



## Rules for the Use of e-Signatory

Type of document	Document owner	Document ID	Version No	Page
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<u>Type of document</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Document ID</u>	<u>Version No</u>	<u>Page</u>
JRC-IMS Work Instruction	Rules for the Use of e-Signatory	IMS-JRC-M4.1-WIN-0006	1.0	2 / 11

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION .....	3
1.1	Purpose and scope .....	3
1.1.1	Purposes .....	3
1.1.2	Scope .....	3
1.1.3	Advantages .....	3
1.1.4	Specific requirements .....	3
1.2	Definitions .....	4
1.2.1	Acronyms .....	4
1.2.2	Terms .....	4
2	EXECUTION .....	4
2.1	Documents subject to e-signatory .....	4
2.1.1	Basic principles .....	4
2.1.2	Document circulation approaches .....	5
2.1.3	Definition of the content of a file .....	5
2.2	Workflow summary .....	6
2.2.1	Create document .....	6
2.2.2	Create and launch e-signatory .....	6
2.2.3	Circulate e-signatory .....	7
2.2.4	Register document (or send to trash bin) .....	7
2.2.5	Courtesy signature .....	7
2.2.6	External transmission .....	8
2.2.7	Manage e-signatory .....	8
2.3	Workflow list management .....	8
2.4	Profile delegation and authentication rules .....	9
3	LINKS TO OTHER DOCUMENTS .....	9
3.1	Reference documents .....	9
3.2	User manuals .....	9
3.3	Annex .....	9
4	DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT .....	10
4.1	Control of this document .....	10
4.2	Records management .....	10
	ANNEX A – WORKFLOW LIST TEMPLATE .....	11

<u>Type of document</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Document ID</u>	<u>Version No</u>	<u>Page</u>
JRC-IMS Work Instruction	Rules for the Use of e-Signatory	IMS-JRC-M4.1-WIN-0006	1.0	3 / 11

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Purpose and scope

### 1.1.1 Purposes

In accordance with JRC's Documents and Records management policy, *"born-digital documents are signed by means of an electronic signature wherever possible. Electronic workflows allow efficient and transparent preparation, approval, and distribution of documents"*.

This document sets up the rules applicable for the use of ARES e-signatory in JRC.

This Work Instruction applies to all JRC services.

### 1.1.2 Scope

Signatories consist in the collection of contributions, visas and signatures leading to the approval of a document and its disclosure. This process is therefore a sequential workflow of successive validations of a document (eventually a set of more than 1 attachment).

ARES e-signatory is intended to replace paper signatories.

### 1.1.3 Advantages

ARES e-signatory corresponds to the electronic implementation of a sequential workflow with non-negligible advantages compared to paper circulation, notably:

- All operations in ARES are traceable and full electronic management of document guarantees the integrity of the information as well as an increased reliability and efficiency of the validation process;
- Routing slips may be generated automatically on the basis of pre-configured templates;
- Each actor receives an email and a CNS notification when assigned a task in an e-signatory;
- Each task assignment can be set with specific instructions and a deadline;
- E-signatory can be assigned multiple e-signatory managers ensuring business continuity;
- The use of ARES "virtual entities" allows functional groups to act as a single stakeholder in an e-signatory, ensuring business continuity and substantially reducing the risk of workflow blocking in case of absence;
- Documents subject to e-signatories may be reviewed and edited directly by the stakeholders;
- ARES is accessible remotely, therefore e-signatories can be processed remotely (except for attachment check out/check in);
- An e-signatory manager can by-pass a stakeholder in case of his/her unavailability;
- E-signatories are EMAS compliant.

In addition, getting rid of paper circulation and paper files substantially reduces the burden of paper archives preservation and management in the long term.

Overall, the use of e-signatory results cost efficient and cost effective.

### 1.1.4 Specific requirements

SG's note Ares(2013)2534472 dated 28/06/2013 on the use of e-signatories provides that the Commission should target 80% usage for its registered documents(*"L'objectif est de parvenir dans tous les services, pour 2014, à une utilisation de l'e-signataire pour au moins 80% des documents enregistrés"*).

