



Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation

A Guide for Industry to the APEC TEL Mutual Recognition Arrangement

APEC Telecommunications and Information Working Group

A Guide for the Telecommunications Industry to the APEC Telecommunications and Information Working Group's Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Conformity Assessment of Telecommunications Equipment (APEC TEL MRA)

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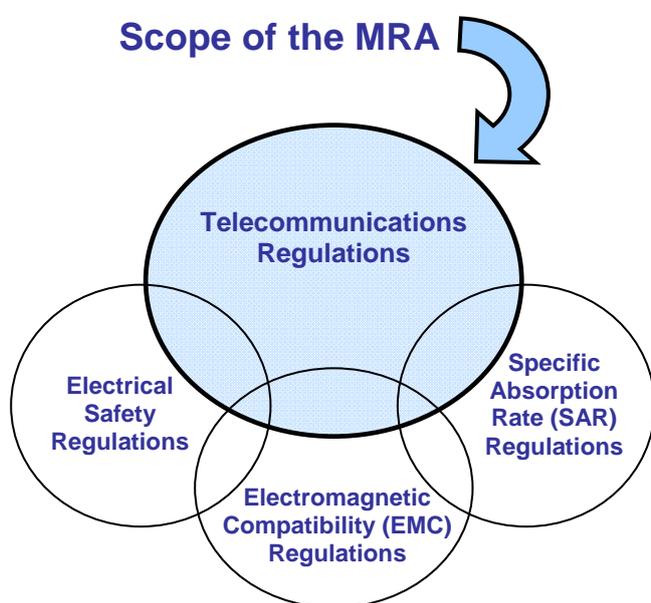
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1. What is the MRA?

Testing and certification are expensive procedures for exporters, importers and regulators that increase the cost to users and delays the availability of products in a large number of markets.

All stakeholders benefit from simplified procedures that can reduce these costs. At the same time, regulators need to have confidence in the quality of testing that provides the basis for certification of equipment.

In June 1998, the APEC¹ Telecommunications and Information Ministers agreed to streamline APEC-wide processes for the testing and type-approval of telecommunications equipment.



This landmark arrangement, the Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Conformity Assessment of Telecommunications Equipment (APEC TEL MRA²), was the first multilateral agreement of its type in the world.

This Arrangement streamlines the Conformity Assessment Procedures for a wide range of telecommunications and telecommunications-related equipment and facilitates trade among the APEC member economies⁴.

It reduces a significant barrier to what is projected to be a US\$60 billion industry by 2010.

Its scope includes all equipment subject to telecommunication regulations, including wireline and wireless, terrestrial and satellite equipment. For such equipment, the MRA covers electromagnetic compatibility (EMC), specific absorption rate (SAR) and electrical safety aspects as well as purely telecommunications aspects of the conformity assessment requirements.³

1. **APEC - Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation.** Since its formation in 1989, APEC has expanded to become the primary vehicle for promoting trade liberalization and economic cooperation in the Asia Pacific Region. APEC is committed to "open regionalism", striving for regional trade and investment liberalization as a building block to strengthen the multilateral trading system and expand the global economy.

2. A copy is available at <http://www.apectel.org> or <http://mrams.com>.

3. Equipment on the user side of the network boundary and intended for connection behind devices providing adequate network protection for a Public Telecommunications Network will be excluded by the Parties from the scope of equipment certification as it applies to network terminal attachment.

4. The members are called **economies** in APEC. They include Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, People's Republic of China, Hong Kong-China, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Philippines, Peru, Russian Federation, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, United States and Viet Nam.

2. So, how do I reduce export costs?

The MRA provides the ability to use a Conformity Assessment Body, whether a testing laboratory or a certification body, in the economy¹ of export to perform type testing or certification of equipment in accordance with the importing economy's requirements. These tests or approvals were previously performed in the economy of import.

The savings come from:

- ❑ A reduction in duplicate testing costs;
- ❑ The ability to deal with a local Conformity Assessment Body rather one in the importing economy;
- ❑ Reduced time-to-market, maximising export opportunities and allowing for rapid reinvestment in research and development for next -generation technologies; and
- ❑ Access to other economies' available information on the regulations, technical standards, legislation and interpretations via the Internet.

