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A large, light blue graphic with a grid pattern that curves and tapers towards the center, creating a sense of depth and focus. The text 'EA Management System' is centered within this graphic 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 and the EA Quality Manager.

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 and stored on the EA Secretariat server.

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 |
|--------------|--|
| APLAC | Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation |
| BLA | Bilateral Agreement |
| CAB | Conformity Assessment Body |
| CC | Certification Committee |
| COC | Contract Of Cooperation |
| DN | Directives Network |
| EA | European cooperation 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 |
| PAC | Pacific Accreditation Cooperation |
| PT | Proficiency Testing |
| RfP | Request for Payment |
| SADCA | Southern African Development Community Accreditation |

| | |
|------------|-------------------|
| TFG | Task Force Group |
| TL | Team Leader |
| TM | Team Member |
| TN | Technical Network |
| WP | Work Program |

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 | | |

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. A similar FPA was signed with EFTA on 8 December 2010. These Partnership Agreements place EA in a similar

position as other organizations of major European interest (such as the European Standardization Bodies). 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-member accreditation bodies that guarantee this confidence.

EA Articles of Association
Framework Partnership Agreements
Guidelines for Cooperation between the EC, EFTA, EA and the Competent National Authorities

2.2. Missions of EA

EA's mission consists of:

- defining, harmonizing and building consistency in accreditation as a service in Europe, by ensuring common interpretation of the standards used by its members;
- ensuring transparency of the operations (including assessments) performed and results provided by its members;
- maintaining a multilateral agreement (MLA) on mutual recognition between accreditation schemes and reciprocal acceptance of accredited conformity assessment services and results. According to Regulation (EC) 765/2008, EA shall support and harmonise the implementation of stringent rules in this regard, notably for cross-frontier accreditation;
- managing a peer-evaluation system consistent with international practices, since EA as a region is a member of ILAC (International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation) and IAF (International Accreditation Forum); and, according to Regulation (EC) 765/2008, tailoring the peer-evaluation process to fully accommodate the specific needs of regulatory sectors to strengthen the reassurance of sectorial stakeholders and regulators that the ABs' technical competence is thoroughly assessed;
- acting as a technical resource on matters related to the implementation and operation of the European policies on accreditation.

The EA MLA covers accreditation of the following conformity assessment bodies:

- Laboratories
 - testing laboratories
 - medical laboratories
 - calibration laboratories
- Certification bodies performing assessment of:
 - management systems (MS)
 - products and services
 - persons

- Verification bodies according to the EU Emission Trading Scheme regulations
- Inspection bodies

2.3. Structure and organisational chart of EA

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

EA-1/17 *EA Rules of Procedure*

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



2.4. Responsibilities of EA Bodies

2.4.1. The EA 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. The EA Executive Committee

The instructions given by the General Assembly are implemented by the EA 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. The EA 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. The EA Secretariat

The day-to-day operations of EA are managed by the EA 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* and outlined as follows:

- a) To conduct the day-to-day activities of EA, in particular, the execution of the decisions taken by the Executive Committee and the General Assembly;
- b) To provide administrative support to the operation of the peer evaluation system for national accreditation bodies and bilateral agreement signatories;
- c) To administer and manage the EA accounts and prepare the financial reporting and budget to be presented to the Executive Committee and General Assembly;
- d) To be the contact point for the European Commission, EFTA and other scheme owners and coordinate the EA input in the related work;
- e) To document, implement and maintain the management system of the EA;
- f) To monitor that all the process and activities performed by EA are done in strict observation of EA relevant procedures;
- g) To prepare communications to EA Members and stakeholders on EA activities, including EA committee and EAAB meetings, developments of the cooperation with the Commission and regulators and on other issues of common interest;
- h) To prepare and circulate documents for and minutes of meetings of the General Assembly, EA Advisory Board, the Executive Committee, and other Council/Committees etc. and serve as the secretariat for the EA Advisory Board;
- i) To liaise with stakeholders and other interested parties;
- j) To provide administrative support to EA Committees in planning activities and in execution and implementation of decisions including the management of the EA MLA;
- k) To administer contracts with the European Commission and suppliers of technical and administrative services;
- l) To deal with external correspondence;
- m) To publish information on EA decisions, activities, EA documents;
- n) To manage the archives of EA;

- o) To manage the EA website and Intranet.

