaluation. Specific checks during the planning process will be per-formed on the resources reserved for cross-unit initiatives at the planning stage.

Draft vision and strategy

A draft vision and strategy 2021-2027 for ECDC are currently under consultation with the MB. The vision states that until 2027 ECDC aims:

"To improve lives in Europe and globally applying scientific excellence, thus empowering the Member States, the European Commission, and other partners to drive public health policy and practice."

In order to implement this vision, a draft strategy for the years 2021-2027 is under consultation with the ECDC Management Board. The draft strategy was sent to the MB on 5 March. On 3 June, we sent a revised version of the draft strategy, based on the comments received in the March MB. The structure has followed the draft strategy as presented to MB on 5th of March and the subsequent modifications following the MB comments. Priorities for a roadmap to implement the strategy will be discussed with the AF in September 2019. Based on the outcome, the roadmap with KPIs will be proposed to the MB in November 2019.

The main elements of the vision and strategy, the scientific excellence and the empowerment of our partners through our work on public health functions and the disease-specific work, laid the ground for structuring the operational Units. A more detailed description of the Units and Sections is given below. The description for ICT and RMC is taken from the current Administrative Decision on the Centre's Structure and Organisation Chart, 25 March 2019.

Organisational chart as of 1 January 2020
See Annex

Director's Office

The entities in the Director's Office are functions which oversee and coordinate the implementation of the Centre's strategy. This includes the full cycle from planning to monitoring until the final reporting. Constant improvement through KPIs, evaluations and audits as well as quality management. The Director's Office also provides the central coordination of the Centre's external strategic relationships inside the EU to MS (Advisory Forum (AF), Management Board (MB), Coordinating Competent Bodies (CCB) and to EU institutions (Commission, European Parliament, Council, other agencies), but also outside the EU (EU enlargement (ENL), European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) countries), partners with whom ECDC holds a Memorandum of Understanding (WHO, other CDCs); and finally the communication from the Centre via press and media, and internally. The actual implementation and the monitoring of the work will be done in the Units.

The Data Protection Officer and Accountant report directly to the Director in those specific functions.

Corporate Affairs

The Corporate Affairs team is responsible for managing the Director's agenda, forward planning and missions, official visits and correspondence, protocol and secretarial needs of the Director.

Executive Office

The Executive Office should be seen as an engine of the organisation, providing the corporate framework for the efficient functioning of the Centre, and ensuring that ECDC fulfills its mission and vision. The colleagues in the Executive Office will work actively with the entire organisation in order to accomplish their tasks and use existing and possible new channels for this.

The Executive Office supports the Director in managing the Centre in a coherent, effective and efficient way. It coordinates the development and implementation of the corporate strategy and oversees the full planning cycle, including the corporate reporting e.g. the Annual Activity Report. As part of the continuous improvement of the organisational performance, it implements regular evaluations, coordinate audits, and evaluates and improves the internal controls.

The Executive Office also coordinates all activities with the corporate bodies (MB, AF and CCB), as well as ensures the smooth running of Director's Consultation Groups. The Executive Office establishes and maintains its operational contacts with the European Commission, European Court of Auditors, other relevant EU institutions, other EU Agencies, and other stake-holders as needed to carry out its functions.

Communication

External and internal communication are essential means for the Director to execute her function. This section is responsible ofr efficiently communicating ECDC's scientific and technical knowledge to promote European public health and constantly raising ECDC's profile and visibility through targeted science and corporate communication via different channels. It raises awareness of the impact of communicable diseases and the importance of their prevention and control. It supports the European Commission and the Member States in the areas of risk and crisis communication in the context of the Decision 1082/2013/EU on Serious Cross-border Threats to Health. Finally, it increases staff engagement and empowerment by creating a constructive dialogue between all internal stakeholders and proactively supports the management of information and knowledge across ECDC.

European and International Cooperation

The Section will serve as a central point of entry for all of ECDC's strategic relations with EU institutions (EU Commission services, European Parliament and European Council) and agencies, ENL and ENP countries, WHO and other CDCs. It also will coordinate ECDC's country support by being the central entry point and monitor the implementation of the support activities. The operational activities will be carried out in the respective Units/Sections that work in the area of the requested support.

