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A large, light blue rectangular area with rounded corners, featuring a background of a white grid pattern that curves and converges towards the center, creating a sense of depth and perspective. The text 'EA Management System' is centered within this area in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

EA Management System

PURPOSE

The present document outlines the EA management system with a view to describe what EA is and explain how EA is structured and operates.

Authorship

The publication has been written by the EA Secretariat.

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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1 PREAMBLE

1.1 How to use/read the document

The present document outlines the EA management system with a view to describe what EA is and explain how EA operates.

Tasks, processes and related responsibilities are identified.

For every subject, a summary description and general principles or rules which are usually further detailed in a separate document or procedure are provided. The intention is not to repeat a procedure that exists. Instead, and wherever possible, reference is made to the applicable procedure or document.

At the end of each section or subsection, there is a frame which contains the list of documents referred to in the section or subsection itself.

The original word copy is available at the EA Secretariat.

1.2 Abbreviations

The Accreditation world is used to using a lot of abbreviations. For convenience, please find below the list of abbreviations used in the document.

AB	Accreditation body
APAC	Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation
BLA	Bilateral Agreement
CAB	Conformity Assessment Body
CC	Certification Committee
COC	Contract of Cooperation
EA	European co-operation for Accreditation
EAAB	EA Advisory Board
EC	European Commission
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EX	Executive Committee
FOC	Financial Oversight Committee
FPA	Framework Partnership Agreement
IAAC	Inter American Accreditation Cooperation
HHC	Horizontal Harmonization Committee
IC	Inspection Committee
ILC	Inter Laboratory Comparison
LC	Laboratory Committee
MAC	MLA Council
MG	Management Group
MLA	Multilateral Agreement
NAB	National Accreditation Body
PT	Proficiency Testing
RfP	Request for Payment
RMP	Reference Material Producer
SADCA	Southern African Development Community Accreditation
TFG	Task Force Group
TL	Team Leader
TM	Team Member
TN	Technical Network
WP	Work Programme

1.3 Review of the EA Management System

The changes in this document are summarized in the following table with the appropriate information to ensure traceability of the changes made.

Changes			Valid revision	Date of approval	Short description of changes
Previous revision	Section/ subsection	Page(s)			
Initial edition	-	-	00	2011-09-...	
00	01	March 2015.	Updating of the reference of procedures Taking into account the new EA secretariat structure Disbanding of HRSRC Elimination of duplication of other EA documents
01	02	April 2019	Comprehensive update of the document

2 ROLE AND ORGANISATION OF EA

2.1 Nature and purpose of EA

2.1.1 Nature of EA

EA, the European co-operation for Accreditation, is a non-profit association which was set up in November 1997 and registered as an association in the Netherlands in June 2000 under the Dutch law.

EA is the European network of nationally-recognised accreditation bodies located in the European geographical area.

EA has been recognised by the European Commission as the official European accreditation infrastructure on 1st April 2009 in Brussels when the *Guidelines for Cooperation between the European Commission (EC), the EFTA, EA and the competent national authorities* were signed. The appointment of EA as the official European accreditation infrastructure follows the adoption of *Regulation (EC) 765/2008* of the European Parliament and the Council of 9 July 2008 establishing a legal framework for accreditation in the EU/EFTA member states. This regulation came into effect as of 1st January 2010.

A *Framework Partnership Agreement between EA and the EC* setting out the common cooperation objectives as well as the administrative and financial conditions relating to Community financing granted to EA for the implementation of European accreditation policy and of the EC Regulation, was first signed on 30 June 2010 in Brussels. The FPA is renewed at intervals of 4 years as defined by the European Commission and EFTA.

2.1.2 Purpose of EA

The *EA Articles of Association* set out the objectives of EA. In broad terms, these establish that EA exists to lead and develop the official European accreditation infrastructure, in which industry and society can have confidence in the results of accredited conformity assessment.

It is the independence, competence and impartiality of EA members, the national accreditation bodies, that guarantee this confidence.

EA Articles of Association
Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 setting out the requirements for accreditation and market surveillance relating to the marketing of products
Framework Partnership Agreements
Guidelines for Cooperation between the EC, EFTA, EA and the Competent National Authorities

2.2 Missions of EA

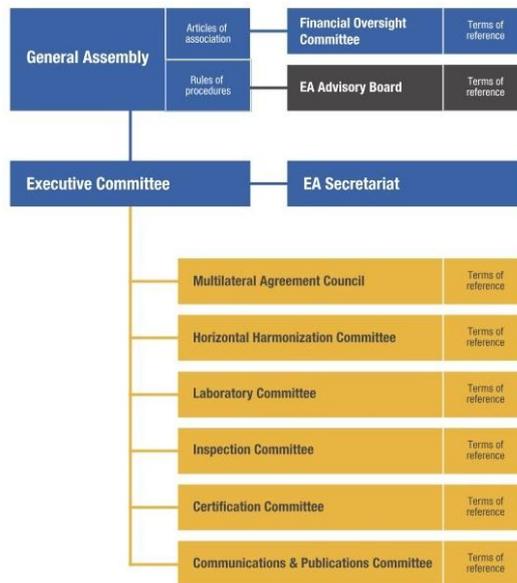
The EA’s Mission and Vision are set out in the Strategy 2025 and published on the website. It includes also the EA Core Values.

2.3 Structure and organisational chart of EA

The *EA Articles of Association*, *the Rules of Procedure* and its Supplements define the formal structure and rules of procedure to be followed so that the objectives of EA as defined in the *EA Articles of Association* are fulfilled.

