

**A Guide for**

**Conformity Assessment Bodies**

**to the**

**APEC TEL Mutual Recognition Arrangement**

**APEC Telecommunications &  
Information Working Group**



# A Guide for Conformity Assessment Bodies 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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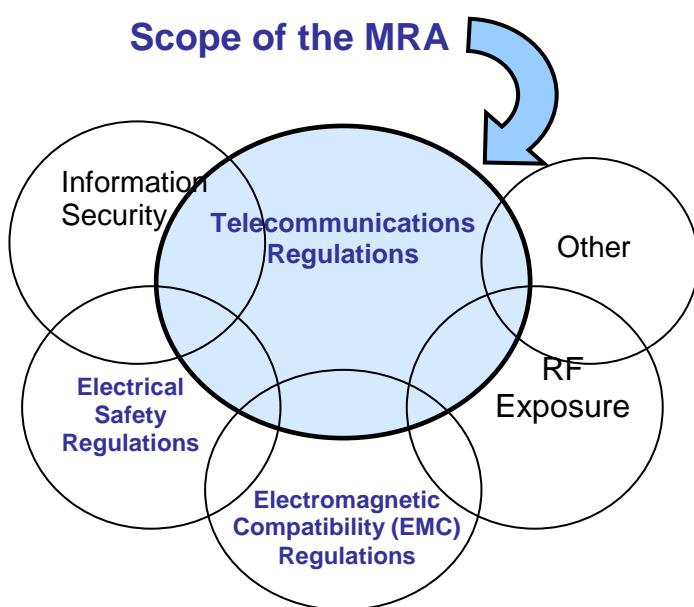
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# 1. What is the MRA?

In June 1998, the APEC<sup>1</sup> Telecommunications and Information Ministers agreed to update 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 MRA<sup>2</sup>), was the first multilateral agreement of its type in the world. It reduces a significant trade barrier to a multi-billion dollar industry.



Its scope includes all equipment subject to telecommunication regulations, including wireline and wireless, terrestrial and satellite equipment intended for telecommunications applications. For such equipment, the APEC TEL MRA covers electromagnetic compatibility (EMC), RF Exposure (e.g. specific absorption rate - SAR), information security, and electrical safety aspects as well as purely telecommunications aspects of the conformity assessment requirements when they are covered by regulations.

This Arrangement streamlines the Conformity Assessment Procedures for a wide range of telecommunications and telecommunications-related

equipment and facilitates trade among the APEC member economies<sup>3</sup>.

It provides for the recognition of Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) and acceptance of the testing results and/or equipment authorizations by the importing economy to the importing economy's Technical Regulations.

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.apec.org>

3. 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, the Philippines, Peru, Russia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, the United States and Viet Nam.

## 2. What are the opportunities to grow my business?

The APEC TEL MRA provides opportunities for your business to assist manufacturers of equipment intended for telecommunications applications in your economy to perform testing and product certification to an importing economy's requirements.

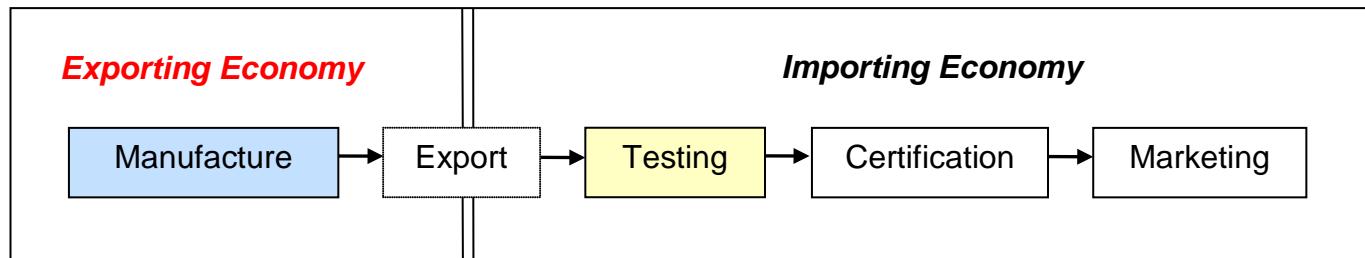
You can become involved by:

- Applying for accreditation to test or certify products to importing economies' requirements;
- Becoming accredited and recognised by the importing economies' regulatory authority to test and or approve products to the importing economies requirements ;
- Becoming a recognised expert in the requirements for other economy's standards and regulations and marketing these services to manufacturers and research and development groups;
- Providing a better return on investment on the test equipment that you already own by broadening your ability it to perform tests against other economy's standards and technical regulations where appropriate;
- Having access to an economy's available information on the regulations, standards, legislation and interpretations; and
- Having the ability to recognize and apply the equivalency of technical requirements

### 3. How does the MRA work?

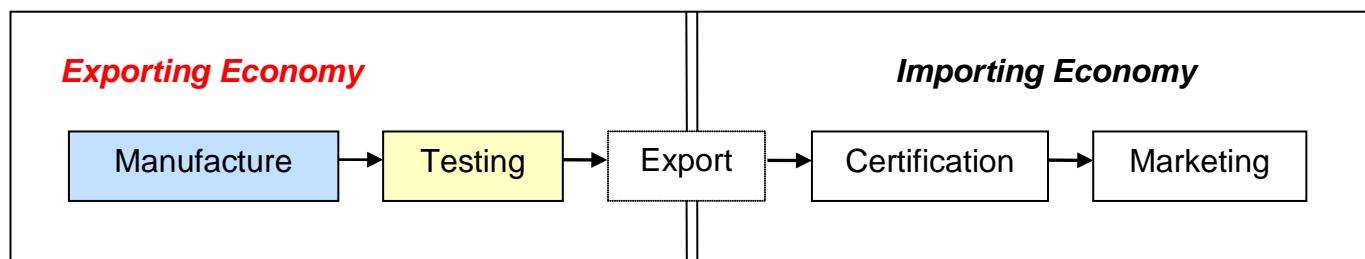
#### Traditional patterns

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



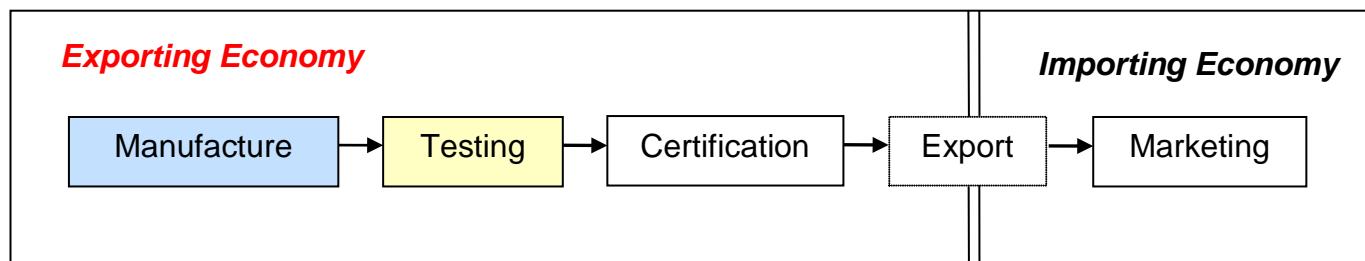
#### Phase One of the MRA

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.



Confidence building is promoted by the development, within each economy, of rigorous systems of accreditation for Conformity Assessment Bodies, using the ISO/IEC 17000 series of Standards.

## Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Equivalence of Technical Requirements (MRA-ETR)

The MRA for Equivalence of Technical Requirements builds upon the MRA for Conformity Assessment of Telecommunications Equipment to further streamline conformity assessment for a range of telecommunications and telecommunications-related equipment and thereby facilitate trade among the Parties. Clause 4.4 of the MRA for Conformity Assessment states that: “This Arrangement does not constitute an acceptance of the standards or technical regulations of a Party by the other Parties, or mutual recognition of the equivalence of such standards or technical regulations”. This MRA for Equivalence of Technical Requirements builds on the MRA for Conformity Assessment by defining a process for the recognition of equivalent standards or technical requirements

## 4. Where does it work?

### Participating Economies

The APEC Leaders declared<sup>4</sup> that APEC economies would develop and begin to implement, on an elective basis, a model mutual recognition arrangement for 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.apec.org](http://www.apec.org) along with web links to the MRA pages of each participating economy.