Recommendation R.008.VI of Audit of Document Management IA-12-05 (Ares(2014)968510), provides *"The DMO should define a strategy to deal with the paper archives. The strategy should include a clear policy to limit the creation of paper files, including specific exceptions requested by the Legal Service"*. A generic work instruction on the use of e-signatory shall therefore aim at limiting both paper circulation and storage.

<u>Type of document</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Document ID</u>	<u>Version No</u>	<u>Page</u>
JRC-IMS Work Instruction	Rules for the Use of e-Signatory	IMS-JRC-M4.1-WIN-0006	1.0	4 / 11

## 1.2 Definitions

### 1.2.1 Acronyms

ARES	Advanced REcords System.
CNS	Corporate Notification System managing notifications produced by Information Systems owned by the European Commission.
COF	Content of Files.
DDMO	Deputy Document Management Officer.
DMO	Document Management Officer.
EMAS	Eco-Management and Audit Scheme.
IMS	Integrated Management System.

### 1.2.2 Terms

Attachment	Formatted electronic information composing a document or a record.
Check out/check in	The operation consisting in temporarily exporting an attachment to edit it (check out) and import it as a new version (check in).
Document	For the purpose of this work instruction, any content drawn up by the Commission concerning a matter relating to the policies, activities and decisions falling within the institution's competence and in the framework of its official tasks, subject to validation process in the e-signatory, and to registration and filing in case of successful validation.
Document creator	User initiating the creation of a specific document in ARES.
E-signatory manager	Identified user in charge of the management of the e-signatory.
JRC DMO	Team composed of DMO and DDMO.
Native attachment	Attachment in its original and wherever possible editable format.
Process owner	Service responsible for the definition of process, the approval of related procedures and work instructions, and the systematic review and improvement of process performance.
Supporting document	Document not subject to validation process, providing any appropriate background information in support to the e-signatory
User	Identifiable and identified natural person authorised to access and use the Commission information systems.
Virtual entity	Functional user composed of at least 1 real user.

## 2 EXECUTION

### 2.1 Documents subject to e-signatory

#### 2.1.1 Basic principles

All born digital documents subject to a workflow of contributions and/or validations such as visas or signatures, are processed by means of an e-signatory in ARES, unless processed by electronic workflow(s) in other specific IT tools (e.g. JIPSY, ABAC, PUBSY, MIPS,...).

<u>Type of document</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Document ID</u>	<u>Version No</u>	<u>Page</u>
JRC-IMS Work Instruction	Rules for the Use of e-Signatory	IMS-JRC-M4.1-WIN-0006	1.0	5 / 11

Some documents may require hand-written blue-inked signature on paper support in order to comply with specific applicable legal obligations.

It is therefore the responsibility of the process owner to identify such applicable legal obligations.

### 2.1.2 Document circulation approaches

As a result:

#### **Either**

documents are circulated the traditional way only in paper format. Being formally drawn up documents, these documents finalised on paper support are equally registered and filed in ARES at the end of the workflow, without e-signatory,

#### **OR**

documents are processed and circulated only with an ARES e-signatory, until final registration. Courtesy blue ink signature may be manually added on the printed registered document (bearing the ARES registration number and the e-stamp).

