

Reform of the Agency's Internal Operations

In every aspect of the way in which ESA manages its internal operations, there is a constant requirement to adapt to evolving needs and standards and to continually improve rules and procedures. Only in this way can one ensure the most efficient running of the Agency and its programmes. In Agenda 2007, the Director General formulated a number of objectives and the reforms, which the Council and Administrative and Finance Committee (AFC) are encouraging and supporting, needed to achieve this. The Ministerial Council in December, in Berlin, gave strong encouragement to the Director General to apply the most up-to-date processes and tools for the Agency's day-to-day operations, stressing the need to adapt its internal operations to the changing environment.

For the definition and execution of those reforms that are of an inter-Directorate nature, a new Director of Reforms was nominated, Jörg Feustel-Büechl, who took up duty on 1 September. Since then, under his management, a number of inter-Directorate reform projects have already been started, including:

- the development of an ESA risk-management policy and appropriate procedures at corporate and programme level
- the introduction of an Agency-wide control function
- the introduction of Project Plans and Integrated Project Reviews
- the review of the General Budget's structure and charging policy
- the provision of corporate information systems for the reforms currently underway.

The project related to the establishment of an overall Risk Management Policy includes a coherent set of associated risk-management procedures. These elements, together with the Project Plans and the information that will be provided via the Agency-wide controlling system, will ensure that risk management, at both the corporate and

programme levels, will be given the high priority needed for the most effective and efficient running of ESA's activities.

The introduction of an ESA-wide controlling system, together with the new functions of a Corporate Controller and Business Unit Controllers, is intended to provide an improved overview of the status of all activities, to enable better budget and programme management on an Agency-wide scale. An in-year budget-execution reporting system has already been introduced as the first step.

Project Plans have already been generated for a variety of projects, programmes and activities across the Agency. They contain essential technical, cost, schedule and other information relating to the execution of a project. The Project Plan is the reference for performing regular Integrated Project Reviews at Director General level, and will contribute to the overall orientation of activities and to better knowledge and management of project risks.

Reform of the General Budget structure and charging policy has already led to a number of improvements and simplifications, aiming at greater accountability and transparency and more efficient use of funds.

The project on Corporate Information Systems will provide the solid and viable IT support for the reforms currently underway, in particular for the Project Plans, Agency-Wide Controlling and Long-Term Plan processes. It will further provide guidelines for ESA CIS management, including reference applications and technical architecture, procedures for ensuring adequate CIS governance and an ESA CIS policy.

Over the coming months, these measures will be systematically improved and refined to ensure the very best execution of ESA's programmes.