Scientific Methods and Standards

Scientific excellence is at the heart of the ECDC vision and strategy. The Unit will lead the processes for strengthening the scientific excellence and the dissemination of knowledge within the organisation and to partners. This includes the quality assurance of ECDC's scientific work and the organisation of ESCAIDE. It also covers the definition of the standards for the Centre's scientific processes and outputs and monitor performance against those standards. The Unit will also be responsible for ensuring the relevance and transparency of ECDC's scientific outputs through appropriate consultation (including the IRIS process). The Unit will lead and coordinate ECDC's activities on research and innovation. In liaison with other Units, the Unit will identify priorities and support learning and development activities to develop and strengthen the competencies of ECDC's scientific workforce.

The Head of Unit will be responsible for the Transversal Activity (TVA) on Horizon Scanning, which will start in 2020 with the Transversal Project (TVP) on Foresight.

In addition, the Eurosurveillance Editorial Office will be hosted in this Unit. As the majority of ECDC's outputs and scientific publications will arise from the Disease Unit, the conflict of interest is minimised, and the overall aim of the Unit of disseminating knowledge and spread scientific excellence matches the goals of Eurosurveillance.

Scientific Methods & Advice Coordination

The Scientific Methods & Advice Coordination Section will be responsible for managing the workflow for the production and clearance of scientific outputs (through SARMS), including those developed as part of the Centre's annual work plan and those developed in response to in-year requests. The Section will also coordinate the IRIS process for the review and prioritisation of the Centre's scientific and other public health activities, and will be responsible for oversight and coordination of the organisation of ESCAIDE.

The Section will develop and identify new methods, define relevant standards for delivering and demonstrating the scientific excellence of the Centre's work, define indicators for measuring the impact of that work, and provide operational support to the other Units of the Centre, in the domains of evidence-based medicine/public health, infectious disease modelling, and biostatistics.

It will also identify and communicate research priorities through analysis of knowledge gaps, based on the findings of systematic and scoping reviews undertaken within or on behalf of the Centre, and through discussion with, and information obtained from, the Centre's scientific staff and its network of national focal points. The Section will also provide leadership for the Transversal Activity (TVA) on Horizon Scanning.

Eurosurveillance Editorial Office

There will be no changes in the activities and staffing of the Editorial Office. The Office will be attached to the HoU, indicating the line management, but not the content management (dotted line). ECDC has checked with the Editorial Board of Eurosurveillance, the Advisory Forum and the Management Board whether the intended arrangement gives cause for concerns regarding the editorial inde-pendence of Eurosurveillance. As the majority of ECDC's outputs will be produced in the Disease Programmes Unit, no direct conflict of interest exists.

Information and Knowledge Management

Document management, the library, and the editing, production and publication of reports are all part of the same activity flow of translating information into knowledge. This Section will have a key role in increasing access to the accumulated information and knowledge of the Centre, both internally and externally. In order to better reach our stakeholders and improve ECDC's impact, the Section also needs to review and further develop how we present our scientific products.

The Section will also ensure the highest standards of presentation of ECDC's scientific outputs, and develop new formats for presentation and dissemination of those outputs. Hence, the Section combines the elements that are needed to manage the information and knowledge internally as well as redesign our outputs for higher impact externally. This will need input from across the organisation.

ECDC needs to shift the focus in order to increase the translation of information into knowledge and subsequently achieve a change in policy and practice. This includes the need to review what is presented to whom and how ECDC outputs are presented. In that sense, the website should go beyond being a communication tool, it should become one of our main tools for creating knowledge.

In addition, the Section will be responsible for establishing and strengthening the Centre's data and information governance systems and processes to the benefit of internal and external users. The Section will be responsible for ensuring access for the Centre's scientific staff to relevant published evidence, and for establishing an easily accessible and searchable institutional repository of scientific outputs and other corporate knowledge resources. The Section will work in close collaboration with the Integrated Surveillance Section and the Communication Section.

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[2] The Scientific Methods and Standards Unit will be led by the Chief Scientist and will not have a Deputy Head of Unit: in the absence of the Head of Unit the Director will serve as Authorising Officer, and in the absence of the Chief Scientist, the Deputy Chief Scientist will clear the outputs that require approval at this level.