Articles of Association
 EA-1/17 *EA Rules of Procedure*

The EA structure comprises a General Assembly, an Executive Committee, an Advisory Board, a Secretariat, six committees including the MLA Council and a Financial Oversight Committee.



2.4 Responsibilities of EA Bodies

2.4.1 General Assembly

The EA General Assembly, the highest decision-making body of the association, supervises the management and the general course of affairs in the association and gives instructions in respect of the EA policies.

The composition of the EA General Assembly is described in the *EA Articles of Association*. The responsibilities of the EA General Assembly, as well as rules for meetings and voting, are further developed in the *EA Rules of Procedure*.

The EA General Assembly elects a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman, whose election and responsibilities are set out in the *EA Articles of Association and Rules of Procedure*.

2.4.2 Executive Committee

The instructions given by the General Assembly are implemented by the Executive Committee, whose membership, responsibilities, reports and decisions are defined in the *EA Rules of Procedure*.

The EA General Assembly elects the members of the Executive Committee from amongst the full membership. Elections rules are set out in the *EA Articles of Association and Rules of Procedure*.

2.4.3 Executive Secretary

The EA Executive Committee appoints the Executive Secretary. The tasks and responsibilities of the Executive Secretary are defined in the Rules of Procedure.

2.4.4 Secretariat

The day-to-day operations of EA are managed by the Secretariat, based in Paris (France). The Secretariat is comprised of staff members employed by EA.

The EA Secretariat's main functions are listed in the *EA Rules of Procedure*

2.4.5 Committees, Working Groups and Tasks Forces

The establishment and the procedures for Committees, Council, Working Groups and Tasks Forces are set out in the Rules of Procedure. It includes inter alia the following provisions regarding Committees/Council:

- Establishment,
- Members,
- Election of Chairs,
- Terms of Reference,
- Meetings,
- Working Groups.

2.4.5.1 Certification Committee (CC)

The Certification Committee discusses technical issues related to the accreditation of certification and validation & verification bodies with the view of establishing best practice and fostering harmonization.

The standards used by the EA members for accreditation of certification and validation & verification bodies and for the work in the Certification Committee are:

- Management Systems Certification: ISO/IEC 17021-1
- Product Certification: ISO/IEC 17065
- Personnel Certification: ISO/IEC 17024
- Validation & Verification: ISO 14065

The EA Certification Committee includes three working groups dedicated to the food, environmental and ICT sectors as well as the EU/ETS network group in charge of monitoring

NAB activity in relation to the EU/ETS Regulations. Its activities are monitored through the CC.

CC Terms of Reference

2.4.5.2 Inspection Committee (IC)

The Inspection Committee discusses technical issues related to the accreditation of inspection bodies with the view of establishing best practice and fostering harmonization.

The standard used by the EA members for accreditation of inspection bodies and for the work in the Inspection Committee is ISO/IEC 17020.

The IC set up a technical network for Car Inspection.

IC Terms of Reference

2.4.5.3 Laboratory Committee (LC)

The Laboratory Committee discusses technical issues related to the accreditation of laboratories, proficiency testing providers and reference material producers, with the view of establishing best practice and fostering harmonization.

The standards used by the EA members for accreditation of laboratories and for the work in the Laboratory Committee are:

- Testing and Calibration laboratories: ISO/IEC 17025
- Medical laboratories: ISO 15189
- Proficiency testing providers: ISO/IEC 17043
- Reference material producers: ISO 17034
- Biobanking: ISO 20387

The Laboratory Committee established the WG Health care.

The Laboratory Committee also comprises six technical networks: TN Calibration, TN Environment, TN Food and Feed, TN Forensics and TN Mechanical, Electrical and Construction and TN Toys and Consumer Goods.

LC Terms of Reference

2.4.5.4 The Multilateral Agreement Council (MAC)

The MAC is responsible for the effective and impartial management and monitoring of the peer evaluation process. It is the ultimate decision-making body on the Multilateral Agreement (MLA) and Bilateral Agreements (BLA) of EA.

The tasks and responsibilities, the composition and the voting procedures are set out in the Articles of Association, the Rules of Procedure and the MAC Terms of Reference.

The MAC has established the MAC Management Group.

Articles of Association
Rules of Procedure
MAC Terms of Reference
MAC MG Terms of Reference

2.4.5.5 Horizontal Harmonization Committee (HHC)

The Horizontal Harmonization Committee deals with horizontal technical issues regarding the application of general accreditation requirements on different types of conformity assessment bodies and the assessment of notified bodies.

The HHC is responsible for aspects related to the harmonised implementation of Regulation (EC) No 765/2008, ISO/IEC 17011 and relevant ILAC/IAF and EA application documents.

The HHC monitors the process and procedure for the evaluation of Conformity Assessment schemes in compliance with EA-1/22 *Procedure and Criteria for the Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes by EA Accreditation Body Members*.

HHC Terms of reference

2.4.5.6 Communications and Publications Committee (CPC)

The Communication and Publication Committee (CPC) is the forum for the exchange of information and experiences related to and discussion of communication issues relevant for EA Members and Stakeholders.

CPC Terms of Reference

2.4.5.7 Financial Oversight Committee (FOC)

The Financial Oversight Committee shall prepare a recommendation to the General Assembly regarding the annual financial statements and the Executive Committee's financial report. The rules applying to its membership are described in the *EA Rules of Procedure* (see also sub-section 3.6 of this document).

FOC Terms of Reference

2.5 EA Advisory Board

The EA Advisory Board is EA's main forum for stakeholders.

To meet the requirements of the European legislative framework, the EA Advisory Board has been established to ensure an effective and balanced involvement by relevant stakeholders in European accreditation in the provision of advice to EA on policy and strategy issues.

