

Roadmap on Carcinogens 3.0

Strategy 2025-2027

July 2024, Romy Marx, Jos de Lange – final

The initial Roadmap on Carcinogens (RoC) initiative ran from **2016 to 2019** (RoC1.0) and established a joint initiative of member states, the EU social partners, the European Commission and EU-OSHA to focus on prevention of work-related cancer. Within this **first phase** of the RoC, the partner's focus included activation of stakeholders, successfully raising awareness by keeping it a standing priority in the presidencies of the Council, and generation of support structures (i.e. establishing a website with practice solutions and a management to reach out to). The Netherlands together with Austria lead this first phase.

The **second phase** of the RoC continued from **2020 to 2024** (RoC2.0) with Germany as the managing partner. In this second phase, a revised strategy and new partners deepened the efforts to fight work-related cancer by introducing projects ('challenges') whose aims were to further boost support for stakeholders.

The partners now agree that a final period is needed to ensure that all results, tools and awareness of the RoC communication structures will penetrate to workplaces across Europe, thereby ensuring invested efforts in the first and second phases are fully realised and sustained. Therefore and to keep the issue of exposure to carcinogens at work high on the agenda, it is important to continue this unique European joint effort with a **final RoC3.0 phase** during **2025-2027**.

1. Roadmap 3.0 scope and goals

The core drivers of RoC 1.0 from 2016-2019 provided a profound and confirmed basis for the second period of the roadmap from 2020-2024 which established four goals by executing 12 challenges that were successfully concluded in 2024. The partners developed this final RoC3.0 strategy based on the following considerations:

- The Roadmap on Carcinogens is a voluntary and action driven program;
- We strive to communicate our deepened knowledge on negative health impacts due to exposure to the most harmful carcinogens and our jointly developed support portfolio for one of the main target groups – employers and workers exposed to these carcinogenic substances;
- We believe it is important to actively support employers and workers and ensure that available tools and knowledge are actually implemented in practice. This will contribute significantly to the prevention of work-related exposure to carcinogenic substances;
- Key elements of the Roadmap on Carcinogens were the fruitful exchanges and the cooperation between all partners and being aware of their respective activities; therefore, it is of crucial importance to ensure a sustained exchange between all partners by organising partner meetings on a regular basis;
- Financing the Roadmap project as an initiative is challenging so the partners agree to a basic line of activities within their joint strategy. However, this does not exclude optional and extended action by individual partners during the third period;
- An initiative taken up by Presidencies of the Council spanning more than a decade and supporting priorities set out in the EU OSH Strategic Framework 2021-2027, will leave a lasting legacy as the issue of work-related exposure to carcinogenic substances will persist for quite some time.

2. Roadmap on Carcinogens 3.0: the steering structure

Both the Netherlands and Germany, as former managing partners, will provide for a **joint managerial role** and allocate the corresponding needed finances and resources for implementing the basic activities for RoC3.0.

Together with the partners, the managing team will continue to ensure that the fight against work-related cancer is in line with the current EU OSH Strategic Framework 2021-2027. The current Roadmap partner structure will be supported by a smaller management group which will be enlarged to a more dynamic managing group depending on the topics to be covered. Current partners will be a part of the established exchange and are invited/encouraged to act as multipliers to ensure a more profound impact of the baseline activities.

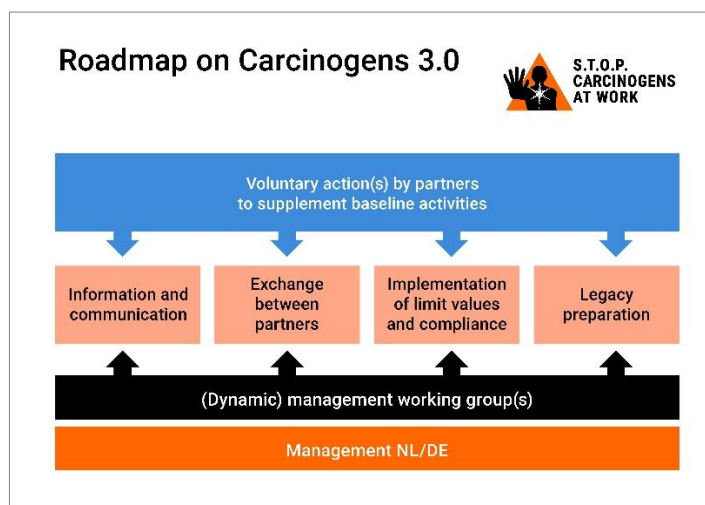


Figure 1: RoC3.0 structure

Building on the knowledge and the results achieved, especially during RoC2.0, RoC3.0 will disseminate and promote the developed and collected tools, templates and guidance as part of its basic activities (e.g. communication, campaigns, legacy preparation etc.) to be undertaken by actively engaged partners.

If possible, subject to sufficient funding being allocated, partners might dedicate specific, extended action to these base activities to implement knowledge and further boost the impact of the RoC.

3. RoC3.0 - the core elements

The baseline activities aim to ensure the results and output of all initiatives comes to the attention of European employers, employees and workplaces as well as keeping the issue high on the European political agenda. One key strength of the Roadmap is the ownership by successive EU Council Presidencies. We feel it is important to sustain that until the end of 2027. To launch the third RoC phase, the Belgian Presidency event in Brussels in June 2024 included a ceremonial act involving the European social partners, the European Commission, EU-OSHA and the new partners together with representatives from the Roadmap management.

For the conclusion of the RoC from 2016 to 2027, the managing member states, the Netherlands and Germany, will jointly organise a final event in 2027.

RoC3.0 is about consolidating some of the core RoC assets which have proven to be successful. So, the following are the **four main assets** that the partners feel should underpin RoC3.0 with recommended baseline activities.

