



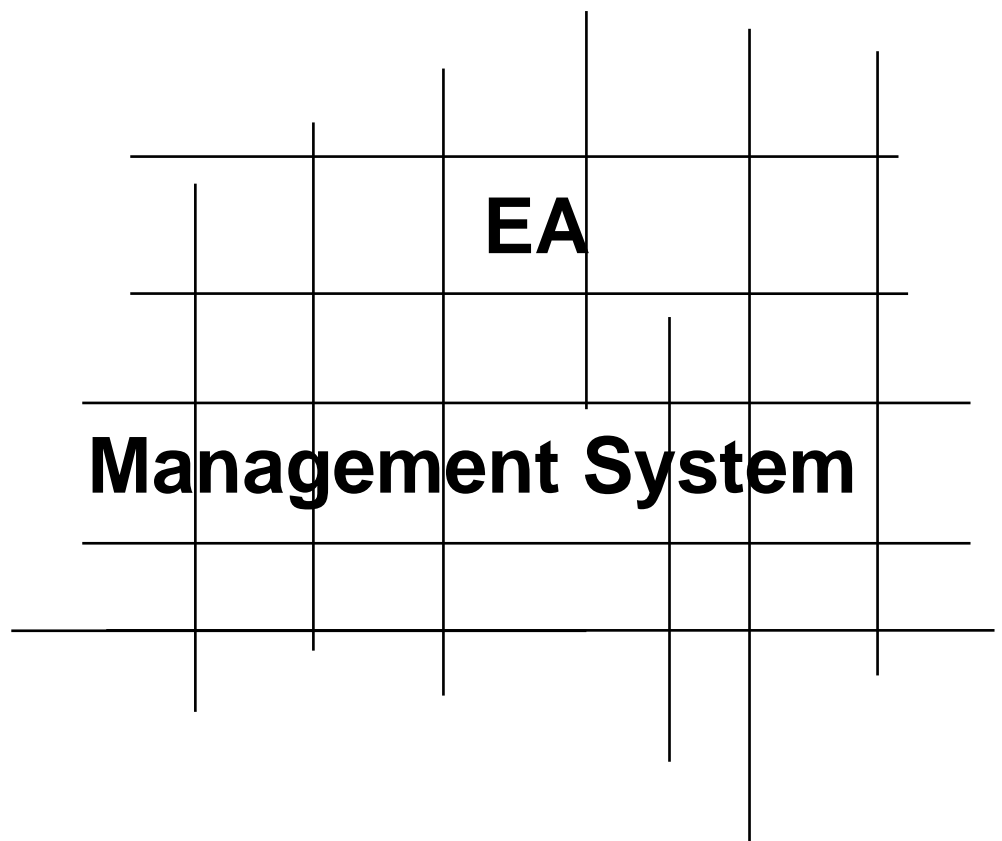
**European  
co-operation for  
Accreditation**

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Reference**

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**PURPOSE**

The present document outlines the EA management system with a view to describe what EA is and explain how EA is structured and operates.

*Authorship*

The publication has been written by the EA Secretariat and the EA Quality Manager.

*Official language*

The text may be translated into other languages as required. The English language version remains the definitive version.

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## 1. PREAMBLE

### 1.1 How to use/read the document

The present document outlines the EA management system with a view to describe what EA is and explain how EA operates.

Tasks, processes and related responsibilities are identified.

For every subject, a summary description and general principles or rules which are usually further detailed in a separate document or procedure are provided. The intention is not to repeat a procedure that exists. Instead, and wherever possible, reference is made to the applicable procedure or document.

An EA document is any document (printed or electronic) approved by an identified responsible EA body. An EA procedure is a document which describes an EA process with related responsibilities and authorities.

At the end of each section or subsection, there is a frame which contains the list of documents referred to in the section or subsection itself.

This document is issued as a controlled edition. There is one hard copy signed by the EA Chair and kept in the EA Secretariat.

### 1.2 Abbreviations

The Accreditation world is used to using a lot of abbreviations. For convenience, please find below the list of abbreviations used in the document.

<b>AB</b>	<b>Accreditation body</b>
<b>APLAC</b>	Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation
<b>BLA</b>	Bilateral agreement
<b>CAB</b>	Conformity Assessment Body
<b>CC</b>	Certification Committee
<b>COC</b>	Contract of cooperation
<b>DN</b>	Directives Network
<b>EA</b>	European cooperation for Accreditation
<b>EAAB</b>	EA Advisory Board
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EFTA</b>	European Free Trade Association
<b>EX</b>	Executive Committee
<b>FOC</b>	Financial Oversight Committee
<b>FPA</b>	Framework Partnership Agreement
<b>IAAC</b>	Inter American Accreditation Cooperation
<b>HHC</b>	Horizontal Harmonization Committee
<b>HRSRC</b>	Human Resources and Staff Remuneration Committee
<b>IC</b>	Inspection Committee
<b>ILC</b>	Inter Laboratory Comparison
<b>LC</b>	Laboratory Committee
<b>MAC</b>	MLA Council
<b>MG</b>	Management Group
<b>MLA</b>	Multilateral Agreement
<b>NAB</b>	National Accreditation Body
<b>PAC</b>	Pacific Accreditation Cooperation

<b>PT</b>	Proficiency Testing
<b>SADCA</b>	Southern African Development Community Accreditation
<b>TFG</b>	Task Force Group
<b>TL</b>	Team leader
<b>TM</b>	Team member
<b>TN</b>	Technical Network
<b>WP</b>	Work program

### 1.3 Review of the EA Management System

The changes in this document are summarized in the following table with the appropriate information to ensure traceability of the changes made.

Changes			Valid revision	Date of approval	Short description of changes
Previous revision	Section/ subsection	Page(s)			
Initial edition	-	-	00	2011-09-...	-
00	.....	.....	01	.....	.....
01	.....	....	02	.....	.....

## 2. ROLE AND ORGANISATION OF EA

### 2.1 Nature and purpose of EA

#### 2.1.1 Nature of EA

EA, the European co-operation for Accreditation, is a non-profit association which was set up in November 1997 and registered as an association in the Netherlands in June 2000 under Dutch law.

EA is the European network of nationally-recognised accreditation bodies located in the European geographical area.

EA has been recognised by the European Commission as the official European accreditation infrastructure on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 in Brussels when the *Guidelines for Cooperation between the European Commission (EC), the EFTA, EA and the competent national authorities* were signed. The appointment of EA as the official European accreditation infrastructure follows the adoption of *Regulation (EC) 765/2008* of the European Parliament and the Council of 9 July 2008 establishing a legal framework for accreditation in the EU/EFTA member states. This regulation came into effect as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010.

A *Framework Partnership Agreement between EA and the EC* setting out the common cooperation objectives as well as the administrative and financial conditions relating to Community financing granted to EA for the implementation of European accreditation policy and of the EC Regulation, was signed on 30 June 2010 in Brussels. A similar FPA was signed with EFTA on 8 December 2010. These Partnership Agreements place EA in a similar position as other organizations of major European interest (such as the European Standardization Bodies).

### 2.1.2 Purpose of EA

The *EA Articles of Association* set out the objectives of EA. In broad terms, these establish that EA exists to lead and develop the official European accreditation infrastructure, in which industry and society can have confidence in the results of accredited conformity assessment.

It is the independence, competence and impartiality of EA-member accreditation bodies that guarantee this confidence.

*EA Articles of Association*  
*Framework Partnership Agreements*  
*Guidelines for Cooperation between the EC, EFTA, EA and the Competent National Authorities*

### 2.2 Missions of EA

EA's mission consists of:

- defining, harmonizing and building consistency in accreditation as a service in Europe, by ensuring common interpretation of the standards used by its members;
- ensuring transparency of the operations (including assessments) performed and results provided by its members;
- maintaining a multilateral agreement (MLA) on mutual recognition between accreditation schemes and reciprocal acceptance of accredited conformity assessment services and results. According to Regulation (EC) 765/2008, EA shall support and harmonise the implementation of stringent rules in this regard, notably for cross-frontier accreditation;
- managing a peer-evaluation system consistent with international practices, since EA as a region is a member of ILAC (International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation) and IAF (International Accreditation Forum); and, according to Regulation (EC) 765/2008, tailoring the peer-evaluation process to fully accommodate the specific needs of regulatory sectors to strengthen the reassurance of sectorial stakeholders and regulators that the ABs' technical competence is thoroughly assessed;
- acting as a technical resource on matters related to the implementation and operation of the European policies on accreditation.

