

# Roadmap on Carcinogens 2.0

## Final report Challenges 2.3 & 3.1

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## Introduction

Cancer is the leading cause of work-related mortality in the European Union. Identifying smart solutions and sharing good practices between businesses and organizations could make a tremendous difference in reducing workers' exposure to carcinogens. The Roadmap on Carcinogens, which was established on 25 May 2016, encourages and helps businesses, organizations, industries and others to raise awareness and share knowledge on how to tackle exposure to carcinogens in the workplace. One of the main aims of the Roadmap is to share good practices between companies and organisations. While many initiatives have already been undertaken, there is an existing need to do more. Amongst others, there is a need for increased targeted dissemination of what is already known about reducing exposure to carcinogens between relevant stakeholders at all levels.

The Roadmap on Carcinogens 2.0, which was renewed in 2019, has therefore established four main pillars. Firstly, it aims to create awareness amongst European businesses and workers on the risks of exposure to carcinogenic substances and the need for preventive action. Secondly, it intends to provide help to businesses and workers in preventing exposure to carcinogens on the work floor and minimize its effect on the workforce. Thirdly, its goal is to engage industry and sectors and increase the involvement of relevant parties to multiply the efforts throughout Europe. Fourthly, it targets innovation to bridge the gap between research findings and businesses' needs. To reach these goals, four pillars of strategy have been found, including twelve challenges.

As the leading voice of European employers, BusinessEurope has been an official partner to the Roadmap on Carcinogens since its inception. Given its expertise and position in the labour market, BusinessEurope took responsibility for two key challenges within the second iteration of the Roadmap: challenge 2.3, which aims to look further into available funds for businesses to reduce workers' exposure to carcinogens, and challenge 3.1, which aims to activate and engage sectoral stakeholders and specific industries in tackling the issue of carcinogens in the workplace.

## Challenge 2.3 – Funds for businesses<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

A lot of work is already being undertaken to reduce the level of workers' exposure to carcinogens in the workplace. This work ranges from legislative initiatives, both at national and European level, to set and implement occupational exposure limit values for carcinogens, to company- or sector-wide initiatives and awareness raising campaigns to tackle this important issue in a more practical way. Regardless of the driving force behind their initiatives, businesses need financial assistance in taking the measures to prevent exposure to carcinogenic substances in the workplace. These measures, ranging from changing work nature and processes (either change of substance or change of equipment), are associated with substantial investment costs. Moreover, it is often hampered by the market (client) demands and delayed due to testing new products for functionality. Execution also depends on financial support to either directly install technical solutions or to bridge investment cycles.

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<sup>1</sup> [Challenge 2.3: Funds for businesses - Roadmap on Carcinogens](#)

It is known that different organisations, including Member States, industries or sectoral organisations, national social security organisations and insurance initiatives, already have funds or specific fiscal measures in place that stimulate businesses to invest in occupational safety and health. Nevertheless, often, businesses and organisations are either unaware of these financial opportunities and support measures or have difficulties navigating the process in finding the funds to make it possible to invest in the necessary measures to prevent exposure to carcinogens.

Challenge 2.3 of the Roadmap on Carcinogens therefore aims to address this gap by finding and guiding businesses to those funds or fiscal measures, which can act as an accelerator and help companies to invest in adopting measures to prevent workers getting exposed to carcinogens. A key subtask of this Challenge is furthermore to map existing financial instruments/funds available for businesses to support them in managing carcinogens-related risks at the workplace.

### Main activities

The first step undertaken in this challenge consisted of desk research with the main objective to develop a questionnaire for key stakeholders. Through this desk research, the challenge partners aimed to get a first understanding of the available funding streams at national level to address the challenge of combatting carcinogens in the workplace as well as gather more information on relevant actors (including 'no cure no pay intermediaries') at the relevant levels. Unfortunately, the desk research garnered few results, which highlighted the complexity of this exercise.

In order to bolster the information gathered through the desk research, the challenge partners developed a brief questionnaire to be sent out to key stakeholders. In order to keep it simple, the questionnaire consisted of two main questions which were also considered relevant for challenge 3.1:

- What do businesses need to be assisted in tackling carcinogens at the workplace?
- How can businesses be assisted in the most effective way?