The EA Advisory Board aims to ensure that the work of the association meets the needs of the market place and expectations of all interested parties. The composition, tasks and procedures of the EA Advisory Board are provided for in the *EAAB Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure*.

The cooperation with stakeholders is set out in EA-1/15 *EA policy for relations with stakeholders*.

EAAB Terms of Reference
EA-1/17 Rules of Procedure

3 MANAGEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION

3.1 Legal status

EA has been established as a not-profit-distributing association in the Netherlands in June 2000. The Association is registered in the Chamber of Commerce of Utrecht under No 30166441. EA's officers are declared to the Chamber of Commerce.

Furthermore, EA has established a Secretariat in Paris, France. This was done by declaring its activities to the French "Préfecture de Police de Paris". The EA accounts are maintained, declared and registered in Paris according to the French applicable rules.

3.2 Cooperation with European and national authorities

The Executive Secretary is in charge of managing and coordinating EA's cooperation with the European Commission and EFTA.

3.2.1 Cooperation with the EC and the EFTA

3.2.1.1 Legislative framework: objectives and conditions

The *Guidelines for Cooperation between the EC, the EFTA, EA and the competent national authorities* set out the principles and objectives for the cooperation between EA, the EC and the EFTA.

The *Framework Partnership Agreements* between EA and the EC and between EA and the EFTA set out the common cooperation objectives, as well as the administrative and financial conditions relating to the Community and EFTA-specific financings granted to EA for the implementation of European accreditation policy.

Arising from the FPAs, specific agreements on annual operating or action grants enable EA to implement annual or specific work programmes based on annual or specific budgets, both adopted by the EC/EFTA.

Guidelines for cooperation between the EC, the EFTA, EA and the competent national authorities
Framework Partnership Agreements

3.2.1.2 Responsibilities for cooperation

In practice at the operational level, the relations between EA and the European authorities is based on routine communication with the EC General Directorates, but specifically with DG GROW which is the appointed contact entity in the EC for the implementation of the FPA.

EA is required to participate in the meetings of the Expert Group on the Internal Market for Products (IMP) for matters relating to accreditation.

Furthermore, EA may be invited to participate in the meetings of the EC Inter-Service Steering Group for Accreditation with a view to discuss the provision of accreditation to support the various EC services.

EAAB

The EAAB includes representatives from DG GROW as well as from EFTA. EA representatives are invited to attend EAAB meetings to represent EA.

Executive Committee and General Assembly

The Executive Committee is responsible for setting-up processes and procedures for the management of specific agreements and related grants awarded by the EC/EFTA on the basis of an agreed annual work program supported by a specific budget submitted to ask for financing through an action or operating grant. The work programmes are worked out to meet the main objectives set out in the EA Action plan introduced in the FPA.

The Executive Committee establishes the annual consolidated EA work programme together with the associated estimated budget, which is approved by the General Assembly.

3.2.2 Cooperation with the national authorities

3.2.2.1 Legislative framework: principles and objectives

The *Guidelines for Cooperation between the EC, the EFTA, EA and the competent national authorities* set out the principles and objectives for the cooperation between EA and the competent national authorities.

3.2.2.2 Responsibilities for cooperation

EAAB

Five representatives from the competent national authorities from the EU and EFTA Member States form the National Authorities College within the EAAB.

The EA Advisory Board appoints observers to attend meetings of the MLA Council.

The Multilateral Agreement Council

Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 creates obligations on the Member States with regards to their National Accreditation Body, notably in terms of the resources necessary for the national accreditation body (NAB) to perform its tasks, and to comply with the requirements of the Regulation.

Member States, through the competent national authorities, are kept informed of the results of the peer evaluations. They are invited to oversee peer evaluations of their NAB as observers.

3.3 EA Membership

The membership criteria are defined in the Articles of Association.

Full and Associate members sign a Membership agreement which formalizes their acceptance by EA as Members and their commitment to abide by the EA rules and requirements. The agreements signed are kept in the EA Secretariat.

Membership status is granted by decision of the General Assembly, upon recommendation of the Executive Committee. It can be suspended or withdrawn, when a Member fails to fulfill its obligations to EA or to the EA Members.

Candidates shall submit their application according to the applicable procedure EA-0/07 *Application for EA Membership*. They shall comply with the EA-1/17 *Rules of Procedure Supplement 1 Criteria for Membership*.

The list of EA Members is given in EA-INF/02 and published on the EA website.

EA-1/13 *EA's Relationships with ABs of countries not being a member of EU or EFTA* outlines EA's policy for relationships with NABs which cannot apply for EA Membership. It provides for an "exception" rule that allows such NABs to enter into a contract of cooperation with EA, upon specific conditions and based on documented evidence.

EA-INF/02 *Contact Persons of EA Full and Associate Members, Contracts of Cooperation, Recognized Stakeholders and Observers*
 EA-0/07 *Application for EA Membership*
 EA-1/17 *Rules of Procedure Supplement 1 Criteria for Membership*
 EA-1/13 *EA's Relationships with ABs of countries not being a member of EU or EFTA*

3.4 MLA signatory status

MLA signatory status is granted by the MAC, by delegation of the General Assembly in accordance with the Articles of Association. MLA signatory status can be granted for one or several scopes of the MLA, as defined in EA-1/06 *The EA Multilateral Agreement*.

Signatories are subject to regular peer evaluation in order to maintain or extend their status, according to EA-2/02 *Procedure for the evaluation of a National Accreditation Body*.

Suspension or withdrawal of MLA signatory status can be decided when a NAB fails to fulfill its obligations.