This list will change from time-to-time as more economies participate in the Arrangement. Hence, you are encouraged to check periodically for updates on participation.

<sup>4</sup> 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?

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 participating APEC economies.
- Conformity Assessment Bodies accredited and designated by exporting parties and recognized by importing parties.

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.apec.org](http://www.apec.org) along with web links to the individual participating economies' TEL MRA pages.

These TEL MRA pages and the relevant Regulatory Authority's website, will provide the MRA information for each economy.

## 6. Some frequently asked questions.

### 1) Does implementation of the APEC TEL MRA 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. It does, however, call upon economies to "endeavour to use international standards, or the relevant parts of international standards ..." as the basis for their Technical Regulations.

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

Section 4.1 of the MRA requires that all parties to the MRA be notified within 60 days of changes to an economies requirements.

The current information for an economy will be available via their TEL MRA web page which can also be accessed via the APEC TELWG site. The variations to be notified are:

- Variations to the notified Technical Regulations.
- New technical regulations within the scope of the MRA.

Any changes to lists of:

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

### 3) Do I need accreditation for each Economy?

Yes. Following the implementation of the MRA, you will need to apply for accreditation against the requirements for testing and/or certification to each economy's regulatory requirements for which you wish to test or certify.

### 4) I'm already accredited to test for a number of economies. Do I have to obtain more accreditations?

No. If you hold current accreditation from an accreditation body that is recognised by your economy's regulatory authority, you can seek designation and recognition for economies with similar technical requirements. The importing economy's regulatory authority will recognize the accreditation.

### 5) 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 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.

## 6) What is the role of each stakeholder of participating economies?

- The CAB or RA is responsible for maintaining a list of all equipment certifications.
- The RA, DA and AB must ensure that the Conformity Assessment Bodies maintain the necessary technical competence to undertake the Conformity Assessment Procedures for which they have been recognized.
- The DA and AB must 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 party challenging their competence.

## 7) What are the obligations of a recognized CAB under the TEL MRA?

With the benefits of the MRA come some obligations. The Arrangement is reliant upon Conformity Assessment Bodies producing consistently reliable outputs against the requirements of the importing economy. The MRA also requires some information transfer to ensure its effective operation. As such, CABs must:

- Maintain accreditation in accordance with their Accreditation Body's requirements;
- Ensure that their accreditation and capabilities cover all of the technical requirements of the importing economy for which they have been recognized;
- Keep up-to-date with changes in technical regulations for which they are recognized and ensure their ongoing capability;
- Maintain a list of test certificates and/or certifications that they have issued under the scope of this Arrangement and their recognition.

## 8) Where can I get a copy of the APEC TEL MRA text?

A copy of the [APEC TEL MRA](#) can be obtained from:

The APEC Telecommunications & Information Working Group website:

<http://www.apec.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 of the APEC TEL Working Group site at [www.apec.org](http://www.apec.org) and following the link to the economy of interest.

