



EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY
SCIENCE MEDICINES HEALTH

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European Medicines Agency

Report on industry stakeholders' feedback on engagement and communication activities

Final report on survey and interviews

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1. Executive summary

Effective communication and active engagement with key stakeholders are essential for providing innovative, safe, high-quality medicines for all European patients and animals.

The European medicines agencies network strategy 2028¹ recognises the importance of deepening and fostering communication and collaboration with stakeholders across all six identified thematic areas, especially in the current environment characterised by rapid changes in science, technology, legislation and regulatory requirements.

The Agency commitment to its stakeholders is evident in its constant efforts to ensure transparent, clear and effective communication, and to enable active engagement and dialogue.

The pharmaceutical industry, in particular, is one of the key stakeholder groups, and cooperation with representatives of large and smaller pharmaceutical companies, medical device companies and distributors, opens avenues for sharing knowledge, discussing challenges, and proposing solutions across all sectors.

The value of the Agency's current communication and engagement channels was confirmed by the positive feedback received from the affiliated members of industry organisations who took part in the engagement and communication activities survey, and by the insights gained from the interviews with

industry organisation secretariat representatives.

Industry stakeholders consider the possibility of receiving targeted communication on important updates, invitations to contribute to consultations, initiatives and events to be pivotal in raising awareness and promoting cooperation. Other channels, such as newsletters, the corporate website and social media, represent a useful, complementary source of information.

The possibility to actively participate in initiatives and events is considered fundamental. Clarity on topic relevance, the availability of the right expertise as well as the open dialogue and the ability to shape events agendas are flagged as enablers to a positive engagement.

Both the surveys and the interviews provided an opportunity to learn about the perception and preferences of industry stakeholders regarding the Agency engagement and communication practices.

The feedback received confirmed that the current practices in use at the Agency ensure effective communication and positive engagement with industry stakeholders. The improvement and streamlining proposals have been translated into a set of recommendations aimed at maintaining a balanced and transparent communication and a positive engagement.

The Agency would like to thank all the industry stakeholders who contributed to this initiative.

¹

<https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/other/seizing-opportunities-changing-medicines-landscape->

[european-medicines-agencies-network-strategy-2028-final_en.pdf](https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/other/seizing-opportunities-changing-medicines-landscape-)



2. Background

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) routinely interacts with key stakeholder² groups (such as organisations and associations representing patients and consumers, healthcare professionals, academia, industry) which have an interest in or are influenced by the work of the EMA and its partners.

In accordance with the Framework for interaction between the EMA and industry stakeholders², regular engagement with European industry organisations aims at providing a platform to exchange views and promote dialogue; improve communication and provide efficient, targeted and timely information; enhance stakeholders understanding of the European medicine regulatory framework; co-operate with established networks and alliances and increase transparency of stakeholders engaging with EMA.

In this context, it is fundamental to ensure effective communication and to maintain an active engagement with key industry stakeholder organisations. These stakeholders represent large pharmaceutical companies, as well as micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and offer a variety of perspectives from sectors such as human and veterinary medicines, medical devices, and medicine distribution.

To monitor the adequate implementation of the framework for interaction with industry stakeholders and to receive feedback on the effectiveness of the Agency's communication and engagement activities, a dedicated survey was shared to all members of eligible industry organisations³. The survey was complemented by a series of interviews with the secretariats of some of the industry organisations represented in the Industry Standing Group

(ISG)⁴ where the proposal for the project and the call for volunteers was presented⁴.

3. Objectives, scope and methodology

The objective of this initiative was to obtain the feedback from industry stakeholders regarding their experience with the EMA's communication and engagement activities. Two complementary approaches were employed:

- Feedback survey to all eligible industry stakeholders on the Agency's communication and engagement initiatives.
- Interviews on specific procedures and perception related to the Agency's communication and engagement initiatives with volunteers from the European industry organisation secretariats represented in the ISG.