The eligible services provided by the Secretariat are covered by the Framework Partnership Agreement concluded with the EC/EFTA and financed through the corresponding grants received from the EC/EFTA.

2.4.5. The EA Committees, Working Groups and Tasks Forces

EA Committees/Council and other working parties are established by the EA General Assembly. The terms of reference of EA Committees and the MLA Council shall be endorsed by the EA General Assembly.

The EA Executive Committee and the EA Committees/Council may decide to set up working groups and task forces, to deal with specific issues. Working groups will be set up to deal with specific questions of a long-term nature that are within the competence of the Committees/Council, and task forces to deal with questions that can be solved within a limited time.

The decision by Committees/Council to set up working groups or task forces shall be endorsed by the Executive Committee, including Terms of Reference.

Decision to set up a management group is the prerogative of the EA Committees/Council.

The common rules of procedure for every EA Committee or Council, Working Group and Task Force are described in the *EA Rules of Procedure*.

Committees/Council may elect a Vice Chair and appoint a management group from the Committee/Council membership.

As required by the FPA, the EA Committees/Council set out a draft annual work programme to be submitted to the EA General Assembly for endorsement. Reporting on progress with the WP is made to the General Assembly at each General Assembly meeting.

Each Committee/Council is responsible for the management of the documents that they own (see section 3.8.3). Document review shall be a permanent item on the Committee/Council agenda.

Membership of the Committees/Council comprises:

- representatives of the EA membership (full and associate members);
- representatives of accreditation bodies having signed a cooperation agreement with EA;
- representatives of recognized stakeholders;
- representatives of the regional co-operations, ILAC and IAF;
- other observers.

Rules for membership are defined in the EA Rules of Procedures and individual Terms of Reference.

2.4.5.1. The EA Certification Committee (CC)

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

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

- Management Systems Certification: ISO/IEC 17021
- Product Certification: ISO/IEC 17065 (EN 45011)
- Personnel Certification: ISO/IEC 17024
- Verification bodies: ISO 14065

The EA Certification Committee includes two working groups dedicated to the food and environmental sectors: the WG Food and the WG Environment. An EU/ETS network group in charge of monitoring NAB activity in relation to the EU/ETS Regulations was set up in 2012. Its activities are monitored through the EA CC.

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| <p><i>CC Terms of Reference</i> <i>CC WG Environment Terms of Reference</i> <i>CC WG Food Terms of Reference</i> <i>CC WG GHG Terms of Reference</i> <i>CC EU/ETS network group Terms of Reference</i></p> |
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2.4.5.2. The EA Inspection Committee (IC)

The EA 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 EA Inspection Committee is ISO/IEC 17020.

In 2012, the IC set up a technical network for Car Inspection.

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| <p><i>IC Terms of Reference</i></p> |
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2.4.5.3. EA Laboratory Committee (LC)

The EA 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 EA Laboratory Committee are:

- Testing and Calibration laboratories: ISO/IEC 17025
- Medical laboratories: ISO 15189
- Proficiency testing providers: ISO/IEC 17043
- Reference material producers: ISO Guide 34

The EA Laboratory Committee includes three working groups: WG Health care, WG ILC in Calibration and WG ILC in Testing.

The EA Laboratory Committee also comprises five technical networks: TN Calibration, TN Environment, TN Food and Feed, TN Forensics and TN Mechanical, Electrical and Toy Testing.

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| <p><i>LC Terms of Reference</i> <i>LC MG Terms of Reference</i></p> |
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LC WG Healthcare Terms of Reference
LC WG ILC in Calibration Terms of Reference
LC WG ILC in Testing Terms of Reference
LC TN Terms of Reference

2.4.5.4. The EA Multilateral Agreement Council (MAC)

The Multilateral Agreement Council manages the peer-evaluation process and decides on MLA and bilateral signatories. Decision-making power on EA MLA/Bilateral signatory status is delegated to the MAC by the EA General Assembly.