Associate Members and non-EA Member NABs may sign the EA MLA through a bilateral agreement (BLA), which conveys the same benefits and obligations. The peer evaluation process and requirements are the same.

MLA and BLA signatories receive a certificate and shall sign an MLA/BLA signature sheet.

The list of MLA signatories, including BLA signatories, is given in EA-INF/03 *EA Multi and Bilateral Agreements, List of Signatories* and on the website. Information concerning dates of signatures is maintained by the Secretariat.

EA-1/06 *The EA Multilateral Agreement*
 EA-2/02 *Procedure for the evaluation of a National Accreditation Body*
 EA-INF/03 *EA Multi and Bilateral Agreements, List of Signatories*

3.5 Cooperation with interested parties

Close cooperation with interested parties and their involvement in the development of accreditation policies and procedures is essential to ensure a coherent approach to accreditation and overall acceptance of accredited results.

Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 reinforces EA's obligations towards stakeholders in terms of transparency on its operations and its peer evaluation system.

3.5.1 Recognised Stakeholders

As provided for in the *EA Articles of Association* pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 765/2008, EA shall consult and interact in a most efficient and transparent way with its stakeholders, notably through the EAAB (see sub-section 2.4.5).

Criteria and procedure

The *EA Policy for Relations with Stakeholders* provides that a distinct status with associated rights and obligations is granted to those "EA Recognised Stakeholders" who wish to become more directly involved in EA's associative life and have a particular institutional interest in contributing to EA's technical activities without, however, meeting the criteria for

becoming EA members. The full conditions and procedures for constructive and transparent cooperation are explained in the policy.

Responsibilities

Admission to the status of Recognised Stakeholder is decided by the Executive Committee, following consultation with the EAAB and subject to endorsement by the General Assembly. Organisations invited to become EA Recognised Stakeholders shall sign a specific agreement to be reviewed every five years.

EA-1/15 <i>EA Policy for Relations with Stakeholders</i>
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3.5.2 Sector scheme acceptance

Recognizing that sometimes the market requires accreditation of CABs to conform to the special requirements set out in sector schemes, EA has the objective to underpin cooperation and mutual confidence with sector scheme owners.

It is EA's policy to support use of accreditation and the EA multilateral agreement by sector schemes in order to meet market and consumer expectations in terms of reliability, confidence and cost-efficiency.

Although schemes may be developed at national or European level, schemes that are designed to meet purely national needs do not fall under the scope of the EA policy for sector schemes.

Procedure and Criteria

The process used and the criteria are described in EA-1/22 *Procedure and Criteria for the Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes by EA Accreditation Body Members*.

EA-1/22 <i>Procedure and Criteria for the Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes by EA Accreditation Body Members</i>
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3.6 Financial resources and allocation of funds

EA's financial resources come from:

1. Membership fees charged annually to EA's members;
2. Money received from the operating and action grants signed with the EC and EFTA;
3. Money received from contracts for projects (e.g. RusAccreditation project, Breast Cancer Services project);
4. Other incomes (e.g. interest on bank account, etc.).

EA's expenditure covers costs incurred for:

1. the operation of its Secretariat (office and overheads, salaries and taxes, travel & subsistence, equipment, etc.);
2. the costs for services provided for the management of accounts, insurance, IT and other legal costs;
3. the performance of activities according to the approved work program agreed with the EC/EFTA and financed by the relevant grants, contracts or by EA.

Responsibilities

The Executive Committee is responsible for the proper use of EA's resources, according to EA-1/20 *Procedure for the preparation of budget and control of expenditures*.

The Executive Committee is in charge of monitoring the accounts with the assistance of the Executive Secretary. The Secretariat manages the daily accounts with the assistance of an accountant company.

A chartered accountant, appointed by the General Assembly, carries out the audit of the accounts every year.

A Financial Oversight Committee (FOC) is elected from the Membership for a 2-years mandate (see also sub-section 2.4.5.7 of this document). According to the Rules of Procedure, the FOC shall prepare a recommendation to the General Assembly regarding the annual financial statements and the Executive Committee's financial report.

Budgeting

In accordance with EA-1/20, the Executive Committee prepares a draft budget to be submitted to the General Assembly not later than in November of the previous year.

Particular attention is given to the budgeted income and expected level of membership fees, with a view to avoid unexpected increase in the fees and to maintain an appropriate level of the EA reserves.

Rules for calculation of membership fee have been established in document EA-1/17 Supplement 5.

Re-forecasting of EA's revenues and expenditures can be made during the year, based on the endorsed annual budget presented by the Executive Secretary.

Management of operating/action grants with the EC/EFTA

A separate process has been set up for the management of the grants received from the EC/EFTA. It is governed by the FPA signed with the European Commission and EFTA.

The main steps of the process are the following:

1. Drafting and approval of an annual work program (WP) to be submitted to the EC/EFTA.
2. The proposed WP is supported by a draft budget, prepared by the Secretariat approved by the Executive Committee and the General Assembly.
3. Members of staff of the EA NABs who contribute to the WP are entitled to submit requests for payment (RfP) to the Secretariat for reimbursement of the costs incurred in the performance of the activity planned in the WP and in accordance with the EA specific Terms and Conditions and the relevant mandates established and issued by the Secretariat.
4. Verification of the RfP and justifying documentation is made by the Secretariat.
5. The corresponding costs and flows of money from EA to the EA NABs are booked in the EA accounts.
6. A "Commissaire aux comptes" especially appointed by the Executive Committee carries out the verification of the accounts related to the operating/action grants and

the Services contract as relevant, and issues a certificate/attestation or report, as required by the FPA to support the financial report that is submitted to the EC/EFTA.

