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Reference*

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**Procedure for
Development and Approval
of EA Documents
and
Adoption of ILAC/IAF Documents**

PURPOSE

This document describes the various stages of development and approval of EA documents and adoption of ILAC/IAF documents as EA publications.

Authorship

The publication was written by the EA Communications and Publications 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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CONTENTS

1	PRINCIPLES AND DEFINITIONS	4
1.1	Policy for development of documents.....	4
1.2	Abbreviations	4
1.3	Classification and status of EA documents.....	5
1.4	General rules for Approval and Implementation of EA documents	6
2	PROCESS FOR THE PROPOSAL FOR NEW EA DOCUMENTS OR REVISION OF EXISTING DOCUMENTS – New Work Item (NWI)	6
2.1	NWI proposal (NWIP).....	6
2.2	2.2 Comments	7
3	DEVELOPMENT AND CIRCULATION OF DOCUMENTS FOR COMMENTS	7
4	APPROVAL OF MANDATORY AND GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS	8
5	MANDATORY DOCUMENTS FOR USE BY SECRETARIAT SYSTEM.....	9
6	APPROVAL OF INFORMATIVE DOCUMENTS	9
7	ADOPTION OF ILAC/IAF MANDATORY DOCUMENTS as EA Documents	9
8	PUBLICATION AND NOTIFICATION.....	10
9	REVISION OF EA DOCUMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS	10
	APPENDIX - PROPOSAL FOR THE PREPARATION OF EA DOCUMENTS	12

1 PRINCIPLES AND DEFINITIONS

1.1 Policy for development of documents

The EA policy is to develop Members' Procedural and CAB Application documents to ensure implementation of harmonised practices, particularly in cases when the document is essential to achieve EA objectives.

In compliance with EA-1/15: *Policy for Relations with Stakeholders*, EA shall consult all stakeholders and interested parties when considering the need for a new document or the revision of existing EA documents, and involve relevant stakeholders and interested parties in the development process as required.

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EA publishes:

- documents which define organisational policies and procedures to be followed by EA and its Members and the Secretariat;
- other process, procedural and application documents which are mandatory or not for both Members and signatories to the EA MLA; and
- Information documents.

The process described in this document applies to EA documents based on their classification as defined below.

1.2 Abbreviations

CAB	Conformity Assessment Body
CC	Certification Committee
EAAB	EA Advisory Board
EX	Executive Committee
HHC	Horizontal Harmonization Committee
IC	Inspection Committee
LC	Laboratory Committee
MAC	MLA Council
MLA	Multilateral Agreement
NAB	National Accreditation Body
NWI	New Work Item
NWIP	New Work Item Proposal

1.3 Classification and status of EA documents

Summary table for document classification

Classification	Governance and Policy	Peer evaluation	Members procedural	Application documents for CABs	Secretariat and MS	Information, promotional
Status	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory or Guidance	Mandatory or Guidance or Informative	Mandatory for use by the Secretariat	Informative

1.3.1 Status of EA documents

EA documents may have the following status:

- Mandatory

Mandatory documents are documents that shall be applied by those concerned.

- Guidance

Guidance documents are those documents that provide technical or scientific guidance and recommended examples on how to fulfil the criteria.

- Informative, promotional

Informative/promotional documents are those documents that are published for pure information/promotion purposes.

1.3.2 Classification of EA documents

EA Governance and Policy documents

EA Governance and Policy documents include documents such as the Articles of Association, Rules of Procedure and other documents relating to the operation of EA as a legal entity. They also include documents published by Committees/Councils, such as the EA Strategic Plan, Terms of Reference for EA Committees and Council, for instance.

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 and training of EA evaluators.

Members' Procedural documents

Members' procedural documents include procedures and requirements applying to EA members including application documents for National Accreditation Bodies (NABs).

The purpose of issuing such EA documents is to ensure consistency and to support harmonisation of accreditation practices by all EA MLA signatories when working with international standards, harmonised standards and other applicable requirements.

Application documents for CABs

Application documents are documents to be used by CABs for the application of standards.

Secretariat Management System and related documents

Documents used by the Secretariat for its operations. Operational procedures are Secretariat Management System related documents for use by the Secretariat or anybody involved in the Secretariat processes and operations, as relevant. These documents are controlled by the Secretariat.