The MAC is responsible for considering applications to EA membership and submitting recommendations to the General Assembly for decision.

The MAC is also responsible for the evaluators' training and monitoring activities. (See section 4 of this document)

A representative from the EAAB and EC and a representative from the WG Training may attend the MAC meetings as observers.

Ad-hoc Task Force Groups are nominated to review evaluation reports as described in the EA-2/02 Policy and procedures for the multilateral agreement. Based on the evaluation and TFG reports, the MAC decides on signatory status.

The MAC has established one working group, the WG Training.

MAC Terms of Reference
MAC-MG Terms of Reference
MAC WG Training Terms of Reference
EA-2/02 Policy and procedures for the multilateral agreement

2.4.5.5. The EA 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 ISO/IEC 17011 and relevant ILAC/IAF and EA application documents.

The HHC monitors the process and procedure for evaluation of CAS in compliance with EA-1/22.

HHC Terms of reference
EA-1/22 Policy, Criteria and procedures for the Evaluation and Acceptance of Conformity Assessment Schemes for inclusion in the EA MLA

2.4.5.6. The EA Communications and Publications Committee (CPC)

The Communications and Publications Committee is involved in the development of matters related to internal and external communications activities, including the publication of EA documents and the monitoring of the EA website. The CPC maintains a *Communication Plan* that is in line with and supports the *EA strategic plan*.

CPC Terms of Reference

2.4.5.7. The Financial Oversight Committee (FOC)

The Financial Oversight Committee monitors the use of EA's finances during each financial year and reports to the EA Executive Committee and the General Assembly. The rules applying to its membership are described in the *EA Rules of Procedure* (see also sub-section 3.6 of this document).

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| <i>FOC Terms of Reference</i> |
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2.5. The 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*.

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| <i>EAAB Terms of Reference</i> <i>EA-1/17 Rules of Procedure</i> |
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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 programs 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 implementation of the FPA. EA is required to participate in the meetings of the Expert Group on the Internal Market for Products (former SOGS and now IMP group) 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. The EA Chairman, Vice Chairman and Executive Secretary are invited to attend EAAB meetings to represent EA.

EA Executive Committee and General Assembly

The EA 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 programs are worked out to meet the main objectives set out in the EA plan introduced in the FPA. The EA Executive Committee establishes the annual consolidated EA work program together with the associated estimated budget which is approved by the EA 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 and the HHC.

The EA Multilateral Agreement Council

Regulation 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.

EA Communications and Publications Committee

Communication between NABs and their national authorities plays a pivotal role within EA.

For that purpose, a *Best Practice Guide on Communications with the Regulators* has been elaborated by the CPC and published to assist EA and its members to develop and strengthen cooperation with both national and European regulators.

Benchmarking surveys are carried out regularly by CPC. They may lead to revise the Best Practice Guide to keep up with changes and practices at the NAB level.

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| <i>Best Practice Guide on Communications with the Regulators</i> |
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3.3. EA Membership

The Articles of Association define two types of EA members:

- EA Full members, which are ABs located in an EU/EFTA country or in a country identified as a candidate country to the EU/EFTA membership;
- EA Associate members, which are ABs located in a country identified as a potential candidate to the EU/EFTA membership or a country of a particular importance in the EU Neighborhood Policy.

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 Multilateral Agreement Council. 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 ABs which cannot apply for EA Membership. It provides for an "exception" rule that allows such ABs to enter into a contract of cooperation with EA, upon specific conditions and based on documented evidence.

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| EA-INF/02 <i>Contact Persons of EA Full and Associate Members, Contracts of Cooperation, Recognized Stakeholders and Observers</i> EA-0/07 <i>Application for EA Membership</i> EA-1/17 <i>Rules of Procedure Supplement 1 Criteria for Membership</i> |
|--|

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 *Policy and Procedures for the Multilateral Agreement*.