The EA MLA covers accreditation of the following conformity assessment bodies:

- Laboratories
  - testing laboratories
  - medical laboratories
  - calibration laboratories
- Certification bodies performing assessment of:
  - Quality, environmental and other management systems (MS)
  - products and services
  - persons

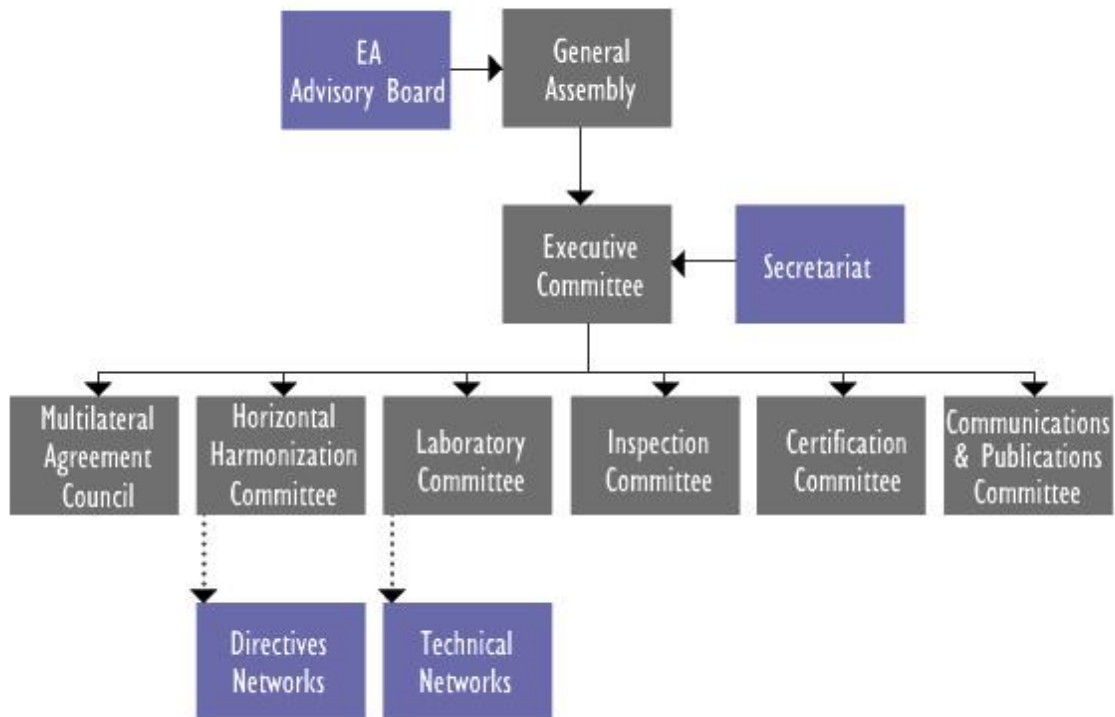
- Verification bodies according to the European regulation EMAS and EU Emission Trading Scheme regulations
- Inspection bodies

## 2.3 Structure and organisational chart of EA

The *EA Rules of Procedure* and its Supplements define the formal structures and rules of procedure to be followed so that the objectives of EA as defined in the *EA Articles of Association* are fulfilled.

### EA-1/17 *EA Rules of Procedure*

The EA structure comprises a General Assembly, an Executive Committee, an Advisory Board, a Secretariat and six technical committees including the MLA Council and a Financial Oversight Committee. The HRSRC is not considered a formal committee of EA but is a sub-group of the Executive Committee.



## 2.4 Responsibilities of EA Bodies

### 2.4.1 The EA General Assembly

The EA General Assembly, the highest decision-making body of the association, supervises the management and the general course of affairs in the association and gives instructions in respect of the EA policies.

The composition of the EA General Assembly is described in the *EA Articles of Association*. The responsibilities of the EA General Assembly, as well as rules for meetings and voting, are further developed in the *EA Rules of Procedure*.

The EA General Assembly elects a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman, whose election and responsibilities are set out in the *EA Articles of Association and Rules of Procedure*.

#### **2.4.2 The EA Executive Committee**

The instructions given by the General Assembly are implemented by the EA Executive Committee, whose membership, responsibilities, reports and decisions are defined in the *EA Rules of Procedure*.

The EA General Assembly elects the members of the Executive Committee from amongst the full membership. Elections rules are set out in the *EA Articles of Association and Rules of Procedure*.

#### **2.4.3 The EA Secretariat**

The day-to-day operations of EA are managed by the EA Secretariat, established and under the control of the Executive Committee, and responsible to the Chairman of EA. Based in Paris, France, and Utrecht, the Netherlands, the Secretariat is comprised of staff members employed by EA and staff contracted in from an EA member AB.

The EA Secretariat's main functions are fully listed in the *EA Rules of Procedure* and outlined as follows:

- supporting the Executive and all of the other EA Committees, including the EAAB;
- managing the EA General Assembly, EAAB and Committees' meetings;
- dealing with internal and external requests for information, and serving the network of members and stakeholders;
- dealing with applications for membership and sectorial cooperation;
- conducting the association's day-to-day administration and finances;
- managing all publications and archives of EA;
- maintaining the EA management system and related procedures;
- managing IT facilities and updating the EA web site.

The specific tasks of the MAC Secretariat consist of managing the peer-evaluation process, training the evaluators and liaising with the MLA Committees of ILAC and IAF (see section 4). The MAC Secretariat is hosted by RvA, the Dutch member of EA, in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

The eligible services provided by the Secretariat are covered by the Framework Partnership Agreement concluded with the EC/EFTA and financed through the corresponding operation grants received from the EC/EFTA.

#### **2.4.4 The EA Committees, Working Groups and Tasks Forces**

EA Committees/Council and other working parties are established by the EA General Assembly. The terms of reference of EA Committees and the MLA Council shall be endorsed by the EA General Assembly.

The EA Executive Committee and the EA Committees/Council may decide to set up working groups and task forces, to deal with specific issues. Working groups will be set up to deal with specific questions of a long-term nature that are within the competence of the Committees/Council, and task forces to deal with questions that can be solved within a limited time.

The decision by Committees/Council to set up working groups or task forces shall be endorsed by the Executive Committee, including Terms of Reference and Membership.

The common rules of procedure for every EA Committee or Council, Working Group and Task Force are described in the *EA Rules of Procedure*.

Committees/Council may elect a Vice Chair from the Committee/Council membership.

The EA Committees/Council set out a draft annual work programme to be submitted to the EA General Assembly for endorsement. Reporting on progress with the WP is made to the General Assembly at each General Assembly meeting.

Each Committee/Council is responsible for the management of the documents that they own (see section 3.8.3). Document review shall be a permanent item on the Committee/Council agenda.

Membership of the Committees/Council comprises:

- representatives of the EA membership (full and associate members);
- representatives of accreditation bodies having signed a cooperation agreement with EA;
- representatives of recognized stakeholders;
- representatives of the regional co-operations, ILAC and IAF;
- other observers.

Rules for membership are defined in the EA Rules of Procedures and individual Terms of Reference.

#### 2.4.4.1 The EA Certification Committee (CC)

The EA Certification Committee discusses technical issues related to the accreditation of certification bodies with the view of establishing best practice and fostering harmonization.

The standards used by the EA members for accreditation of certification bodies and for the work in the EA Certification Committee are:

- Management Systems Certification: ISO/IEC 17021
- Product Certification: EN 45011 (ISO/IEC Guide 65)
- Personnel Certification: ISO/IEC 17024

The EA Certification Committee includes two working groups dedicated to the food and environmental sectors: the WG Food and the WG Environment.

<p><i>CC Terms of Reference</i> <i>CC WG Environment Terms of Reference</i> <i>CC WG Food Terms of Reference</i></p>
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#### 2.4.4.2 The EA Inspection Committee (IC)

The EA Inspection Committee discusses technical issues related to the accreditation of inspection bodies with the view of establishing best practice and fostering harmonization.

The standard used by the EA members for accreditation of inspection bodies and for the work in the EA Inspection Committee is **ISO/IEC 17020**.

<p><i>IC Terms of Reference</i></p>
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#### 2.4.4.3 The EA Laboratory Committee (LC)

The EA Laboratory Committee discusses technical issues related to the accreditation of laboratories, proficiency testing providers and reference material producers, with the view of establishing best practice and fostering harmonization.

The standards used by the EA members for accreditation of laboratories and for the work in the EA Laboratory Committee are:

- Testing and Calibration laboratories: ISO/IEC 17025
- Medical laboratories: ISO 15189
- Proficiency testing providers: ISO/IEC 17043
- Reference material producers: ISO Guide 34

The EA Laboratory Committee includes three working groups: WG Healthcare, WG ILC in Calibration and WG ILC in Testing.

The EA Laboratory Committee also comprises five technical networks: TN Calibration, TN Environment, TN Food and Feed, TN Forensics and TN Mechanical, Electrical and Toy Testing.

The EA Laboratory Committee appoints a management group in charge of preparing Committee meetings and monitoring the work between meetings. Members of the MG are the Chair and Vice Chair of the LC and the conveners of the WGs and TNs.

<p><i>LC Terms of Reference</i></p> <p><i>LC MG Terms of Reference</i></p> <p><i>LC WG Healthcare Terms of Reference</i></p> <p><i>LC WG ILC in Calibration Terms of Reference</i></p> <p><i>LC WG ILC in Testing Terms of Reference</i></p> <p><i>LC TN Terms of Reference</i></p>
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#### 2.4.4.4 The EA Multilateral Agreement Council (MAC)

The Multilateral Agreement Council manages the peer-evaluation process and decides on MLA and bilateral signatories. Decision-making power on EA MLA/Bilateral signatory status is delegated to the MAC by the EA General Assembly. The MAC is also responsible for the evaluators' training, monitoring and harmonisation activities. (See section 4 of this document)

The MAC appoints a management group in charge of preparing Council meetings and monitoring the work between meetings. Members of the MG are the Chair, Vice Chair and secretary of the MAC and 2 to 4 EA MLA signatory members.