Disease Programmes

This Unit will be the disease-specific part of empowering ECDC's partners to drive public health policy and practice. The major bulk of ECDC's outputs will come from this Unit, guided and supported by the Scientific Methods and Standards and Public Health Units. Through the disease networks, a close link and an intensive dialogue will be established and maintained to the national authorities and public health institutes in the countries in coordination with EU Commission Services and WHO Europe. The priorities of ECDC's disease-specific work will be influenced by its own intelligence (e.g. from horizon scanning), by the needs of the countries (e.g. identified through country visits), political priorities and ECDC's contribution to EU and global programmes (e.g. EU or global action plans, Council Recommendations, SDGs). In order to create synergies, the DPs will be clustered in two Sections.

Due to the work and the size of the Unit, the Deputy Head of the Disease Programmes Unit will not lead a Section (as is the basic principle), but lead the work on the overarching topics of the Unit and will have two staff assigned to him for this work. One will work on social and behaviour change communication, and while concentrating first on vaccine hesitancy, he will also support such activities in other disease areas. Part of the tasks will be to develop a concept how ECDC addresses behavioural aspects in its disease work, including an inventory of current activities and a plan how ECDC could add value in this area in the future. The other staff member will support the development and coordination of disease programme activities focusing on prevention of communicable diseases; support the revision of the DP framework and assist in development and implementation of a framework for ECDC to work with ECDC disease networks, focusing on links between the various networks.

The two Heads of Section (HoS) will have the overall responsibility for the work plan, including monitoring; the overall responsibility for resources (budget, staff), including securing support functions, and assessing workload peaks; the final clearance of all routine surveillance outputs, part of clearance for others; they will lead on cross-cutting themes of the Section; they will be the back-up for Heads of Disease Programmes (HoDPs) and line and performance manage the HoDPs. The HoDPs will provide scientific direction; propose and implement DP work plan; they will have the responsibility for budget implementation; they will have first level clearance of DP outputs; represent ECDC within DP area; contribute to cross-cutting themes for their DP and line and performance manage staff in DP.

In principle, the function of the programme manager does not change due to the new structure. In case of a new division of work between the programme managers, or assignment of new tasks, this will be discussed with the Head of DP and the programme manager. Developing terms of reference for all entities is part of the implementation plan.

Each Head of the merged Disease Programmes will be supported by two Programme Managers. The DPs will be headed by one Head of DP who will line manage the DP staff, and will be supported by one or two Programme Manager(s) (two in case of the merged DPs).

The Head of Unit will be responsible for a TVA on Prevention, with transversal projects still to be determined. ECDC is increasingly asked to focus more on prevention, a focus that is already enshrined in its name. In the past years, ECDC has worked on prevention in various areas; however, there was no coherent corporate approach that would have shown ECDC's prevention concept to stakeholders in a transparent way. Hence, as part of the ECDC strategy 2021-2027, this focus will be developed and as it will touch on all areas in the organisation, it needs to be addressed in a transversal approach.

Disease Programmes

Air-Borne, Blood-Borne and Sexually Transmitted Infections (ABS)

(merged Disease Programmes on HSH/TB and DP on VPD, including human influenza + RSV)

This Section will comprise the following current Disease Programmes: HIV/AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, and Hepatitis (HSH), Tuberculosis (TB), Vaccine Preventable Diseases (VPD). For many of the diseases in this Section, elimination programmes and targets exist, either via the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or other international programmes or action plans, e.g. for measles. This also includes the fact that many MS have specific national programmes to address the challenges connected to these elimination targets. The programmes on HSH and TB will be merged into one DP to develop synergies for working towards the SDG targets.

The work on human influenza as well as on RSV currently done in IRV will be incorporated into Vaccine Preventable Diseases and Immunisation Programme (VPI) as it is strongly related to vaccination efforts. Seasonal influenza was assigned to VPI due to the importance of the vaccination in influenza prevention and control. Since Vaccine Preventable Diseases are currently a priority, the inclusion of seasonal influenza in the VPI Programme ensures that it is part of this priority.