Suspension or withdrawal of MLA signatory status can be decided when an AB fails to fulfill its obligations. In case of transfer of activities or change in the AB name, a specific process is applied for transfer of signatory status.

Associate Members and non EA Member ABs 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 on the EA server.

EA-1/06 *The EA Multilateral Agreement*

EA-2/02 *Policy and Procedures for the Multilateral Agreement*

EA-INF/03 *EA Multi and Bilateral Agreements, List of Signatories*

3.5. Cooperation with sectoral organisations

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 765/2008 reinforces EA's obligations towards stakeholders in terms of transparency on its operations and its peer evaluation system.

3.5.1. EA Recognised Stakeholders

As provided for in the *EA Articles of Association* pursuant to Regulation (EC) 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 Recognized 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 EA Executive Committee, following consultation with the EAAB and subject to endorsement by the EA General Assembly. Organisations invited to become EA Recognised Stakeholders shall sign a specific agreement to be reviewed every two years.

The information, application and agreement signing steps, coordinated by the EA Secretariat, are fully described in the Secretariat *Checklist for RS Applications and Agreements*.

EA-1/15: *EA Policy for Relations with Stakeholders*

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 is described in EA-1/22 *Procedure and Criteria for the Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes by EA Accreditation Body Members*. This document contains the procedure and criteria to be used by EA members when evaluating, upon request by a scheme owner, if a given conformity assessment scheme (CAS) is appropriate and acceptable as an EA MLA Level 4 CAS (see EA-1/06) and, if so, under which harmonized standards (EA MLA Level 3 – see EA-1/06) containing general requirements for conformity assessment bodies.

EA-1/22 *Procedure and Criteria for the Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes by EA Accreditation Body Members*

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 EA Executive Committee appoints an EA Treasurer who is in charge of monitoring the accounts with the assistance of the Executive Secretary and the EA Secretary. The EA 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 its terms of reference (ToR, see also sub-section 2.4.4.7), the FOC monitors how EA uses its finances during each financial year and reports to the Executive Committee and the General Assembly on the extent to which these finances have been used for projects and activities included in the approved budget for EA and in a manner that is consistent with the expectations and resolutions of the General Assembly.

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 the membership fees and EA's expenditures can be made during the year, based on the financial report and statement of accounts presented by the EA Treasurer and prepared with the Secretariat based on the records in the accounts.

Any change to a particular heading or transfer from one to another heading in the budget can be made according to the rules set out in EA-1/20.

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 EA Treasurer and 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. Competence criteria for the individuals involved in the verification and validation process have been established and approved by the Executive Committee.
5. The corresponding costs and flows of money from EA to the EA ABs 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 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 closely monitored by the Executive Committee. To facilitate this monitoring, a verification table is maintained by the Secretariat, under control by the EA Treasurer. The table gives a detailed picture on how the budgeted amounts have been used, giving an immediate indication of how resources can be transferred from one activity to another, within the limits set in the FPA.

EA banks

EA holds several accounts in two banks:

- 1) Société Générale in Paris

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

- 2) The Deutsche Bank in Utrecht (The Netherlands)

Business account
Deposit account

Payments

Payments are governed by EA-1/20. Any payment, whatever the way the payment is made, is subject to a double authorization from the EA Executive Secretary and EA Treasurer for amounts that are in excess of 2 000€.

A specific process is in place for authorizing reimbursement of costs to EA ABs based on their requests for payment (RfP) submitted to EA. Basically, the EA Treasurer shall check a sample of RfPs validated by the Secretariat. She then 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 EA Executive Secretary checks and signs off claims put forward by the EA Secretary. The EA Secretary checks and signs off claims put forward by the other Secretariat staff members.

Cash-flow

Cash flow is monitored by the EA Treasurer and EA Secretary.

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 end February 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 checking how EA has used its budget.

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.

This mutualisation of resources results not only in a rationalization of processes, but also in the optimization of internal communication and sharing of information. The interrelating role of the EA Secretariat as a focal point generates cross-fertilization between the EA bodies.