A representative from the EAAB and EC and a representative from the WG Training and Procedures may attend the MG meetings as observers.

Terms of service for the MG Chair, Vice Chair and observers are aligned with the term for the MAC Chair and Vice Chair. Every year one member of the MG shall be replaced for a 2-year mandate.

Membership of the MAC shall terminate when a member does not meet the following requirements:

- Being a Full EA Member representative
- Signatory status of represented Full EA Member is withdrawn.

The MAC MG nominates ad-hoc Task Force Groups to review evaluation reports (see EA-2/02). Based on the evaluation and TFG reports, the MAC decides on signatory status.

The MAC has established one working group, the WG Training and Procedures.

<p>EA-MAC/01-S1 <i>MAC Terms of Reference</i> EA-MAC/01-S2 <i>MAC-MG Terms of Reference</i> EA-MAC/01-S3 <i>MAC WG Training and Procedures Terms of Reference</i></p>
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#### 2.4.4.5 The EA Horizontal Harmonization Committee (HHC)

The Horizontal Harmonization Committee deals with horizontal technical issues regarding the application of general accreditation requirements on different types of conformity assessment bodies, the assessment of notified bodies and the elaboration of decisions on the eligibility of sector schemes to be covered specifically by the EA MLA.

The HHC is responsible for aspects related to the harmonised implementation of ISO/IEC 17011 and relevant ILAC/IAF and EA application documents.

The HHC also monitors the networks established for sharing knowledge on EU directives. Directive Networks (DNs) covering 21 “New Approach” Directives have been established to collect, structure and make accessible technical knowledge required for the assessment of CABs, thus meeting the high expectations set by the competent national authorities relying on accreditation as the best route to demonstrate the CABs’ competence in view of notification.

The HHC appoints task force groups as required for the analysis of sectoral schemes in compliance with the *EA-2/11 Policy, Criteria and procedures for the Evaluation and Acceptance of Conformity Assessment Schemes for inclusion in the EA MLA*, and in cooperation with the EA technical committees.

A permanent TFG has been specifically set up for the management and monitoring of the work in the DNs.

Another permanent TFG has been appointed for dealing with questions related to the implementation and interpretation of ISO/IEC17011 requirements.

<p><i>HHC Terms of reference</i> <i>Terms of Reference of EA networks dealing with EC directives (DNs)</i> <i>EA-2/11 Policy, Criteria and procedures for the Evaluation and Acceptance of Conformity Assessment Schemes for inclusion in the EA MLA</i></p>
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#### 2.4.4.6 The EA Communications and Publications Committee (CPC)

The Communications and Publications Committee is involved in the development of matters related to internal and external communications activities, including the publication of EA documents and the monitoring of EA IT facilities. The CPC maintains a *Communication Plan* that is in line with the *EA strategic plan*.

The Communications and Publications Committee has one working group: WG Database / Search Facility. It is in charge of monitoring the development of the EA Search Facility.

<p><i>CPC Terms of Reference</i></p>
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#### 2.4.4.7 The Financial Oversight Committee (FOC)

The Financial Oversight Committee monitors the use of EA's finances during each financial year and reports to the EA Executive and General Assembly. The rules applying to its membership are described in the *EA Rules of Procedure*.

*FOC Terms of Reference*

## 2.5 The EA Advisory Board

The EA Advisory Board is EA's main forum for stakeholders.

To meet the requirements of the European legislative framework, the EA Advisory Board has been established to ensure an effective and balanced involvement by relevant stakeholders in European accreditation in the provision of advice to EA on policy and strategy issues.

The EA Advisory Board aims to ensure that the work of the association meets the needs of the market place and expectations of all interested parties. The composition, tasks and procedures of the EA Advisory Board are provided for in the *EAAB Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure*.

*EAAB00 Terms of Reference*  
*EAAB01 Rules of Procedure*

## 3. MANAGEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION

### 3.1 Legal status

EA has been established as a not-profit-distributing association in the Netherlands in June 2000. The Association is registered in the Chamber of Commerce of Utrecht under No 30166441. EA's officers are declared to the Chamber of Commerce.

Furthermore, EA has established a Secretariat in Paris, France. This was done by declaring its activities to the French "Préfecture de Police de Paris". The working contracts of EA's employees in France have been established according to French working law. The EA accounts are maintained, declared and registered in Paris according to the French applicable rules.

### 3.2 Cooperation with European and national authorities

#### 3.2.1 Cooperation with the EC and the EFTA

##### 3.2.1.1 Legislative framework: objectives and conditions

The *Guidelines for Cooperation between the EC, the EFTA, EA and the competent national authorities* set out the principles and objectives for the cooperation between EA, the EC and the EFTA.

The *Framework Partnership Agreements* between EA and the EC and between EA and the EFTA set out the common cooperation objectives, as well as the administrative and financial

conditions relating to the Community and EFTA-specific financings granted to EA for the implementation of European accreditation policy.

Arising from the FPAs, specific agreements on annual operating grants enable EA to implement annual work programs based on annual budgets, both adopted by the EC/EFTA.

*Guidelines for cooperation between the EC, the EFTA, EA and the competent national authorities*  
*Framework Partnership Agreements*

#### 3.2.1.2 Responsibilities for cooperation

In practice at the operational level, the relations between EA and the European authorities is based on routine communication with the EC General Directorates, but specifically with DG Enterprise which is the appointed contact entity in the EC for implementation of the FPA.

#### EAAB

The EAAB includes representatives from DG Enterprise as well as from EFTA. The EA Chairman and Vice Chairman are invited to attend EAAB meetings to represent EA.

#### EA Chairman

EA (normally the EA Chairman) is required to participate in the meetings of the Senior Officials Group for Standardization and Conformity Assessment Policy (SOGS) for matters relating to accreditation.

Furthermore EA (normally the EA Chairman) may be invited to participate in the meetings of the EC Inter-Service Steering Group for Accreditation with a view to discuss the provision of accreditation to support the various EC services.

#### EA Executive Committee and General Assembly

The EA Executive Committee is responsible for setting-up processes and procedures for the management of specific agreements and related grants awarded by the EC/EFTA on the basis of an agreed work program.

The EA Executive Committee establishes the annual consolidated EA work program together with the associated estimated budget which is approved by the EA General Assembly.

### **3.2.2 Cooperation with the national authorities**

#### 3.2.2.1 Legislative framework: principles and objectives

The *Guidelines for Cooperation between the EC, the EFTA, EA and the competent national authorities* set out the principles and objectives for the cooperation between EA and the competent national authorities.

#### 3.2.2.2 Responsibilities for cooperation

#### EAAB

Five representatives from the competent national authorities from the EU and EFTA Member States form the National Authorities College within the EAAB.

The EA Advisory Board appoints observers to attend meetings of the MLA Council and the HHC.

#### The EA Multilateral Agreement Council

Regulation 765/2008 creates obligations on the Member States with regards to their National Accreditation Body, notably in terms of the resources necessary for the national accreditation body (NAB) to perform its tasks, and to comply with the requirements of the Regulation.

Member States, through the competent national authorities, are kept informed of the results of the peer evaluations. They are invited to oversee peer evaluations of their NAB as observers.

#### EA Communications and Publications Committee

Communication between NABs and their national authorities plays a pivotal role within EA.

For that purpose, a *Best Practice Guide on Communications with the Regulators* has been elaborated by the CPC and published to assist EA and its members to develop and strengthen cooperation with both national and European regulators.

Benchmarking surveys are carried out regularly by CPC. They may lead to revise the Best Practice Guide to keep up with changes and practices at the NAB level.

*Best Practice Guide on Communications with the Regulators*

### **3.3 EA Membership**

The Articles of Association defines two types of EA members:

- EA Full members, which are ABs located in an EU/EFTA country or in a country identified as a candidate country to the EU/EFTA membership;
- EA Associate members, which are ABs located in a country identified as a potential candidate to the EU/EFTA membership or a country of a particular importance in the EU Neighborhood Policy.

Full and Associate members sign a Membership agreement which formalizes their acceptance by EA as Members and their commitment to abide by the EA rules and requirements. The agreements signed are kept in the EA Secretariat.

Membership status is granted by decision of the General Assembly, upon recommendation of the Multilateral Agreement Council. It can be suspended or withdrawn, when a Member fails to fulfill its obligations to EA or to the EA Members.

Candidates shall submit their application according to the applicable procedure EA-0/07 *Application for EA Membership*. They shall comply with the EA-1/17 *Rules of Procedure Supplement 1 Criteria for Membership*.

The list of EA Members is given in EA-1/05 and published on the EA website.

EA-1/13 *EA's Relationships with ABs of countries not being a member of EU or EFTA* outlines EA's policy for relationships with ABs which cannot apply for EA Membership. It provides for an "exception" rule that allows such ABs to enter into a contract of cooperation with EA, upon specific conditions and based on documented evidence.