Given BusinessEurope's strategic position as a European employers' representative, it was decided that the questionnaire would be primarily sent out to BusinessEurope's membership and wider network. In early 2021, the questionnaire was sent out in a first round to national employers' organisations, European sectoral employers' organisations and individual companies. The key objective of this first round was to draft a first overview of available resources and identify those "low hanging fruits" that companies and employers could make use of.

The response rate to the first round of the questionnaire was very limited. In following up with the BusinessEurope network, it became clear that a lack of knowledge and awareness on this topic was the main hurdle for stakeholders to reply. It was also noted that broad scope of the questionnaire made it difficult for stakeholders to respond in a targeted way.

In order to gather more relevant information, it was therefore decided to update and resend the questionnaire (see annex II) to the BusinessEurope network in late 2021 and early 2022. In addition to the questionnaire, stakeholders were also asked for further information on existing or past examples of any incentives and tools to help businesses taking measures to prevent exposure to carcinogens, including supportive legal framework, counselling services or other umbrella organisations' initiatives.

This more targeted approach garnered better results and by April 2022, we had received 3 well-rounded inputs from Slovakia, Spain and Sweden. Whilst an improvement, the overview still did not provide a representative picture of the different funding availabilities in the various Member States. Given the scarcity of these results, the challenge partners therefore agreed that a renewal of the questionnaire in 2023 which includes more specific questions on funding availabilities could be beneficial for the next steps under this particular challenge.

***Needs from businesses to address carcinogens in the workplace: The case of Spain***

Spanish companies identified that aid to companies should focus firstly on raising awareness about carcinogens in the workplace as well as developing more knowledge on how regulations on carcinogens will affect them. The existence of technical advisory committees, open to sectoral employer organisations, could play a pivotal role in the latter.

Secondly, mutual insurance companies were identified as key stakeholders in assisting companies by offering them prevention advice on the one hand and producing good training tools on the other hand. More support however is needed for enabling the exchange of information and experiences between different companies.

Thirdly, access to adequate funding and incentives are crucial in order to carry out technical studies, implement targeted health surveillance protocols and implement needed investments in the installation of up-to-date systems.

The response rate to the questionnaire in 2023 more than doubled to 8 replies, from a national, sectoral and company level. This increased response rate can be attributed to two main factors. Firstly, the presentation of the intermediate results and further dissemination of the questionnaire during the webinar of 19 May 2022 (see below), highlighted the need to stakeholders for more targeted input. Secondly, stakeholders indicated an increased awareness of this issue due to renewal of the questionnaire on many different occasions.

In order to widen the scope of the questionnaire further, it was finally decided in 2023 to also send it out to the EU-OSHA national focal points to gather their insights on national initiatives, sources, financial schemes and opportunities. With this, we gathered five responses. These responses confirmed our the earlier responses on how there is a lack of existing financial instruments or guiding tools specifically to support businesses in managing carcinogen-related risks at the workplace.

**Main conclusions**

Despite the many attempts by the challenge partners to map this information via multiple ways, it was concluded that this information is not so readily available. This was exacerbated by the limited level of knowledge that stakeholders had on this topic, which led to a relatively low response rate to the questionnaire. All in all, this led to the conclusion that the information is not as available as we thought and we need to explore other routes to collect the needed information.

Whilst the main objective of this challenge was to create a dedicated webpage on the website of the Roadmap on Carcinogens, where all available funding resources would be made accessible to interested stakeholders, the challenge partners agreed that this would be a premature action for two

reasons. Firstly, a more robust overview of initiatives is needed to fill out the webpage with substantial, meaningful and up-to date information for end-users. In order to accomplish this, it might be necessary to contract an external consultant to conduct a mapping exercise in more depth as the resources of the challenge partners were too limited to broaden the scope of their research. Secondly, a more targeted involvement of relevant stakeholders, including end-users, national focal points, insurance groups, etc. is needed to gather the relevant and necessary information to complete this exercise.

## Challenge 3.1 – Engaging sectors and industries<sup>2</sup>

### Introduction

The use of carcinogenic substances in the workplace is not restricted to any one sector or Member State. This is why the involvement and mobilisation of a wide set of actors is necessary to effectively combat the exposure to carcinogens at work. In this regard, cross-industry and sectoral organizations play a significant role to their members in raising awareness, in assisting businesses as well as in developing specific practical guidance and dedicated solutions or instruments. The more cross-industry and sectoral organisations (both at the European and the national level) can be mobilised to join the Roadmap on Carcinogens, the more sectors will therefore benefit from the mapped and explained solutions across the different challenges.

