TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE EA-MAC (MLA Cie.)

Structure and Operation of the EA Multilateral Agreement Council (MAC)

The MAC is composed of one representative from each EA Full Member, one observer from the EA Advisory Board representing the Member States and one observer from the European Commission.
Members having signed a Cooperation Agreement with EA may attend the meetings as observers. [i]
The AB 'under evaluation' is encouraged to invite one representative from its Member State as observer to the MAC meeting where its evaluation report is discussed. Representatives of IAF and ILAC may observe a meeting as part of the evaluation of EA as a region.

The MAC shall establish a Management Group and Task Force Groups as necessary to deal with specific topics.

The MAC meetings normally take place twice a year. In-between voting may be done by e-mail.

Responsibilities and Tasks of the MAC

The MAC is responsible for the effective and impartial management and monitoring of the peer evaluation process. As such it is the ultimate decision-making body on the Multilateral Agreement (MLA) and Bilateral Agreements (BLA) of EA.

The EA MAC is responsible for informing the EA-General Assembly about all decisions made on the EA MLA and EA BLAs. The decisions of the MAC concerning the signatory status to the EA MLA and BLA's are taken by the EA MLA signatories, including signatories to the MLA through a BLA. These decisions do not need to be endorsed by the EA General Assembly.
Complaints and appeals against MAC operations or decisions are handled through the EA Complaints and Appeals Procedure EA-2/01-S3.

The MAC is also responsible for providing information to the EA General Assembly on prospective new full members or any accreditation body with which EA propose to enter into a Contract of Cooperation.

Pursuant to the above functions, four major tasks are identified each with related subtasks.

1) Setting of operational procedures

- Establishing and updating peer evaluation criteria and procedures in line with ILAC and IAF procedures.
- Identifying concerns of customers or stakeholders about acceptance and relevance of the MLA and seeking for solutions.
- Acting on international evaluations of the MAC secretariat and its processes
- Discussing issues in relation to the MLA.
- Reporting to the EA-General Assembly on these issues.

2) Admission of new EA Full Members, Associate Members and Members having signed a Cooperation Agreement.
    - Studying documentation of applicants for EA-membership on request of the EA-secretariat.
    - Interacting with the applicant.
    - Conducting the necessary evaluations against EA's criteria.
    - Submitting recommendations to the EA-General Assembly.

3) Managing evaluations and deciding on acceptance into the EA MLA and BLA and further decisions on the signatory status of EA Accreditation Bodies

    - Processing applications for evaluation.
    - Organizing, managing and monitoring the peer evaluation activities.
    - Studying evaluation reports and deciding on admitting new signatories, continuation of signatory status, and on suspension or withdrawal.
    - Interacting whenever appropriate with regional groups, IAF and ILAC on combined evaluations.
    - Maintaining a system of control (re-evaluations) on the signatories.
    - Informing the EA General Assembly about decisions.

4) Management of resources

    - Conducting evaluator training sessions, evaluator monitoring and evaluator harmonisation.
    - Maintaining lists of approved evaluators for Team Leaders, Deputy Team Leaders and Team Members.
    - Appointing Team Leaders, Deputy Team Leaders and Team Members.
    - Ensuring a balanced contribution of the MLA signatories to the evaluations.
    - Cooperating with regional groups, IAF and ILAC on evaluator training.
    - Collecting appropriate data, monitoring and appraising team performances and providing feedback to individual evaluators.
    - Identify areas for additional harmonisation.

[i] An observer has no right to vote *but has access* to confidential information