

# Joint Undertakings – Back-office arrangements for ICT

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## 1 Context and purpose

In its Article 13, the Single Basic Act identifies ICT as one of the 7 areas for common back-office arrangements.

The opportunity to create or reinforce the current cooperation in the form of back-office arrangements was confirmed through the BoA study carried out in the period from May to July 2022.

The Executive Directors (EDs) and the Governing Boards of the JUs endorsed the areas where the back-office arrangements are most relevant, including ICT, and EDs have started to move forward with the implementation of the back-office arrangements. The purpose of the BOA ICT is to achieve efficiency gains, economy of scales and relevant critical mass in the area of information and communication technologies. The JUs are committed to reinforce the existing collaboration, identify new areas where advantages can be achieved and provide assurance for each JUs in terms of quality, harmonisation, business continuity and timely delivery of ICT services.

This document outlines the concept of the BOA ICT, starting with an overview of the ICT activities currently carried out in common, that form its baseline.

## 2 Baseline: the common ICT activities

### 2.1 Description of common ICT activities and existing staff allocation

Since 2010, six JUs and their predecessors<sup>1</sup> have consistently looked for synergies and, where relevant, centralisation of ICT operations, and have carried out ICT activities in common, through a common ICT strategy, a shared ICT infrastructure, a shared workspace services management.

In addition, JUs have used corporate tools and services provided by the Commission, in particular in the fields of financial management and accounting (ABAC, SUMMA), HR (SysPer, PMO services), record management (Ares), grant management (e-grants suite), procurement (e-procurement suite, PPMT), ICT security (Cert-EU) etc. JUs have also participated in multi-institutional procurement actions and resulting framework contracts orchestrated by the Commission or by decentralised agencies (for instance for license acquisition, studies and consultancy services procurement...), and offered access to their procurement actions to other agencies (for instance for the Testa connection).

Lastly, the JUs have a common IT governance, which materialises in particular in the drafting, approving and monitoring of a common annual work plan for ICT.

Under the current organisation (baseline), ICT is managed by IT Officers and additional staff (including administrative staff and in some cases interims) complemented by outsourcing, under the supervision of Heads of Administration and Finance (HoAFs) and Executive Directors (EDs).

This represents a total effort (not including EDs and HoAFs) for 6 JUs composed of 7 ITOs representing ~5.7 full-time equivalents<sup>2</sup>, and other (admin) staff and interim effort: ~2 FTEs.

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<sup>1</sup> Namely: Fuel Cells and Hydrogen JU and its successor Fuel Cells and Hydrogen 2 JU, Clean Sky JU and its successor Clean Sky 2 JU, Innovative Medicines Initiative JU and its successor Innovative Medicines Initiative 2 JU, ECSEL JU, joined in 2014 by Shift2Rail JU and Bio-Based Industries JU; in 2021, these JUs became Circular Bio-based Europe JU (CBE JU), Clean Aviation JU (CA JU), Clean Hydrogen JU (CH2 JU), Europe's Rail JU (EU-Rail JU), Innovative Health Initiative JU (IHI JU), Key Digital Technologies JU (CHIPS JU),

<sup>2</sup> Not all ITOs are full-time dedicated to ICT activities: Clean Hydrogen 1 FTE + CAJU 0.6 FTE + CBE 1 FTE + EU-Rail 0.6 FTE + IHI 1.5 FTEs + Chips 1 FTE. ITOs can be TA or CA, from CA FG III to TA AD8, depending on the Staff Establishment Plan of each JU.



It has to be noted that IT officers only work part-time on common ICT activities, while they devote the rest of their time to activities specific to each JU.

To deliver all ICT services, tools and activities, the JUs have relied on external resources. Outsourced activities are not quantified in FTEs as they are contracted as service provision. The main component of the outsourced activities and services is a framework contract for IT managed services (provision of ICT infrastructure, workplace services and end-user support) with a total value of up to EUR 7,500,000 for the period from 2023 to 2027.