The scope of the survey targeting members of all eligible industry stakeholder organisations included:

- information on the respondent profile, questions on experience with the current EMA communication channels (such as the EMA corporate website, the newsletters, social media, publications and targeted mailing);
- feedback on the use of target communication disseminated by the EMA industry liaison;
- feedback on the experience with written and public consultations, surveys and engagement initiatives and events (including ISG, the industry stakeholder platform on research and development support (R&D platform), the industry stakeholder platform on the operation of the centralised procedure for human medicines (CP platform), industry

²

https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/other/framework-interaction-between-european-medicines-agency-and-industry-stakeholders_en.pdf

³ https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/other/list-eligible-industry-stakeholder-organisations_en.pdf

⁴ <https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/partners-networks/pharmaceutical-industry/industry-standing-group/industry-standing-group-meetings>

⁴ https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/report/highlights-twelfth-industry-standing-group-meeting_en.pdf

stakeholder platform – operation of European Union (EU) pharmacovigilance (PhV platform)⁵, and bilateral meetings).

The scope of interviews with volunteers from EU industry organisations secretariats included:

- feedback on processing of Agency's communication and engagement requests;
- discussion on the preferred method for communication;
- feedback on engagement drivers and preferences when contributing to the EMA's initiatives and events with attendees and speakers;
- where relevant, feedback was sought on the clarity and efficiency of the tools currently in place for engagement and communication on the Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe) methodology.

4. Industry stakeholder survey

The survey was launched from the 15th of May to the 15th of July 2025 and was shared to all 37 eligible industry organisations via a targeted communication. Two reminders were sent to improve the response rate.

Each representative from the eligible industry organisations were asked to consult its affiliated members and to submit a single, consolidated response. However, if consensus could not be reached, separate responses reflecting differing viewpoints were also accepted.

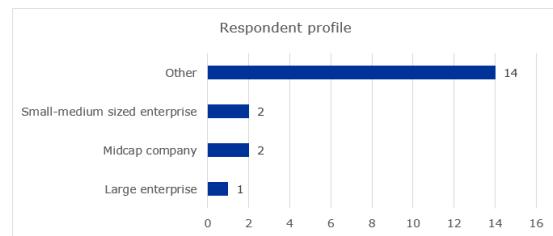
Profile and overall survey response rate

A response was received from 19 eligible organisations (corresponding to a response rate of 51.9%) with most respondents (n = 14)

representing SMEs, midcap companies and large size companies.

All key sectors were represented with most of the feedback received from organisations active in the field of medicinal products for human use (n = 11) and medicinal products for veterinary use (n=3).

Figure 1. Respondent profile



Agency's communication channels

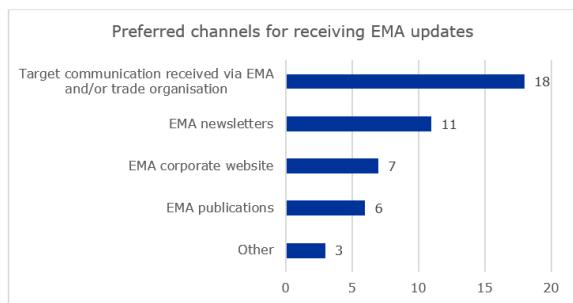
Receiving targeted communication via the EMA or the trade organisations was indicated as the most preferred channel (n=17), followed by reading the EMA newsletters (n= 14) and monitoring the EMA corporate website (n=12). In one instance ("Other"), the use of external regulatory intelligence tools to aggregate information from all EMA channels was indicated.

Similar feedback was provided regarding the preferred communication channel, confirming that targeted communications disseminated through the EMA or relevant trade organisations were the preferred source of information (n=18), followed by the EMA newsletters as a secondary important channel (n=11).

Most respondents (n= 14) indicated that the information was generally not perceived as duplicated. Where a duplication was indicated, targeted emails, newsletters, the EMA corporate website, social media and publications were indicated as the main source of duplicative information.

⁵ <https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/partners-networks/pharmaceutical-industry/industry-stakeholder-platform-meetings>

Figure 2. Preferred communication channel



Agency's newsletters and corporate website

Most respondents ($n = 9$) considered the newsletters to be a valuable resource or indicated that this tool helped them to stay informed and updated with the latest developments ($n = 9$). In one instance, concerns were raised on the number of newsletters currently available and the potential duplication of information.