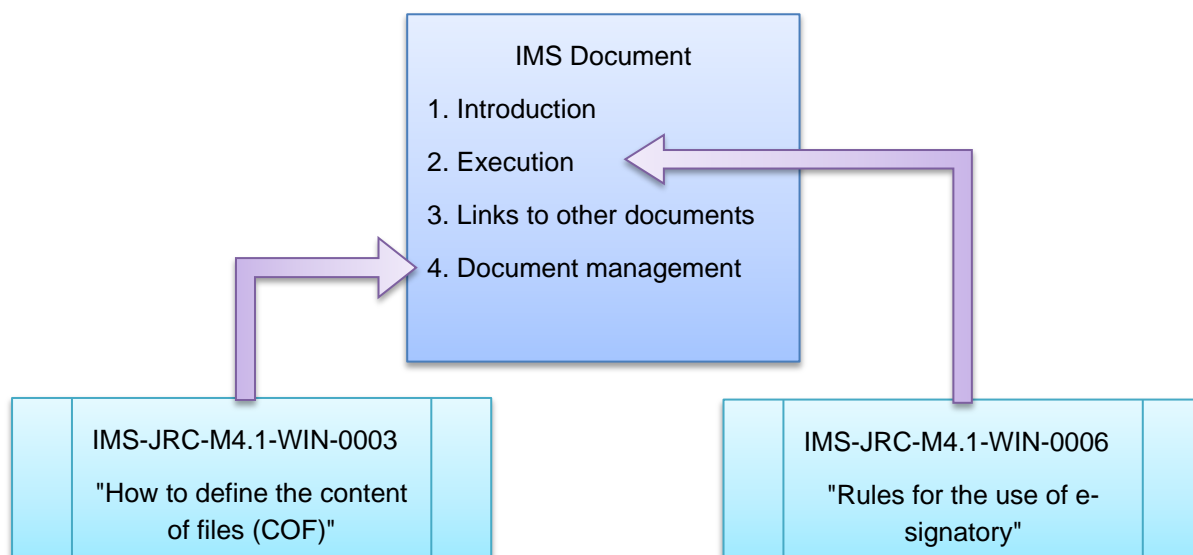
The present work instruction refers only to the second approach. It excludes any use of ARES features eventually allowing reference to paper workflow<sup>1</sup>.

The present work instruction does not apply for documents requiring signature from external stakeholders<sup>2</sup>.

### 2.1.3 Definition of the content of a file

Process owners apply work instruction JRC-IMS-M4.1-WIN-0003 "How to define the content of files (COF)" to describe how documents and records are circulated within a process.

Process owners apply the present work instruction to define the workflow applicable to their processes for the circulation and validation of related documents or records.



<sup>1</sup> Such as "parallel paper signatory" or "courtesy copy".

<sup>2</sup> Not being granted any authentication mechanisms to ARES.

<u>Type of document</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Document ID</u>	<u>Version No</u>	<u>Page</u>
JRC-IMS Work Instruction	Rules for the Use of e-Signatory	IMS-JRC-M4.1-WIN-0006	1.0	6 / 11

## 2.2 Workflow summary



### 2.2.1 Create document

The document subject to e-signatory is created in ARES (preferably from the favourite file where it must be filed).

All metadata are filled in except "Document date" and "Sent date" that will be completed at the end of the workflow (see §2.2.4).

**All the native** attachments subject to the e-signatory are uploaded upon creation.

The main attachment shall bear the statement "Electronically signed in ARES" next to the name of the approver(s), if any.

Once all metadata are completed and attachments uploaded, the document creator **saves** it<sup>3</sup>.

### 2.2.2 Create and launch e-signatory

The document creator creates the e-signatory in accordance with the workflow applicable to the related process and, where the case arises, defined in the related work instruction or procedure by the process owner.

Available e-signatory tasks are:

RED	the stakeholder approves the document as author
CONTRIB	the stakeholder contributes to the document
VISA	the stakeholder approves the document
SIGN	the stakeholder approves and signs the document
EXP	the stakeholder registers and sends the document

The e-signatory should always include an EXP task as terminal task, entrusted to the user responsible for the final registration and filing of the document.

For repetitive workflows, the document creator may use workflow lists in accordance with the provisions set out in §2.3.

The document creator may identify additional e-signatory managers who will then be able to manage the e-signatory as described in §2.2.5.

Where relevant, supporting documents are added in the e-signatory. Supporting documents shall not be attached to the document subject to approval.

Once the e-signatory is properly created, the e-signatory manager (by default the document creator) saves and launches it.

Launching the e-signatory triggers a task email notification to the first stakeholder.

<sup>3</sup> Registered documents cannot be subject to e-signatory.