## 2.2 Service coverage

The ICT area covers a list of ~50 activities or services grouped in 6 service groups (JUs ICT service catalogue). These activities or services are either provided within the JU and/or with the support of external service provider, or fully delivered by others (e.g. European Commission departments).

When services are delivered by the European Commission or by external service providers (“service brokerage”), the service group includes activities related to ICT portfolio management, services specification of service requirements, procurement and/or contractual procedures, contract management, supervision of service delivery and monitoring of quality and performance. Therefore, even when “brokered”, the related services require in-house ICT competency in collaboration with administrative competency.

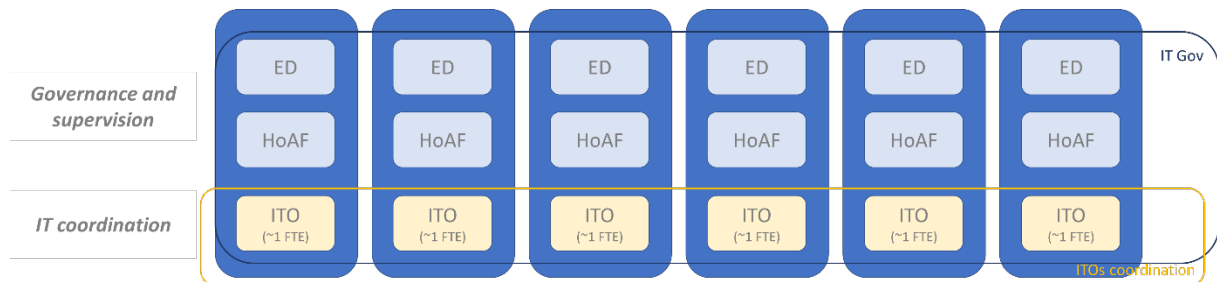
The JUs ICT service catalogue is structured in 6 service groups:

1. Inter-JU IT Governance: this service group consists in the coordination of common ICT activities and services, planning, effort allocation, decision-making and reporting;
2. Management of shared ICT infrastructure: this service group consists in ensuring provision of ICT infrastructure (servers, networks, IT security infrastructure, cloud services, teleconferencing systems, Wi-Fi provision, landlines and Internet infrastructure) and the related services to the JUs. According to the ICT strategy adopted in 2017, the provision of ICT infrastructure is outsourced and acquired from external service providers, the specification, monitoring and supervision of services remaining within the JUs;
3. Management of ICT tools, services and contracts: this service group is related to the management of services (tools, systems, contracts) provided by the European Commission (DG DIGIT, DG HR, DG BUDG, DG RTD...) or by external service providers. It also includes the functional maintenance of these systems and tools;
4. Workplace services provision: this service group consists in ensuring the provision of configured JUs specific ICT hardware (e.g. laptops, printers, etc.) and software (e.g. EU-Login), managing access rights (in/out), purchasing licenses other than EC (e.g. Microsoft, Adobe) and assignment of licenses to users, liaising with the IT help desk providers for workplace services and end user support. In accordance with the ICT strategy, the provision of ICT infrastructure is outsourced;
5. Security and compliance management: this service group is related to the provision of information security services, including the execution of the role of Local Information Security Officer (LISO) for the JUs, the future implementation of the Cyber-Security regulation, the maintenance of the business continuity and disaster recovery plans from an ICT standpoint, and the coordination of the related testing and update activities. This activity is currently provided within each JU by the IT Officer, with the support of external service providers;
6. ICT activities specific per JU: this service group is related to the execution of activities specific within each JU, which can include development of specific software in relation with the JU’s mission and objectives.

These groups and the related services or activities are further detailed in the annex.

### 2.3 Governance

The coordination of common ICT activities between the JUs is depicted in the following figure:



- The “IT governance”, composed of all EDs and/or Heads of Administration and Finance and IT Officers, is responsible for the adoption of the common ICT annual work plan (common ICT AWP) and supervision of its implementation; the IT governance meets at least once per quarter,
- The IT Officers group is composed of all IT Officers and meets on a weekly basis. It coordinates daily IT operations to secure the implementation of the annual work plan. IT Officers also prepare the common ICT AWP before its submission to the IT governance.