Regarding the use of the EMA corporate website, most respondents reported visiting it at least once a week ($n = 9$) or once a month ($n = 4$). In some instances ($n = 3$), daily consultation was indicated. Three respondents indicated not availing of the EMA corporate website to stay informed about the latest updates.

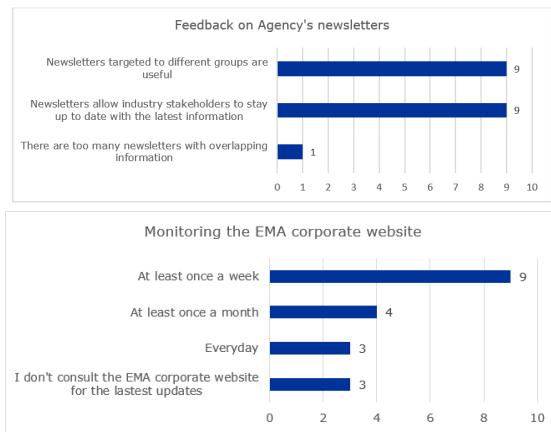
Industry stakeholders were also asked to provide feedback on the two webpages targeting the pharmaceutical industry:

- [Pharmaceutical industry](#) available from the Agency corporate website landing page and providing featured information and latest news.
- [Pharmaceutical industry](#), available from the Agency corporate website landing page under the "Partners & Networks" tab and providing details on the framework for engagement, related activities and relevant industry stakeholder groups.

The majority of respondents ($n = 9$) was aware of both webpages while only a minority was aware of only one or neither. Generally, these webpages were considered useful. In one

instance ("Other"), it was noted that there were different opinions among the respondent's affiliated members, and it was highlighted that the featured information on the homepage was not easily visible.

Figure 3. Feedback on EMA newsletters and corporate website



Target communication disseminated by the EMA industry liaison

Targeted mailing was considered a useful tool for receiving information on call for nominations for events and initiatives ($n = 14$), key updates ($n = 13$), and event invitations ($n = 13$) and call for speakers/invites to contribute to surveys/consultations ($n = 13$).

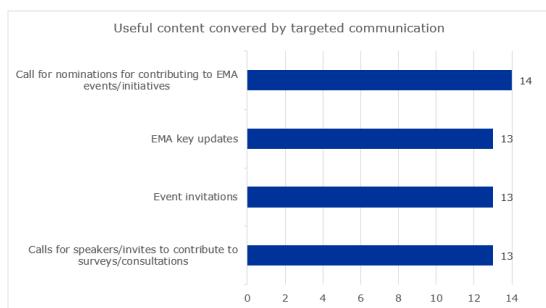
The information provided in the targeted emails was generally rated as "extremely clear" ($n = 8$) and "somewhat clear" ($n = 11$).

The communication was perceived as relevant across several topic areas (EMA key updates, event initiations, call for speakers, invites to contribute to survey/consultations, call for nomination for contributing to EMA events/initiatives) with only one instance, related to a specific sectorial organisation, where relevance was not confirmed.

Additionally, most respondents ($n = 17$) confirmed that the given deadlines were usually acceptable while only in 2 instances the time given to provide feedback was considered unsuitable. Reminders were generally indicated as useful in ensuring meeting the required deadlines ($n = 11$) and, in 4 cases, preference

was expressed in having more frequent reminders. In some instances, reminders were not considered necessary, and proposals (outlined in "Other") were made to improve the process.

Figure 4. Targeted communication content

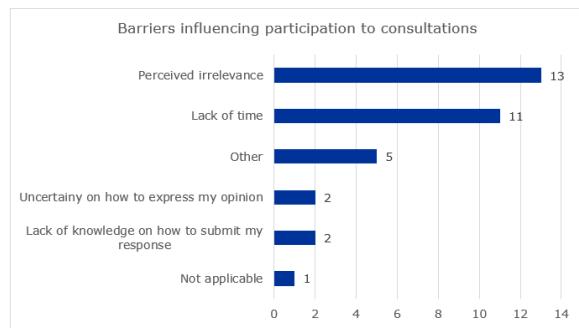
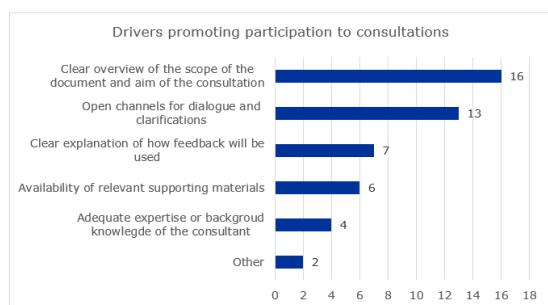


Agency's written and public consultations

Overall, satisfaction was indicated regarding the frequency of written and public consultations issued by the Agency (n = 14).