The EA Secretariat manages the meetings, the documents and the IT facilities specifically related to each EA body, i.e. the General Assembly, the Executive Committee, the Financial Oversight Committee, the MAC, HHC, the Technical Committees (CC, IC and LC), CPC and the EAAB.

Processes

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 distribution of responsibilities related to Committees is described in a document maintained by the Secretary for the management of the Secretariat.

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 accreditation body.

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.
- The Secretariat collects all papers for the meeting from the body/committee's Chair, numbers them according to EA-0/02 Procedure for document control and publishes them on the intranet. The body/committee's members are informed of the publication of any new document 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.

Terms of Reference of EA bodies

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, DN, 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) and Directive Network (DN), 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 EA 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:

- Secretariat Management System and related Documents
- EA Governance and Policy documents
- Peer Evaluation Process documents, including policies and procedures
- Members' Procedural documents (include documents that ABs must use or comply with)
- CABs Application documents (Includes documents ABs must assess if CABs comply with)
- Information and Promotional documents

ILAC/IAF documents adopted by EA

The rules and process for adoption of ILAC/IAF documents are described in EA-1/14. The objective is to make clear to EA AB members that are not members of ILAC/IAF the complete list of requirements to be met.

The basic principle is that EA adopts ILAC/IAF documents unless they contradict EA's or European rules. In that case, the Executive Committee shall bring the issue to the EAAB for advice, with a proposal for solving the issue.

ILAC/IAF documents are not re-published by EA. They are hyperlinked from the EA website.

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 EA 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. The handbook is available at the EA secretariat and exists only in a French version.

EA IT infrastructure and management handbook

3.10 Records and archives

The Secretariat maintains hard and electronic copies of documents. In principle, all documents having an official, legal status and bearing a handwritten signature shall be kept and archived as hard copies. In addition, scanned copies of official documents are archived on the EA server.

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 Document controlled

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 ABs for their activities carried out according to the annual work program;

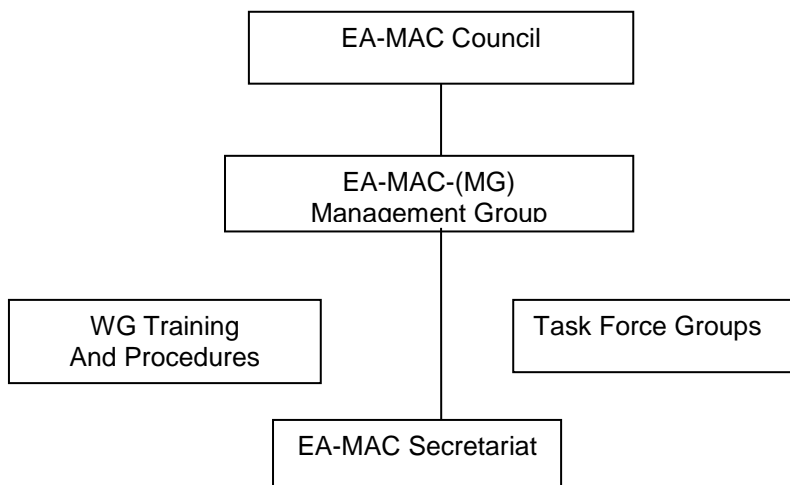
Confidentiality undertaking forms are used.

In additional, 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 and organisational chart of MAC



See also sub-section 2.4.5.4 for detailed information.

4.2 The peer evaluation process

4.2.1 General aspects

The evaluation process is described in document EA-2/02 *Policy and Procedures for the Multilateral Agreement* which is in line with ISO/IEC 17011, and the appropriate requirements of EC Regulation 765/2008 and ILAC/IAF-A2 IAF/ILAC MRAs: *Requirements and Procedure for Evaluation of a Single Accreditation Body*, and day-to-day practice.

The process of becoming an EA MLA signatory is divided into five major steps:

- a) Application
- b) Planning, including pre-evaluation
- c) Evaluation
- d) Reporting
- e) Decision

Where possible, the decision is based on consensus amongst the signatory members. If voting is required the EA voting rules as described in the Articles of Association apply.

