Purpose

This document has been produced by EA for the preparation and adoption of the budget for next financial year, registration and control of expenditures during the year and for the drawing up of statements of accounts. It is meant to be used by the Secretariat and the Executive Committee.
Authorship
The publication has been written by the EA Executive Committee.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 According to Article 18.8 of the EA Articles of Association (AoA), the EA Executive Committee (EX) “proposes the budget for the next financial year”.

1.2 According to Article 18.1, the financial year of EA coincides with the calendar year, i.e. from 1 January to 31 December of the same year.

1.3 The EX shall present the annual accounts.

1.4 This internal procedure contains the process adopted by the EX for:

   1.4.1 Drafting the budget;
   1.4.2 Monitoring expenditure;
   1.4.3 Delegation of responsibilities;
   1.4.4 Approval of payments and transfer of money; and
   1.4.5 Accounting and reporting of financial accounts.

1.5 This procedure shall be used together with the EA Terms & Conditions for financial compensation of EA members from the European Commission/EFTA Operating Grant (EA Terms & Conditions) for activities performed by AB staff members under the Operating Grant Agreement.

1.6 The EX appoints a TFG “FPA” in charge of monitoring the management of the agreement and related grants. The TFG members are the Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and one member of the EX.

2 PREPARATION AND APPROVAL OF BUDGET FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR

2.1 The EX shall present a budget for the next financial year to the EA General Assembly no later than in the month of November.

2.2 The proposed budget shall be approved by the EX and circulated to the members of EA no later than one month in advance of the EA General Assembly.

2.3 The budget shall be drafted in the form which is formally recorded in the EA management system.

2.4 The EX is responsible for drafting the budget for total income to EA for the next financial year based on available information. Attention shall be given to the income related to the contract with the European Commission and EFTA, and the connected expenditures to deliver the service agreed with the Commission and other external parties.

2.5 The total income budgeted shall normally be at a level corresponding to the total expenditure included in the budget for the financial year.\(^1\)

2.6 The total membership fees shall be fixed at a level ensuring a balanced EA budget. The membership fees for the individual members of EA shall be calculated from the total membership fees by using the applicable rules for calculation of individual membership fees.

2.7 The EA Chair/Vice-Chair and Committee Chairs in co-operation with the EA Treasurer should prepare the budgeted expenditures for the following items:

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\(^1\) The GA decided in November 2001 that until the reserves reach a level equal to 50% of the total EA budget, the budgets shall be prepared to include a surplus thus contributing to increasing the reserves. Since receipt of the Operating Grant, this is considered to be 50% of the annual budget without taking into account the Operating Grant income/expenditure.
2.7.1 EA Executive

2.7.2 EA Committees

The budget shall be based on work programs adopted by the Committees and endorsed by the EA General Assembly. (The EA General Assembly may endorse these work programs in connection with the approval of the budget for the financial year.) The work program shall contain an estimate (budget) of the expenditure required to complete the proposed activities, including expenditures for Working Groups, Task Forces, liaison activities etc. (Liaison activities will only be financed by EA according to the procedure for liaison activities).

2.8 The EA Secretary in co-operation with the EA Treasurer should prepare the budgeted expenditures for the following items:

2.8.1 EAAB meetings
2.8.2 EA General Assembly
2.8.3 Training activities
2.8.4 EA liaison activities based on proposals from EA Committees and supported by the EX
2.8.5 Management system of EA
2.8.6 Secretarial costs
2.8.7 IT and Communication
2.8.8 Finance and management of accounts and EC/EFTA grant agreements
2.8.9 Legal costs

2.9 The EA Secretary may request other members of the EX or others responsible for EA activities to provide information needed to draft the budget for the above-mentioned items. The budgeted expenditures for each of the items shall be supported by specifications allowing for an effective control of the budget for each item.

3 MONITORING OF EXPENDITURES

3.1 When the EA budget for the next financial year is approved by the EA General Assembly, the EX is thereby authorised by the EA General Assembly to carry out and complete the activities financed by the budget.

3.2 The EX is, however, obliged to ensure that total expenditure in a financial year does not exceed the total budget adopted by the EA General Assembly.

