Purpose

This document describes the various stages of development and approval of EA documents and the adoption of ILAC/IAF Documents.
Authorship
The publication has been written by the EA Communication and Publication Committee.

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

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Further information
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Please check our website for up-to-date information
http://www.european-accreditation.org

Category: EA Governance and Policy documents - Mandatory

Date of approval: 24 September 2010
Date of implementation: immediate
Transitional period: none
# CONTENTS

1  **PRINCIPLES AND DEFINITIONS**  4  
1.1 Introduction  4  
1.2 EA documents  4  
1.3 International Mandatory Documents  6  
1.4 Approval and Implementation of EA documents  6  
1.5 Policy for Development of Documents  7  

2  **PROPOSAL FOR NEW EA DOCUMENTS OR REVISION OF EXISTING DOCUMENTS**  7  

3  **CIRCULATION OF DOCUMENTS FOR COMMENTS**  8  

4  **APPROVAL OF EA DOCUMENTS**  9  

5  **ADOPTION OF ILAC/IAF MANDATORY DOCUMENTS**  10  

6  **PUBLICATION AND NOTIFICATION**  11  

7  **REVISION**  11  

8  **FLOW CHARTS**  12  

APPENDIX A  PROPOSAL FOR THE PREPARATION OF EA DOCUMENTS  15
1 **PRINCIPLES AND DEFINITIONS**

1.1 **Introduction**

EA publishes:
- documents that define organisational policies and procedures to be followed by EA and its Members
- other process, procedural and application documents that are mandatory for both Members and signatories to the EA MLA, and
- information documents and publications.

*The process defined in this document shall apply to:*
- EA Governance and Policy documents
- Peer Evaluation Process documents, including policies and procedures
- Members’ Procedural documents
- Application documents and Technical/Advisory documents for conformity assessment bodies (CABs)
- Secretariat Management System and related documents
- Information and Promotional documents

1.2 **EA documents**

Documents published by EA are divided into the following categories:

1.2.1 **EA Governance and Policy documents**

EA Governance and Policy will include documents such as the Articles of Association, Rules of Procedure and other documents relating to the operation of EA as a legal entity. It will also include documents published by Committees/Councils or working groups, such as the EA Strategic Plan, Terms of Reference for EA Committees and Councils etc.

1.2.2 **Peer Evaluation Process documents, including policies and procedures**

Peer evaluation process documents include policy and procedural documents for the operation of the EA peer evaluation system and documents relating to the management of the peer evaluation process, training of the evaluators and liaisons with the Arrangement Committees of ILAC and IAF.

1.2.3 **Members’ Procedural documents**

Members’ procedural documents include procedures, requirements, etc. applying to EA members including application documents for Accreditation Bodies.

The purpose of issuing such EA documents is to introduce and ensure consistency into accreditation practice by all EA MLA signatories when working to international standards, harmonised standards and technical specifications.
These documents will be classified as either:

- **Mandatory** documents:
  - Documents of a horizontal nature that support the application of the standards used for accreditation. These documents shall be implemented by EA member accreditation bodies for use in their accreditation systems. Their implementation will be assessed as part of the EA MLA peer evaluation process, and
  - Sector specific documents that support the implementation of the standards used for accreditation in specific sectors/sector schemes. These documents must be implemented in the accreditation process by EA member accreditation bodies that provide accreditation for that specific sector(s).

  Their implementation will be assessed as part of the EA MLA peer evaluation process.

  or

- **Guidance/informative documents** will typically provide technical or scientific guidance and recommended examples on how to fulfill the criteria.

EA documents under this category shall, where relevant, contain reference to the clause(s) in ISO/IEC/EN Guides and Standards or other technical specifications and normative documents which is/are being addressed in the document.

1.2.4 Application documents and Technical/Advisory documents for conformity assessment bodies (CABs)

Documents used by Conformity Assessment Bodies that provide technical or scientific guidance for the application of standards.

These documents will be classified as:

- **Mandatory** documents
  
  Their implementation by CABs will be assessed by Accreditation Bodies. The use of these documents in the assessment process will be evaluated as part of the EA MLA peer evaluation process,

- **Guidance/informative documents** will typically be documents that provide technical or scientific guidance and recommended examples on how to fulfill the criteria.

- **Technical/Advisory documents** i.e. publications from third parties or stakeholder groups with an interest in accreditation. They are endorsed by a committee of EA and provide useful advice on matters relating to accreditation and are not subjected to formal approval by the EA General Assembly. (See section 4).