EA-2/02 EA Policy and Procedures for the Multilateral Agreement
EC Regulation 765/2008
ILAC/IAF-A2 IAF/ILAC MRAs: Requirements and Procedure for Evaluation of a Single Accreditation Body

4.2.2 (Day-to-day) Operation of the MAC

For its operations, the MAC relies on a Management Group and the EA secretariat. The Secretariat operates according to the flowchart of the EA-2/02 Chapter 5 "Evaluation Process".

The Chair of the MAC is elected by the General Assembly. The Vice Chair, elected by EA-MAC members, is a member of the MG and may act as Chair of the MAC or MAC MG. The Vice Chair ensures continuity of the MAC operations.

The day-to-day operations of the Secretariat (Secretary and MG) cover the following tasks:

- Reviewing applications for EA membership and submitting recommendations for decision by the General Assembly;
- planning evaluations (pre, initial, extraordinary and re-evaluations) for MLA/Bilateral applicants and signatories
- assigning evaluation teams in consultation with the EA-MAC-MG
- co-operating in assigning teams for international and interregional evaluations (ILAC/IAF)
- interacting with the ABs and evaluation teams
- screening evaluation reports
- maintaining the list of peer evaluators
- assigning Task Force Groups for evaluation report examination

- supporting the organisation of trainings/workshops
- organising / recording the EA-MAC assembly meetings (2/year)
- organising / recording the EA-MAC-MG meetings (2-4/year)
- organising / recording the EA-MAC WG Training meetings (2/year)
- monitoring evaluator performance.

The MAC Secretariat may approach the other EA Committees on technical issues where a clarification is needed in terms of the interpretation of the requirements.

4.2.3 MAC meetings

Agenda and MAC meeting documents are prepared by the Secretariat, and posted on the MAC intranet site. Participation in the EA-MAC meetings is limited to two delegates per AB.

The MAC-MG meets as required but with a minimum of two times, in conjunction with the regular MAC meetings. In-between, and where possible, electronic, internet communication tools shall be used.

Likewise, the MAC WG Training holds its meetings in combination with the MAC meetings.

4.3 Peer evaluation resources and training

4.3.1 Obligations of EA MLA Signatories

Signatories to the EA MLA are required to nominate evaluators to support the EA peer evaluation system according to EA-1/06 *The EA Multilateral Agreement*. It is the responsibility of the signatory AB to nominate competent persons fulfilling the requirements of EA-2/02 *Policy and Procedures for the MLA*.

Based on an analysis of

- the total number of accreditations per AB
- the number of days used over the past 4 years
- the involvement in ILAC and IAF evaluations

An average percentage contribution is calculated which gives the amount of mandays the AB has to deliver, as a minimum.

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| EA-1/06 <i>EA Multilateral Agreement</i> EA-2/02 <i>Policy and Procedures for the MLA</i> |
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4.3.2 Application and approval of evaluators (Team Members)

Each applicant who wishes to become an evaluator has to complete a standardised Curriculum Vitae. Required criteria to become a team member and the process for selection and training are described in EA-2/02. A supplement focusing on selection, training and monitoring of peer evaluators is under development by the MAC.

Data about areas of competence of all evaluators, including their past evaluation activities, are maintained by the secretariat. CVs and updates are stored on the EA server.

EA-2/02 Policy and procedures for the MLA
EA-2/02 Supplement 1 Selection, training and monitoring of Evaluators
Curriculum Vitae for EA Team Members & Team Leaders

4.3.3 Training and monitoring of Evaluators - Team Members/ (Deputy) Team Leaders

Team Members and (Deputy) Team Leaders have to participate in (follow-up) training courses/workshops whenever invited by the MAC Secretariat.

The MAC Working Group Training (see sub-section 2.4.4.4) is responsible for the organisation and performance of training/workshops.

NABs are expected to train their personnel on general issues and assessment skills. MAC training and workshops are dedicated to the more specific issues of an evaluation: preparation, technical issues, witnessing, file reviewing and critical issues and findings.