The top 3 factors influencing the ability of industry to contribute to consultations were indicated as the clarity towards the scope and aim of the consultation (n = 16), the possibility to have an open channel with the EMA to request clarifications (n = 13) and the clarity on how the feedback will be used (n = 7). When "Other" was selected, availability of supporting materials, timing of the consultation and use of a feedback management tool was indicated. The top 3 elements representing a barrier to industry stakeholder contribution were indicated as the perceived irrelevance (n = 13), the lack of time (n = 11) and the availability of the required expertise/other (n = 5).

Figure 5. Consultations drivers and barriers



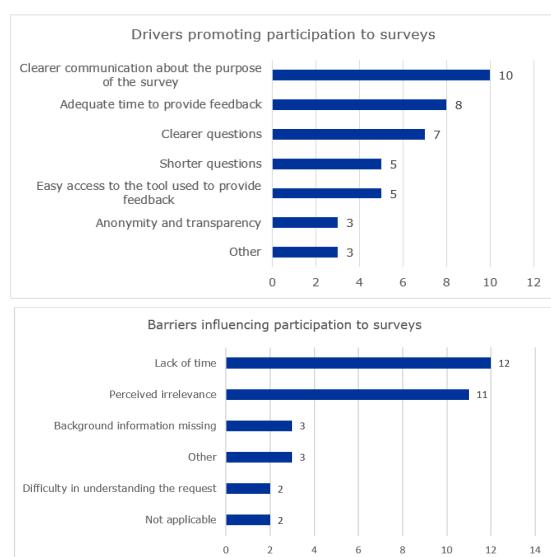
EMA surveys

Overall satisfaction was indicated regarding the frequency of surveys issued (n = 10).

The top 3 factors influencing the ability of industry to contribute to surveys were indicated as the clarity of the purpose (n = 10), the adequate time allocated to respond (n = 8) and the clarity of the questions (n = 7). When "Other" was selected, suggestions were made on improving and/or reconsidering a different survey management tool and on increasing transparency of survey outcomes.

The top 3 barriers influencing participation to surveys were indicated as the lack of time (n = 12), the perceived irrelevance (n = 11) and the missing background information (n = 3). When "Other" was selected, relevance of survey topics, more transparency on survey outcomes and insufficient recognition of stakeholder contributions were indicated.

Figure 6. Surveys drivers and barriers



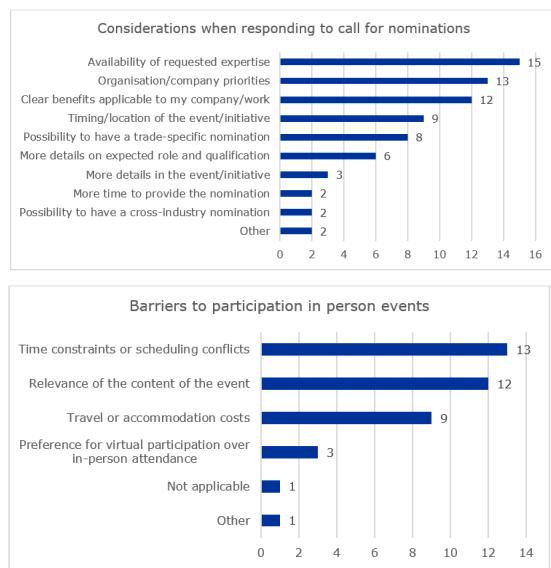
Engagement on initiatives and events

The top 3 factors motivating responses to calls for nominations are the availability of the requested expertise ($n = 15$), the alignment with company priorities ($n = 13$), and the clear benefits for the company ($n = 12$). Additional factors favouring participation were indicated as timing and location of the event, as well as the possibility of a trade-specific representation (rather than a cross-industry representation). When "Other" was selected, the relevance of the event, the requests for cross-industry nominations (considered as time consuming and as diluting the input of each sector) were indicated.