EA documents under this category shall, where relevant, contain reference to the clause(s) in ISO/IEC/EN Guides and Standards or other technical specifications and normative documents which is/are being addressed in the document.

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1 EA Mandatory Documents are required to be used by accreditation bodies when accrediting conformity assessment bodies to ensure that they operate their programs in a consistent and equivalent manner. EA Mandatory Documents do not establish, interpret, subtract from or add to the requirements of any ISO/IEC/EN Guides and Standards or other technical specifications and normative documents, but assure consistent application of those documents. The definition of EA mandatory documents will be included in the introduction of all EA mandatory documents.
1.2.5 Secretariat Management System and related documents

Documents used by the Secretariat will be made available to the members for information. These documents are prepared and published by the Secretariat under the management of the EA Executive.

1.2.6 Information and Promotional documents

This category includes information and promotional publications such as EA brochures, annual reports, activity reports and other information on EA and EA activities. These documents are prepared by the EA Secretariat or EA Committees/Councils.

1.3 International Mandatory documents

Accreditation Body signatories to the EA MLA, as well as signatories to the ILAC or IAF agreements, are obliged to comply with international documents adopted by ILAC and IAF containing globally accepted criteria for application of standards and specifications.

EA shall formally endorse mandatory documents approved and published by ILAC and IAF. In cases where ILAC or IAF documents contain policies or principles conflicting with the policy and principles for the European accreditation system as decided by EA, the European Commission and European Council, then EA shall not endorse those ILAC or IAF documents, and may develop EA documents containing a policy and/or principles applicable to the European accreditation system. (See clause 5, and in particular clause 5.3 specifying responsibilities for EA Committee/Council Chairs in case ILAC and/or IAF is preparing documents that may conflict with principles or policies for the European accreditation system).

1.4 Approval and Implementation of EA documents

For EA approved documents, the following shall apply in relation to definitions of the dates of approval, transition period and implementation dates.

1.4.1 Date of Approval of EA Documents

EA documents are approved by full members. Approval is normally carried out by electronic ballot of the full members and shall be ratified at the meeting of the General Assembly. The date of approval is the closing date for the ballot plus one day. As a general rule, an approved document is published no later than one week after it has been approved.

1.4.2 Transition period between date of approval and date of implementation

The transition shall be the period of time between the approval and implementation date.

1.4.3 Date of implementation of EA Documents

As a general rule, the date of implementation of an EA approved document shall be the date of approval plus one year, unless otherwise agreed.

While it is expected that every accreditation body will apply the procedures set out in a new EA document and where relevant require its accredited and applicant bodies to apply the procedure from the implementation date, it does not mean that the Accreditation Body has confirmed through assessment the implementation of a new document by that date. The implementation of the requirements or procedures set out in a new EA document by accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies (CAB) must however be confirmed through assessment on or before the next scheduled assessment date for the accredited body following the implementation date.
1.5 Policy for development of documents

The EA policy for the development of Members’ Procedural Documents and CABs’ Application Documents should aim to reduce the overall set of EA documents.

EA shall consult all stakeholders and interested parties when considering the need for a new document or the revision of existing EA documents, and to involve relevant stakeholders and interested parties including the EA Advisory Board (EAAB) in the development of such documents.

Copyright material shall not be reproduced without permission of the copyright holder. In particular, ISO deliverables, including ISO Guides, are copyrighted material and their re-use in other documents needs authorization from the ISO Central Secretariat.

2 PROPOSAL FOR NEW EA DOCUMENTS OR REVISION OF EXISTING DOCUMENTS

2.1. A proposal for a new document or revision of an existing EA document, whether originating from within EA or arising from international work, shall be supplemented by information on those EA documents, where relevant, that will be superseded by the new document and will therefore need to be withdrawn.

2.2. A proposal to draft a new document or to amend an existing one may be made by:
- EA Members
- EAAB
- Representatives of Stakeholders or Observers
- MLA Council
- any Committee of EA;

2.3. All proposals shall be submitted in writing to the EA Secretariat. Appendix A shall be used for documents mentioned in clause 2.6.1 to describe the purpose and objective of drafting or revising EA documents, including the planned work program, consultation procedure etc. to be followed. The EA Secretariat will then consult the relevant EA Committee(s)/Council for comments to the proposal.

2.4. When the EA Secretariat has consulted the relevant committees or councils for comments to the proposal, the Secretariat will prepare a formal proposal, which shall be submitted in writing to the EAAB for consultation. The consultation period with committees and with the EAAB shall be a maximum of 30 days, by the end of which a written response will be requested from the parties being consulted.