Information and Promotional documents

This category includes information and promotional publications such as EA brochures, annual reports, activity reports and other material concerning the information of EA members and the promotion of EA and its activities.

1.4 General rules for Approval and Implementation of EA documents

1.4.1 Approval of EA Documents and Date of Approval

The rules and process for approval are laid down in chapter 4. When approval is carried out by electronic ballot the date of approval is the closing date for the ballot plus one day. When approval is done by voting at a GA meeting, the date of approval will be the last day of the GA. How to approve a document is based on the status of the document.

1.4.2 Transition period

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

1.4.3 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 NAB 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, this does not mean that the NAB has confirmed through an assessment of the accredited CAB 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 CABs, must however be confirmed through assessment on or before the next scheduled assessment date for the accredited body following the implementation date. The implementation of the new document by the NAB will be covered by the next peer evaluation if not defined otherwise.

2 PROCESS FOR THE PROPOSAL FOR NEW EA DOCUMENTS OR REVISION OF EXISTING DOCUMENTS – NEW WORK ITEM (NWI)

2.1 NWI proposal (NWIP)

A proposal for drafting a new document or revising an existing EA document, whether originating from EA or international work, shall be supplemented by information on those EA documents,

where relevant, that will be superseded by the new document and will therefore have to be withdrawn. Any EA member/body can make a proposal for a new work item (NWIP).

Proposals shall be submitted in writing to the Secretariat of the Committee involved using the Appendix of this procedure. The Committee/Council Secretariat shall then consult the relevant EA Committee(s)/Council for comments and endorsement of the proposal.

When the proposal has been endorsed by the relevant Committees or Council, the EA Executive Committee is invited to confirm the new work item, taking account of the EAAB advice. The final approval of the NWI is done by the GA members, either by electronic ballot or voting in a meeting.

In urgent cases, the NWIP may also take the form of a resolution presented for approval at an EA GA meeting under the EX responsibility. Representatives of stakeholders and the EA Advisory Board have then the opportunity to react and comment.

The approved NWIP shall be reflected in the relevant work program(s).

For Secretariat Management System documents, the new work item is managed internally in the Secretariat. The NWIP are approved by the Executive Secretary. This NWIP process does not apply to documents with an informative status. For documents with an Informative status, the proposal is approved by the EX.

2.2 2.2 Comments

The NWIP shall identify the owner Committee responsible for the document and specify the **comment procedure** to be applied, according to the table below:

	Owner Committee	Stage 1 : Committee/Council comments	Stage 2: EA comments
EA Governance and Policy documents	EX, HHC	X	X
Peer Evaluation Process documents, including policies and procedures	MAC	X	N/A
Members' Procedural documents	HHC	X	N/A
	LC, IC, CC	X	X
Application documents for CABs with a mandatory or guidance status	LC, IC, CC	X	X
Application documents for CABs with an informative status	LC, IC, CC	N/A	N/A
Secretariat Management System and related documents	SECR	N/A	N/A
Information and promotional documents	CPC, EX	X	N/A

3 DEVELOPMENT AND CIRCULATION OF DOCUMENTS FOR COMMENTS

3.1 The responsible Committee/Council shall complete the work in accordance with the decision by the EA Executive Committee/General Assembly. Where relevant, the Committee/Council is encouraged to consult with other regional accreditation body co-operations.

3.2 When a draft is complete, it shall be circulated for comments in compliance with the agreed comment process.

Normally the **Committee/Council comment** period is 60 days. Any other proposals shall be indicated in the proposed new work item with proper justification. Furthermore, during the development process, specific circumstances may require a quick response from EA and a shorter comment period may be applied. The owner Committee retains responsibility for recommending adjusting the duration of the comment period, to be confirmed at the EX level. The Secretariat will keep track of the process in the minutes of the meeting(s) concerned.

3.3 Comments received shall be considered. The Committee/Council shall respond to each comment and set out the rationale for not accepting a comment. A revised draft is then produced and submitted to the Committee for endorsement.

Should the Committee/Council decide to circulate the revised draft to members of the Committee/Council for a new comment period, clauses 3.2 – 3.3 shall be repeated.