EA training is also accessible to evaluators from other regions. EA (Deputy) Team Leaders are encouraged to participate in training organised by other regions. Occasionally EA-MAC members may also be trained to enable them to be conversant with the EA-MAC procedures and operations.

The secretariat, in cooperation with the MAC MG is responsible for the monitoring of the peer evaluators performance. The monitoring is based on feedback from the evaluated body through:

- a questionnaire;
- comments from the Task Force Groups examining the evaluation reports according to the process in the flowchart in EA-2/02;
- "Review of Performance of an EA Evaluator".

All information on the performance of the evaluation team is kept at the Secretariat.

Questionnaire to be answered by the evaluated AB
Review of performance of an EA evaluator TM
Review of performance of an EA evaluator TL

4.3.4 Assigning Evaluation Teams

Evaluation teams are assigned by the MAC-MG based on criteria that include:

- Competence in the general fields of accreditation managed by the AB, covered (or to be covered) by the MLA;
- Competence in accreditation in the fields of European legislation (e.g. Directives, Regulations) and European according to the applicable requirements of the EC Regulation;
- Competence in internationally recognised sector schemes.

Teams are built up to cover at best the range of activities of the NAB under evaluation. The corresponding information can be retrieved from the Statistical Information provided by the NAB under evaluation.

All team members receive an assignment letter for initial and re-evaluation visits and extraordinary evaluations.

Teams are composed of evaluators from different economies; the team shall normally include at least one team member with sufficient knowledge and understanding of the local language of the body under evaluation. The composition of the teams is changed where possible between evaluation cycles. In particular the team leader shall not be the same as for the previous evaluation. Team members are not allowed to have acted as a consultant in the setting up and/or development of the respective accreditation body (see EA 2/02).

Statistical information

5. COMPLAINTS & APPEALS

As a general rule, EA encourages active communication between the parties to a complaint or an appeal with a view to come to a satisfactory solution, before opening a case at the EA level. Responses to the Complainant and any investigation of a case shall be made in a timely manner.

Complaints and appeals received may concern decisions and activities of EA or EA Members, or CABs accredited by EA members.

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

A list of TFGs appointed for complaint handling is maintained by the EA Secretariat.

Documentation supporting a case is archived by the EA Secretariat.

The MAC shall be kept informed of the result of EA's investigation of a case.

Any specific issues arising from the process shall then be followed up by the MAC in the peer evaluation process.

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 in a more technical and periodic fashion 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.

A *Communication strategy* is published that is supported by a *Communication Action Plan*, implemented by the EA Secretariat in cooperation with CPC.

Processes and responsibilities

EA communicates through cooperation with relevant European and international organisations, the EA website, different communication materials and external specific requests of information.

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 technical committees'/council chairs attend IAF/ILAC technical committees' meetings. Liaison persons are appointed by the EA 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 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*: in cooperation with the EA CPC, the EA Secretariat writes articles to be published as EA's contributions into the newsletters;

In order to ensure the best representation of EA in the ILAC/IAF General Assembly meetings, the Secretariat reinforce the invitation from the ILAC and IAF Secretariats to appoint proxies, making sure that proxies are distributed properly amongst the EA Members who intend to attend the meetings.

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

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

An annual program for liaison activities is approved by the EA General Assembly, supported by a specific budget and implemented by the Executive Secretary; the list of appointed liaison persons is approved by the EX.

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| <i>EA-1/21 Procedure for liaison activities</i> <i>List of appointed liaison persons</i> |
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6.2 The 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, thanks to the setting up of a new, tailored contents management system, which has been in place since the beginning of 2013.

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.

Didactic information about EA and accreditation is given in the *Guide to EA*. This information aims to welcome newcomers to EA by making them more familiar with the basic accreditation issues and the association's life and activities.

The *Guide to EA* is updated occasionally in the light of developments within EA and the accreditation world.

Other material targets specific groups:

- *EA Reports* are periodically distributed to the international accreditation cooperation organizations. These regularly-updated reports outline EA's main political and technical developments;
- *EA FAQs*. *The system for publication and process for management of EA FAQs is being built up.*

The annual 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 and associated evaluator training.