According to the FPA, EA is the coordinator of the program, in charge of distributing the EC/EFTA grants to the EA NABs according to their contribution to the approved WP. The use of the EC/EFTA grant is monitored by the Executive Secretary and the Executive Committee. To facilitate this monitoring, the Secretariat prepares financial report on a quarterly basis.

EA banks

EA holds several accounts in one bank:

- 1) Société Générale in Paris

Business account for EA operations
Business account for EC/EFTA grants
Business account for external projects
Deposit account

Payments

Payments are governed by EA-1/20. Any payment is subject to the evaluation by the Financial Manager and/or the Head of Administration followed by the authorization from the Executive Secretary and/or the Head of Administration.

A specific process is in place for authorizing reimbursement of costs to EA NABs based on their requests for payment (RfP) submitted to EA. Basically, the Head of Administration validates the RfPs checked by the Financial Manager. The Head of Administration authorizes the transfers to be issued to the EA NABs involved, according to a management list maintained by the Secretariat and in line with the rules set out in EA-1/20.

The Secretariat staff is authorized to use a credit card for payment of their travel expenses. The same limit of 2 000€ applies. Control of expenses is made according to EA-1/20.

Expenses claims shall be established by the Secretariat staff when either using EA credit cards or claiming reimbursement of costs incurred for EA work. The Executive Secretary checks and signs off claims put forward by the Head of Administration. The Head of Administration checks and signs off claims put forward by the other Secretariat staff members.

Cash-flow

Cash flow is monitored by the Financial Manager and the Head of Administration.

Closing of accounts

According to the FPA and in compliance with the French rules, EA shall close its accounts by 30 April of the following year at the latest. It means that the EA accounts have to be controlled and audited in advance and a draft report issued for review and endorsement by the Executive Committee.

The EA accounts shall be controlled and audited in parallel for the operating grant, the resulting certificate and report shall be submitted to the Executive Committee for endorsement prior to being sent to the EC/EFTA, normally by February/March the next year.

As part of the process for closing of accounts, the FOC is entitled to examine the EA accounts for the purpose of preparing its recommendation to the General Assembly regarding the annual financial statements and the Executive Committee's financial report. The FOC receives all relevant documentation in due course for its draft report to be available for consideration by the Executive Committee in advance of the GA meeting of the mid-year. The Executive Committee shall then prepare its response to the FOC report. Both the report of the FOC and the Executive Committee response are presented to the General Assembly for endorsement at the mid-year meeting.

EA-1/20 Procedure for the preparation of budget and control of expenditures
EA-1/20 S1 Terms and Conditions for compensation from an Operating Grant to the EA Accreditation Body

3.7 Secretariat support to EA

The organisation of EA provides for the EA Secretariat to support the main bodies of EA, including the EAAB.

The tasks of the Secretariat are set out in the Rules of Procedure.

3.7.1 Management of EA meetings

One member of the Secretariat staff is appointed specifically to be responsible for the management of a Committee.

The EA Secretariat's assistance in EA meetings consists of:

3.7.1.1 Preparing the meetings

- The Secretariat sends an invitation package to the body/committee's members through the intranet. This invitation includes an attendance form and a hotel reservation form prepared by the hosting national accreditation body.

Note: The Secretariat is responsible for hosting and managing EA web meetings.

EA-0/10 Procedure for EA meetings

- In addition to the invitation, the Secretariat sends a preliminary draft agenda to be commented by the body/committee's members, together with a call for questions to be asked to the Committee and discussed/answered at the meeting (if relevant).
- The Secretariat collects all papers for the meeting from the body/committee's Chair and publishes them on the intranet. The body/committee's members are informed of the publication of new documents by emails sent from the relevant intranet page. Observers attending a meeting may receive the meeting documentation by email.

3.7.1.2 Ensuring the follow-up of meetings

- The Secretariat participates in each meeting to take the minutes as a record of the main discussions, actions and decisions for future follow-up. After the meeting, the draft minutes are circulated for comments within the body/committee once they are reviewed by the body/committee's Chair.

- The Secretariat prepares an action list after each meeting to recapitulate the distribution of tasks between the body/committee's members, the body/committee's Chair and the Secretariat itself.
- Until the next meeting, the Secretariat follows up the implementation of all actions under the supervision of the body/committee's Chair.

For further details on the rules applicable to each EA body, please consult the terms of reference of the body.

<i>Terms of Reference of EA bodies</i>
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3.7.2 Management of committee-specific documents

In addition to the publication of documents for each meeting, the EA Secretariat is in charge of:

- establishing and updating the membership lists of each EA body, WG, TN, etc. and to make these available on the intranet;
- dealing with the documents related to each committee by circulating them for comments or voting, compiling comments, etc. as appropriate and required by the body/committee's Chair in accordance with the decisions made at the last body/committee's meeting;
- managing the documents for which each committee has a responsibility in terms of document control in accordance with EA-1/14.

3.7.3 Management of IT facilities (EA intranet)

The EA intranet is located in the Members' only page of the EA website and is the section of the website where the EA Committee and Meeting documents are stored and maintained.

Each EA body is allocated a section of the EA intranet, in the form of a dedicated directory or sub-directory. The Secretariat and Chairperson of the corresponding EA body are responsible for the contents and updating of their allocated directory/sub-directory. They receive writing rights which enable them to upload, archive, delete or edit anything in their intranet section.

Members of a Committee/Council are declared as Users of the intranet relevant sub-directory(ies) and receive corresponding access rights (ID and password).