EA-1/05 *Contact Persons of EA Full and Associate Members, Contracts of Cooperation, Recognized Stakeholders and Observers*  
EA-0/07 *Application for EA Membership*  
EA-1/17 *Rules of Procedure Supplement 1 Criteria for Membership*  
EA-1/13 *EA's Relationships with ABs of countries not being a member of EU or EFTA*

### 3.4 MLA signatory status

MLA signatory status is granted by the MAC, by delegation of the General Assembly and according to the Articles of Association. MLA signatory status can be granted for one or several scopes of the MLA, as defined in EA-1/06 *The EA Multilateral Agreement*.

Signatories are subject to regular peer evaluation in order to maintain or extend their status, according to EA-2/02 *Policy and Procedures for the Multilateral Agreement*.

Suspension or withdrawal of MLA signatory status can be decided when an AB fails to fulfill its obligations. In case of transfer of activities or change in the AB name, a specific process is applied for transfer of signatory status.

Associate Members and non EA Member ABs may sign the EA MLA through a bilateral agreement (BLA), which conveys the same benefits and obligations. The peer evaluation process and requirements are the same.

MLA and BLA signatories receive a certificate and shall sign an MLA/BLA signature sheet.

The list of MLA signatories, including BLA signatories, is given in EA-1/08 *EA Multi and Bilateral Agreements, List of Signatories* and on the website. Information concerning dates of signatures is published and maintained on the website.

EA-1/06 *The EA Multilateral Agreement*  
EA-2/02 *Policy and Procedures for the Multilateral Agreement*  
EA-1/08 *EA Multi and Bilateral Agreements, List of Signatories*

### 3.5 Cooperation with sectoral organisations

Close cooperation with interested parties and their involvement in the development of accreditation policies and procedures is essential to ensure a coherent approach to accreditation and overall acceptance of accredited results.

Regulation 765/2008 reinforces EA's obligations towards stakeholders in terms of transparency on its operations and its peer evaluation system.

#### 3.5.1 EA Recognised Stakeholders

As provided for in the *EA Articles of Association* pursuant to Regulation (EC) 765/2008, EA shall consult and interact in a most efficient and transparent way with its stakeholders, notably through the EAAB (see Sub-section 2.4.5).

### Criteria and procedure

To manage the increasing number of bodies wishing to become EA stakeholders, the *EA Policy for Relations with Stakeholders* provides that a distinct status with associated rights and obligations is granted to those “EA Recognized Stakeholders” who wish to become more directly involved in EA’s associative life and have a particular institutional interest in contributing to EA’s technical activities without, however, meeting the criteria for becoming EA members. The full conditions and procedures for constructive and transparent cooperation are explained in the policy.

### Responsibilities

Admission to the status of Recognised Stakeholder is decided by the EA Executive Committee, following consultation with the EAAB and subject to endorsement by the EA General Assembly. Organisations invited to become EA Recognised Stakeholders shall sign a specific agreement to be reviewed every two years.

The information, application and agreement signing steps, coordinated by the EA Secretariat, are fully described in the Secretariat *Checklist for RS Applications and Agreements*.

EA-1/15: <i>EA Policy for Relations with Stakeholders</i> EA-0/12 Checklist for RS Applications and Agreements
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### **3.5.2 Sector scheme acceptance**

Recognizing that sometimes the market requires accreditation of CABs to conform to the special requirements set out in sector schemes, EA has the objective to underpin cooperation and mutual confidence with sector scheme owners.

It is EA’s policy to support use of accreditation and the EA multilateral agreement by sector schemes in order to meet market and consumer expectations in terms of reliability, confidence and cost-efficiency.

Although schemes may be developed at national or European level, schemes that are designed to meet purely national needs do not fall under the scope of the EA policy for sector schemes.

### Criteria and Procedure

When a scheme is designed to develop at a European level and benefit from the EA MLA coverage, the scheme owner may apply for EA’s acceptance of the scheme. The process used is described in EA-2/11 *Policy and procedures for Sector Schemes*.

EA-2/11 <i>Policy and procedures for Sector Schemes</i>
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## **3.6 Financial resources and allocation of funds**

EA’s financial resources come from:

1. Membership fees charged annually to EA’s members;
2. Money received from the operating and action grants signed with the EC and EFTA;
3. Other incomes (e.g. interest on bank account, other grants etc).

EA’s expenditure covers costs incurred for:

1. the operation of its Secretariat (office and overheads, salaries and taxes, travel & subsistence, equipment, etc);
2. the costs for services provided for the management of accounts, insurance, IT and other legal costs;
3. the costs incurred for the performance of activities according to the approved work program agreed with the EC/EFTA and financed by the relevant (annual) grants or by EA.

### Responsibilities

The Executive Committee is responsible for the proper use of EA's resources, according to EA-0/05 *Procedure for the preparation of budget and control of expenditures*.

The EA Executive Committee appoints a Treasurer who is in charge of monitoring the accounts with the assistance of the EA Secretary. The Secretariat manages the daily accounts with the assistance of an accountant company which is appointed by the Executive Committee.

A chartered accountant carries out the audit of the accounts, every year.

A Financial Oversight Committee (FOC) is elected from the Membership for a 2-years mandate.

According to its terms of reference (ToR, see also sub-section 2.4.4.7), the FOC monitors how EA uses its finances during each financial year and reports to the EA Executive and the General Assembly on the extent to which these finances have been used for projects and activities included in the approved budget for EA and in a manner that is consistent with the expectations and resolutions of the General Assembly.

### Budgeting

In accordance with EA-0/05, the Executive Committee prepares a draft budget to be submitted to the General Assembly not later than in November of the previous year.

Particular attention is given to the budgeted income and expected level of membership fees, with a view to avoid unexpected increase in the fees and to maintain an appropriate level of reserves.

Rules for calculation of membership fee have been established in document EA-0/11.

Re-forecasting of the membership fees and EA's expenditures can be made during the year, based on the financial report and statement of accounts presented by the Treasurer and prepared with the Secretary based on the records in the accounts.

Any change to a particular heading or transfer from one to another heading in the budget can be made provided that 1) the GA is properly informed and 2) this is done within the limits set out in the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) where applicable.

### Management of action/operating grants with the EC/EFTA

A separate process has been set up for the management of the grants received from the EC/EFTA. It is governed by the FPA signed with the European Commission on 30 June 2010 and with EFTA on 8 December 2010.

The main steps of the process are the following:

1. Drafting and approval of an annual work program (WP) to be submitted to the EC/EFTA.
2. The proposed WP is supported by a draft budget, prepared by the Treasurer and approved by the EX and the GA.
3. Members of staff of the EA ABs who contribute to the WP are entitled to submit requests for payment (RfP) to the Secretariat for reimbursement of the costs incurred

in the performance of the activity planned in the WP and in accordance with the EA specific Terms and Conditions.

4. Verification of the RfP and justifying documentation is made by the Secretariat.
5. The corresponding costs and flows of money from EA to the EA ABs are booked in the EA accounts.
6. A "Commissaire aux comptes" especially appointed by the Executive Committee carries out the verification of the accounts related to the WP and issues a certificate, as required by the FPA to support the financial report that is submitted to the EC/EFTA.

According to the FPA, EA is the coordinator of the program, in charge of distributing the EC/EFTA funds to the EA ABs according to their contribution to the approved WP.

The use of the EC/EFTA grant is closely monitored by the Executive Committee. To facilitate this monitoring, a verification table is maintained by the Secretariat, under control by the Treasurer. The table gives a detailed picture on how the budgeted amounts have been used, giving an immediate indication of how resources can be transferred from one activity to another, within the limits set in the FPA.

### EA banks

EA holds a number of accounts in two banks:

- 1) Société Générale in Paris

Business account for EA operations

Business account for EC/EFTA funds

Deposit account

- 2) ABN-AMRO in Utrecht (The Netherlands)

Business account

Deposit account

### Payments

Payments are governed by EA-0/05 which sets out a process for issuing payments. Any payment, whatever the way the payment is made, is subject to a double authorization from the EA Chair and Treasurer for amounts that are in excess of 2 000€.

The Secretariat staff is authorized to use a credit card for payment of their travel expenses. The same limit of 2 000€ applies. Control of expenses is made according to EA-0/05.

Expenses claims shall be established by the Secretariat staff when either using EA credit cards or claiming reimbursement of costs incurred for EA work. The Treasurer checks and signs off claims put forward by the Secretary. The Secretary checks and signs off claims put forward by the other Secretariat staff members.

The MAC Secretary is not an employee of EA. Her costs are reimbursed according to the rules applying to the ABs contributing to the WP (EA Terms and Conditions).

### Cash-flow

Cash flow is monitored by the Treasurer and Secretary.

### Closing of accounts

According to the FPA and in compliance with the French rules, EA shall close its accounts by 30 April of the next year at the latest. It means that the EA accounts have to be controlled and audited in advance and a draft report issued for review and endorsement by the EX. The EA accounts shall be controlled and audited in parallel for the operating grant, the resulting certificate and report shall be submitted to the EX for endorsement prior to being sent to the EC/EFTA.

As part of the process for closing of accounts, the FOC is entitled to examine the EA accounts for the purpose of checking how EA has used its budget. The FOC receives all relevant documentation in due course for its draft report to be available for consideration by the EX in advance of the GA meeting of the mid-year. The EX shall then prepare its response to the FOC report. Both the report and the EX response are presented to the GA for endorsement at the mid-year meeting.