The top 3 barriers impeding the participation to an event were indicated as time constraints/scheduling conflicts (13), event content relevance (12) and travel and accommodation costs (9). When "Other" was selected, the lack of possibility for industry to contribute to shaping and discussing the event content was raised.

All the established engagement mechanisms represented by the ISG, the Industry stakeholder platforms (R&D, CP, PhV platforms) and bilateral meetings and related transparency efforts were considered useful by most respondents ($n = 8$). In some cases ($n = 5$), the lack of clarity on the differences in scope between the various groups and platforms was flagged.

Figure 7. Events drivers and barriers



Suggestions for improvement

Industry stakeholders provided several improvement proposals. These were categorised in order to identify reoccurring suggestions. The top 5 proposals made were related to the improvement of timelines for consulting stakeholders; ensuring coordination between publications and targeted mailing; providing track changes versions of updated documents or at least specify the nature of the change; keep published documents and timeline up to date and refine website search to facilitate identification of information and guidance.

5. Interviews with industry stakeholder organisations

The organisations that expressed interest in participating to the interviews represented human and veterinary sectors, distribution and medical devices and included organisations representing big pharma as well as SMEs.

The interviews were conducted from the 3rd to the 26th of June 2025 and complemented the survey with specific insights on procedures and methodologies used by each organisation when dealing with any communication and

engagement requests received from the Agency. The interviews aimed at gathering specific insights on how the information is triaged and communicated to affiliated members and how Agency activities are perceived by each industry organisation. Each interview was held virtually and lasted approximately 25 to 30 minutes.

Figure 8. Industry organisations interviewed

Industry organisations
ACRO (Association for Clinical Research Organisations)
AESGP (Association of the European Self-Medication Industry)
Affordable Medicines Europe
AVC (Association of Veterinary Consultants)
EAAR (Europeans Association of Authorised Representatives)
EALTH (European Association for Logistics and Transportation in Healthcare)
EFPIA (European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations)
EIGA (European Industrial Gases Association)
EuropaBio (European Association for Bioindustries)
GIRP (European Healthcare Distribution Association)
IPFA (International Plasma and Fractionation Association)
Medicines for Europe
PPTA (Plasma Protein Therapeutics Association)
Vaccines Europe

Processing EMA communication and engagement requests

Most industry organisations indicated performing an internal triage when receiving the Agency's communications and engagement requests. This included evaluating the relevance and urgency of a request before forwarding the information to the affiliated members and/or relevant working groups.

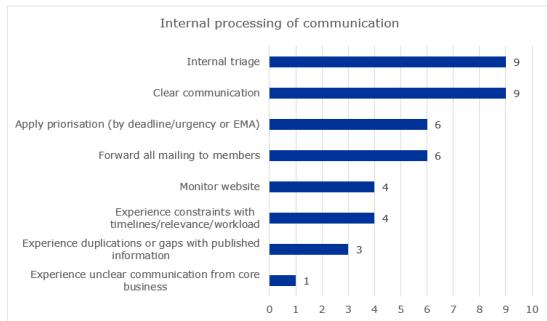
The communications received were considered generally clear and well-structured especially if issued by the EMA industry liaison. Having specific actions or deadlines highlighted in the email subject as well as receiving reminders were considered helpful and a good way to raise awareness on urgency and ensure submission of a response. Most organisations reported that prioritising communication received from the EMA was standard practice, especially if the request was marked as 'urgent' and/or a deadline was given. Affiliated members were informed within a short timeframe (often within 24 hours). In some instances, challenges were flagged when dealing with short deadlines or when assessing the relevance of certain topics.

Some organisations indicated that they routinely monitored the EMA corporate website to stay up to date with the latest information. This approach sometimes resulted in the discovery of new information before the actual mailing was received. More alignment was suggested.

General satisfaction was expressed with current procedures in place at the Agency to flag urgent requests by using subject lines and formatting. Better clarifications on the reasons

behind the urgency and related impact were indicated as potential improvements.