Day to day activity

The Secretariat is responsible for the daily management of the EA intranet for documents, which includes specific directories not only for each EA body, but also for each LC and IC Technical Network (TN) as well as the Committees Working Groups as necessary.

This regular management consists of:

- giving and checking access rights to all the members registered for a given body/committee to enable them to access the body/committee's intranet directory and get the invitation package and meeting papers for each meeting. The table of intranet access rights is given in a specific database maintained by the Secretariat;

- ensuring a clear and coherent classification of documents under each intranet directory, including archiving more-than-2-year-old documents.

3.7.4 Communication within and between the EA bodies

The EA Secretariat acts as a contact point for members requesting information about a body/committee's or a meeting's management.

By participating in EA meetings, the Secretariat plays an interface role between the body/committee and the other EA bodies.

Responsibilities

The secretarial tasks are coordinated and led by the responsible Secretary under the supervision of the Executive Secretary and EA bodies' chairs.

3.8 Management of EA documents

EA documents shall be prepared according to EA-0/06 *Format and layout of EA documents*.

General principles

The rules for document control are given in the EA-0/02 *Procedure for document control*.

The development process of an EA publication is described in EA-1/14 *Procedure for the Development and Approval of EA documents and the Adoption of ILAC/IAF documents*.

EA publications are controlled by their owner Committee. The owner Committee is the Committee (or EA body more generally) in charge of managing the documents belonging to it. EA-1/14 provides that at least every 5 years, the EA publications shall be reviewed. The result of the review may be:

- Revision needed
- Withdrawal recommended
- No change needed

Classification

The classification of EA publications is given in EA-1/14.

ILAC/IAF documents adopted by EA

The rules and process for adoption of ILAC/IAF documents are described in EA-1/14.

EA-0/02 *Procedure for document control*
EA-0/06 *Format and layout of EA documents*
EA-1/14 *Procedure for the Development and Approval of EA documents and the Adoption of ILAC/IAF documents*

3.9 IT infrastructure

The EA IT infrastructure is a partially hosted system, set up in the Secretariat offices in Paris.

Management and development of the IT infrastructure is sub-contracted to a service provider.

A handbook has been prepared by the service provider. It describes the EA IT infrastructure and all applicable procedures for the management and maintenance of the EA server as well for back-up of EA data.

3.10 Records and archives

The Secretariat maintains hard and electronic copies of documents and records.

The secretariat is responsible for the management of paper and electronic archives, rules for management of records and archives are described in EA-0/02.

EA-0/02 Procedure for Document Control

3.11 Confidentiality

All Committee/Council members are expected to keep confidential information identified as such during Committee meeting discussions or in the documents and discussion papers published by the Committees.

This is particularly critical in the operation of

- the MAC peer evaluation system;
- EA evaluators;
- the Secretariat verification process for reimbursement of requests for payment submitted by the EA NABs for their activities carried out according to the annual work programme.

Confidentiality undertaking forms are used.

In addition, the EA staff members are subject to the confidentiality rules set out in their working contracts.

EA peer evaluation process - confidentiality declaration
Confidentiality Undertaking (generic)

4 MANAGEMENT OF THE EA PEER-EVALUATION SYSTEM

4.1 Structure of the MAC

See sub-section 2.4.5.4 for information.

4.2 The peer evaluation process

See EA-2/02

The operation of the MAC and the task and responsibilities of the MAC MG and the Secretariat are set out in EA-2/02 and in the MAC and MAC MG Terms of References.

5 COMPLAINTS & APPEALS

Complaints and appeals may concern decisions and activities of EA or EA Members, or conformity assessment bodies accredited by EA members.

EA-1/17 S3 describes the responsibilities and actions of the Committees, Multilateral Agreement Council (EA-MAC), the Secretariat, the EA Advisory Board (EAAB), and EA Members in relation to the investigation and resolution of complaints and appeals.

EA-1/17 S3 Procedure for the investigation and resolution of complaints and appeals

6 EA COMMUNICATIONS

The purpose of EA's communications is twofold:

- To promote EA's mission widely;
- To communicate EA's activities and positions among the European and international conformity assessment and accreditation communities.

The overall aim is to improve EA's visibility both inside and outside the accreditation community to support recognition and acceptance of the EA MLA and services/products provided under accreditation issued by the EA accreditation body members.

6.1 EA's cooperation with the European and international conformity assessment and accreditation communities

As a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), EA:

- participates in the IAF/ILAC meetings: the EA liaisons attend IAF/ILAC committees' meetings. Liaison persons are appointed by the Executive Committee to represent EA as a regional cooperation in the meetings of the IAF/ILAC Executive Committee and other Committee meetings. The objective is to voice EA's views on technical, communication or political issues and feedback any issue of specific relevance/interest for discussions in EA;
- contributes to the publication of the *IAF and ILAC newsletters*: the Secretariat writes articles to be published as EA's contributions into the newsletters;

Liaison persons are appointed by the Executive Committee to participate in the meetings of the regional cooperations: Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (APAC), Inter American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC), the Southern African Development Community Accreditation (SADCA), the Arabic Accreditation Cooperation (ARAC) and the African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC).

Where possible, EA is represented in the annual (General Assembly) meetings of (selected) Recognized Stakeholders.

The annual liaison activities are covered in the EA annual budget, which is approved by the EA General Assembly and implemented by the Executive Secretary. The list of appointed liaison persons is approved by the EX.

EA-1/21 <i>Procedure for liaison activities</i>

6.2 EA website

In addition to library resources and communication tools (see sections 3.7 and 3.9), the EA website includes information pages designed to describe and give information about:

- EA's activities and events related to the EA bodies/ committees' life, actions and decisions;
- EA's role and tasks.