Press Release Quotes

"This agreement will eliminate time-to-market delays caused by lengthy or unnecessary retesting and reviews. Decreasing time to market benefits industry and consumers alike by providing new technology to end-users faster and at lower cost. This MRA is important for the telecommunications industry in particular, and will be an important building block toward facilitating other areas of trade in information technology products," said Dick Warmington, Vice President and Managing Director for Hewlett-Packard in Asia-Pacific.²

"Finalizing this agreement will be another important step in the ongoing trend of international market liberalization," said Martina Bradford, corporate vice president, public affairs, Lucent Technologies. "As with the MRA reached in June between the United States and the European Union, an APEC agreement would benefit consumers by speeding new products to market, while helping manufacturers eliminate unnecessary and burdensome red tape."³

1. The members are called **economies** in APEC. They include Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, People's Republic of China, Hong Kong-China, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Philippines, Peru, Russian Federation, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, United States and Viet Nam.

2. HP Applauds APEC Agreement on Telecoms Equipment Certification - <http://www.asiapac.hp.com/news/1998-06-05.html>

3. Lucent Technologies supports proposed APEC trade agreement to further open international markets <http://www.lucent.com/press/1197/971125.coa.html>

“It is estimated that the MRA will save five percent of the cost of new product placement, cut six months off the placement of new products in markets and reduce marketing costs for new products by up to thirty percent.”¹

"I am aware that manufacturers of telecommunications equipment are now demanding shorter lead times for conformity assessment and lower testing and certification costs.

They have already emphasised the global nature of their business, the importance of free movement of their goods, and the need for relatively open access to markets.

Their ultimate desire is to have an international arrangement which would allow their products to be ‘tested once and accepted anywhere’.

One essential precondition for that desire to be fulfilled is the confidence in the competence of conformity assessment bodies in a foreign territory. The MRA is a means to build up that confidence.”²

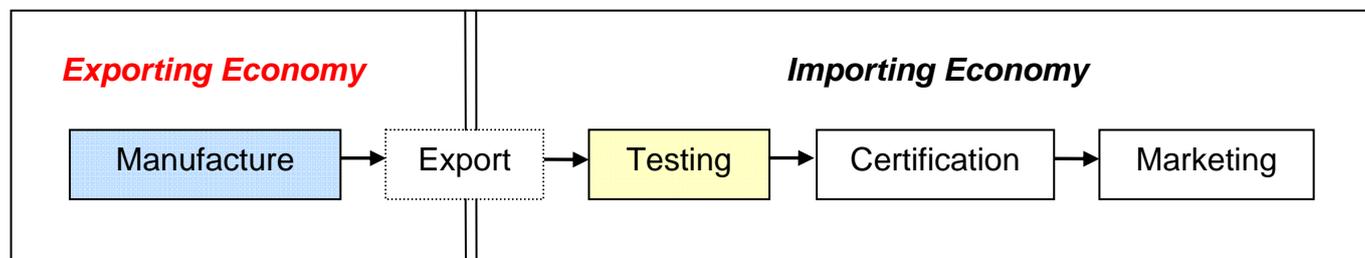
1. What is APEC and what can it do for business? APEC Business Advisory Council - ABAC is the official voice of the private sector within APEC. ABAC was established by APEC Leaders at the APEC Summit in Osaka in November 1995 to formalize private sector participation in APEC - http://www.abaconline.org/news/apec_eason.htm

2. Speech by Mr. KWONG Ki-chi, Hong Kong Secretary for Information Technology and Broadcasting, 3 June 1998 - 3rd APEC Ministerial Meeting on the Telecommunications and Information Industry - <http://www.info.gov.hk/itbb/english/speech/pr030698.htm>