<b>Economy</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Website</b>
Australia	Australian Communications and Media Authority	<a href="http://www.acma.gov.au">www.acma.gov.au</a>
Brunei Darussalam	Authority for Info-communication Industry of Brunei Darussalam (AITI)	<a href="http://www.aiti.gov.bn">www.aiti.gov.bn</a>
Canada	Industry Canada	<a href="http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/insmt-gst.nsf/en/h_sf06389e.htm!">http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/insmt-gst.nsf/en/h_sf06389e.htm!</a>
Chile	Telecommunications Subsecretariat (SUBTEL)	<a href="http://www.subtel.cl/">http://www.subtel.cl/</a>
China	Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT)	<a href="http://www.miit.gov.cn">www.miit.gov.cn</a>
Hong Kong, China	Office of the Communications Authority(OFCA)	<a href="http://www.ofca.gov.hk">www.ofca.gov.hk</a>
Indonesia(TBD)	POSTEL	<a href="http://www.postel.go.id/">http://www.postel.go.id/</a>
Japan	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	<a href="http://www.tele.soumu.go.jp/e/index.htm">http://www.tele.soumu.go.jp/e/index.htm</a>
Korea	National Radio Research Agency(RRA)	<a href="http://rra.go.kr/eng2/index.jsp">http://rra.go.kr/eng2/index.jsp</a>
Malaysia	Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC)	<a href="http://www.mcmc.gov.my/">http://www.mcmc.gov.my/</a>
Mexico	Federal Telecommunications Institute	<a href="http://www.ift.org.mx">www.ift.org.mx</a>
New Zealand(TBD)	Commerce Commission	<a href="http://www.comcom.govt.nz">www.comcom.govt.nz</a>
Papua New Guinea	NICTA	<a href="http://www.nicta.gov.pg/">http://www.nicta.gov.pg/</a>
Peru	Ministry of Transportation and communications(MTC)	<a href="http://www.mtc.gob.pe/">http://www.mtc.gob.pe/</a>
Philippines	National Telecommunications Commission	<a href="http://www.ntc.gov.ph">www.ntc.gov.ph</a>
Russia	Ministry of Communications and Mass Media	<a href="http://www.minsvyaz.ru/en/">http://www.minsvyaz.ru/en/</a>
Singapore	Infocomm Development Authority (IDA)	<a href="http://www.ida.gov.sg">www.ida.gov.sg</a>
Chinese Taipei	National Communication Commission(NCC)	<a href="http://www.ncc.gov.tw/english/gradation.aspx?site_content_sn=65&amp;is_history=0">http://www.ncc.gov.tw/english/gradation.aspx?site_content_sn=65&amp;is_history=0</a>
Thailand	National Telecommunications Commission	<a href="http://www.ntc.go.th">www.ntc.go.th</a>
United States	Federal Communications Commission (FCC)	<a href="http://www.fcc.gov/oet/ea/mra">www.fcc.gov/oet/ea/mra</a>
Vietnam	Ministry of Information and Communications	<a href="http://www.mic.gov.vn">www.mic.gov.vn</a>

## 8. Glossary

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>APEC</b>	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
<b>Accreditation</b>	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.
<b>Administrative Arrangements</b>	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.
<b>APEC TEL</b>	APEC Telecommunications and Information Working Group
<b>APEC TEL MRA</b>	APEC TEL Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Conformity Assessment of Telecommunications Equipment
<b>CAB</b>	Conformity Assessment Body
<b>Certification</b>	The official endorsement by a CAB of a product as having met the standards required.
<b>Certification Body</b>	A Conformity Assessment Body that has been accredited to ISO/IEC 17000 series of Standards and designated to approve products against an importing economies technical regulations and requirements.
<b>Conformity Assessment Body</b>	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.
<b>Designating Authorities</b>	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.
<b>Economies</b>	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, the Philippines, Peru, Russia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, the United States and Viet Nam.
<b>EMC</b>	Electromagnetic compatibility
<b>APEC TEL MRA-ETR</b>	APEC TEL Mutual Recognition Agreement for Equivalence of Technical Requirements
<b>Exporting economy</b>	The economy from which goods have been exported by a manufacturer or supplier.
<b>Importing economy</b>	The economy accepting goods that have been exported by a manufacturer or supplier.
<b>Party</b>	An APEC member economy that chooses to join this Arrangement.
<b>Phase I</b>	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
<b>Phase II</b>	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.
<b>Regulator</b>	Typically, a government body charged with the specific duty to govern the standards and regulations as they apply, in this case, to telecommunications equipment.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Suppliers' Declaration of Conformity</b>	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.
<b>Technical Regulations</b>	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.