3.3 If the EX during its monitoring of expenditures estimates that the total expenditure to complete the activities in the approved budget for the actual financial year is expected to exceed the budgeted amount, the EX is obliged to inform the EA members explaining the reason for the increase of expenditures and measures taken by the EX to control increase in expenditure where applicable. This should be communicated to the EA Members as soon as practicable without waiting until the next General Assembly.

3.4 The EX may decide to allocate more resources to a specific activity (project) in the course of the year within the limits set out in the Operating Grant Agreement with the European Commission. The EX shall provide the appropriate justification (time to be spent, labour costs, travel and subsistence costs etc.) to be filed/kept by the Secretariat.

3.5 Beyond the limits stated in 3.4, the rules of 3.3 above shall be applied. Appropriate justification shall also be provided.
3.6 As a rule, the budget is prepared in close cooperation with all EA officers and EX members concerned, in accordance with the agreed annual work programme. However there may be reasons for changing planned activities during the year. For the extension/modification of mandates under the Operating Grant Agreement the following procedure shall be applied:

3.6.1 All changes to the mandates shall be agreed by the EX at one of its meetings (physical or web) or in special cases, by electronic correspondence.

3.6.2 The EX shall be notified of all foreseen modifications of a mandate (e.g. activity or sub-activity to be cancelled, difference in the number mandays needed, difference in the number of trainers or trainees, difference in the number of travels or days eligible for per diem) in order to adjust the forecast.

3.6.3 Individual staff members of ABs mandated by EA for ongoing activities (e.g. EA Chair and Vice-Chair, TC Chairs, Quality Manager, EA Treasurer and other additional EX members, EX TFG conveners) are obliged to immediately notify EA Secretary when:

   a) a new activity of EA is foreseen,
   b) it is foreseen that their mandate needs extension (e.g. new sub-activity, more mandays, travels or days eligible for per diem),
   c) the mandated activity/sub-activity needs to be modified.

3.6.4 TC Chairs are also obliged to immediately notify the EA Secretary when any sub-activity under their auspices needs modification, e.g.

   a) HHC Chair for DNIs (e.g. new DN established, more mandays, more meetings of DN conveners, more moderators at a seminar etc.)
   b) MAC Chair for peer evaluator trainings (e.g. more training, more trainers, more trainees, longer trainings etc.)
   c) MAC Chair (Secretary) for peer evaluations (e.g. additional evaluation visits)
   d) TC Chair(s) for harmonisation trainings (e.g. more training, more trainers, longer trainings etc.)
   e) Activities to be cancelled or postponed

3.6.5 Mandated liaison representatives of EA shall also notify EA Secretary when any extension/modification of the liaison representation is foreseen.

3.6.6 Notification of extension/modification shall include appropriate justification:

   a) for extension: number of mandays, travels and days eligible for per diem, the meeting/training venue, meeting agendas etc.
   b) for modification: the data expected to change (e.g. only 1 trainer instead of 2, only 12 trainees instead of the budgeted 15 etc.)

3.6.7 The EA Secretary registers and compiles all notifications.

3.6.8 In case of extension before the notified activity/sub-activity takes place, the EA Secretary prepares the draft budget for the extension in the form of the activity based budget and sends it to EA Treasurer for control.

3.6.9 The EA Treasurer prepares the revised forecast based on the latest update of the budget and the draft budget for the extension and distributes it to the EX TFG FPA.

3.6.10 The EX TFG FPA agrees on the way the EX shall decide on the extension of the mandate (e.g. next physical meeting, next web meeting, interim web meeting or electronic correspondence). In accordance with section 4 of this procedure, for extensions amounting to less than 2000€, the EX TFG FPA can decide and report to the EX about the decisions made.
3.6.11 The revised forecast submitted to the EX or TFG FPA for decision-making on extension should include all modifications notified up to date.

3.6.12 Based on the decision of the EX or TFG FPA the EA Secretary informs the proposer, and prepares and sends the revised mandate with a copy to the Treasurer.

3.6.13 The EA Treasurer prepares the revised forecast based on the revised mandates, and distributes it for information to the EX.

4 DELEGATION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR SPECIFIC ITEMS IN THE BUDGET

4.1 The EX is collectively responsible for managing the EA budget. The EX may, however, delegate responsibility for specific items in the budget to individual members of the EX and the member will be responsible for controlling the total expenditures for that item.

4.2 EX members’ delegated responsibility for specific items in the budget are entitled to enter into commitments in accordance with the budget and work program approved by the EA General Assembly.