One Health-Related Diseases (OHRD)

(ARHAI and merged DP on zoonotic, foodborne, and emerging diseases (including avian influenza + MERS-CoV)

This Section will comprise diseases that fit under a One Health approach: Food and Water-Borne Diseases (FWD, Emerging and Vector-Borne Diseases (EVD), Antimicrobial resistance and Healthcare-Associated Infections (ARHAI). ECDC has a mandate to contribute to One Health. However, while ECDC since years has carried out many activities that contribute to One Health, this has never communicated in a succinct way. Hence, the Section is tasked to not only establish an overview of ECDC's current One Health-related activities, but also develop a plan how ECDC could add even more value in this area in the future.

The programmes on EVD and FWD will be merged into one DP on zoonotic, food-, water- and vector-borne diseases. The merged DP will need to prioritise and there are opportunities to do so, as several of the 40 diseases do not have any case reported since the whole period ECDC is operating. Nonetheless, we should keep them on our radar, but primarily focus on those diseases where we can make a difference. The work done on zoonotic influenza and MERS-CoV will be added to this merged programme. The placement of the avian influenza activities to the Zoonotic, Food-, Water- and Vector-borne DP will allow synergies with this programme.

Public Health Functions

The Unit will be responsible for the delivery of ECDC's statutory public health functions in a way that integrates all elements according to the cycle depicted in the figure below. The Unit will work closely with the disease programmes as it will provide the data for the respective disease-specific outputs and will need the input from the DPs for the respective specific emergency preparedness and training needs. The Head of Unit will be responsible for the TVA on adoption of/adaptation to new technologies, with the TVP on e-health starting in 2020.
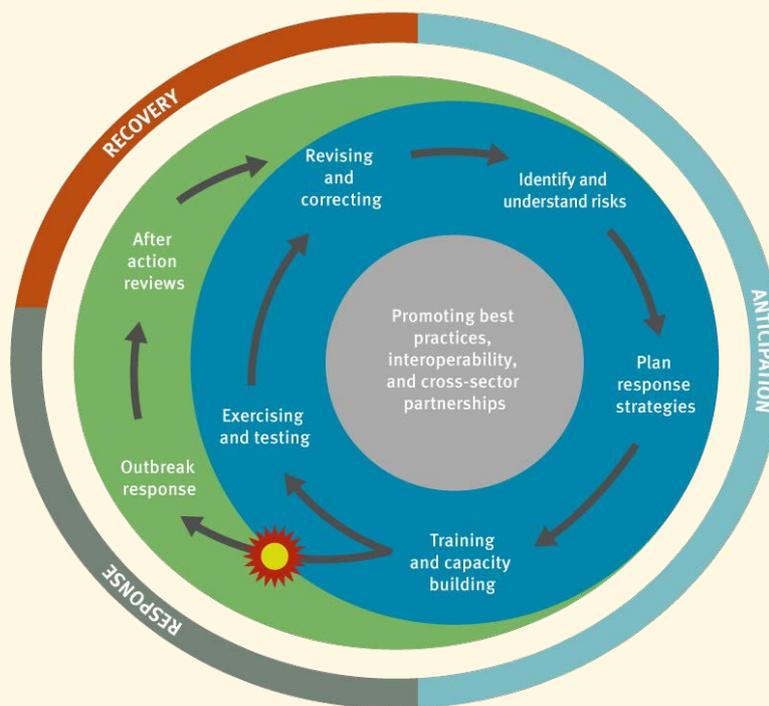

Figure 2: cycle of anticipation-response-recovery

Emergency Preparedness and Response Support

The Section's tasks will cover both the emergency preparedness and response support part of the cycle above. Emergency preparedness will comprise the support to DG SANTE regarding Decision 1082/2013 on Serious Cross-border Threats to Health, the organisation of simulation exercises and the support to countries with country visits, and after action reviews.

For the response support, the response duties and the production of Rapid Risk Assessments will be coordinated in the Section in collaboration with the respective DP. The Section coordinates also Public Health Events and deployments either with DG ECHO or with GOARN, and operates ECDC's Emergency Operation Centre.

Public Health Training

The Section will coordinate the Fellowship programme and in particular implement the recommendations coming from the External Evaluation of EPIET. All activities regarding ECDC's continuous professional development initiative will be coordinated and further developed.