Against this background, the Roadmap aims at activating sectors to develop their own solutions and feed into the Roadmap, not only with initial ideas, but also with practical details on how to implement these solutions. Furthermore, by engaging with different stakeholders through the organisation of interactive events, the Roadmap aims at fostering a closer involvement with these organisations and finding ways for collaboration and future projects. Finally, a continuous and up-to-date information flow is necessary to keep actors motivated and mobilised to continue building a European-wide prevention culture on health and safety at work.

### Main activities

On 25 April 2022, the partners of challenge 3.1 published an [article on “Activating European industries and sectors in the fight against exposure to carcinogens in the workplace”](#) on the Roadmap’s website. The article provided a retrospective on the outcome of the May 2019 conference on the role of sectoral organisations with respect to preventing exposure to carcinogens and aimed to introduce interested stakeholders to the main webinar underpinning this challenge. The article was subsequently circulated amongst BusinessEurope’s relevant working groups as a scene-setter for the webinar.

On 19 May 2022, several Roadmap partners organised a joint online workshop in line with challenge 3.1 on the important role of (cross-)sectoral organisations in supporting and encouraging the companies in their network to take measures against exposure to carcinogens. The workshop sought to find out to what extent sectoral organisations can work together with the Roadmap on Carcinogens and exchange some good practices in view of formulating follow-up actions for the coming years. In

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<sup>2</sup> [Challenge 3.1: Engaging industry and sectors - Roadmap on Carcinogens](#)

addition, the workshop focused on best practices in terms of safe working procedures, in line with challenge 4.3<sup>3</sup>, and on the financing of measures to prevent workers getting exposed to carcinogens, in line with challenge 2.3. The workshop was built on the previous workshop given in Brussels in May 2019<sup>4</sup>.

The webinar brought together representatives from national employers' organisations, European sectoral organisations and companies, who exchanged on best practices and relevant experiences. An in-depth discussion with participants was fostered through active break-out rooms, followed by broader reflections within the workshop plenary. Several key best practices were highlighted during the event, both from a national as well as a sectoral perspective.

***Best Practice Example: The NEPSI Social Dialogue Agreement and Good Practice Guide***

The NEPSI Social Dialogue Agreement was established to protect the health of those occupationally exposed to respirable crystalline silica. Main industries in the European Union associated with the exposure to respirable silica agreed on appropriate measures for the improvement of working conditions through the application of good practice.

NEPSI focuses on good practice implementation in workplaces, to reduce workers' exposure to respirable crystalline silica dust. The NEPSI Good Practice Guide draws example from many companies.

The established European Network on Silica provides guidance to small and micro enterprises, trainings for new workers using the latest technologies, standardized RCS measurement methodology, and good implementation thanks to a reporting system on Key Performance Indicators.

Lastly, the BusinessEurope network were informed on continuous activities of the Roadmap through internal meetings. In addition to receiving regular updates of the main developments within the Roadmap, the BusinessEurope network was furthermore invited to the activities of the Roadmap, such as the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour's virtual event on 27 September 2022 on "Silica Dust – Fight against work-related cancer!" and the Spanish Presidency conference on 20-21 November 2023 on "Preventing work-related cancer". These internal discussions also served to collect any further relevant information from the network on their own successful activities and events related to tackling the exposure to carcinogens in the workplace.

<sup>3</sup> [Challenge 4.3: Safe working procedures - Roadmap on Carcinogens](#)

<sup>4</sup> Slides-set of Conference 15 May 2019 on 'How to help businesses and workers to tackle exposure to carcinogens on the shop floor. the vital role of cross-industry and sectoral organisations.': [Microsoft PowerPoint - 15MayBrussels RoadmapEvent Proceedings.pptx \(roadmaponcarcinogens.eu\)](#)

### Main conclusions

Participants to the webinar indicated a high satisfaction rate with the content as well as the outcomes of the webinar. As indicated above, the success of the webinar led to the renewal of the questionnaire on available financial resources under challenge 2.3.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

As RoC2.0 comes to an end and we are at the beginning of RoC3.0, the activities, results and lessons learned from both challenge 2.3 and 3.1 can be taken into the next phase. RoC3.0 consists of four main assets (1. Information and Communication, 2. Exchanges between partners, 3. Implementation of limit values and compliance, 4. Legacy preparation - input into the next EU OSH Strategic Framework). Especially for assets 1 and 2 there is a role for the insights of these two challenges to strengthen the knowledge base and actions. All stakeholders involved in execution of challenge 2.3 and 3.1 will stay involved and have agreed to continue in the RoC3.0 phase.

