

Terms of Reference of the EA Horizontal Harmonization Committee (HHC ToR)

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1. SCOPE AND FIELD OF APPLICATION

The EA Horizontal Harmonization Committee (HHC) is the forum for the discussion of all matters related to the harmonised implementation of ISO/IEC 17011 and relevant ILAC/IAF and EA application documents and the responsibilities of all parties concerned.

This document gives particular guidance to conveners and members of the HHC, 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 HHC is composed of EA members, Recognized Stakeholders, and representatives (experts, stakeholders, observers) invited by the Chair. Members of the HHC should have broad experience in the application of ISO/IEC 17011 and a good overview over different activities of a NAB.

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

The EA Secretariat provides a Secretary to the HHC.

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 from an A Member.

The Vice-Chair is elected by the HHC A, B, C Members for a period of the Chair mandate. Candidates can be nominated by A, B, 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. If the result of this second ballot is a tie, the decision is taken by a toss of a coin.

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

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

The Vice-Chair assists the Chair in carrying out his/her duties.

2.3 Management Group

The HHC has a Management Group (MG) consisting of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, the convenors of permanent sub-structures and of additional members elected by the HHC. The overall number of members of the MG should not be less than three and not exceed five persons.

The HHC MG has the task to prepare the meetings of the HHC. The HHC MG also has the task to prepare technical positions of the HHC. Normally and if time allows the MG should involve the HHC in full to prepare these positions. But if needed, the HHC MG could also finally decide on technical positions that have to be provided on short notice.

3. MEETINGS

The HHC meets at least once a year, normally twice a year, although extraordinary meetings may be called upon the initiative of the HHC Chair.

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

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.

Draft minutes will be distributed within 2 months after the meeting.

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. TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

Moreover the HHC is responsible for the harmonised implementation of the horizontal requirements concerning the assessment and accreditation of CABs seeking notification by the competent National Authorities. In particular, the HHC is responsible

for the harmonised implementation of the horizontal guidance document developed by EA.

The implementation of the specific Level 3 standards (for example ISO/IEC 17025, 17020, ISO/IEC 17065, etc) in the area of Notified Bodies, as well as the study of possible sector-related aspects, remain within the responsibilities of the relevant Technical Committees.

Moreover the HHC is responsible for the evaluation, as established in EA relevant procedures, of sectoral conformity assessment schemes (CAS) and for reporting the outcome of such evaluation to the relevant EA Committees and the General Assembly as applicable.

The HHC performs the following tasks in order to achieve its goals.

- Discusses and prepares decisions for the harmonised implementation of ISO/IEC 17011 and pertinent application documents, taking into account topics highlighted by other Technical Committees and/or identified during the peer evaluation process.
- Discusses and prepares decisions for the harmonized implementation of the assessment practices for the assessment of CABs seeking notification, including maintenance and development of the related EA guidance documents.
- Answers questions by its members and keep a list of frequently asked questions as stipulated in the corresponding working procedures.
- Develops and maintains a close relationship with the EA technical committees and the MAC to ensure close liaison and smooth flow of information to and from the HHC.
- Passes on to the relevant Technical Committee questions related to the implementation of specific Level 3 standards in the area of Notified Bodies.
- Discusses and prepares decisions on sector schemes.
- In general, discusses and prepares decisions on issues that are of common interest across the full range of conformity assessment activities.
- Within its scope of activity, prepares application documents, if and when necessary, to foster harmonization among EA members.
- Identifies the need for closer cooperation between NABs and proposes measures for its implementation including to identify the specific needs of the NABs regarding sharing of resources.

4.2 HHC 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 peer evaluations, managing standards transition, highlighting issues to be covered by promoting in EA’s communications.

HHC 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 GROUPS / TASK FORCE GROUPS / TECHNICAL NETWORK

The HHC may decide to set up working groups and task force groups 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 HHC will keep a list of the active working groups and task force groups or other sub-structures, their tasks and composition.

6. DECISION MAKING / VOTE OTHER THAN FOR ELECTIONS

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