

Terms of Reference of the EA Certification Committee

Approved by the EA General Assembly on 19th May 2022

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1. SCOPE AND FIELD OF APPLICATION

The EA Certification Committee is the forum for the discussion of all matters related to the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies performing certification and verification activities and the responsibilities of all parties concerned.

This document gives particular guidance to conveners and members of these groups, with the aim of harmonizing their activities, avoiding the duplication of work and ensuring that their activities will be carried out in the most efficient way.

2. COMPOSITION

2.1 Members

The Certification Committee is composed of EA Members, Recognized Stakeholders (RS), and representatives (experts, stakeholders, observers) invited by the Chair.

In accordance with EA-1/17 *Rules of Procedure* (RoP) clause 10.11, each EA Member is entitled to nominate one member to the Certification Committee. Recognised Stakeholders are entitled to nominate one person to the Certification Committee.

The EA Secretariat provides a Secretary to the Certification Committee.

2.2 Chair and Vice-Chair

The Chair is elected by the General Assembly for a period of two years in accordance with the *Articles of Association* and RoP.

The Chair shall be an A or B Member (except for HHC and MAC, the Chair shall be A Member). When the Chair of the Certification Committee is a B Member, the Vice-Chair shall be an A Member.

The Vice-Chair is elected by Certification Committee A, B, C Members for a period of two years / Chair mandate. Candidates can be nominated by A, B and C and D Members (RoP clause 10.10). The deadline for sending nominations to the Secretariat will be specified in the call for nominations.

The quorum must be reached (two-third of the participants) for the result to be valid. For a candidate to be elected, he/she must obtain the simple majority. If no candidate obtains the simple majority at the end of the 1st round, a second round will be set up. The 2 candidates having collected the greatest number of votes will go for the second round.

The EA Certification Committee Chair is responsible to propose a yearly work plan in accordance with the ToR, to be agreed at the Certification Committee.

The Chair is also responsible to ensure that the Certification Committee ToR, the *Articles of Association* and the RoP are respected.

The Vice-Chair assists the Chair in carrying out his/her duties, especially in managing the agenda and representation of the Certification Committee. Other specific tasks can be delegated as mutually agreed. If needed, the Vice-Chair will replace the Chair in chairing a meeting.

2.3 Management Group

In accordance with the RoP, clause 10.5 and 10.13, the Certification Committee may set up a Management Group to ensure proper management of the work inside and outside of meetings.

The Certification Committee Management Group (MG) prepares the work of the Certification Committee. It aims to ensure the overall management and coordination of the operations of the committee. The task of the MG is to contribute and confirm the meeting agenda and ensure efficient communication and feedback between the Certification Committee and the WGs and the Review Panel.

The MG is led by the Certification Committee Chair. The MG is composed of the Chair, the Vice-Chair as well as the conveners of the CC WGs and of the Review Panel. A member of the MG can be designated by the Chair to represent or replace the Chair in meetings. Additional members may be added as needed to help achieving its aims. The interaction between the members of the MG is intended to be made by electronic means (e-mails / web meetings).

3. MEETING

The Certification Committee meets at least once a year, normally twice a year, although extraordinary meetings may be called upon the initiative of the Certification Committee Chair. A spring and an autumn meeting are normally scheduled in the first and third quarters of the year.

The date and location of the Certification Committee meeting will be decided by the Certification Committee Chair, in consultation with the membership and other committees' Chairs, as necessary.

The Certification Committee Chair may propose a preparatory session or meeting, restricted to EA Members as necessary, with a view to prepare discussions in the plenary session or full meeting and to enhance the sharing of experience and harmonization. Nevertheless, conclusions from the preparatory session, to be representative of the Certification Committee, must be endorsed at the full session.

When justified, more than one representative of each EA member or stakeholder may attend the meeting, subject to availability and previous agreement with the Certification Committee Chair.

A draft agenda will be distributed at least 4 weeks before each meeting, except where otherwise agreed. Agendas will be confirmed at the beginning of each meeting, thus subject to changes.

Questions from the Certification Committee membership will be submitted at least three months in advance of a committee meeting to be considered by the Review Panel prior to their presentation and discussion at the committee meeting.

Draft minutes will be distributed within 2 months after the meeting for a one-month commenting period, before being approved by the membership.

Decisions lists may be considered and approved at the meeting and published immediately after the meeting.

The organization of the meetings will follow EA-0/10: *Procedure for EA Meetings*.

4. TASK AND RESPONSABILITIES

4.1 The Certification Committee has the following functions:

- to set-up and disband working groups as needed to deal with specific matters of a long-term nature (see section 5 below);
- to set-up and disband task forces as needed to deal with specific matters or tasks for a limited duration (see section 5 below);
- to discuss and harmonize the implementation of accreditation activities by EA Members, namely by preparing and updating a set of documents as well as resolutions;
- to enhance the equivalence and consistency of accreditation systems and practices, namely by organizing training events, surveys, workshops and dedicated networks, as well as maintaining records of the exchange and sharing of experience and knowledge;
- to coordinate and liaise with other EA committees and councils to foster harmonization and the improvement of multilateral recognition agreements;
- to interact and liaise with relevant stakeholders, including scheme owners and regulators;
- to follow the European and international standardisation work and contribute as required for the development of relevant standards and guidance documents;
- to follow and contribute as required to the preparation and implementation of European legislation;
- to contribute to the worldwide harmonization of accreditation activities, by following, reviewing and contributing to the IAF technical work and liaising with relevant bodies in other recognized regions.

- 4.2** The Certification Committee is responsible for liaisons with ILAC/IAF, implementing the EA “One Voice” approach, following up new developments in accreditation schemes and regulations, resolving technical issues arising in PE’s, managing standards transition, highlighting issues to be covered by promoting in EA’s communications.

The Certification Committee shall pursue any other activity required by the General Assembly, Executive Board or Technical Management Board and cooperate with the other EA committees on a regular basis.

5. WORKING GROUP / TASK FORCE GROUP / TECHNICAL NETWORK

The Certification Committee may decide to set up working groups and task forces or other sub-structures to deal with specific issues. In this case, the provisions set out in the RoP clauses 10.13 - 10.16 and 10.18 shall be respected.

The Certification Committee set up a Review Panel aimed to consider questions raised by the committee membership prior to their presentation and discussion at the committee meeting. The Review Panel is composed of members of the Certification Committee and convened by one of them. The members and convener of the Review Panel may change upon requirement.

The Certification Committee will keep a list of the active working groups and task forces or other sub-structures, their tasks and composition.

The Certification Committee working groups’ and task forces’ conveners have the duty to coordinate the work assigned to their structures and ensure its timely execution and report back (at least) for the committee meetings. Presentation of the working group report and work during committee meetings is expected, and should be ensured by the convener or the corresponding NAB representative appointed to attend the Certification Committee meeting.

Working groups may decide to establish special task force groups, with an appointed convenor, to study a precisely defined problem and to report back on it. The task force groups should automatically be disbanded after presenting their final results.

6. DECISION MAKING / VOTE OTHER THAN FOR ELECTIONS

Decisions will be taken in accordance with the RoP clause 10.17.

Decisions that have a medium/long-term impact shall be recorded in a List of Decisions or Decision Log for easy retrieval.