3. How does the MRA work?

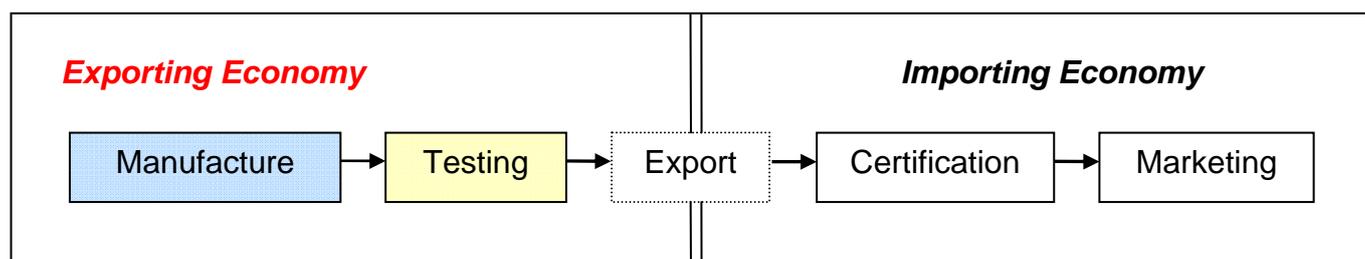
Traditional patterns

Most regulatory transactions have traditionally involved testing and certification of equipment in the importing economy.



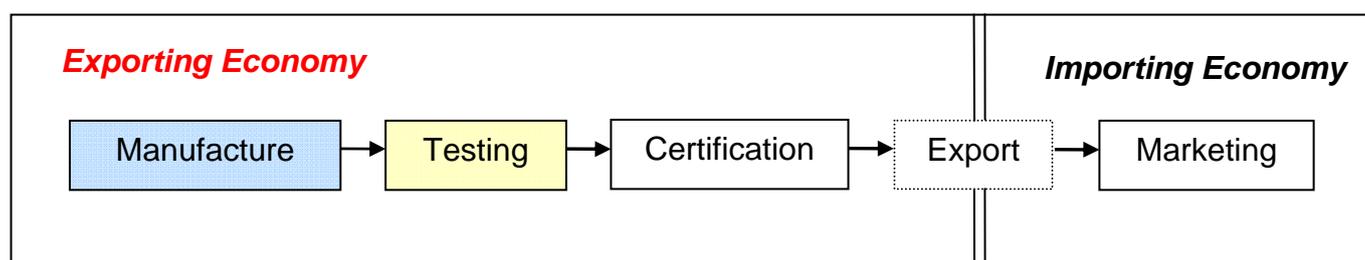
Phase One of the MRA

Phase One of the APEC TEL MRA provides for the mutual recognition of test results, which allows **testing** to be done in the exporting economy and having it recognized in the importing economy.



Phase Two of the MRA

Phase Two provides for the mutual recognition of certification, allowing **certification** to be undertaken in the exporting economy and having it recognized in the importing economy.



Supplier's Declaration of Conformity

While not formally addressed under the MRA, the ability to recognize test reports from another economy is of benefit to economies who have implemented, or looking to implement, SDoC processes. Regulators can have increased confidence under this arrangement on the basis of Conformity Assessment Bodies having to be accredited, that is to have their technical competence assessed and recognised, to test to the importing Party's requirements.

4. Where does it work?

Participating Economies

The APEC Leaders declared¹ that APEC economies would develop and begin to implement, on an elective basis, a model mutual recognition arrangement on conformity assessment of telecommunications equipment.

Since implementation began in 1999, the number of participating economies has steadily grown with more economies preparing to commence participation.

A listing of the economies currently participating in Phase I and/or Phase II may be found on the APEC TEL Working Group website at www.apectelwg.org along with web links to the MRA pages of each participating economy.

This list will change from time-to-time so you are encouraged to check periodically for updates on participation.

1. Osaka Action Agenda in November 1995. <http://www.apecsec.org.sg/virtualib/history/osaka/agenda.html>

5. Where do I get information on the MRA? ¹

Implementation of the MRA generates a large amount of data and information, which will be very important to manufacturers, regulators, service providers, conformity assessment bodies and users.

This vital information includes:

- ❑ All available information on regulations, standards, legislation and interpretations relating to Telecommunications for the APEC economies.
- ❑ Conformity Assessment Bodies accredited and designated by exporting parties and recognized by importing parties; and

General information on the MRA, including the MRA text itself, may be found on the TEL MRA web page of the APEC TEL Working Group site at www.apectelwg.org along with web links to the individual participating economies' TEL MRA pages.

These TEL MRA pages of the relevant Regulatory Authority's website will provide you with the necessary information for each economy. Each of these web pages is interlinked so you can find your way around the various economies' requirements.

If you do not have access to an internet connection, contact the regulator or point of contact listed at the end of this document to find out where you can obtain the information you need.