2.5. After the proposal has been presented to the EAAB for comments, the proposal shall be presented to the EA General Assembly along with any comments from the relevant EA Committees/Council and EAAB.

2.6. The procedure to be followed when proposals for new or revised EA documents are brought forward depends on the category the document belongs to, see. clause 1.2. The procedure to be followed for each category of documents is as follows:

2.6.1 EA Governance and Policy documents, Peer Evaluation Process documents, including policies and procedures, Procedural documents for members, application documents and Technical/Advisory documents for CABs

Proposals for new documents or revision of existing documents shall be presented for the EA General Assembly (see clause 2.5.)
The proposal shall be formally adopted by EA General Assembly and completed in accordance with the decision of the General Assembly.

2.6.2 Secretariat Management System and related documents and Information and Promotional documents

Drafts of new and revised documents will be presented by the Executive Committee to the EA General Assembly. The proposal shall include, where applicable:

- A justification for the proposal
- The Committee/Council, Working Group or Task Force etc. responsible for completing the work
- A time table for completing the work
- The comment procedure to be followed for collecting opinions from members, stakeholders, observers and other relevant parties.

The proposal is presented to EA General Assembly for comments and shall be completed in accordance with any recommendation as agreed by the General Assembly.

2.7 Other International Mandatory Documents

The Executive Committee is responsible for informing the EAAB of proposals and decisions taken by ILAC and IAF to develop or revise mandatory documents that may impact on EA MLA signatories or accredited CABs. Any comments or remarks by the EAAB shall be considered by the Executive Committee, and where relevant, presented to the relevant EA committee/council, as well as ILAC or IAF Committee for consideration, together with a proposal for dealing with the position of the EAAB when completing the drafting/revision of the document.

2.8 Involvement of members and stakeholders in drafting of documents and in the consultation process

Direct involvement of members and stakeholders in the process of drafting documents is important to ensure that all views and positions are taken into account.

The appointed Committee responsible for the document will include representatives of member accreditation bodies and relevant stakeholders in the drafting process. The MLA Council shall make its own arrangements for drafting documents, subject to input from the relevant stakeholders and interested parties.

The process of consulting members, stakeholders, and other relevant parties shall also be considered carefully when drafting a proposal to be presented for EA General Assembly for approval, to ensure that all relevant parties are invited to comment on the final draft (see also Appendix A, clause 8).

3 CIRCULATION OF DOCUMENTS FOR COMMENTS

3.1 After a proposal for drafting a new document or revision of existing documents has been presented to the EA General Assembly in accordance with clause 2.6, the committee/council, or the working group or task force, responsible for the work item, is responsible for completing the work in accordance with the decision taken by the EA General Assembly. If relevant, the committee/council is encouraged to consult with other regional accreditation body co-operations.

3.2 When the committee/council responsible for preparing the document has completed the draft, it shall be circulated for comments according to the decision taken by the EA General Assembly. The normal procedure should be to circulate to members of the committee for comments, followed by wider circulation among all members, stakeholders and other interested parties.
3.3 Comments received from committee/council members shall be considered by the committee/council responsible for drafting the document. The committee/council shall respond to each comment setting out the rationale for accepting or rejecting each point.

3.4 A report will be collated to include the comments received and the responses to each comment. A revised version of the draft document will accompany the report together with a recommendation to circulate to the members, stakeholders and interested parties for consideration and approval.

3.5 Should the council/committee decide to circulate the revised draft to members of committee/council for a new comment period, clause 3.2 – 3.4 shall be repeated.

3.6 Should the committee/council decide to circulate the revised draft for comments to all members, stakeholders and other interested parties, either the report on comments received with prepared responses or a summary report shall be forwarded to the EA Secretariat. The EA Secretariat is responsible for circulating the documents to members, stakeholders and other interested parties for comments. The comment period shall normally be 60 days, or as decided by the EA General Assembly when endorsing the proposal. In some circumstances where a quick response is required, a shorter comment period can be applied, with the agreement of the Executive Committee.

3.7 Comments received from members, stakeholders and other interested parties shall be forwarded by the EA Secretariat to the Chair of the committee/council responsible for the work item. The committee/council is responsible for preparing a report to summarise the comments received, the responses to those comments, and for revising the draft accordingly. The report and the final draft of the document shall be circulated to members of the committee/council for approval.

3.8 The final document together with the report shall be forwarded to the EA Secretariat requesting the EA Secretariat to arrange the ballot among full members on the document.