Figure 9. Internal processing



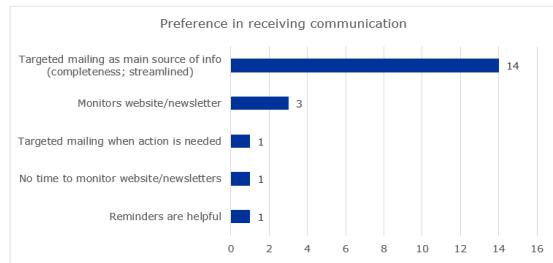
Preferred method for communication

Receiving targeted mailing was considered as the most suitable tool by the majority of interviewed given the constraints in monitoring the Agency corporate website and in reading newsletters.

Receiving emails (and reminders) was indicated as giving a sense of inclusion and security in terms of not missing out key information and events. Additionally receiving emails was indicated as facilitating internal dissemination and retaining of the information. Most of the organisations were subscribed to one or more newsletters but reported lack of time and workload constraints as main reasons for not reading them. Generally, newsletters were considered a good learning resource but not the preferred way to receive important updates and information. Duplications, fragmentation in finding the source of information and having to actively search for key updates were not considered useful.

Weekly monitoring of the website was indicated as a routine procedure by some organisations and a preferred way to identify updates in respect to newsletters.

Figure 10. Preferred communication channel



Engagement drivers and preferences

Generally positive feedback was received on the engagement mechanism. The importance of learning about the perspectives of other industry stakeholders, sharing views, providing strategic input, networking, and keeping up to date with the latest activities was indicated as the main reason for participating in ISG, the stakeholder platform meetings, and the annual bilateral interactions.

A lack of clarity regarding topic selection and groups remit as well as lack of specific sector discussions were mentioned by some respondents, suggesting a need to increase stakeholders involvement and communication during the preparatory phase of the meetings

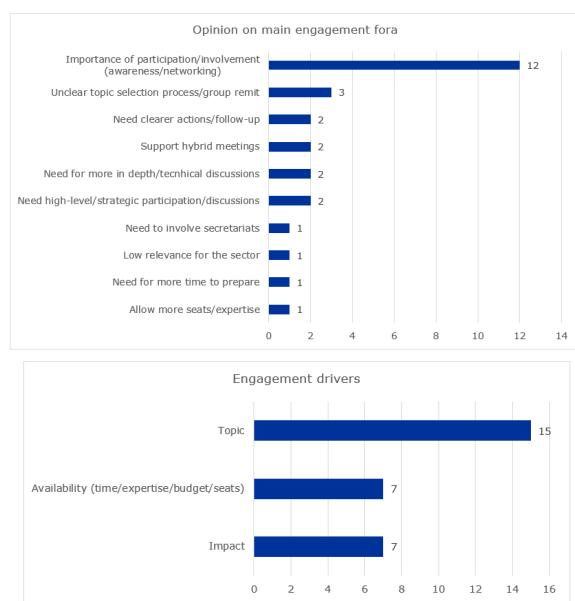
Specifically, for the ISG meetings, the interviewees expressed the importance of allowing more in-depth discussions as well as ensuring more strategic topics and high-level industry representativeness.

Some organisations highlighted that hybrid formats and receiving the agenda in advance are important factors contributing to members participation. However, the limited number of available seats (including virtual seats) and need for topic-specific expertise were indicated as factors limiting the participation.

Industry annual bilateral meetings were considered a valuable tool for bringing directly to the Agency sector specific perspectives.

In terms of industry stakeholder drivers to engage on EMA activities, topic relevance and its impact to the sector represented by the organisation were indicated as main criteria that each industry organisation affiliated member takes into consideration when evaluating participation to an event or when contributing to a consultation. The availability of relevant expertise was also indicated as determinant for participation in activities and events. At this regard, barriers to engagement were identified in terms of constraints linked to workload and holiday periods, lack of technical expertise or poor clear understanding of how a topic impacts their sector. Additionally, short deadlines and limited availability of seats for in person and virtual participation were indicated as factor that may have an impact on the ability of the organisation to provide a comprehensive contribution and ensure expert participation.