The different parts of the EA website are updated by the EA Secretariat on a continuous basis.

6.3 EA Communication materials

EA publishes several communication materials targeted either at the general public or at the specialized accreditation and conformity assessment community. All these materials are available from the EA website.

Other material targets specific groups:

- *EA Reports* are periodically distributed to the international accreditation cooperation organizations;
- *EA FAQs*.

EA annual report: Annually EA prepares an EA report, which provides comprehensive information on EA and its activities.

EA MLA report: Annually EA prepares an EA MLA report which gives an overview of EA's activity with regards to its peer evaluation system.

Communication about the EA MLA: Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 reinforces EA's obligations for full transparency regarding the MLA signatory status of its Members. As a consequence, detailed information shall be available not only for the competent national authorities but for the market in general. EA has developed a specific page on its website that gives the details of the signatory status of EA NAB MLA signatories, which is updated as necessary by the Secretariat. *EA-INF/03 EA Multilateral and Bilateral Agreements, and Signatory lists* is the document published by EA which lists all signatories showing the specific scopes for which they have signed the MLA.

<i>EA-INF/03 EA Multilateral and Bilateral Agreements, and Signatory lists</i>
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7 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The Secretariat comprises a number of persons who are employees of EA with a working contract.

The purpose of the EA HR management system is to develop and implement a human resources and remuneration system which provides overall packages and terms and conditions that are competitive and relevant to EA's position and business, that retains and motivates high quality staff capable of achieving EA's objectives, and that ensures that they are fairly rewarded for their individual and collective responsibilities, achievements, and contributions to EA's overall performance and strategic development.

The Human Resources Management System covers the criteria and processes for:

- Responsibilities and job descriptions,
- Recruiting staff,
- Terms of contract,
- Induction,
- Training,
- Performance appraisal,
- Remuneration.

7.1 Responsibilities and job descriptions

The Executive Secretary holds the overall responsibility for the activities and operation of the Secretariat. He manages issues related to EA being an employer and recruitment of staff.

Each member of staff has received and agreed a job description. The job descriptions comprise among others:

- Job details
- Dimensions and key contacts
- Key responsibilities
- Decision making

7.2 Recruiting staff

EA's objective is to recruit, select and appoint the best-qualified people available for the position in question. This will be done within the approved budget limits. Selection will be on the basis of merit and the principles of equal opportunity will apply.

Any request of new personnel is reviewed by the Executive Secretary first. The need of new personnel (position) has to be justified to the Executive Committee, based on the proposal of the Executive Secretary. The following information will be provided to the Executive Committee:

- Description of the position in question and qualification needed
- Justification, why the position is needed and what is the impact if appointment is not made at this time
- Full time or part time (hours a week)
- Salary band

Based on the information provided, the Executive Committee decides about the approval of the new position in question. Afterwards the Head of Administration commences the recruitment process (advertisements, etc.), organizes the recruitment advertising and coordinates the shortlisting, interview and appointment process.

The Executive Secretary and/or the Head of Administration carry out the interviews. Based on the application documents and the interview results the Executive Secretary decides about the staffing.

The Head of Administration prepares the work contract, which will be signed by the Executive Secretary.

The recruitment of the position of the Executive Secretary will be prepared and conducted by the Executive Committee.

7.3 Terms of contract

The terms of contract are defined according the applicable law. The work contracts include inter alia the following terms:

- Work place and geographical mobility
- Contract duration and probation period
- Position and classification
- Working hours

- Remuneration package
- Collective agreement
- Paid vacation
- Professional duties
- Absences
- Social benefits
- Notification delays
- Confidentiality provisions

The terms of contract for the Executive Secretary will be stipulated by the Executive Committee separately.

7.4 Induction

Based on an induction program, approved by the Executive Secretary, the Head of Administration provides new employees with an appropriate work place induction. Furthermore, the EA Secretariat ensures that new employees receive guidance and instruction regarding operating requirements that relate to their duties.

The successful conclusion of the induction shall be confirmed by the Head of Administration to the Executive Secretary normally before the probation will end.

7.5 Training

Training is important and has specific objectives. It is one of the key elements of improving staff's capability, capacity, productivity and performance.

EA shall promote training of its personnel and therefore training activities are considered in the annual EA budget, based on a proposal by the Executive Secretary.

Based on EA's needs and in compliance with the applicable law, the annual staff interviews and proposals by the employees themselves, the Head of Administration prepares in due course the annual training program for the next year. The Executive Secretary approves the annual work program and the related budget.

7.6 Performance appraisal

The aim of EA is to strengthen the personal responsibility, motivation and commitment of its staff and to reward its performance. The reward may include financial and non-financial elements, based on performance appraisals.

Performance appraisals is the assessment of individual's performance in a systematic way. The appraisals must take place in an understandable, transparent, and timely manner and free from discrimination in order to gain acceptance among the parties involved and to reach self-dependent acting.

Furthermore, the Executive Committee members, notably the Committee/Council Chairs, are invited once a year to provide feedback about the performance of the Secretariat staff member involved in the secretariat of their Committee/Council.

The feedback will be considered in the performance appraisal.

Individual appraisal interviews shall be held regularly – normally each year - in order to evaluate completion of objectives, overall performance and agree on new objectives, taking into account the needs of the EA work programme. They are also used to determine need for training.

The appraisal interviews are conducted by the Executive Secretary and the Head of Administration in compliance with the applicable law.

7.7 Remuneration

A remuneration policy must support and reinforce the achievement of the EA mission, work programs and objectives.