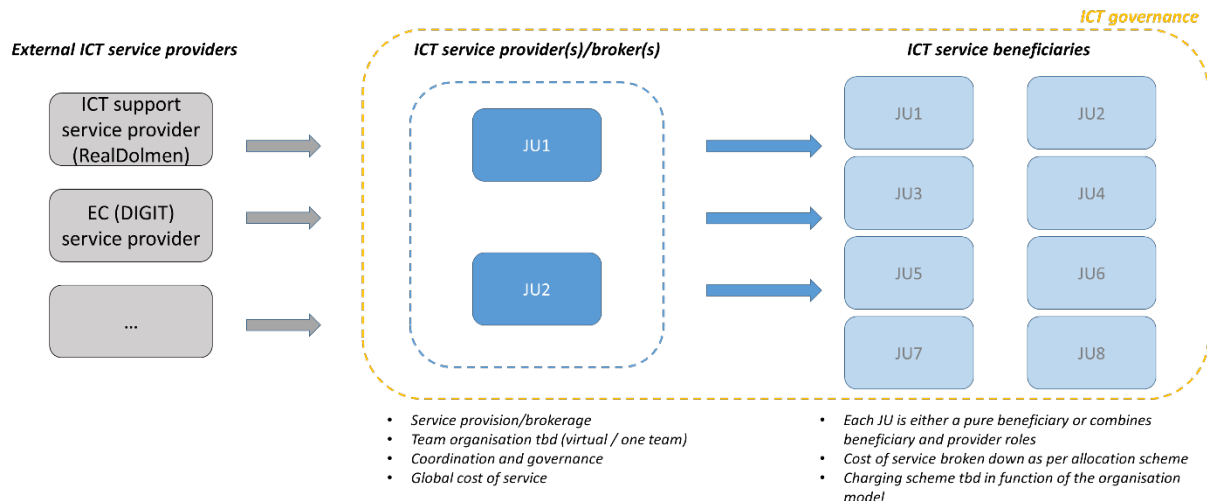
## 3 Target: the back-office arrangements for ICT

In continuation of the effort to manage jointly ICT activities, infrastructure and services and in response to the requirements of Article 13 of the SBA, the Executive Directors of the Joint Undertakings want to further structure ICT in the form of back-office arrangements (BOA ICT), to achieve further benefits.

### 3.1 BOA ICT concept

The BOA ICT provides an organisation, working arrangements and a legal framework to ensure the delivery of ICT services and activities of common interest for the Joint Undertakings. Within the BOA ICT, responsibilities are allocated, activities defined and their outputs and benefits identified. It defines a clear resource allocation and costs per activity.

In line with back-office arrangements in other areas of activity (Accounting, Procurement, HR), the model can be described with one or several JU(s) being ICT service provider(s)/broker(s) and all JUs being ICT service beneficiaries.



The model relies on a clear allocation of roles and responsibilities for the various services amongst the JUs, characterised by the following elements:

- The BOA ICT co-leads deliver the activities under the service group #1 “Inter-JU IT governance” (see in annex 5.1.1);
- One or several JU(s) act as “service provider” or “service broker”<sup>3</sup> for services of the other service groups;
- The common ICT working arrangements shall be settled in the form of an SLA, which shall amongst other clauses formalise and clarify the mandate(s), roles and responsibilities. The SLA shall:
  - Provide a clear description of the services and activities including well-defined roles and responsibilities for the different stakeholders (for instance, in case one or more JUs take the responsibility of signing contracts on behalf of all the others),
  - Centralise and/or outsource some other official roles (compliance related) for all JUs, after careful assessment of its legal feasibility and the related expected effort,
  - Establish cost repartition.
- The allocation of responsible JU (and corresponding ED and ITO) to the services shall be documented in the SLA. The corresponding ED shall be entrusted for the provision or brokerage of the services within the service group and shall be decision-making and contracting authority, on the basis of an annual work plan adopted by the EDs, taking into account budget availabilities and each JU’s work programme. The common ICT annual work plan may provide further details each year on responsibilities allocated to actions involving one or multiple services.