Figure 11. Engagement fora feedback and drivers



Feedback on communication and engagement related to SAFe

10 out of 16 organisations interviewed had experience in working with the Agency by adopting the SAFe methodology. Their feedback was sought on aspects related to SAFe communication and engagement activities.

All respondents expressed general satisfaction with the level of transparency and engagement currently in place. This included quarterly system demos meetings, info days, quarterly strategic portfolio review meetings and targeted mailing.

Some organisations indicated the need to improve the strategic roadmaps by providing, in addition to the long-term vision, also a more detailed progress update.

The need for Subject Matter Experts to respect strict confidentiality agreements was indicated as a limiting factor for ensuring true industry representation. Increase the possibility to have more interactive sessions during quarterly system demos and other events was proposed.

6. Overall conclusions and recommendations

Engaging with and communicating to stakeholders is an essential part of the Agency's activities, especially in the current evolving times. Open dialogue is needed to discuss how to deliver innovation to European patients and animals as well as how to retain knowledge, boost competitiveness and ensure resilience. Additionally, the adequate and timely implementation of any new legislative and regulatory requirements must be ensured. Effective and clear communication, and the active engagement of stakeholders, are therefore of primary importance.

The industry is one of the key stakeholder groups, and its interaction is formalised through the relevant interaction framework, the effective implementation of which is periodically monitored.

The feedback received from the 19 industry organisations that participated in the survey, as well as the insights gained from interviews with 16 of their representatives, confirms the effectiveness and positive impact of the Agency's current practices for communicating with and engaging industry stakeholders. It also outlines the value of continuing to enhance the available practices and channels.

The industry values the possibility of receiving targeted mailings, as this ensures the receipt of key information and updates. Other channels, such as newsletters, the corporate website, publications and social media, are considered to complement targeted communication.

Important suggestions were made on ensuring coordination in publication and dissemination of information and ensuring an easy identification of updated information.

Active industry engagement in consultations, initiatives and events is also considered important, with suggestions proposed to facilitate understanding of topics, encourage active contributions and improve timing.

Clarifying the remit of the various groups and platforms and, where possible, boosting strategic dialogue and cooperation in the selection of discussion topics were indicated as important aspects requiring enhancement to maintain positive and active industry engagement.

Based on the feedback received, a set of recommendations has been proposed to enhance the communication and engagement experience between the Agency and industry

stakeholders further, and to maintain positive and open cooperation.

The recommendations were clustered into specific areas as showed in figure 12.

The full list of recommendations is available on section 6.1.

Figure 12. Areas for which recommendations were proposed

Area	Number of recommendations
Communication channels	1
Communication clarity	2
Transparency	4
EMA corporate website	3
Consultations and surveys	2
Engagement	4
SAFe	1



6.1. List of recommendations

Area	Recommendation
Communication channels	Maintain targeted emailing as the primary channel to inform industry stakeholders about key updates and events.
Communication clarity	Reinforce EMA's current practice of clear communication with email subjects and structured texts incorporating scope, impact and reasoning for urgent requests.
	Ensure that activities and event are relevant to the targeted organisations.
Transparency	Ensure coordination between publication of information and dissemination of the same information via targeted mailing to ensure all stakeholders have timely access to published information.
	Provide up to date overviews and increase transparency of all activities involving industry nominated representatives.
	Ensure transparency on outcome of consultations and surveys and, as possible, highlight how stakeholders feedback was implemented.
	Inform Industry on Agency's engagement and communication practices.
EMA corporate website	Continue taking actions to ensure that the website provides updated information
	Refine website search customisation.
	Enhance transparency on the nature of changes of updated documents.
Consultations and surveys	Ensure clarity of scope and aim of consultations and surveys.
	Evaluate improvements to EU survey management tool.
	Ensure adequate and realistic timelines for public consultations and suitable timing of events and other initiatives involving stakeholders.



Area	Recommendation
Engagement	Enhance stakeholders' participation to event and activities in terms of topic selection and seat availability.
	Enhance clarity on objectives, scope, and target audience for ISG and other stakeholder platform meetings to avoid duplication.
	Enhance strategic discussion and alignment during ISG meetings.
SAFe	Enhance SAFe activities understanding with clearer and up to date roadmap and enhance interactions.