*EA-0/05 Procedure for the preparation of budget and control of expenditures*  
*EA-0/11 Rules for calculation of membership fees*  
*Terms and Conditions for compensation from an Operating Grant to the EA Accreditation Body*

### **3.7 Secretariat support to EA**

The organisation of EA provides for the EA Secretariat to support the main bodies of EA, including the EAAB.

This mutualisation of resources results not only in a rationalization of processes, but also in the optimization of internal communication and sharing of information. The interrelating role of the EA Secretariat as a focal point generates cross-fertilization between the EA bodies.

The EA Secretariat manages the meetings, the documents and the IT facilities specifically related to each EA body, i.e. the General Assembly, the Executive Committee, the Financial Oversight Committee, the MAC, HHC, the technical committees (CC, IC and LC), CPC and the EAAB.

#### Processes

##### **3.7.1 Management of EA meetings**

One member of the Secretariat staff is appointed specifically to be responsible for the management of a Committee. The distribution of responsibilities related to Committees is described in a document maintained by the Secretary for the management of the Secretariat.

The EA Secretariat's assistance in EA meetings consists of:

###### 3.7.1.1 Preparing the meetings

- The Secretariat sends an invitation package to the body/committee's members through the intranet. This invitation includes an attendance form and a hotel reservation form prepared by the hosting accreditation body, as well as some information on local transports or attractions.

###### EA-0/10 Procedure for EA meetings

- In addition to the invitation, the Secretariat sends a preliminary draft agenda to be commented by the body/committee's members, together with a call for questions to be asked to the Committee and discussed/answered at the meeting.

- The Secretariat collects all papers for the meeting from the body/committee's Chair, numbers them according to the Secretariat numbering system and publishes them on the intranet together with a hyperlinked agenda. The body/committee's members are informed of the publication of any new document by emails sent from the relevant intranet page.  
Observers attending a meeting may receive the meeting documentation by email.

#### 3.7.1.2 Ensuring the follow-up of meetings

- The Secretariat participates in each meeting to take the minutes as a record of the main discussions, actions and decisions for future follow-up. After the meeting, the draft minutes are circulated for comments within the body/committee once they are reviewed by the body/committee's Chair.
- The Secretariat prepares an action list after each meeting to recapitulate the distribution of tasks between the body/committee's members, the body/committee's Chair and the Secretariat itself.
- Until the next meeting, the Secretariat follows up the implementation of all actions under the supervision of the body/committee's Chair.

For further details on the rules applicable to each EA body, please consult the terms of reference of the body.

<p><i>Terms of Reference of EA bodies, including the EAAB</i> <i>EAAB01 EAAB Rules of Procedure</i> <i>Supplement to EAAB01 Interaction Table</i></p>
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#### 3.7.2 Management of committee-specific documents

In addition to the publication of selective documents for each meeting, the EA Secretariat is in charge of:

- establishing and updating the membership lists of each EA body, WG, TN, DN, etc. and to make these available on the intranet;
- developing and implementing a numbering system for all the documents related to each committee;
- dealing with the documents related to each committee by circulating them for comments or voting, compiling comments, etc. as appropriate and required by the body/committee's Chair in accordance with the decisions made at the last body/committee's meeting;
- managing the documents for which each committee has a responsibility in terms of document control, notably by checking periodical times of revision and notifying the committee's Chair of any need for revision.

#### 3.7.3 Management of IT facilities (Members Only web section)

The Secretariat is responsible for the daily management of the EA intranet for documents, which includes specific directories not only for each EA body, but also for each LC Technical Network (TN) and HHC Directive Network (DN).

This regular management consists of:

- giving and checking access rights to all the members registered for a given body/committee to enable them to access the body/committee's intranet directory and get the invitation package and meeting papers for each meeting. The table of intranet access rights is given in a separate list maintained by the Secretariat;
- ensuring a clear and coherent classification of documents under each intranet directory, including archiving more-than-2-year-old documents.

A specific page in the Members Only section lists all DNs and the EC directives covered, and gives access to every DN's membership in order for DN members to easily and independently communicate and exchange information by individual or collective mails. This DN-specific page is updated by the Secretariat.

### **3.7.4 Communication within and between the EA bodies**

The EA Secretariat acts as a contact point for members requesting information about a body/committee's or a meeting's management. When participating in EA meetings, the Secretariat plays an interface role between the body/committee and the other EA bodies.

#### Responsibilities

The secretarial tasks are coordinated and led by the EA Secretary under the supervision of the EA bodies' chairs.

### **3.8 Management of EA documents**

EA documents shall be prepared according to EA-0/06 *Format and layout of EA documents*.

#### **3.8.1 Numbering system**

EA publications and documents are numbered according to the EA-0/03 *Policy for Document Numbering*.

#### Traceability

Meeting papers have a life cycle. During their life cycle, meeting papers may be

- amended and then the revision number shall be incremented;
- submitted to another Committee for additional input or to the GA for adoption. In such a case, the document shall have an additional reference, corresponding to the new Committee to which it is submitted. The initial reference number must appear also in order to keep track of the development of the document and also to show the Committee members how the paper has developed.

To that end, a specific frame shall be used to be put on top of the document, in the right corner. Example of a frame:

DOCUMENT FILE NAME	
Document reference (according to EA-0/03)	
Agenda item No XX	
	For information
	For discussion
X	For decision

Use of the frame for identification of a meeting paper is mandatory for all EA Committees, the EAAB and the MAC. When the frame cannot be put on the document, for instance in case the document is a PDF document, then, as far as possible, the name of the file shall give an indication of how it is intended to use/refer to the document.

Moreover, to facilitate navigation, for instance on the EA intranet, and identification of meeting papers during a discussion/meeting, it is recommended to name the files as follows, **AgendaItemXX\_REF\_NAME** where:

- XX is the number of the agenda item under which the document has been tabled;
- REF is the document number (as described in EA-0/03)
- NAME is the name of the file. It should give an indication of the subject covered in the paper.

The secretariat keeps track of the various steps of the development of a meeting document in a specific table used to allocate numbers and maintain information about the document life cycle.

### 3.8.2 Intranet for meeting papers

The EA intranet is located in the Members' only page of the EA website and is the section of the website where the EA Committee and Meeting documents are stored and maintained.

Each EA body is allocated a section of the EA intranet, in the form of a dedicated directory or sub-directory. The Secretariat and Chairperson of the corresponding EA body are responsible for the contents and updating of their allocated directory/sub-directory. They receive writing rights which enable them to upload, archive, delete or edit anything in their intranet section.

Members of a Committee/Council are declared as Users of the intranet relevant sub-directory(ies) and receive corresponding access rights (ID and password).

The rules for intranet are to maintain online the papers for meetings of the year, and backward until year – 2 at most. Beyond that date, documents are to be archived by the Secretariat of the Committees/Council. This rule does not apply to reference documents, such as terms of reference which have a more permanent status.

### 3.8.3 General principles for document control

The rules for document control are given in the EA-0/02 *Procedure for document control*. The development process of an EA publication is described in EA-1/14 *Procedure for the Development and Approval of EA documents and the Adoption of ILAC/IAF documents*.

EA publications are controlled by their owner Committee. The owner Committee is the Committee (or EA body more generally) in charge of managing the documents belonging to it. EA-1/14 provides that at least every 5 years, the EA publications shall be reviewed. The result of the review may be:

- Revision needed
- Withdrawal recommended
- No change needed

The Committee then issues a recommendation for a new work item to start which shall first be submitted to the EAAB and GA for approval. A specific form justifying the need to start a new work item shall be provided to the EAAB and the GA.

When the proposal is to withdraw a document, a resolution shall be submitted to the EX and the GA for approval.

#### Proposal for new work items

In general, a proposal for a new work item (NWI) concerns revision of an existing EA publication or drafting of a new document. It can be issued by any individual or body in EA. It shall be submitted to the EAAB and GA for endorsement. Appendix A of EA-1/14 shall be used to provide proper justification of the NWI. The full process of the development and approval of the document are described in EA-1/14.

#### Classification

The classification of EA publications is given in EA-1/14:

- Secretariat Management System and related Documents
- EA Governance and Policy documents
- Peer Evaluation Process documents, including policies and procedures
- Members' Procedural documents (include documents that ABs must use or comply with)
- CABs Application documents (Includes documents ABs must assess if CABs comply with)
- Information and Promotional documents

#### ILAC/IAF documents adopted by EA

The rules and process for adoption of ILAC/IAF documents are described in EA-1/14. The objective is to make clear to EA AB members that are not members of ILAC/IAF the complete list of EA requirements.

The basic principle is that EA adopts ILAC/IAF documents unless they contradict EA's or European rules. In that case, the Executive Committee shall bring the issue to the EAAB for advice, with a proposal for solving the issue.

ILAC/IAF documents are not re-published by EA. They are hyperlinked from the EA website.

EA-0/02 *Procedure for document control*

EA-0/03 *Policy for document numbering*

EA-0/06 *Format and layout of EA documents*

EA-1/14 *Procedure for the Development and Approval of EA documents and the Adoption of ILAC/IAF documents*

### **3.9 EA IT system**

The EA IT system is a partially hosted system, set up in the Secretariat offices in Paris.

Management and development of the IT system is sub-contracted to a service provider.