The BOA ICT will be provided resources by all JUs either in the form of staff allocation (for service providers or other JUs with the necessary ICT resources interested to provide the service) or financial resources (for service beneficiaries). Staff allocation should be complemented by outsourcing as required and agreed and documented in the SLA underlying the BOA ICT. A global cost of service shall be defined and agreed upfront in the SLA and confirmed on an annual basis in the common ICT annual work plan. The invoicing and payment scheme, if required, will be defined in the SLA.

<sup>3</sup> The roles and responsibilities of service provider/broker will be further defined in the Service Level Agreement.

### 3.2 Expected benefits

In implementing the BOA ICT, JUs are seeking the following benefits:

- One cluster:
  - Common ICT portfolio management and IT procurement resulting in economies of scale e.g. license purchasing (to be confirmed),
  - Smoother planning and deployment of IT solutions made available to users across all JUs, with the related change management process and business impact analysis,
  - Pooling financial resources,
  - Leverage experience across JUs,
  - Flexibility (e.g. quotas and ceilings management),
  - JUs speaking with one voice.
- Common ICT governance and harmonised procedures for processes and activities in the scope of the BoA,
- Efficiencies:
  - Simplification of IT management and administrative follow-up,
  - Easier and smoother collaboration between JUs,
  - Clearer allocation of tasks, roles and responsibilities,
  - Efficiency in some IT areas, with economy of scale that will enable ITOs to better focus on individual JU IT needs,
- Business continuity with effective back-up,
- Avoided redundancies,
- Better IT legacy management, development of centers of expertise for certain service groups, reuse of IT solutions.

In implementing the BOA ICT, the JUs will follow main guiding principles and good practices applied at the Commission, such as the corporate digital strategy, the reuse-buy-build approach, the IT governance workflow.

It should also be noted that the BOA ICT could also provide the framework to implement other synergies identified in the future as well as other synergies already identified through the BoA study.

### 3.3 Participating JUs

The following 10 JUs will participate to the BOA ICT and sign the related SLA:

- Circular Bio-based Europe JU (CBE JU),
- Clean Aviation JU (CA JU),
- Clean Hydrogen JU (CH2 JU),
- European High-Performance Computing JU (EuroHPC JU), depending on the service groups,
- Europe's Rail JU (EU-Rail JU),
- Innovative Health Initiative JU (IHI JU),
- Key Digital Technologies JU (CHIPS JU),



- Single European Sky ATM Research 3 JU (SESAR 3 JU), depending on the service groups,
- Smart Network & Services JU (SNS JU),
- Global Health European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials 3 Joint Undertaking (GH EDCTP3 JU).

CH2 JU and IHI JU will co-lead the BOA ICT.

EuroHPC JU and SESAR 3 JU, due to their own constraints and ICT service delivery set-up and location, are the signatory of the BOA ICT SLA focusing on the principles of the BOA, showing the willingness to enhance synergies with other European Partnerships and ensuring access to knowledge sharing around common ICT activities (including EC provided services and security as well as coordination activities i.e. Governance). They may be included in common ICT activities (e.g. coordination activities) and be recipient of common services on an ad-hoc basis, as required. The two JUs will express their interest in joining specific activities to the ICT BOA co-lead JUs by using inclusion mechanism defined in the BOA ICT SLA. Consequently, they will participate in the related cost sharing scheme, as relevant.

### 3.4 Service coverage

The BOA ICT will cover service groups 1 to 5 identified.

Within these service groups, the Annex 1 identifies which services or activities are in scope of the BOA ICT and which are out of scope (for instance, covered by each JU individually or through other arrangements).

ICT developments and other activities specific to each JU (service group #6) will be under the responsibility of each ED and will not be part of the BOA ICT, that in any case will have to ensure the integrity of the overall ICT architecture.

### 3.5 Target effort allocation

This section is work in progress and will be addressed in further detail in the SLA.

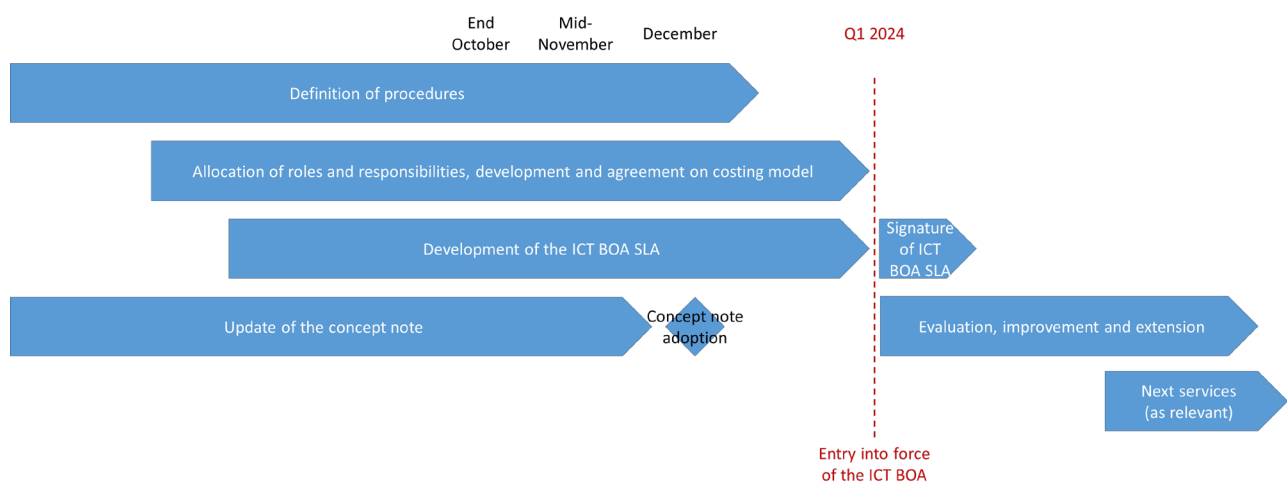
BOA ICT builds on the current practice of common support to activities in ICT. The BOA ICT rationalises synergies and aims at bringing efficiencies and benefits whilst enhancing quality delivery and availability to focus on individual JU IT specific needs (as described under section 3.2 Expected benefits and with a transfer on focus for JUs on strategic service group #6). After the arrangement is in place, the total effort (not including EDs and HoRs) for 9 JUs will remain basically unchanged: 8 ITOs representing ~7.2 positions, other (admin) staff and interim effort: ~2 FTEs, complemented with outsourced services.

### 3.6 Governance

Further detail on the governance of ICT and its evolution in the context of the back-office will be documented in the SLA.

## 4 Timeline

The BOA ICT will be implemented according to the following timeline. To note that as of the entry into force of the ICT BOA an action plan covering the indicative services listed in the Annex, regrouped in the 6 identified service groups, will be developed. This planning will prioritise the activities and include a multi-annual IT strategy, taking into account the budgetary and resources availability of each JUs to ensure the feasibility of its implementation:





## 5 Annex

### 5.1 Annex 1: List of ICT services

This annex establishes a list of ICT services delivered to the JUs per service group as identified in section 2.2.

Further detail on the activities and services delivered by the BOA ICT will be documented in annexes to the SLA identifying the roles and responsibilities, the deliverables and outputs of the activities, and the related effort and costs.

#### 5.1.1 Service group #1: Inter-JU IT Governance

Service	Status (09/2023)
Weekly ITOs coordination and quarterly IT Governance Committee meetings	Common
Definition and supervision of common (multi-)annual work plan	Common
Development of AWP projects	Common
Periodic reporting to IT Gov	Common
Future IT architecture development	Common
Support to Audit and Strategic Risk Assessment (IAS, ECA)	Common where relevant
Participation to EUAN ICTAC	Coordination

#### 5.1.2 Service group #2: Management of shared ICT infrastructure

Service	Status (09/2023)
Server management	Common (outsourced)
IT security infrastructure	Common (outsourced)
Teleconferencing	Common (outsourced)
Wi-Fi provision	Common (outsourced)
Landlines	Common (outsourced)
Internet	Common (outsourced)