¹ At the time the first edition of this guide was produced, the intention was to use a web based tool called the MRA Management System, known as MRAMS, which was developed by *The Colony Park Group* in Australia. This system was endorsed by APEC and was to host all information required to operate the MRA and manage the substantial quantity of information it would generate including a database of all products undergoing conformity assessment. The system was to rely on sponsorship so that users would incur no charge for its use.

Regrettably, this system did not receive sponsorship support at the level needed. As such, it does not have the functionality needed and alternative arrangements have had to be made with individual regulators.

6. Some frequently asked questions.

Note: Points relating to sections in the MRA are indicated by [Square Brackets].

1) My company has internal test labs already accredited to test in a number of countries. Do I have to get more accreditations?

No. If you hold current accreditation, seek designation for the economies covered by your accreditation and the importing economy's body recognising such designations will confirm them.

2) How do these changes affect standards?

The APEC TEL MRA is not intended to displace private sector arrangements among Conformity Assessment Bodies, or to displace regulatory regimes allowing for manufacturers' self-assessments and declarations of conformity. It is an expression of the willingness by the participating economies to work together, in their mutual interests, to accept test reports and/or equipment certifications. It is not an arrangement to harmonize standards. [12]

3) How do I keep up to date with changes in requirements for economies?

The MRA requires the variations to information supplied under section 4.1 to be notified to the APEC Tel MRA Chair and to all Economies Party to the Arrangement within 60 days. The current information for an economy will be available via their APEC TEL MRA web page. The variations to be notified are:

- Variations to the notified Technical Regulations. [10.1]
- New technical regulations within the scope of the MRA. [10.3]

Any changes to lists of:

- Designating Authorities [10.4]
- Accreditation bodies [10.4]
- Designated Conformity Assessment Bodies [10.4]
- Recognised Mutual Recognition Arrangements among accreditation bodies [10.4]
- Recognised Conformity Assessment Bodies [10.4]

4) Do I have any say in the development of the standards and regulations I have to work with?

A Party must ensure that arrangements are established within its Economy:

- To consult as necessary to ensure the maintenance of confidence in Conformity Assessment Procedures and to ensure that all Technical Regulations are identified and are satisfactorily addressed. [10.2]
- To provide any interested person, including manufacturers within other Parties, an opportunity to comment, unless expressly prohibited under a Party's law, on the relevant part of the new or amended Technical Regulations in advance of their adoption. [10.3]

5) What is the relationship between governments and Conformity Assessment Bodies of participating Economies?

A member economy's government shall ensure that the Conformity Assessment Bodies within its jurisdiction:

- ❑ Ensure that their designated Conformity Assessment Bodies maintain the necessary technical competence to undertake the Conformity Assessment Procedures for which they have been designated. [5.2]
- ❑ Ensure the CABs designated under their authority are available for verification of competence and compliance with Appendix A of the APEC TEL MRA in the event of a contest of their competence being made by another Party. [8.4]

6) Where can I get a copy of the APEC TEL MRA?

A copy of the APEC TEL MRA can be obtained from the APEC Telecommunications & Information Working Group website: <http://www.apectelwg.org>

7. MRA Contacts

The following information was correct at the time of publication. For participating economies, contact details may be checked via the TEL MRA page on the APEC TEL Working Group site at www.apectelwg.org and following the link to the economy of interest.