A comprehensive handbook has been prepared by the service provider. It describes the EA IT infrastructure and all applicable procedures for the management and maintenance of the EA server as well for back-up of EA data. The handbook exists only in a French version, under reference DT-EA-201105-01.

### 3.9.1 MAC Secretariat

The MAC Secretariat uses the RvA IT system and infrastructure according to the conditions set out in a specific contract between EA and RvA for the provisions of the MAC Secretariat offices and related services. Back-up of MAC data is an RvA responsibility. The process is documented within the RvA system.

The MAC Secretariat uses and maintains a MAC database for the management of the peer evaluation system. A specific guide has been designed which describes the database and the procedures for its use and updating. The necessary steps to restricted access are implemented.

<p>EA-MAC/01-S4 <i>Users Guide for EA-MAC database</i> DT-EA-201105-01 <i>EA IT infrastructure and management handbook</i></p>
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### 3.10 Records and archives

The Secretariat maintains hard and electronic copies of documents. In principle, all documents having an official, legal status and bearing a handwritten signature shall be kept and archived as hard copies. In addition, scanned copies of official documents are archived.

#### Confidential records/archives

Data concerning ABs submitted in support of RfP and personal data concerning the Secretariat staff are confidential. Access to this information shall be strictly limited to the Secretariat, and for Secretariat staff information the members of the HRSRC.

Access to personal data concerning evaluators shall be strictly restricted to the EA MAC Chair, Vice Chair and Secretariat.

Occasionally, internal or external auditors may be given access to confidential data, upon written authorization from the EA Secretary (for the confidential data kept in the EA Secretariat) or the MAC Secretary (for the confidential data stored in the MAC Secretariat).

#### 3.10.1 Paper Archives

The following documents are archived as hard copies:

- MLA signature sheets
- Contracts of cooperation
- Bilateral agreements
- Recognised Stakeholder agreements
- Sector Scheme agreements
- Pay slips
- Financial audit report
- Statutory reports to the French Authorities concerning EA accounts
- The FPA with EC/EFTA
- The operating grant agreements with EC/EFTA
- AB documentation supporting RfP certified by the Commissaire aux comptes
- Certificate of expenses established by the Commissaire aux comptes according to the FPA
- EA Management System Manual.

### Legal obligations

Pay slips and accounting documents shall be archived for 10 years.  
The documentation verified and certified against the FPA shall be archived for 5 years in accordance with the FPA.

### MAC Secretariat

All paper archives are kept securely in the offices of the EA-MAC Secretariat in RvA.  
Access to the files is limited to the EA MAC Chair, Vice Chair and Secretariat.

The following documents are archived as paper records:

- 1) Records related to the application / evaluation process of an AB (evaluation documents);
- 2) Records which are not related to the evaluation process of a particular AB such as: management system records, internal audits & ILAC/IAF re-evaluations of EA-MAC, Team Leaders/Team Members qualifications (CVs), general correspondence, EA MAC Annual Reports, relevant information on ILAC/IAF MLA / MRA Committees etc (secretarial documents).

EA-MAC/01-S9 Procedure for Filing EA-MAC Paper Records
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### **3.10.2 Electronic archives**

As a rule, a signed original shall be scanned and stored on the EA server.

All documents and data used and managed in the Secretariat are stored on the EA server.  
The Secretariat staff are not authorized to store any professional data/document on their workstation PC/laptop. Everything must be stored on the EA server so that it is subject to a back-up process which is documented in the handbook referenced under sub-section 3.9.1.

Electronic archives are maintained outside of the EA offices, indefinitely, as provided by contract with the back-up services provider.

### MAC Secretariat

Electronic documents for the operation of the MAC are maintained by the MAC Secretariat.  
Some of these are available on the MAC intranet site in separate directories which are clearly defined:

- MAC General. The sub-directory contains information concerning Peer Evaluators and WG Training meetings;
- MAC Management Group. The sub-directory contains information concerning meetings of the MAC MG.
- MAC Meeting Documents. The sub-directory contains all information and documents for MAC meetings.

Access to the files is secured and limited to the authorized persons through use of an individual password.

Detailed information and records on the evaluation of EA ABs, including archives covering past evaluation activities from 1987, are available on the MAC Secretariat IT system and as hard copies. Documentation on decisions taken in MAC meetings on evaluations are maintained both in the database and as a hard copy.

### 3.11 Confidentiality

All Committee/Council members are expected to keep confidential information identified as such during Committee meeting discussions or in the documents and discussion papers published by the Committees.

This is particularly critical in the operation of

- the MAC peer evaluation system;
- the Secretariat verification process for reimbursement of requests for payment submitted by the EA ABs for their activities carried out according to the annual work program;

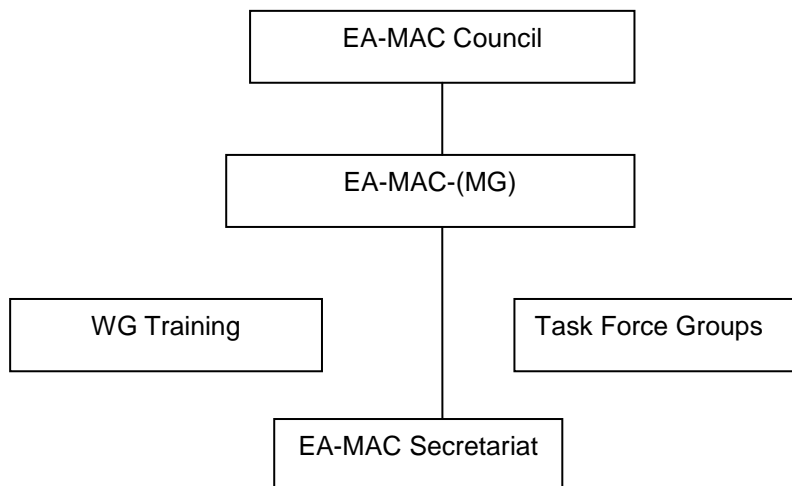
Confidentiality undertaking forms are used.

In addition, the EA staff members are subject to the confidentiality rules set out in their working contracts.

EA-MAC/01-S5 Confidentiality Declaration for EA peer evaluation Team Members  
EA-MAC/01-S6 Confidentiality Declaration for EA-MAC members and observers  
EA-MAC/01-S14 Declaration Conflict of Interest for EA peer evaluation Team Members  
EA-0/F9 Confidentiality Undertaking (generic)

## 4. MANAGEMENT OF THE EA PEER-EVALUATION SYSTEM

### 4.1 Structure and organisational chart of MAC



See also sub-section 2.4.4.4 for detailed information.

## 4.2 The peer evaluation process

### 4.2.1 General aspects

The evaluation process is described in document EA-2/02 *Policy and Procedures for the Multilateral Agreement* which is in line with ISO/IEC 17011, and the appropriate requirements of EC Regulation 765/2008 and ILAC/IAF-A2 IAF/ILAC MRAs: *Requirements and Procedure for Evaluation of a Single Accreditation Body*, and day-to-day practice.

The process of becoming an EA MLA signatory is divided into five major steps:

- a) Application
- b) Planning, including pre-evaluation
- c) Evaluation
- d) Reporting
- e) Decision

Where possible, the decision is based on consensus amongst the signatory members. If voting is required the EA voting rules as described in the Articles of Association apply.

*EA-2/02 EA Policy and Procedures for the Multilateral Agreement*  
*EC Regulation 765/2008*  
*ILAC/IAF-A2 IAF/ILAC MRAs: Requirements and Procedure for Evaluation of a Single Accreditation Body*

### 4.2.2 (Day-to-day) Operation of the MAC

For its operations, the MAC relies on a Management Group and the MAC secretariat. The Secretariat operates according to the flowchart of the EA-2/02 Chapter 5 "Evaluation Process". The Chair of the EA-MAC is elected by the EA-General Assembly. The Vice Chair, elected by EA-MAC members, is a member of the MG and may act as Chair. The Vice Chair ensures continuity of the MAC operations.

In addition to the day-to-day work, the Chair and/or members of the (MG) MAC represent the MAC in the following ILAC/IAF meetings:

ILAC	IAF
Arrangement Management Committee	MLA Management Committee
Arrangement Council	MLA Group
Arrangement Committee	MLA Procedures Sub Committee

*Note:* If any of the above meetings overlap, it is the responsibility of the Chair to select those agenda items requiring the Chair's attention. For other parts of the meeting it is then sufficient to have the EA-MAC represented by an (MG) MAC member. It may be necessary to agree with the various Committee Chairs to rearrange their agenda items whenever meetings overlap.

The day-to-day operations of the Secretariat (Secretary and MG) cover the following tasks:

- planning of evaluations (pre, initial, extraordinary and re-evaluations) for MLA/Bilateral applicants and signatories:
- assignment of evaluation teams in consultation with the EA-MAC-MG:
- co-operating in assigning teams for international and interregional evaluations (ILAC/IAF):
- interaction with the ABs and evaluation teams:
- screening of evaluation reports :

- maintaining of the MAC database;
- assignment of Task Force Groups for evaluation report examination;
- support to the organisation of trainings/workshops
- (chairing) / recording the EA-MAC assembly meetings (2/year)
- (chairing) / recording the EA-MAC-MG meetings (2-4/year)
- Review of applications for EA Full and Associate membership and advising the EA-GA
- monitoring of evaluator performance.