3.4 Where applicable, the revised draft is circulated for EA comments. When an EA comment period is required, the process as described in 3.3 shall apply.

3.5 Comments received shall be consolidated by the Secretariat and then sent to the responsible Committee for consideration. The responsible Committee/Council shall consider every comment and give a response, and revise the document as necessary. The final revised draft shall be endorsed by the Committee/Council before circulation for EA voting.

3.6 The Secretariat shall arrange the ballot for approval of documents. Before circulation for ballots, the Secretariat shall review the document for compliance with the applicable requirements as set out in EA-0/06: *Format and Layout of EA documents*.

4 APPROVAL OF MANDATORY AND GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

4.1 These documents will be approved either during an EA General Assembly session or, more generally, through electronic ballots. The rules for decisions and votes by the EA General Assembly apply as set out in the Articles of Association. Results of electronic ballots shall be ratified at a General Assembly meeting.

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 voting members:

- the final draft of the document
- a track change version from the previous document provided it remains legible
- the template with comments and responses considered during the EA comments phase
- information on the implementation date and proposed transition period shall be given in the draft submitted for voting

4.3 If the adoption of a document is to be completed by electronic ballot, voting members will normally have 30 days to vote from the time of posting the document for voting. Fast track process can be used in urgent cases, with the EX deciding on the most appropriate voting period.

4.4 For electronic ballots, voting members shall confirm receipt of the invitation to vote including the related documents, to the EA Secretariat, within one week, and shall lodge their vote within 30 calendar days.

4.5 During the voting period, the EA Secretariat will follow up and remind voting members to vote, notably when the quorum is not reached.

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

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

5 MANDATORY DOCUMENTS FOR USE BY SECRETARIAT SYSTEM

Secretariat management system documents are prepared by the Secretariat under the management of the EA Executive Secretary. They are approved by the Executive Secretary and published by the Secretariat.

6 APPROVAL OF INFORMATIVE DOCUMENTS

Application documents for CABs published by an outside organisation, in general a Recognised Stakeholder organisation which provides useful advice on matters relating to accreditation, are endorsed by the relevant Committee of EA and listed in INF/01 and on the website. They are not subject to approval by the EA General Assembly.

The relevant Committee will report to the EA General Assembly on their endorsement and publication.

EA Information and Promotional documents are approved by the Executive Committee and published by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat or the Executive Committee will report to the EA General Assembly on their approval and publication.

7 ADOPTION OF ILAC/IAF MANDATORY DOCUMENTS AS EA DOCUMENTS

7.1 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 Members for endorsement. EA shall formally and automatically adopt mandatory documents approved and published by ILAC and IAF.

It is assumed that ILAC or IAF documents do not contain policies or principles which conflict with EU legislation that support the European system for accreditation as decided by EA and the European Commission, because EA is part of the developing process of IAF and ILAC mandatory documents (see 7.2./7.3.)

However, in any specific case where IAF or ILAC endorses a mandatory document which contradicts European legislation or EA requirements; IAF or ILAC shall be notified that it is not possible for EA to approve the respective document, and to strive to find a solution. If no solution is possible EA will need to cancel its status as a recognized region.

7.2 EA Committee Chairs, including the Chair of the EA MLA Council, are responsible for evaluating whether ILAC/IAF documents contain provisions or requirements that may conflict with the policy and principles for the European accreditation system as decided by the European Commission

If such conflict or potential conflicts are identified during the ILAC/IAF development process, EA Committee/Council Chairs, after consultation with the EA Committee/Council, shall notify the Executive Committee and recommend action to be taken by EA. This can be carried out by email consultations.

The Executive Committee will inform EA ILAC/IAF Members of its considerations with the proposed recommendation for action to ILAC/IAF.

If such conflict or potential conflicts are identified during the ILAC/IAF voting process, after consultation with the EA Committee/Council, the EA Executive Committee will issue a recommendation to the EA ILAC/IAF Members. The Executive Committee may recommend voting against the proposed ILAC/IAF document. This should only arise if the potential conflicts cannot be resolved during implementation of the document in EA.

The Executive Committee will seek advice of the EAAB in resolving the identified conflict, if appropriate.