4.3 EX members delegated responsibility for specific items are however, not allowed to take on obligations/complete single transactions for an amount greater than 2,000 Euro. Obligations and transactions greater than 2,000 Euro shall be approved by two EX members. Documentation for approval of transactions greater than 2,000 Euro shall be filed/kept by the Secretariat.

4.4 An EX member responsible for a specific item in the budget is not allowed to take on obligations/accept expenditure for that item exceeding the total approved budget for the item without informing and gaining the agreement of the EX. He/she shall then provide the appropriate justification to be filed/kept by the Secretariat.

5 APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS, TRANSACTIONS AND TRANSFER OF MONEY

5.1 Expenses which EA shall reimburse to staff members, members of the EX or others, shall be sent to the EA Secretariat together with justifying documents (pay slips, invoices, statement of accounts, voucher or receipt etc.) documenting the expense and information on the bank account to which the amount shall be transferred.

5.2 If the expenses are greater than the limit for single transactions stated in clause 4.3 documentation for approval of the transaction by two EX members shall be enclosed and filed in the EA Secretariat.

5.3 EA does not hold any cash and therefore any transaction and transfer of money will be executed from an EA bank account.

5.4 The EA agreement with the bank and the bank internet facilities allow two individuals to transfer money from the bank account (credit transaction). The bank EA is using does not offer an online system requiring a double authorization for any online transaction. In practice and within the agreed limits, the Secretary prepares a transaction which must then be signed off by either the Treasurer or the Chair.

5.5 The EX authorises individual(s) to act on behalf of EA and thereby authorises individual(s) to execute transactions from the EA bank account. The authorised individual is empowered to execute individual transactions on the bank account not greater than 2,000 Euro.
5.6 Transactions on the bank account amounting to an amount greater than 2.000 Euro shall be approved by one additional member of the EX.

5.7 Authorization for transactions greater than 2.000 Euro by the two EX members having approved the transaction shall be documented and the relevant document shall be filed by the EA Secretariat with the original invoice, voucher or receipt.

5.9 The EX may decide to authorise the EA Secretary and, in exceptional cases, other employees of the Secretariat or members of the EX to use a credit card which will be drawn on and settled on the EA bank business account. In such a case the conditions for using the credit card shall be defined. Use of a credit card is not considered as transactions as defined in clause 5.4 but the 2.000 Euro limit applies. The statement of account (e.g. monthly) for the use of the credit card by the EA Secretary shall be approved by an EX member (not the holder of the credit card), and when used by an employee of the Secretariat shall be approved by the EA Secretary. In all cases receipts for use of the credit card shall be sent to the Secretariat to be filed with the corresponding statement of account.

6 ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING OF FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

6.1 The EA Secretariat is responsible for the recording of income and expenditures. The EX may enter into an agreement with an external party to carry out the bookkeeping of the accounts and the EA Secretary is responsible for communication with the party.

6.2 In case the accounting is outsourced to an external party, the contract with the party shall specify the:
   a) Documentation EA shall provide to form the basis for accounting of income and expenditures (invoices, statement of account, voucher, receipt etc);
   b) Format for reporting of financial accounts and financial statement and the frequency and time limits for reporting.

6.3 The EA Secretary in co-operation with the EA Treasurer shall monitor the accounts every month and present a statement of account to the EX at least every three months. The statement shall be completed and circulated to the EX in due time with other documents for the meeting. EX members responsible for budget items shall explain the spending for the budget item if requested by the EX.

6.4 The EX shall at least quarterly review the financial statement and decide if the financial statement is in line with the budget or the statement contains information which may indicate a need for revision of the approved budget.

6.5 The General Assembly is empowered to give an order to an accountant to audit the annual accounts. If it does not do so, the EX shall have this power (AoA Article 18.4).

6.6 The external auditor shall complete the financial audit of the accounts and provide its financial statement not later than the end of March of the following year.

6.7 The EX shall approve the annual accounts and the financial statement at the subsequent EX meeting. The annual accounts shall be signed by all members of the EX (AoA Article 18.3).

6.8 The EA Financial Oversight Committee shall review the external audit report and the financial statement no later than mid May of the following year.

6.9 The EA EX shall review the financial audit report from the external auditor and the report from the Financial Oversight Committee and present its response to the EA General Assembly to any remark and/or recommendation in the reports.
6.11 The EX shall present the annual accounts for the previous financial year with a statement about their faithfulness from the appointed accountants. The accounts shall be presented to the annual meeting of the General Assembly within 6 months after the end of the financial year.

6.12 In addition to the audit of the annual accounts (re. clause 6.6) the EA EX shall induce an approved auditor (a Commissaire aux comptes) to certify in accordance with a methodology approved by the Commission that the costs declared by EA in the financial statement are real, accurately recorded and eligible and that all receipts have been declared in accordance with the Framework Partnership Agreement and Operating Grant Agreement or Grants for Action Agreements signed by the European Commission and EA.

**7 EA TRAVEL POLICY**

7.1 The policy of EA is to reimburse its officers and other persons so authorised in accordance with EA-0/04 – EA Procedure for Liaison Activities and the EA Terms & Conditions for all reasonable expenses necessarily incurred in travelling on EA business.

7.2 Reimbursement shall be settled to the accreditation body employing officers and other persons performing activities on behalf of EA.

7.3 The EA travel policy is stated as Appendix A to this document named: Guidelines on Travel Expenses.

7.4 The EA Travel Policy does not apply to EA business carried out by AB staff members under the FPA and operating grant with the Commission. Compensation to ABs for these activities is regulated by provisions in part 3 of the signed Terms and Conditions, and the criteria for compensating ABs for these expenditures are in general that EA is compensating actual costs for air and train travels (if in line with the EA Travel Policy and limited to amounts in line with the EA Travel Policy) and per diems – as published by the Commission – covering accommodation, breakfasts, lunches, dinners and local transportation expenses incurred in the country where the meeting or training has taken place.

7.5 The costs included in the EA budget for travel, accommodation and subsistence shall be budgeted in accordance with the Guidelines on Travel Expenses and the EA Terms & Conditions with regard to activities performed by AB staff under the Operating Grant Agreement with the European Commission.
APPENDIX A: GUIDELINES ON TRAVEL EXPENSES

A1. GENERAL

A1.1 The policy of EA is to reimburse its officers (and other persons so authorised) (“the traveller”) for all reasonable expenses necessarily incurred in travelling on EA business as approved in the annual budget.

A1.2 The policy shall also apply to the employees of EA.

A1.3 Individual circumstances make it impossible to lay down rules for every travel eventuality, and reimbursement will not be withheld where deviation from this policy or claims for items not envisaged can be justified, provided the travel was authorised by the EA Executive.

A1.4 It is further recommended to apply the policy for international travels only. Expenses to domestic travels or to domestic travel costs in connection with international travels should be reimbursed by the national accreditation body in accordance with national rules for reimbursement of travel costs. This will ensure compliance with any national tax regime.

A2. RESPONSIBILITIES

A2.1 The traveller is primarily responsible for complying with the EA travel policy.

A2.2 The EX shall nominate particular individuals to be responsible for authorising expense claims.

A3. TRAVEL/ACCOMMODATION ARRANGEMENTS AND BOOKINGS

A3.1 Travellers shall normally book travel through their current service provider(s). This is not appropriate in all cases, and those travelling on EA business are expected to exercise judgement in making travel arrangements.

A3.2 Any bookings made outside the indicative price (hotels) or normal class of travel must be authorised by the individuals nominated by the EX (re. A.2.2) in advance of the booking.

A4. ROAD TRAVEL

A4.1 Those travelling on EA business should use a private car when it offers advantages in working or travel time and cost over other modes of transport.

A4.2 The traveller shall hold fully comprehensive insurance covering this business use. The traveller will be regarded as having confirmed that the insurance cover is adequate when signing a claim for mileage. EA accepts no risk to the driver or passenger or any third party when this option is taken.

A4.3 Travellers may use a taxi when other modes of transport are unavailable, impractical or time is of the essence.

A4.4 The following items are reimbursable by EA:

- Motor mileage, at the standard rate(s) set by EA, for all journeys in private or hired cars from home or office base to business destination
- Parking meter charges
- Airport parking at long stay rates
- Overnight garage parking costs, if required
- Road and bridge tolls
- Cost of hiring a car\(^2\) e.g. to reach a meeting from an airport
- Taxi fares

EA will reimburse mileage charges for the use of private cars at the same rate as the driver’s own accreditation body rate for private cars, but in any case not to exceed €0.50 per Km.

A4.5 The following items are not reimbursable by the EA:
- Parking and other fines even if incurred on a business trip.

A5. **AIR TRAVEL**

A5.1 Air travel should be used when it offers advantages in working or travel time and cost over travel by other modes of transport.

A5.2 Economy class travel will normally be appropriate, within the EA geographical area. However, special circumstances such as the length or timing of the journey, flexibility in return flights, or individual physical conditions or disabilities may justify the additional cost of other classes. As a guide, “premium economy” would be justified for flights between 4 and 9 hours (Middle East, Gulf, and East coast of USA), and business class for longer flights, or overnight flights.

A5.3 Where a change of itinerary requires a change of ticket and a penalty is payable, this shall be settled at the time by the traveller and justified when reclaimed.

A6. **RAIL TRAVEL**

A6.1 Rail travel should be used when it offers advantages in working or travel time and cost over other modes of transport.

A6.2 The appropriate class of travel will normally be standard (2nd) class. However, special circumstances such as the length or timing of the journey, (journeys >3 hours, international journeys), flexibility in return journey, or individual physical conditions or disabilities may justify the additional cost of other classes. Reserved seating is normally booked.

A7. **ACCOMMODATION**

A7.1 Where an overnight stay on a business trip is necessary, a traveller is entitled to a single room with en suite facilities, adequate working facilities, adjacent car-parking (if required) and restaurant facilities in a hotel of a reasonable standard (minimum 3 star), in a safe area.

A7.2 Unless otherwise required, hotel bookings will be on a guaranteed or late arrival basis. If EA or the traveller is billed a “no-show” charge, the item must be explained when the traveller claims reimbursement for the trip.

\(^2\) The generally appropriate standard of a car hired by the delegate is a manual or automatic car of not more than 2.0 litres, with full CDW/LDW insurance, although alternatives may be justified e.g. to enable a party of five people to travel together.
A7.3 Travellers choosing to stay with family or friends while travelling on business will be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred provided this is a less than the normal room rate. These may include some gesture of appreciation to the friends or relatives for their hospitality.

A8. MEALS AND ENTERTAINMENT

A8.1 Personal meals on a business trip will be reimbursed according to actual and reasonable cost, including tips. EA will not pay for personal bar bills unless they are part of a meal, or are an entertainment expense - see below.

A8.2 EA recognises that there are occasions when it is appropriate and standard behaviour to entertain the representatives of other organisations and will reimburse all reasonable expenses incurred in doing this. Full details of those entertained e.g. numbers, names, organisation or the occasion must be given when making a claim to enable EA to work out the treatment in each case, in accordance with tax and VAT rules.

A8.3 Travellers are reminded of the sensitivity in giving and receiving entertainment and shall avoid circumstances that may compromise the integrity or impartiality of EA.

A9. OTHER EXPENSES

A9.1 The following additional items are reimbursable by EA:

- The cost of business calls from home, personal mobile phones or from pay phones. Each call must be itemised. Use of hotel phones should be avoided wherever possible.
- On extended trips the cost of reasonable telephone calls to maintain family contact.
- Currency exchange commissions.

A10. INSURANCE

A10.1 EA advises travellers travelling on EA business to ensure they have suitable insurance cover. Examples are: medical and emergency travel expenses, cancellation, curtailment and change of itinerary costs, loss of baggage and personal effects, loss of money and traveller's cheques, and personal liability.

A11. EXPENSE CLAIMS, AUTHORISATION AND REIMBURSEMENT

A11.1 All claims other than mileage must be supported by appropriate documentation e.g. VAT receipts, ticket stubs. Where no receipts can be obtained, then fully itemised details should be set out in the expense claim.

A11.2 The conversion rate for foreign currency is the actual rate obtained (if money is exchanged) or paid (if a credit card is used).

A11.3 All expense claims must be signed by the traveller and submitted to EA within a reasonable time (1 month) and must be within the same Financial Year unless expected costs are going to be accrued. EA officers will monitor compliance with EA's current procedures and policies and may withhold payment pending an investigation and/or correction.

A11.4 Reimbursement is by payment direct to a bank account nominated by the traveller.

A11.5 EA does not give cash advances or cash floats either in currency or travellers cheques.