1) Information & Communication

Enterprises may be overwhelmed with legal demands. One of the aims of the RoC since its inception was to provide access to help and assistance. Therefore, continued and if possible more focussed action is needed to emphasise the **'providing help'** aspect of the website.

This can be achieved by keeping the RoC website as a well-known platform due to its central role in communication during the first and second Roadmap phases current, promoting its use and making it available without language barriers. It must be continuously improved to provide condensed information and act as a search platform.

Given our finding that the FactSheets, which contain crucial information, represent the most recognized and followed aspect of the Roadmap, there will be a sustained endeavour to ensure their provision for all relevant carcinogens.

Ensuring the preservation of these fundamental components (website and FactSheets up-to-date and in all languages) is imperative after the closure of the Roadmap on Carcinogens in 2027.

Baseline activities under 'Information and communication'

- **Maintaining and updating the database of solutions and completing the three batches of Factsheets in all member state languages are central objectives of RoC3.0**
- **Ensuring that the RoC website with its central information is secured after RoC3.0 concludes and is optimised to better address the target group**

2) Exchanges between partners

One of the most significant benefits of the RoC is the opportunity for partners to regularly exchange information regarding their ongoing activities and leverage their respective communication networks and funding schemes, thus fostering the joint action. Hence, RoC 3.0 will maintain these regular exchanges through RoC partner meetings. Partners have concurred to convene at least one in-person meeting annually, along with an optional additional virtual meeting in 2025, 2026, and 2027.

Baseline activities under 'Exchange between partners'

- **Organising RoC related meetings/events with STAMI from Norway (2025) and Ireland (2026)**
- **Continuously encouraging other member states and partners to organise targeted events (expert exchanges, enforcement exchanges, etc.) related to the prevention of work-related cancer on local, regional or national level**
- **organising how provision of information will be continued after 2027 to utilise the strength of the multiplier communication**

3) Implementation of limit values and compliance

As significant progress has been achieved by the Commission with regard to setting occupational exposure limit values in the previous Roadmap phases, a joint finding of partners is that intensified complementary effort on the implementation level is needed. The activities under pillar 3 ('Mobilising stakeholders') of the second phase ('Challenge 3.3 – Cooperation with inspectorates') extended the efforts of RoC1.0, were a valuable step forward in fostering exchange on, for example, inspection activities carried out across Europe. These efforts should be continued.

Baseline activities under ‘Implementation of limit values and compliance’

- Continuing efforts to stimulate and promote targeted inspections by exchanging information on inspection methods and guidances, cases and results of enforcement campaigns
- Activating Member States to provide support to companies to enhance compliance

4) Legacy preparation – ‘Input to a possible next EU OSH Strategic Framework’

Combatting work-related cancer has been the core driver of the RoC and will continue to be a topic of high priority. However, the partners feel that this focussed approach should **transition into a broader theme** connecting it with action on hazardous substances in a broader sense and extending it to severe health effects relevant to even a higher number of workers across the EU than carcinogenic effects alone. Considering the significant knowledge represented within the Roadmap team, especially national partners feel confident to provide significant input for the next European Strategic Framework on Occupational Safety and Health in this respect.

Baseline activities under ‘Input to the next EU OSH Strategic Framework’

- Engaging into the debate on a possible EU OSH Strategic Framework 2028-203x to keep the issue of exposure to carcinogens and moreover dangerous substances in a broader sense high on the agenda

To launch the third RoC phase, the Belgian Presidency event in Brussels in June 2024 included a ceremonial act involving the European social partners, the European Commission, EU-OSHA and the new partners together with representatives from the Roadmap management.

For the conclusion of the RoC from 2016 to 2027, the managing member states, the Netherlands and Germany, will jointly organise a final event in 2027.

4. RoC3.0 – an extended program

An optional extended programme has been envisaged by the current management of the RoC to enhance awareness, behavioural change and solutions at European workplaces, and ensure a better uptake of the information materials and initiatives that have been developed. These activities would be initiated and discussed with the partners if additional funding becomes available, most likely from EU4Health later in 2024. The implementation would need the active support of national and local actors as the driving force to get the messages and help to workplaces.



Photo: Nicolas Lobet

COVENANT

A VOLUNTARY ACTION SCHEME ON RAISING AWARENESS AND EXCHANGING GOOD PRACTICES TO DEAL WITH RISKS ARISING FROM OCCUPATIONAL EXPOSURE TO CARCINOGENS

Whereas exposure to carcinogens can lead to very serious health damage and the partners of the Roadmap on Carcinogens (RoC) underline the need to prevent or reduce exposure to cancer causing agents at the workplace.

Whereas the partners consider it is important to actively support businesses and workers by ensuring that available tools and knowledge are in place to promote effective implementation of the European legislation on occupational cancer in practice.

While significant progress has been made since the RoC was launched in 2016, partners still stress the need to extend the RoC to the end of 2027 in order to reach even more European workplaces.

The partners therefore commit themselves to contribute to:

- Fostering the **information provided** to companies, while continuing to utilize and further enhance the already established **communication structures**;
- Engaging regularly in the annual meetings and **exchanges between partners** and encouraging targeted activities related to the prevention of work-related cancer on local, regional or national levels;
- Continuing the efforts to stimulate and promote targeted inspections to **enhance compliance**;
- Continuing to engage in the debate on next **EU OSH policy priorities** related to the exposure to carcinogens and other dangerous substances.

Although this is a voluntary initiative, the RoC is an action driven joint program and partners commit themselves to actively contribute towards achieving its goals.

This Covenant will remain valid until 31 December 2027.

Signed on 13 June 2024, Brussels.

ROADMAP
ON CARCINOGENS

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