3.9 Documents classified as Guidance/Informative documents outlined in clauses 1.2.3 and 1.2.4, shall be approved by the committee/council responsible for the document and not be circulated to the EA General Assembly for approval.

4  

**APPROVAL OF EA DOCUMENTS**

4.1 EA documents will either be approved during an EA General Assembly session or through electronic ballot. The rules for decisions by the EA General Assembly apply as set out in the Articles of Association.

4.2 When EA documents are presented for approval during an EA General Assembly session or by electronic ballot, the following documents and information shall be circulated to the contact point of all full Member Bodies entitled to vote:

- The final draft of the document
- A track change version from the previous document
- Appendix A filled in for the document
- Report prepared on comments received during the comment period from members, stakeholders and other interested parties, re. clause 3.7
- Information on the implementation date and proposed transition period.

4.3 If the adoption of a document is completed by electronic ballot, full members will normally have one month to vote from the time of posting the document for voting.
4.4 If a document is circulated for electronic ballot each full member shall confirm receipt of the document to the EA Secretariat within one week and full members are further required to lodge their vote within 30 calendar days.

4.5 During the 30 day voting period, the EA Secretariat will follow up and remind full members to vote in case insufficient confirmations or votes are received.

4.6 The EA Secretariat will advise all members and the EAAB of the result of the vote within two weeks of the close of voting.

4.7 Where full members forward comments to the document with their vote, the EA Secretariat will transfer all comments received to the Chair of the Committee responsible for drafting the document. The Committee Chair will be responsible for preparing a recommendation to the EA Executive Committee who will finally decide if comments received will have an impact on the outcome of the vote.

4.8 If the outcome of the vote on the document is negative, the Executive Committee will decide on the future process to be followed.

5 ADOPTION OF ILAC/IAF MANDATORY DOCUMENTS

5.1 All documents containing requirements with which EA, EA members and Accredited CABs must comply, shall be adopted as EA documents.

5.2 ILAC or IAF documents that are mandatory for EA MLA signatories as well as for EA (as the regional cooperation body that administers and manages the ILAC and IAF Arrangements) shall be submitted to EA full members for endorsement.

5.3 During the drafting process of ILAC or IAF documents, or at the latest when drafted documents are circulated for ballot in ILAC or IAF, EA Committee Chairs, including the Chair of the EA MLA Council, are responsible for evaluating whether these documents contain provisions or requirements that may conflict with the policy and principles for the European accreditation system. If such conflict or potential conflicts are identified, committee/council Chairs, after consultation with the committee/council, shall notify the Executive Committee and recommend action to be taken by EA. The Executive Committee shall inform members of its considerations and recommend members either to accept the drafted document as an acceptable international document containing globally accepted principles and criteria for application of agreed accreditation requirements, and that EA will carefully consider implementation of the document in EA. Alternatively, it may recommend Members to vote against the drafted document. This should only arise if the potential conflicts cannot be resolved during implementation of the document in EA).

5.4 Approved ILAC or IAF documents, re. clause 5.2, will be submitted to the EA General Assembly session for formal approval. In case ILAC or IAF documents contain provisions, principles or policies conflicting with those adopted for the European accreditation system, the proposal presented to the EA General Assembly shall be supplemented by a recommendation to resolve the conflict identified. If the conflict is resolved by drafting a specific EA document to replace the international document, the procedure in sections 2 – 4 in this document shall be followed.

5.5 Where requirements are identified in ILAC or IAF documents that may cause conflicts or potential conflicts with the principles and policies of the European accreditation infrastructure, the Executive Committee will raise the issue with the EAAB with a request for advice to assist appropriate resolution.
5.6 ILAC and IAF documents adopted as EA documents shall be available from the EA web-site as endorsed ILAC/IAF documents.

6   PUBLICATION AND NOTIFICATION

6.1 When an EA document is approved by the General Assembly or by the relevant Committee cf. clause 3.8, the Secretariat will publish the document on the EA website.

6.2 The Secretariat shall also inform all the EA Members and Stakeholders of the publication of the document.

6.3 When an EA document is under revision, the existing version remains the definitive version until the revisions are approved. During the transition period, both versions of the documents shall apply.

7   REVISION

7.1 At least every five years or whenever it becomes necessary, committees/councils will review the list of the documents they are responsible for.

7.2 The Secretariat maintains a list of documents that are in draft or under revision within ILAC/IAF, based on feedback received from the EA Committees and liaison persons involved in the ILAC/IAF work. The list is retained by the Secretariat and published on the EA intranet.