Communication about the EA MLA: Regulation (EC) 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 AB 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.

Suspension of signatory status is mentioned as required.

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| EA-INF/03 <i>EA Multilateral and Bilateral Agreements, and Signatory lists</i> |
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6.4 External requests of information

The EA Secretariat receives many requests for information from various individuals and organizations from around the world. When questions cannot be directly and definitively answered by EA, those persons or organisations are invited by the Secretariat to consult or contact more relevant resources or bodies.

The answers given are very often good opportunities to promote the EA website and publications, as well as to clarify EA's role, thus raising awareness about EA.

7. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The Secretariat in Paris 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.

Further, he directs the work of the EA Secretary.

The team is managed by the EA Secretary as the line manager.

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 has to be justified to the EA 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 EA Secretary commences the recruitment

process (advertisements, etc.), organizes the recruitment advertising and coordinates the shortlisting, interview and appointment process.

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

The EA Secretary 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

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 EA Secretary 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 EA Secretary 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, the annual staff interviews and proposals by the employees themselves, the EA Secretary 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.

The procedure for the performance appraisal contains:

- Staff Behavior sheets
- Performance Management process
- Performance Management Review form
- SMART objectives Guide Notes

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 program. They are also used to determine need for training.

The appraisal interviews are conducted by the Executive Secretary and the EA Secretary.

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 EA 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 EA 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)

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| <p><i>Staff behavior sheets</i> <i>Performance Management process</i> <i>Performance Management Review form</i> <i>SMART objectives Guide Notes</i></p> |
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8. EA TRAINING

Training needs

The FPA mandates EA to actively distribute information between its members and make use of sound and reliable accreditation practices within EA. 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 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 EA Committees/Council establish a training program, which is submitted to the EA Executive Committee. The EA identified training needs are discussed and evaluated by the Executive and an annual EA training plan is established prior to decision by the General Assembly.

The program shall be aligned with the work program 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 AB's training program with local trainers, or by a trainer from the project group.

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

Any compensation for training activities has to be included in the EA annual budget. The general principle is that the production of training material and, where needed, the costs for the trainers can be compensated in accordance with an agreed project plan.

Any costs for trainers or trainees to be reimbursed 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 program.

Project management of training activities

The Chair/Vice Chair of the EA Committees/Council are responsible for selecting and appointing trainers. Together, they agree on the targeted trainees, define the program of the training seminar and contents of documents to be used, and agree on the dates for the training.

Reports on accepted training projects 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.

Assistance from the EA Secretariat

The Secretariat shall assist the EA Committees/Council as follows:

- To communicate the training program and dates;
- To assist the AB hosting the seminar in the preparation of the event;
- Prepare and distribute the invitation package (registration form, program, hotel booking form);
- To prepare the training certificates to be given to the trainees;
- Collect the feedback forms for analysis within the Committees;

9. MANAGEMENT OF EA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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

The Executive Committee appoints a Quality Coordinator who 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.

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

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| EA-0/08 <i>Procedure for management review</i> |
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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 ABs.

ILAC/IAF A1:02/2014 ILAC/IAF MRAs: Requirements and Procedures for Evaluation of a Regional Group

10. EA ANNUAL MLA REPORT and other EA Reports

EA shall publish an annual EA MLA report. Preparation and publication of the report is coordinated by the Secretariat. An overview of the MAC activities shall be provided in the Annual Report. The Annual Report is published in the first quarter of the year to report on activities of the previous year.

In addition, EA shall provide the ILAC AMC with an MLA report and give the IAF MLA Committee data for the IAF MLA report.

EA provides a separate specific Report on the implementation of the previous year's WP to the EC/EFTA by the end of February each year (in accordance with the FPA provisions). This report is compiled by the Executive Secretary. It is also provided for information to the General Assembly at its mid-year meeting.

The Secretariat produces EA reports on a regular basis, in response to invitations by Stakeholder organisations, ILAC, IAF or the other regions. They are used by the EA appointed liaison persons to report on EA activities.