7.3 When EA Committee/Council Chairs have not notified to the Executive Committee any conflicting principles or policies, ILAC or IAF documents will be automatically submitted to the EA General Assembly for formal adoption as EA documents (see clause 7.1) after their publication by ILAC or IAF, with the relevant EA classification and status.

In case that the EA Committee/Council Chairs notified that 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.

7.4 ILAC and IAF documents adopted as EA documents shall be available from the EA web-site as adopted ILAC/IAF documents and published according to the endorsed classification and status.

8 PUBLICATION AND NOTIFICATION

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

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

8.3 When an EA document is under revision, the existing version remains the applicable version until the revised document is approved. During the transition period, both versions of the documents remain valid unless otherwise agreed.

9 REVISION OF EA DOCUMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS

9.1 At least every five years or whenever it is identified as necessary, Committees/Councils will review the documents they are responsible for. The Committees/Council secretariats will check and update the documents list regularly.

9.2 It is EA Committees/Council responsibility to follow on changes on European legislation and consequences on EA publications, including European and International standards and ILAC/IAF endorsed documents.

9.3 All inquiries regarding the documents should be sent at first instance to the EA Secretariat.

GENERAL SUMMARY TABLE FOR ALL EA DOCUMENTS

Classification	Governance and Policy	Peer evaluation	Members procedural		Application documents of CABs		Secretariat and MS	Information, promotional
Status	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory or Guidance		Mandatory or Guidance	Informative	Mandatory for use by the Secretariat	Informative
Owner Committee	EX, HHC	MAC	HHC	LC IC CC	LC, IC, CC		SECR	CPC, EX
Committee/Council comments	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	N/A	CPC, EX comments
EA comments	X	N/A	N/A	X	X	N/A	N/A	N/A
EA approval	e-ballot and/or GA	e-ballot and/or GA	e-ballot and/or GA		e-ballot and/or GA	TC approval reported to the GA	ES approval reported to GA	EX approval reported to GA

APPENDIX - PROPOSAL FOR THE PREPARATION OF EA DOCUMENTS

<p>1. PROPOSAL MADE BY:</p> <p>on behalf of: _____ Date: _____</p> <p>Individual Member Body or Associate Member Body of EA _____ (name of the Accreditation Body)</p> <p>EA Advisory Board: _____ (name of the Member + College)</p> <p>Individual stakeholder and Observer: _____</p> <p>EA Executive Committee: _____</p> <p>EA Committee/Council: _____ (name of the Committee)</p> <p>to the General Assembly:</p>																								
<p>2</p> <p>Name of the document to be prepared:</p> <p>Area of application:</p>																								
<p>3</p> <p>Justification for the proposal; identification of the need and target group:</p> <p>Benefit:</p>																								
<p>4</p> <p>Proposed classification:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="padding: 5px;">Governance and Policy</th> <th style="padding: 5px;">Peer evaluation</th> <th colspan="2" style="padding: 5px;">Members procedural</th> <th colspan="2" style="padding: 5px;">Application documents of CABs</th> <th style="padding: 5px;">Secretariat and MS</th> <th style="padding: 5px;">Information, promotional</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Mandatory</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Mandatory</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Mandatory</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Guidance</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Mandatory or Guidance</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Informative</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Mandatory for use by the Secretariat</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Informative</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"> </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Justification:</p>	Governance and Policy	Peer evaluation	Members procedural		Application documents of CABs		Secretariat and MS	Information, promotional	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Guidance	Mandatory or Guidance	Informative	Mandatory for use by the Secretariat	Informative								
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Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Guidance	Mandatory or Guidance	Informative	Mandatory for use by the Secretariat	Informative																	
<p>5</p> <p>Is the subject matter being addressed either with EA or elsewhere (ILAC or IAF for example):</p> <p>ρ No, it is not (please make reference to this circumstance in the previous question)</p> <p>ρ Yes (please provide information)</p>																								
<p>6</p> <p>Resources required to prepare the proposed document:</p> <p>Alternative solution available:</p>																								

7
Comment procedure to be applied for the document:
A. To be circulated to Committee members including relevant stakeholders for comments:
Number of days <input type="text"/>
If less than 60 days, please justify:

B. To be circulated to EA Members and stakeholders for a 60-day comment period, if relevant:
YES <input type="checkbox"/>
NO <input type="checkbox"/>
If less than 60 days, please justify:
