

Terms of Reference of the EA Laboratory Committee (LC ToR)

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1. SCOPE AND FIELD OF APPLICATION

The EA Laboratory Committee is the forum for the discussion of all matters related to laboratory accreditation and the responsibilities of all parties concerned.

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

2. COMPOSITION

2.1 Members

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

In accordance with EA-1/17 *Rules of Procedure* (RoP) clause 10.11, each EA member is entitled to nominate one voting member to the LC. However, an additional representative per National Accreditation Body (NAB) may also be nominated and attend LC meetings. The main representative is the person entitled to vote in the name of his/her NAB. Recognised Stakeholders are entitled to nominate one person to the LC.

The EA Secretariat provides a Secretary to the Laboratory Committee.

2.2 Chair and Vice-Chair

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

The Chair shall be an A or B Members. When the Chair of the LC is a B member, the Vice-Chair shall be an A member.

The Vice-Chair is elected by LC's A, B, C Members for a period of 2 years corresponding to the Chair mandate. Candidates can be nominated by A, B, C and D Members (RoP clause 10.10). The deadline for sending nominations to the Secretariat will be specified in the call for nominations.

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

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

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

The Vice-Chair assists the Chair in carrying out his/her duties, especially in managing the agenda and representation of the Laboratory Committee. Other specific tasks can be

delegated as mutually agreed. If needed, the Vice-Chair will replace the Chair in chairing a meeting.

2.3 Management Group

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

The LC Management Group (MG) prepares the work of the Laboratory Committee. The task of the MG is to contribute and confirm the meeting agenda and ensure efficient communication and feedback between the Laboratory Committee, the Working Groups (WGs), the Task Force Groups (TFGs), the Technical Networks (TNs) and other sub-structures. It also acts as a Review Panel (see § 5).

The LC MG also has the task to prepare technical positions of the LC to be discussed at the international level. The MG should involve the LC in full to prepare these positions. The LC MG could also finally decide on technical positions that have to be provided for which no consensus is reached.

The MG is led by the LC Chair. Members are the Vice Chair, conveners of the working groups and the technical networks. With the agreement of the LC Chair, conveners may appoint a co-convenor or deputy to represent them and report on their behalf. The MG meetings are arranged in conjunction with the LC meetings. In addition the MG can hold web-based meeting hosted by the EA secretariat.

TFG conveners or other LC members may be invited by the LC Chair to participate to a MG meeting.

3. MEETING

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

A spring and an autumn meeting are normally scheduled in the first and third quarters of the year.

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

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

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

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

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

The organization of the meetings will follow EA-0/10 Procedures for EA meetings.

4. TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 LC is the forum for discussion of all questions related to the assessment and accreditation of laboratories. In particular its responsibility is

- a) to discuss and harmonize the implementation of accreditation activities performed by laboratories, proficiency testing providers, reference material producers and biobanks by EA Members, namely by preparing and updating a set of documents as well as resolutions;
- b) to follow up development of new accreditation or conformity assessment activities in the field of laboratories, PT providers, RM producers and biobanks;
- c) to follow up development of new standards and schemes and issue recommendations for adoption by the EA General Assembly as level 4 or 5 requirements under the EA MLA;
- d) To identify the need for closer cooperation between NABs and to propose measures for its implementation, especially when presenting and discussing new developments ;
- e) to discuss and where appropriate to develop a European view on issues to be discussed in ILAC or other international organizations;
- f) to support EA National Accreditation Bodies in the implementation of decisions taken by EA and ILAC and to coordinate related activities where appropriate;
- g) to support EA NABs in the management of transitions (standards, ILAC mandatory documents);
- h) to cooperate with relevant working parties of the European Commission and related European organizations, especially as far as the implementation of the standards defining technical competence of laboratories, proficiency testing providers, reference material producers and biobanks is concerned, in particular the recognised stakeholders;
- i) to cooperate with other regional accreditation co-operations in the fields covered by the LC concerning training activities;
- j) to advise the General Assembly, the Executive and Technical Management Boards and the other committees in all matters related to laboratory, PTP, RMP and biobanks accreditation;
- k) to nominate the EA LC representatives to joint Working groups with Stakeholders, such as the EEE-PT and maintain liaison as required;
- l) to develop the LC knowledge by:
 - maintaining the LC-owned publications;
 - organizing training events, surveys and workshops for NABs staff;
 - setting up, maintaining and making available a list of Frequently Asked Questions and LC-approved responses.

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

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

5. WORKING GROUP / TASK FORCE GROUP / TECHNICAL NETWORK

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

The LC will keep a list of the active WGs, TFGs, TNs or other sub-structures, their composition, tasks and responsibilities (terms of reference where appropriate).

The Laboratory Committee WGs, TFGs, TNs or other sub-structures conveners have the duty to coordinate the work assigned to their structures and ensure its timely execution and report back (at least) for the committee meetings.

The Laboratory Committee set up a Review Panel aimed to consider questions raised by the committee membership prior to their presentation and discussion at the committee meeting (the management of Frequently Asked Questions is performed according to the document “Process to manage LC FAQ list” approved by the LC).

6. DECISION MAKING / VOTE OTHER THAN FOR ELECTIONS

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