The EA-MAC Chair and the Secretary shall keep each other informed of issues related to all ABs having a relation with EA. The EA-MAC Chair shall keep the EA-MAC Secretary updated on issues discussed in the relevant committees of ILAC and IAF, especially with regards to the ILAC MRA and IAF MLA.

The MAC Secretariat may approach the other EA Committees on technical issues where a clarification is needed in terms of the interpretation of the requirements.

### **4.3 MAC meetings**

The EA-MAC normally meets twice a year. Agenda and meeting documents are prepared by the MAC Secretariat, approved by the EA-MAC MG and posted on the MAC intranet site. Participation in the EA-MAC meetings is limited to two delegates per AB.

The MAC-MG meets as required but with a minimum of two times, in conjunction with the regular EA-MAC meetings. In-between, and where possible, electronic, internet communication tools shall be used.

### **4.4 Peer evaluation resources and training**

#### **4.4.1 Obligations of EA MLA Signatories**

Signatories to the EA MLA are required to nominate evaluators for the use of EA peer evaluation system according to EA-1/06 *The EA Multilateral Agreement*. It is the responsibility of the signatory AB to nominate competent persons fulfilling the requirements of EA-2/02 *Policy and Procedures for the MLA*.

Based on an analysis of

- the total number of accreditations per AB
- the EA coefficient
- the number of days used over the past 4 years

an average percentage contribution is calculated which gives the amount of mandays the AB has to deliver, as a minimum.

EA-1/06 <i>EA Multilateral Agreement</i> EA-2/02 <i>Policy and Procedures for the MLA</i>
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#### **4.4.2 Application and approval of evaluators (Team Members)**

Each applicant, who wishes to become an evaluator, has to complete a standardised Curriculum Vitae (EA-MAC/01-S7). Potential team members do not have to be a permanent staff member of an AB, but they must have knowledge of the operational aspects of an AB. Only staff members of an accreditation body can be assigned as (Deputy) Team Leaders.

Upon receipt of the CV and a first approval by the MAC-MG the applicant is invited to take part in a training seminar for “Newcomers”. During the training the applicant is evaluated by the trainers. Depending upon the outcome, the applicant will be formally accepted as a Trainee or as an Observer. In some cases the applicant will not be accepted readily and will have to gain further experience or reinforce his/her competencies.

The MAC-MG may recommend that a team member is upgraded to the team leader status. Only those having acted at least twice as a team member (with a positive feedback from the team leader) can be nominated as a (Deputy) Team Leader.

Data about areas of competence of all evaluators, including their past evaluation activities, are maintained in the MAC database. CVs and updates are kept separately in the form of paper records.

EA-MAC/01-S7 <i>Curriculum Vitae for EA Team Members &amp; Team Leaders</i>
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#### **4.4.3 Training and monitoring of Evaluators - Team Members/ (Deputy) Team Leaders**

Team Members and (Deputy) Team Leaders have to participate in (follow-up) training courses/workshops whenever invited by the MAC Secretariat.

A permanent Working Group “MLA Training and Procedures” (see sub-section 2.4.4.4) is responsible for the organisation and performance of training/workshops and management of the specific peer evaluation documents.

ABs are expected to train their personnel on general issues and assessment skills. MAC training and workshops are dedicated to the more specific issues of an evaluation: preparation, technical issues, witnessing, file reviewing and critical issues and findings.

In general EA training is also accessible to evaluators from other regions. EA (Deputy) Team Leaders are encouraged to participate in training organised by other regions. Occasionally EA-MAC members may also be trained to enable them to be conversant with the EA-MAC procedures and operations.

A yearly evaluation of an Evaluator’s performance is conducted by the MAC-MG based on feedback from the evaluated body through:

- a questionnaire (EA-MAC/01-S12);
- comments from the Task Force Groups examining the evaluation reports according to the process in the flowchart in EA-2/02;
- “Review of Performance of an EA Evaluator” (EA-MAC/01-S15 Parts I and II).

All information on the performance of the evaluation team is kept at the MAC Secretariat. As the Chair of the WG MLA Training and Procedures takes part in the MAC-MG meetings any issue of relevance is directly addressed by the working group.

EA-MAC/01-S12 <i>Questionnaire to be answered by the evaluated AB</i> EA-MAC/01-S15 Parts I and II <i>Review of performance of an EA evaluator TM / TL</i>
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#### **4.4.4 Assigning Evaluation Teams**

Evaluation teams are assigned by the MAC-MG based on criteria that include:

- Competence in the general fields of accreditation managed by the AB, covered (or to be covered) by the MLA;
- Competence in accreditation in the fields of European legislation (e.g. Directives, Regulations) and European according to the applicable requirements of the EC Regulation;
- Competence in internationally recognised sector schemes.

This information can be retrieved from the Statistical Information (*EA-MAC/01-S16*) provided by the AB under evaluation.

All team members receive an assignment letter (*EA-MAC/01-S10A*) for initial and re-evaluation visits and the *EA-MAC/1-S10B* for extraordinary evaluations.

Teams are composed of evaluators from different economies; the team shall normally include at least one team member with sufficient knowledge and understanding of the local language of the body under evaluation. The composition of the teams is changed where possible between evaluation cycles. In particular the team leader shall always be a new person. Team members are not allowed to have acted as a consultant in the setting up and/or development of the respective accreditation body (see EA 2/02).

<p><i>EA-MAC/01-S10A Team Leader's and Team Member's assignment for initial or re-evaluation visit</i></p> <p><i>EA-MAC/01-S10B Team Leader's and Team Member's assignment for extraordinary visit</i></p> <p><i>EA-MAC/01-S16 Statistical information</i></p>
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## **5. COMPLAINTS & APPEALS**

As a general rule, EA encourages active communication between the parties to a complaint or an appeal with a view to come to a satisfactory solution, before opening a case at the EA level. Responses to the Complainant and any investigation of a case shall be made in a timely manner.

Complaints and appeals received may concern decisions and activities of EA or EA Members, or CABs accredited by EA members.

*EA-1/17 S3 Procedure for the investigation and resolution of complaints and appeals* is the procedure which describes the responsibilities and actions of EA Committees, EA Multilateral Agreement Council (EA-MAC), the EA Secretariat, the EA Advisory Board (EAAB), and EA Members in relation to the investigation and resolution of complaints and appeals.

A list of TFG appointed for complaint handling is maintained by the EA Secretariat.

Documentation supporting a case is archived in the EA Secretariat.

The MAC shall be kept informed of the result of EA's investigation of a case.

Any specific issues arising from the process shall then be followed up by the MAC in the peer evaluation process.

<p><i>EA-1/17 S3 Procedure for the investigation and resolution of complaints and appeals</i></p>
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## 6. EA COMMUNICATIONS

The purpose of EA's communications is twofold:

- To promote EA's mission widely;
- To communicate EA's activities and positions in a more technical and periodic fashion among the European and international conformity assessment and accreditation communities.

The overall aim is to improve EA's visibility both inside and outside the accreditation community to support recognition and acceptance of the EA MLA and services/products provided under accreditation issued by the EA accreditation body members.

A *Communication strategy* is published that is supported by a *Communication Action Plan*, whose implementation is monitored by the CPC with the involvement of the EA Secretariat.

### Processes and responsibilities

EA communicates through cooperation with relevant European and international organisations, the EA website, different communication materials and external specific requests of information.

### **6.1 EA's cooperation with the European and international conformity assessment and accreditation communities**

As a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), EA:

- participates in the IAF/ILAC meetings: the EA technical committees' chairs attend IAF/ILAC technical committees' meetings. Liaison persons are appointed by the EA Executive Committee to represent EA as a regional cooperation in the meetings of the IAF/ILAC Executive Committee and other Committee meetings. The objective is to voice EA's views on technical or "political" issues;
- contributes to the publication of the *IAF and ILAC newsletters*: in cooperation with the EA CPC, the EA Secretariat writes articles to be published as EA's contributions into the newsletters;

In order to ensure the best representation of EA in the ILAC/IAF General Assembly meetings, the Secretariat reinforces the invitation from the ILAC and IAF Secretariats to appoint proxies, making sure that proxies are distributed properly amongst the EA Members who intend to attend the meetings.

Liaison persons are appointed by the Executive Committee to participate in the meetings of the regional cooperations: Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC), Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC), Inter American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC) and the Southern African Development Community Accreditation (SADCA).

At the European level, EA participates in the "4E and CEOC meetings" of the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of EA, EURACHEM, EURAMET, EUROLAB and CEOC International.

Where possible, EA is represented in the annual (General Assembly) meetings of its Recognized Stakeholders.

An annual program for liaison activities is approved by the EA General Assembly, supported by a specific budget and implemented by the EA Executive Committee; the list of appointed liaison persons is approved by the EX and published on the intranet.

EA-0/04 <i>Procedure for liaison activities</i> EA/EX(06)01 <i>List of appointed liaison persons</i>
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## 6.2 The EA website

In addition to library resources and communication tools (see sections 3.7 and 3.9), the EA website includes information pages designed to:

- Either describe EA's activities and events related to the EA bodies/ committees' life, actions and decisions. This online or intranet news is updated on a periodic basis and is targeted at the EA membership exclusively (when displayed in the Members Only section) or also at the larger European and international conformity assessment and accreditation communities (when displayed in the public section);
- or describe EA's role and tasks. This basic information of a more-permanent nature (occasionally updated to reflect major changes within EA) is targeted at the general public that is not necessarily familiar with accreditation issues. All basic information, such as EA publications, is available in the public section of the EA website.