Looking forward for challenge 2.3, although it was found that it was not feasible to provide a complete overview of financial opportunities and support measures to prevent exposure to carcinogens, this does not imply the goal is not pursued anymore. We still want to guide businesses to (information on) funds or fiscal measures, to act as an accelerator and help companies invest in adopting measures to prevent workers getting exposed to carcinogens. We have identified a need for this guidance, but also a lack of knowledge on how to guide. Our initial idea to provide a webpage where all available funding resources would be made accessible to interested stakeholder was concluded to be too premature. Though, in the next phase we might still create this, for example by contracting an external consultant to conduct this task, if the funds are available. Discussions have also been had on the possibility to build the webpage in a way that it is a place offering an overview of national contacts (e.g. focal points, sectoral organisations, Ministries) which can guide businesses further in their search to financial opportunities.

In line with challenge 3.1, the Roadmap will keep aiming to involve and mobilise relevant actors such as cross-industry and sectoral organisations to effectively combat exposure to carcinogens at work. The Roadmap will keep providing a continuous information flow to keep actors motivated and mobilized to continue building a European-wide prevention culture, focusing especially on the new website that will be published in the near future.

ANNEX I

**AGENDA**

**Seminar “Roadmap on Carcinogens – Engaging industry and sectors”**

19 May 2022  
9h30 – 13h00 (CET)

**Virtual**

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|----------------------|--|
| <b>9h15-9h30</b>     | Connecting to seminar  |
| <b>9h30-9h40</b>     | <b>Welcome and introduction to Roadmap</b><br><i>TNO – Jos De Lange, Senior Consultant</i>   |
| <b>9h40-10h10</b>    | <b>Challenge 3.1: Engaging sectors and industry</b><br><i>Moderator: BusinessEurope – Isaline Ossieur, Adviser Social Affairs</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Introduction to challenge</li><li>- Presentation of best practice, followed by Q&amp;A</li></ul>   |
| <b>10h10-11h15</b>   | <b>Challenge 4.3: Safe Working Procedures</b><br><i>Moderator: TNO – Wouter Fransman, Senior Scientist</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction to challenge</li><li>• Introduction and outcome survey</li><li>• Break-out sessions to exchange best practices</li><li>• Feedback from break-out sessions and discussions in plenary</li></ul> |
| <b>11h15-11h30</b>   | <b>Coffee break</b>  |
| <b>11h30 – 11h45</b> | <b>Challenge 2.3: Funding tools</b><br><i>Moderator: TNO – Amber Vernooij, Junior Scientist</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Presentation of national and sectoral funding and support practices from questionnaire</li><li>- Introduction to dedicated webpage</li></ul>   |
| <b>11h45 – 12h45</b> | <b>Challenge 3.1: Engaging sectors and industry</b><br><i>Moderator: BusinessEurope – Isaline Ossieur, Adviser Social Affairs</i>  |



## ANNEX II

### Questionnaire Challenge 2.3

Questionnaire to BusinessEurope members, which include national employers' organisations, European sectoral employers' organisations and companies<sup>5</sup>.

- How can businesses best be assisted in tackling carcinogens at the workplace?
- What are the specific funding tools, information guides, technical advice programmes, sectoral incentives etc. that are needed at the sectoral/national level?
- How can businesses be assisted in the most effective way in making use of these available tools or funds?
- How do you, as a (cross-)sectoral member federation, already assist businesses in finding existing funding tools?

Questionnaire to European Focal Points on Occupational Safety and Health<sup>6</sup>.

- Are you aware of existing financial instruments/funds available in your country for businesses to support them in managing carcinogens-related risks at the workplace? Could you please provide us with info or guide us to it?
- Are you aware of any websites, publications, organisations or contact persons where businesses can find or be informed on an overview of such existing tools/funds available?

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<sup>5</sup> Sent on 5 April 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Sent on 14 November 2023.