Public Health Functions

Surveillance (indicator-, event- and laboratory-based)

Surveillance will comprise a further integration of indicator-based, event-based and laboratory surveillance including molecular typing-related data. This is done with a view to anticipate the implications of the increasing digitalisation of the health sector where data needed to inform the European surveillance will be taken from different data sources. Data managers will prepare the datasets for the disease-specific reports and other outputs.

The Section will provide the framework for the standardised reporting of surveillance data, e.g. the structure of the regular and specific reports in collaboration with the DPs, and also for any new way we will report surveillance data in the coming years. In order to enhance the quality of surveillance data, the Section should review the outcome and recommendations of all the EPHESUS evaluations once they are available and see whether general conclusions regarding quality standards can be drawn. Then these should be developed and implemented together with the MS.

The Section will also provide the general aspects of the EQA for the laboratory data (with the specifics contributed by the DPs), as well as the monitoring of the laboratory capacity in Europe via the EULabCap/ENLabCap. Roadmaps of the further development of all aspects of surveillance, including the molecular typing will be continued and further developed in the Section. As many DPs have laboratory-based surveillance networks, a close interaction of the Integrated Surveillance Section with the DPs is essential.

Duty rosters will be prepared in the Section as needed with contribution from the disease experts in the Disease Unit.

Digital Transformation Services

With high-level expertise in information and communication technologies, the ICT Unit delivers advice and studies, software products, development expertise, front-end services, application hosting and enterprise infrastructure services in support to ECDCs' core missions and administration. The Unit advises and supports the Centre notably in regard to the overall governance of IT-Assets and to the definition of IT-strategies, frameworks, policies, methodologies and best practices.

ICT Quality

The Section is responsible for ICT quality management including drafting of IT quality plan, IT quality policies and methodologies, overall coordination, planning and monitoring of the Unit resources, overview of IT-Assets, coordination of IT-Security, and support to ICT-Internal communication within ECDC.

Business Solutions

This Section is responsible for delivering strategic and secretarial support to the Information System Strategic Committee and to IT-Portfolio Steering Committees, managing business requirements, conducting studies and projects and maintaining IT-products for all Units.

Development

This Section provides solution architecture design, development and maintenance of ECDC core-business products as well as products supporting ECDC administration, database modelling, business intelligence architecture, and user-interface development.

Infrastructure

This Section provides front-end services, application hosting and enterprise infrastructure services, the section aims to build maintainable, compatible and sustainable services, which are scalable according to operational need. The section networks on infrastructure issues with other EU bodies and partners across Europe.

Resource Management Services

The Resource Management Unit aims at top quality management of ECDC's human and financial resources.

Finance and Accounting

This Section ensures that the financial resources of the Centre are managed efficiently and reported in a clear and comprehensive manner. It ensures the preparation of draft and amending budgets and their publication. It provides budg-etary reporting on the general implementation of the budget and its transfers and provides finan-cial advice and support to all Units in the Centre regarding budgetary commitments and budget monitoring. It provides financial initiation and verification of commitments and payments and executes all payments of the Centre. It provides the annual accounts of the Centre which present a true and fair view of the financial position of the Agency.

Legal Services and Procurement

This Section provides legal advice to the Centre and all Units in legal matters related to the oper-ational as well as administrative field of the Centre's activities. Being the central reference entity for procurement and grant activities, the section provides clear operational support to all Units and assists all internal customers in accomplishing their operational goals in a timely manner. The section helps maintaining com-pliance with the procedures and monitors the Centre's contracting for goods and services.

Human Resources

This Section promotes a supportive work envi-ronment that attracts, develops and motivates a multicultural and highly professional work force by providing high quality services based on competent advice and communication with the ECDC's staff and management.

Corporate Services

This Section develops and maintains the premises of the Centre to meet the requirements of the organisation, provides logistics services for the operational activities and to staff, maintains the physical inventory and ensures security. It organises travel and hotel arrangements and provides budget verification, monitoring and processing of reimbursement claims for staff, interviewees and experts invited to ECDC with a high level of service attitude and ensuring an economically prudent use of ECDC's travel budget. The Section will henceforth furthermore manage the mail room and archives.