<u>Type of document</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Document ID</u>	<u>Version No</u>	<u>Page</u>
JRC-IMS Work Instruction	Rules for the Use of e-Signatory	IMS-JRC-M4.1-WIN-0006	1.0	7 / 11

### 2.2.3 Circulate e-signatory

- e-signatory task notification  
Launching the e-signatory or finishing an e-signatory task triggers a new task email notification to the next stakeholder in the defined workflow.
- Document modification in e-signatory  
The stakeholder of the active task in the e-signatory can modify the document metadata ("Modify") and/or version the attachments (check out/check in).  
In particular, any modification to an attachment must be performed with the check out/check in functionality. Such modification must be emphasised with available track changes possibilities in the native attachment. Any check in of modified attachment must always generate a new version of the latter.  
Any modification to metadata or attachment must be communicated explicitly to any prior participants in the workflow as well as to the e-signatory manager(s) in accordance with the provisions of JRC Code of Conduct.
- Finish e-signatory task  
The stakeholder of the active task assesses the nature of the task, the document metadata and attachments and finishes the assigned tasks, with or without comment, when no objections are to be raised.
- Decline e-signatory task  
Where the stakeholder objects to the document metadata and/or attachments, he/she may decline the assigned task.  
While doing so, the stakeholder creates a CONTRIB task with relevant justification to the attention of the e-signatory manager. The e-signatory manager takes over the workflow of the document (see also §2.2.7 below).
- Delegate e-signatory task  
The stakeholder of the active task may delegate it to another user. In such case, the delegator endorses all responsibility of the completion of the task.

### 2.2.4 Register document (or send to trash bin)

- Register and send  
At the end of the e-signatory, the stakeholder of the last active task "registers and sends" the document as far as the workflow has been pursued successfully.  
Before final registration, the stakeholder of the last active task checks all metadata and fills in the "Document date" and "Sent date".  
Where the document was not created from a file, the document registrar ensures its appropriate and accurate filing.
- Trash bin  
Where a workflow is not completed successfully, the stakeholder of the last active task sends the document to "Trash bin". Documents sent to trash bin are fully eliminated from ARES.

### 2.2.5 Courtesy signature

Courtesy blue ink signature may be manually added on the printed registered document (bearing the ARES registration number and the e-stamp).

The stakeholder of the last active task collects such blue ink signature.

The printed registered document further courtesy blue ink signed is not uploaded in ARES.

### 2.2.6 External transmission

The stakeholder of the last active task ensures the transmission to the external recipients, if any.

<u>Type of document</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Document ID</u>	<u>Version No</u>	<u>Page</u>
JRC-IMS Work Instruction	Rules for the Use of e-Signatory	IMS-JRC-M4.1-WIN-0006	1.0	8 / 11

This transmission is performed by means of the "External transmission" feature when no courtesy signature is needed.

When a courtesy signature has been applied to a printed copy of the registered document, the transmission is ensured by normal post.

#### 2.2.7 Manage e-signatory

- Edit e-signatory  
E-signatory managers and the stakeholder of the active task in the e-signatory may edit the e-signatory at any time, in accordance with the needs of the workflow to:
  - Add an e-signatory manager
  - Add stakeholders in the workflow
  - Change the order of the stakeholders in the workflow
  - By-pass stakeholders in the workflow
- By-pass e-signatory task  
By-pass of stakeholder in an e-signatory must be justified and prior agreed with the by-passed user, as far as possible.
- Modify attachment in e-signatory  
Whoever needs to modify the document metadata and/or attachment(s) must be part of the workflow (see 2.2.3).

### 2.3 **Workflow list management**

ARES users may create workflow lists (templates) for their own purposes or visible for their respective Unit or Directorate depending on their profile.

Where a workflow list refers to the implementation of a specific procedure or work instruction, the process owner uses the example of workflow list template attached in Annex A and integrates it in the definition of his/her processes.

Workflow lists applicable at Site and JRC level may be configured as template available for all JRC users, upon prior request to JRC DMO.