### 5.1.3 Service group #3: Management of ICT tools and services

Business owner	SERVICES							
	System administration /Contract management	Functional maintenance (e.g. access management etc.):	Set-up of contracts and quotas	Follow-up of consumption	Definition of requirements	Budget management	Acquisition	Invoicing
DIGIT – SIDE II and successors	Not common		Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)
DIGIT – CLOUD II and successors	DIGIT – SIDE II and successors		Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)
DIGIT – NATASHA (network hardware) and successors	DIGIT – SIDE II and successors		Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)
DIGIT – MTS II and successors	DIGIT – SIDE II and successors		Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)
DIGIT – MEQ (mobile devices) and successors	DIGIT – SIDE II and successors		Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)
DIGIT - EXICON	DIGIT – SIDE II and successors							
OIB – AVC (audio-visual equipment)	DIGIT – SIDE II and successors		Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)

BUDG - ABAC	DIGIT – SIDE II and successors	DIGIT – SIDE II and successors			Coordination	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)
HR – SysPer/retro ± COMREF	DIGIT – SIDE II and successors	DIGIT – SIDE II and successors			Coordination	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)
Sec GEN - Ares	DIGIT – SIDE II and successors	DIGIT – SIDE II and successors			Coordination	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)
RTD - e-grants	Coordination	DIGIT – SIDE II and successors			Coordination	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)
EC application - e-procurement	DIGIT – SIDE II and successors	DIGIT – SIDE II and successors			Coordination	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)
EC service-Cert-EU	DIGIT – SIDE II and successors	DIGIT – SIDE II and successors			Common (to be assessed)	Common	Common	Common
EC service - Testa	DIGIT – SIDE II and successors	Common	Common	Common	Common	Common	Common	Common
Common JU application – GDPR Central	Common	Common	Common	Common	Common	Common	Common	Common
Common JU application – Systal / Visitor application	DIGIT – SIDE II and successors	DIGIT – SIDE II and successors	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common	Common (to be assessed)
Websites	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)				Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)	Common (to be assessed)

#### 5.1.4 Service group #4: Workplace Services Provision

Service	Status (09/2023)
Providing and configuring the JUs specific ICT hardware (e.g. laptops, printers, etc.)	Common (outsourced)
Providing and configuring the JUs specific ICT software	Common (outsourced)
Managing access rights (in/out)	Common (to be assessed)
EU-Login (ex-ECAS)	Coordination
Purchasing of licenses other than EC (e.g. Microsoft, Adobe)	Common (to be assessed)
Assignment of licenses to users	Common (outsourced)
Liaison with the IT help desk provider for workplace services and with the IT help desk for operations (provided by the H2020 tool for the whole research family)	Common
End user support	Common (outsourced)

#### 5.1.5 Service group #5: Security and compliance management

Service	Status (09/2023)
LISO assessment of IT configurations and tools	Common (to be assessed with legal feasibility <sup>4</sup> )
LISO annual report	Common (to be assessed with legal feasibility)
CISO (future regulation)	Common (to be assessed with legal feasibility)
Business Continuity Management and Disaster Recovery Planning	Common (to be assessed with legal feasibility)

#### 5.1.6 Service group #6: Specific ICT activities per JU

Service	Status (09/2023)
JU developed tools and platforms	Common (to be assessed)

<sup>4</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/imi-net/docs/decision\\_3602\\_2006\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/imi-net/docs/decision_3602_2006_en.pdf)

SYSTAL	Common (to be assessed)
EC apps – ABAC/SUMMA	Common (to be assessed)
EC apps - MIPS	Common (to be assessed)
EC apps – Visitors registration tool	Common
IT studies specific to each JU	Common (to be assessed)
Data collection and analysis	Common (to be assessed)
ABAC Asset Management	Common (to be assessed)
ICT budget management (intra-JU)	Not common



Done in Brussels, on 20 December 2023,

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Executive Director EU-Rail *ad interim*

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