7.3 All enquiries regarding the documents should be referred in the first instance to the EA Secretariat.
8 FLOW CHARTS

CIRCULATION OF DOCUMENTS FOR COMMENTS

- Members, Stakeholders, Other Int. parties
- EA Secretariat
- Council Committee
- Working Group/Task Force

In accordance with the decision by the EA GA Committee/council is consult with other regional Co-operations of AS if relevant.

Develop the draft

Circulate it for comments

Submit comments

Deal with comments and prepare:
- A report on comments and responses
- A revised version of the draft
- A recommendation to circulate for comments

Circulate this information for consideration and approval

Approved?

Yes

Sends the draft document (and information on comments and responses, when applied).

Circulates this information for comments

No

Appendix A (categorization)

The comment period shall normally be 60 days or as decided by the EA GA when endorsing the proposal.

A shorter comment period can be applied, with the agreement of the EA Ex.
CIRCULATION OF DOCUMENTS FOR COMMENTS

Members, Stakeholders, Other Int. Parties

Submit comments

EA Secretariat

Council / Committee

Working Group / Task Force

Forwards the comments received

Deal with comments, and prepare:
- A report on comments and remarks.
- A revised draft of the document based on comments

Final draft Approved?

Yes

Document category

- Guidance/Informative
- Technical/Advisory
- Secretariat management system
- Information and Promotional

Submit to the EA Secr. for publication

No

Submit to the EA Secr. for voting

The comment period shall normally be 60 days or as decided by the EA GA when endorsing the proposal. A shorter comment period can be applied, with the agreement of the EA Ex.
APPROVAL OF EA DOCUMENTS

Executive Committee       Committee Chair       EA Secretariat       Full Members

Circulates documents to the contact point of all Member Bodies entitled to vote

Electronic ballot?

Yes

Launch the ballot

Confirm the reception of the document

Follows up the ballot and reminds members to vote (if necessary)

Lodge their votes

Closes the ballot

Informs of the results of the ballot:
- Member Bodies entitled to vote
- EAAB and all other representatives having contributed to the comments but having no voting rights

No

EA GA Meeting

- Final draft;
- Appendix A;
- Report prepared during the commented period;
- Implementation date and proposed transition period.

Thirty calendar days

Within two weeks of the close of voting

February 2011 rev00
# APPENDIX A

## PROPOSAL FOR THE PREPARATION OF EA DOCUMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.</th>
<th>PROPOSAL MADE BY:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>on behalf of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Member Body or Associate Member Body of EA</td>
<td>(name of the Accreditation Body)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA Advisory Board</td>
<td>(name of the Member + College)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual stakeholder and Observer</td>
<td>(name of the Member + College)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA Executive Committee</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EA Committee:</td>
<td>(name of the Committee)</td>
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<tr>
<td>to the General Assembly</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2</th>
<th>Name of the document to be prepared:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Area of application:</td>
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<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>Justification for the proposal; identification of the need and target group:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benefit:</td>
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<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>Proposed categorisation:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>EA Governance and Policy document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Peer evaluation Process document</td>
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<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Members’ Procedural documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i. Mandatory document</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Guidance/informative document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>CABs application document and Technical/Advisory document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i. Mandatory document</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Guidance/informative document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii. Technical Advisory document</td>
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<td>Justification:</td>
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<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>Is the subject matter being addressed either with EA or elsewhere (ILAC or IAF for example):</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>No, it is not (please make reference to this circumstance in the previous question)</td>
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<tr>
<td>y</td>
<td>Yes (please provide information)</td>
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<th>6</th>
<th>Resources required to prepare the proposed document:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative solution available:</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

| 7 | Work programme for completion: |
Comment procedure to be applied in the Committee:

- Circulated to Committee members including relevant stakeholders for comments:
  
  **Yes**
  
  **No**

  - If no, justify the proposal not to circulate.

Comment procedure at EA Community level: 60 days comment procedure to be completed:

- To EA members and stakeholders for comments:

  **Yes**

  **No**

  - If no, justify the proposal not to circulate.
For Secretariat only

Expected cycle for production of the document:

EAAB advice for starting a new document:

Approval to start by GA

Approval by drafting committee

Submission to EAAB for comments

Submission to Members for comments

Approval: GA meeting ______________________

Email ballot:

Launch ________________

A/R_________________

Follow-up (if necessary)_______________

End of the ballot__________

Publication on the web

__________________________________________________________

Signature: ___________________________  Date: _______________________