The mission will - inter alia - be enabled by the implementation of a remuneration policy which attracts, retains and rewards staff who contribute to the realisation of the mission. EA is also committed to fairness and equity in its dealings with staff and the remuneration policy must reflect these EA values.

The following policy parameters have been approved by the Executive Committee as a framework for remuneration decisions:

- Constructing a specific cost of employment structure that enables EA to attract and retain a quality and representative staff in its administrative, technical and service categories; and to do this inter alia with reference to appropriate market rates – compared to France - where these are relevant, and benchmarking specific categories where required;
- Ensuring internal equity and fairness within and between the various salary/position categories/bands;
- Building incentives (financial and non-financial) in the cost of employment structure to encourage and reward excellent performance, on objectively defined criteria;
- Recognising basic needs of staff, and ensuring that compensation addresses cost of living and inflation;
- Ensuring that staff costs are within the budget set by the Executive Committee and endorsed by the EA General Assembly, and are sustainable over time.

Based on the policy parameters the remuneration comprises two elements:

- Annual salary
- Bonus

In contrast to the annual salary, the bonus is a one-time payment that allows EA to reward employees for outstanding performance. The amount of bonus depends upon the performance of the staff member in question and the EA budget and is given on a case-by-case basis.

Based on the policy parameters the Executive Secretary prepares the labor costs for the annual EA budget, considering the following positions:

- Annual salaries
- Bonuses
- Training expenses
- Recruitment costs (if applicable)

Performance Management Review form

8 EA TRAINING

Training needs

EA follows developments in society and in the marketplace and makes its members aware of issues that need special attention. Training is one of the tools to make sure that sufficient information is available to the members.

Training needs can be identified at the different levels of EA, mainly by the committees, but individual members can also express the need for training and propose training actions.

EA Annual Training Plan

Individual training activities are normally proposed as training projects. The training project shall identify the goal of the training, the resources needed, time allocation, and a suggestion for arrangements of the training activities.

Every year, the Secretariat establishes a training program, which is part of the annual work programme(s) and submitted to the Executive Committee.

The programme shall be aligned with the work programme agreed between EA and the European Commission and EFTA.

Training means

EA training activity can be arranged in a number of different ways.

Common EA training material can be produced which then can either be presented as part of a local NAB's training program with local trainers, or by EA itself.

EA training for trainers can also be organized, where new information has to be circulated and implemented effectively and quickly, such as for the introduction of new accreditation criteria.

Budgeting and compensation of costs

Training costs are financed through the EA budget. Besides, the general principle is that the production of training material, time spent on preparing, delivering and following up trainings as well as travel and subsistence costs for trainers are normally compensated through the EA budget.

Any costs for trainings, including reimbursement of trainers or trainees to be financed through the operating grant with the EC/EFTA must be agreed in advance in the annual budget submitted to the General Assembly and in the EA work programme.

Management of training activities

The Secretariat is responsible for the management of trainings. It includes:

- Selection of trainers (in agreement with the Chair of the EA Committee/Council (if relevant),
- Preparation of the training program (in cooperation with the Chair of the EA Committee/Council (if relevant),
- Identification of the targeted trainees,
- Distribution of the training program and dates,
- Assistance of the NAB hosting the seminar in the preparation of the event (if relevant),
- Preparation and distribution of the invitation package (registration form, program, hotel booking form),
- Preparation of the training certificates to be given to the trainees,
- Collection of the feedback forms for analysis.

Reports on accepted trainings are required after the event for inclusion in the EA Annual Report required by the EC/EFTA.

Use of EA training material

EA produced training material is freely available for the EA members who may translate it into local languages.

9 MANAGEMENT OF EA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Executive Secretary is responsible for the implementation, maintenance and continuous improvement of the EA Management System.

The Quality Coordinator is responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance of the MS with EA policies and requirements,
- Maintaining and further development of the MS,
- Supervision of the MS,
- Preparing Quality Policy and Objectives,
- Appointing of the Quality Officer,
- Reporting to the Executive Committee and EA GA in regard to the MS.

The Quality Coordinator is assisted by the Quality Officer, who is responsible for:

- Assistance regarding maintaining and development of the MS,
- Daily management of the MS,
- Planning, monitoring, correcting of the MS,
- Control of documents and records,
- Management of internal audits, including reporting,
- Management of external audits (ILAC/IAF evaluations),
- Monitoring of corrective actions and their implementation concerning internal and external audits as well as to management reviews,
- Reporting to the QC about the effectiveness of the MS,
- Supporting the QC by developing Quality Objectives,
- Assistance of EA staff and EA members about the EA MS.

9.1 Internal audit

EA-0/09 *Procedure for Internal Audit* is the procedure which describes the process for conducting internal audits in EA.

EA-0/09 <i>Procedure for internal audit</i>

9.2 Management review

EA-0/08 *Procedure for Management Review* is the procedure which describes the process for conducting annual management reviews in EA.

EA-0/08 *Procedure for management review*

9.3 ILAC/IAF evaluation

EA is a regional group member of ILAC and IAF and is a signatory to the IAF MLA and ILAC MRA. This enables an EA MLA member to apply to become a signatory to the IAF MLA/ILAC MRA provided it is a member of those organisations.

In compliance with ILAC/IAF A1 IAF/ILAC MRA Requirements and Procedures for the Evaluation of a Regional Group, EA is subject to regular evaluation by a team of ILAC/IAF evaluators. The objective is to check continued compliance of EA with the ILAC/IAF requirements. This is based on the examination of EA's documentation and witness activities where the ILAC/IAF evaluators observe EA evaluators evaluating EA NABs.

ILAC/IAF A1: ILAC/IAF MRAs: Requirements and Procedures for Evaluation of a Regional Group