Workflow lists shall be named as follows:

Template type	Template name structure
Personal	<b>&lt;scope description&gt;</b> Example: approval of my notes for the file
Unit	<b>&lt;Unit&gt; : &lt;scope description&gt;</b> Example: JRC.B.1: Approval of minutes of unit meeting
Directorate	<b>&lt;Directorate&gt; : &lt;scope description&gt;</b> Example: JRC.B: Signature of note by Director B
Site	<b>&lt;Site&gt; : &lt;scope description&gt;</b> Example: KRU: JRC Karlsruhe Training/Membership Request
DG	<b>JRC : &lt;scope description&gt;</b> Example: JRC: Recruitment request permanent staff
IMS Process	<b>JRC : &lt;IMS Document ID&gt; &lt;scope description&gt;</b> Example: JRC: IMS-JRC-S3.1-WIN-0015 Nominations Opening board

### 2.4 **Profile delegation and authentication rules**

Any user may *delegate his/hers profile* to any other users, including for the purposes of handing over of task assignments or e-signatories management.

Delegators take full responsibility of their profile delegations.



<u>Type of document</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Document ID</u>	<u>Version No</u>	<u>Page</u>
JRC-IMS Work Instruction	Rules for the Use of e-Signatory	IMS-JRC-M4.1-WIN-0006	1.0	9 / 11

Profile delegation does not entail sharing of users credentials. Commission Decision C(2006)3602 and applicable Standard on Access Control and Authentication shall apply in full to the present work instruction. In particular, "[users] *shall not reveal their authentication mechanisms or share them with other persons*" (C(2006)3602, Annex III, §B.4, and applicable Standard §6.26), and "*Passwords must be kept confidential. Passwords for individual accounts must not be disclosed or given to other person in any circumstances*" (Applicable Standard §10.2.79).

### 3 LINKS TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

#### 3.1 Reference documents

2004/563/EC, Euratom	<a href="#">Commission Decision 2004/563 - Commission's provisions on electronic and digitised documents</a>
C(2006)3602	<a href="#">Commission Decision of 16 August 2006 C(2006)3602 concerning the security of information systems used by the European Commission</a>
Ares(2011)675291	<a href="#">Standard on Access Control and Authentication</a>
Ares(2012)955898	<a href="#">JRC Code of Conduct</a>
Ares(2013)2534472	<a href="#">Implémentation de l'utilisation de l'e-signataire</a> (note from SG to all DMOs, 28/06/2013)
Ares(2015)2641903	<a href="#">Ares: legal value of electronically signed internal documents</a> (note from SG to all DMOs, 24/06/2015)
e-Domec	<a href="#">E-signatory dedicated page</a> on SG's Intranet
Ares(2014)968510	<a href="#">Audit of Document Management IA-12-05 (220)</a>
JRC-DRMP-Policy	<a href="#">JRC Documents and Records Management Policy</a>
JRC-DRMP-Strategy	<a href="#">JRC Documents and Records Management Strategy</a>
JRC-DRMP-ACTE	<a href="#">Glossary of Documents and Records Management Acronyms and Terms (https://connected.cnect.cec.eu.int/docs/DOC-44852)</a>
JRC-IMS-M4.1-WI003	<a href="#">How to define the Content Of Files (COF)</a>

#### 3.2 User manuals

ARES manuals	<a href="#">Link to Wiki</a>
CNS manuals	<a href="#">Link to Wiki</a>

#### 3.3 Annex

Annex A	Workflow list template
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<u>Type of document</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Document ID</u>	<u>Version No</u>	<u>Page</u>
JRC-IMS Work Instruction	Rules for the Use of e-Signatory	IMS-JRC-M4.1-WIN-0006	1.0	10 / 11

## 4 DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

### 4.1 Control of this document

This document is a controlled JRC Management System document, and the document owner identified on the cover page has the duty to maintain it. This includes keeping the document up-to-date, making the latest version available to the users, and informing the users on the updates as necessary.

Any user of this document who identifies an inaccuracy, error, ambiguity or potential improvement need is requested to contact the Document Owner.

### 4.2 Records management

The Implementation of the present work instruction does not generate records creation.



<u>Type of document</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Document ID</u>	<u>Version No</u>	<u>Page</u>
JRC-IMS Work Instruction	Rules for the Use of e-Signatory Annex A – Workflow list template	IMS-JRC-M4.1-WIN-0006	1.0	11 /11

## ANNEX A – EXAMPLE OF WORKFLOW LIST TEMPLATE

Template name:			
Template type:			
Task code	Assigned to (function)	Standard instruction	Standard deadline