Economy	Contact	Website	Telephone	Fax
Australia	Australian Communications and Media Authority	www.acma.gov.au	+61 2 6256 1111	+61 2 6256 5200
Brunei Darussalam	Ministry of Communications	www.mincom.gov.bn	+673 2 38 2838	+673 2 38 0389
Canada	Industry Canada	www.info.ic.gc.ca	+1 613 990 4225	1 613 952 1231
Chile	Telecommunications Subsecretariat (SUBTEL)	www.subtle.cl	+56 2 672 6503	+56 2 679 5138
China	Ministry of Information Industry (MII)	www.mii.gov.cn	+86 10 6602 1330	+86 10 6601 1370
Hong Kong, China	Office of the Telecommunications Authority (OFTA)	www.ofta.gov.hk	+852 2961 6333	+852 2803 5110
Indonesia	Directorate General of Posts and Telecommunications (DGPT)	www.postel.go.id	+62 21 383 8501	+62 21 386 0754
Japan	Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications	www.soumu.go.jp/English/Index.htm	+81 3 3504 4792	+81 3 3504 0884
Korea	Radio Research Laboratory (RRL)	rri.go.kr/eng/approval/mra/introduction.jsp	+82 2 710 6614	+ 82 2 710 6609
Malaysia	Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC)	www.cmc.gov.my	+60 3 294 2121	+60 3 4042 3337
Mexico	Comision Federal de Telecomunicaciones (COFETEL)	www.cft.gob.mx	+52 5261 4203	+52 5261 4055
New Zealand	Commerce Commission	www.comcom.govt.nz	+64 4 471 0180	+64 4 471 0771
Papua New Guinea	Papua New Guinea Telecommunications Authority (PANGTEL)	www.pangtel.gov.pg	+675 325 8633	+675 300 4829
Peru	Organismo Supervisor De Inversion Privada En TeleComunicaciones (OSPITEL)	www.ospitel.gob.pe	+51 1 215 1313	+51 1 475 1816
Philippines	National Telecommunications Commission	www.ntc.gov.ph	+63 2 924 4048	+63 2 921 7128
Russian Federation	Ministry of Communications			
Singapore	Infocomm Development Authority (IDA)	www.ida.gov.sg	+65 211 0888	+65 211 2222
Chinese Taipei	Directorate General of Telecommunications (DGT)	www.dgt.gov.tw	+886 2 2343 3969	+886 2 2371 3984
Thailand	National Telecommunications Commission	www.ntc.go.th	+66 2 272 6888	+66 2 271 3512
United States	Federal Communications Commission (FCC)	www.fcc.gov	+1 202 418 0200	+1 202 418 0232
Vietnam	Department General of Posts and Telecommunications		+84 4 822 9267	+84 4 822 6590

8. Glossary

Term	Definition
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
Accreditation	The recognition by an accrediting body of the technical competence of a CAB to perform tests and/or certifications of products against criteria such as a standard or set of standards.
Administrative Arrangements	Any publicly available procedures or legal or contractual arrangements within a Party's jurisdiction which impact on the Conformity Assessment Procedures for the telecommunications equipment within the scope of this Arrangement, as described in paragraph 4 of this Arrangement.
APEC TEL	APEC Telecommunications and Information Working Group
APEC TEL MRA	APEC TEL Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Conformity Assessment of Telecommunications Equipment
CAB	Conformity Assessment Body
Certification	The official endorsement by a CAB of a product as having met the standards required.
Certification Body	A Conformity Assessment Body that has been accredited to ISO Guide 58 and designated to approve products against an importing economies technical regulations and requirements.
Conformity Assessment Body	A body, which may include a third party or a supplier's testing laboratory, or a certification body, that performs conformity assessment (testing or certification) to an importing Party's Technical Regulations.
DCB	A designated Certification Body.
Designating Authorities	Typically, but not necessarily, the Regulator (see below) who has the authority and competence to designate, list, verify the compliance of, limit the Designation of, and withdraw the Designation of Conformity Assessment Bodies within their jurisdictions.
Economies	APEC members are called economies in APEC. They include Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, People's Republic of China, Hong Kong-China, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Philippines, Peru, Russian Federation, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, United States and Viet Nam.
EMC	Electromagnetic compatibility
Exporting economy	The economy from which goods have been exported by a manufacturer or supplier.
Importing economy	The economy accepting goods that have been exported by a manufacturer or supplier.
Party	An APEC member economy that chooses to join this Arrangement.
Phase 1	The mutual recognition of testing laboratories as Conformity Assessment Bodies and mutual acceptance of test reports relating to the conformity of equipment with the Parties' respective Technical Regulations
Phase 2	The mutual recognition of certification bodies as Conformity Assessment Bodies and mutual acceptance of equipment certifications relating to the conformity of equipment with the Parties' respective Technical Regulations.
Regulator	Typically, a government body charged with the specific duty to govern the standards and regulations as they apply, in this case, to telecommunications equipment.

Term	Definition
Suppliers' Declaration of Conformity	A declaration in writing made by a manufacturer or supplier of a product, that it meets the technical regulations and requirements of an economy's regulator.
Technical Regulations	Those technical requirements, legislative and regulatory provisions, and Administrative Arrangements that a Party has specified under Annex I of the Phase I or Phase II Procedures pertaining to the registration, testing or certification of equipment with respect to which compliance is mandatory.