The different parts of the EA website are updated by the EA Secretariat in cooperation with the CPC.

A thorough update is made every three months approximately, normally after the half-yearly succession of technical committees' meetings and especially after each EA General Assembly meeting.

## 6.3 EA Communication materials

EA publishes several communication materials targeted either at the general public or at the specialized accreditation and conformity assessment community. All these materials are available from the public section of the EA website.

Didactic information about EA and accreditation is given in the *Guide to EA* and the *FAQs* (Frequently Asked Questions). This information aims to welcome newcomers to EA by making them more familiar with the basic accreditation issues and the association's life and activities.

The *Guide to EA* and the *FAQs* are updated occasionally in the light of developments within EA and the accreditation world.

Other material targets specific groups:

- *EA Reports* are periodically distributed to the international accreditation cooperation organizations. These regularly-updated reports outline EA's main "political" and technical developments;
- an electronic *EA Newsletter* is circulated by mail at least every 6 months to the whole EA community and also to the wider European and international conformity assessment and accreditation communities. EA Newsletters contain the news published on the EA website in a modern and attractive manner;

- *EA Press Releases* are specifically issued to reflect and promote important and one-off events within EA. These selective press releases can be targeted at different groups according to the topic concerned, and published on the EA Homepage in parallel to emailing. Occasionally EA can also contribute to press releases published by other organizations in order to promote cooperation or participation by EA, and to increase EA's visibility.

EA Newsletters and Press Releases are developed and updated by the EA Secretariat under the supervision of the EA CPC.

Communication about the EA MLA: Regulation (EC) 765/2008 reinforces EA's obligations for full transparency regarding the MLA signatory status of its Members. As a consequence, detailed information shall be available not only for the competent national authorities but for the market in general. EA has developed a specific page on its website that gives the details of the signatory status of EA AB MLA signatories, which is updated as necessary by the Secretariat. *EA-1/08 EA Multilateral and Bilateral Agreements, and Signatory lists* is the document published by EA which lists all signatories showing the specific scopes for which they have signed the MLA.

Suspension of signatory status is mentioned as required.

The EA website also offers a search facility that enables a reader to find a list of accredited CABs for either a given field or a given accreditation body or a combination of criteria. The facility aims to publish data from all EA ABs and for all scopes of the EA MLA.

*EA-1/08 EA Multilateral and Bilateral Agreements, and Signatory lists*

#### **6.4 External requests of information**

The EA Secretariat receives many requests for information from various people and organizations from around the world. When questions cannot be directly and definitively answered by EA, those persons or organisations are invited by the Secretariat to consult or contact more relevant resources or bodies.

The answers given are very often good opportunities to promote the EA website and publications, as well as to clarify EA's role, thus raising awareness about EA. The *FAQs* (see section 6.3) include the most typical and generic questions.

### **7. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

The Secretariat in Paris comprises a number of persons who are employees of EA with a working contract developed within French work law. The team is managed by the EA Secretary as the line manager and the EA Secretary is managed by the EA Chair. Each member of staff has received and agreed a job description. The job description forms are available on the EA server.

[As at July 2011, the EA Secretariat in Paris comprises 3 full-time and 1 part-time employees.]

The MAC Secretary is not an employee of EA. She is a member of staff of the Dutch accreditation body, RVA, with an RVA working contract.

An EA Executive Committee Human Resources & Staff Remuneration Committee (HRSRC) has been appointed to develop and implement a comprehensive human resources and remuneration policy which will provide overall packages and terms and conditions that are competitive and relevant to EA's position and business, that will retain and motivate high quality staff capable of achieving EA's objectives, and that will ensure that they will be fairly rewarded for their individual responsibilities, achievements, and contributions to EA's overall performance and strategic development.

Terms of reference of the HRSRC have been approved on 4 November 2010 and published on the EA intranet.

A performance appraisal system has been put in place which provides that an interview shall take place once a year to evaluate completion of objectives and overall performance, and agree on new objectives, taking into account the needs of the EA work program. Interviews are planned according to the overall timeframe for management of the work program and normally take place in June/July.

The performance appraisal package is published on the EA server and contains:

- Staff Behaviours sheets
- Performance Management process
- Performance Management Review form
- SMART objectives Guide Notes

Internal regulations governing the day-to-day operations, rules and behaviours of the staff have yet to be formalized and published.

<p><i>HRSRC Terms of reference</i> <i>Staff behavior sheets</i> <i>Performance Management process</i> <i>Performance Management Review form</i> <i>SMART objectives Guide Notes</i></p>
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## **8. EA TRAINING**

### Training needs

The FPA mandates EA to actively distribute information between its members and make use of good accreditation practises within EA. EA follows developments in society and in the marketplace and makes its members aware of issues that need special attention. Training is one of the tools to make sure that sufficient information is available to the members.

Training needs can be identified at the different levels of EA, mainly by the committees, but individual members can also express the need for training and propose training actions.

### EA Annual Training Plan

Individual training activities are proposed as training projects. The training project shall identify the goal of the training, the resources needed, time allocation, and a suggestion for arrangements of the training activities.

Every year, the EA Committees/Council establish a training program, which is submitted to the EA Executive Committee. The EA identified training needs are discussed and evaluated by the Executive and an annual EA training plan is established prior to decision by the General Assembly.

The program shall be aligned with the work program agreed between EA and the European Commission and EFTA.

#### Training means

EA training activity can be arranged in a number of different ways.

Common EA training material can be produced which then can either be presented as part of a local AB's training program with local trainers, or by a trainer from the project group.

EA training for trainers can also be organized, where new information has to be circulated and implemented effectively and quickly, such as for the introduction of new accreditation criteria.

#### Budgeting and compensation of costs

Any compensation for training activities has to be included in the EA annual budget. The general principle is that the production of training material and, where needed, the costs for the trainers can be compensated in accordance with an agreed project plan.

Any costs for trainers or trainees to be reimbursed through the operating grant with the EC/EFTA must be agreed in advance in the annual budget submitted to the General Assembly and in the EA work program.

#### Project management of training activities

The Chair/Vice Chair of the EA Committees/Council are responsible for selecting and appointing trainers. Together, they agree on the targeted trainees, define the program of the training seminar and contents of documents to be used, and agree on the dates for the training.

Reports on accepted training projects are required after the event for inclusion in the EA Annual Report required by the EC/EFTA.

#### Use of EA training material

EA produced training material is freely available for the EA members who may translate it into local languages.

#### Assistance from the EA Secretariat

The Secretariat shall assist the EA Committees/Council as follows:

- To communicate the training program and dates;
- To assist the AB hosting the seminar in the preparation of the event;
- Prepare and distribute the invitation package (registration form, program, hotel booking form);
- To prepare the training certificates to be given to the trainees;
- Collect the feedback forms for analysis within the Committees;

## **9. MANAGEMENT OF EA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

The EA Executive Committee is responsible for the implementation, maintenance and continuous improvement of the EA Management System.

The Executive Committee appoints a Quality Manager who is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the EA management system. In cooperation with the EA Secretariat, the Quality Manager develops the appropriate processes and procedures to ensure the compliance of the EA management system and procedures with the applicable requirements.

### 9.1 Internal audit

EA-0/09 *Procedure for Internal Audit* is the procedure which describes the process for conducting internal audits in EA.

EA-0/09 *Procedure for internal audit*

### 9.2 Management review

EA-0/08 *Procedure for Management Review* is the procedure which describes the process for conducting annual management reviews in EA.

EA-0/08 *Procedure for management review*

### 9.3 ILAC/IAF evaluation

EA is a regional group member of ILAC and IAF and is a signatory to the IAF MLA and ILAC MRA. This enables an EA MLA member to apply to become a signatory to the IAF MLA/ILAC MRA provided it is a member of those organisations.

In compliance with ILAC/IAF A1 IAF/ILAC MRA Requirements and Procedures for the Evaluation of a Regional Group, EA is subject to regular evaluation by a team of ILAC/IAF evaluators. The objective is to check continued compliance of EA with the ILAC/IAF requirements. This is based on the examination of EA's documentation and witness activities where the ILAC/IAF evaluators observe EA evaluators evaluating EA ABs.

ILAC/IAF A1:07/2010 ILAC/IAF MRAs: Requirements and Procedures for Evaluation of a Regional Group

## 10. ANNUAL REPORT

EA shall publish an annual report. Preparation and publication of the report shall be coordinated by the Secretariat and the CPC. An overview of the MAC activities shall be provided in the Annual Report. The Annual Report is published in the first quarter of the year to report on activities of the previous year. The relevant parts of the EA Annual Report concerning the MAC activities shall be forwarded to ILAC/IAF for inclusion in the ILAC and IAF Annual Reports.

EA provides a separate specific Annual Report on the implementation of the previous year's WP to the EC/EFTA by the end of April each year. This report is compiled by the Executive Committee. It is also provided for information to the General Assembly at its mid-year meeting.