



Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation

A Guide  
For Conformity Assessment Bodies to the  
APEC TEL Mutual Recognition Arrangement

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**APEC Telecommunications and 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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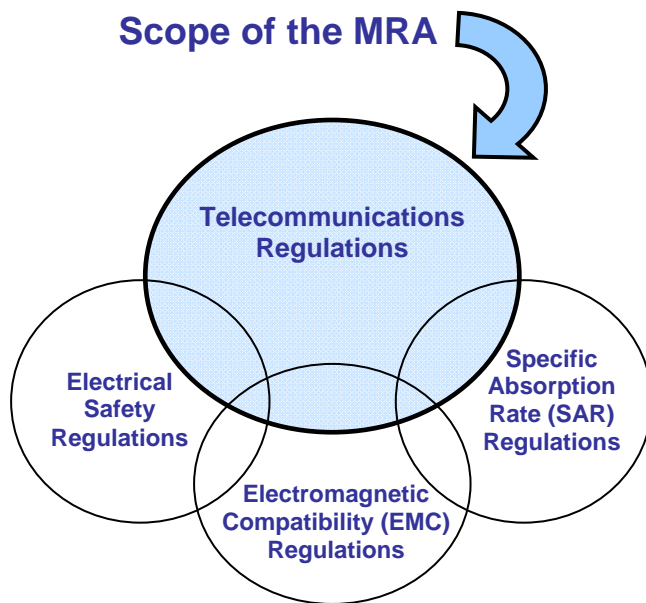
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# 1. What is the MRA?

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 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 APEC TEL MRA covers electromagnetic compatibility (EMC), specific absorption rate (SAR) and electrical safety aspects as well as purely telecommunications aspects of the conformity assessment requirements.<sup>3</sup>

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>4</sup>.

It provides for the mutual recognition, by an importing economy, of Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) and mutual acceptance of the results of testing and equipment certification procedures undertaken by those bodies in assessing conformity of equipment to the importing economy's own 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.apectel.org>

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. What are the opportunities to grow my business?

The opportunities to grow your business come with the ability to assist manufacturers of telecommunications equipment in your economy perform testing to an importing economy's requirements.

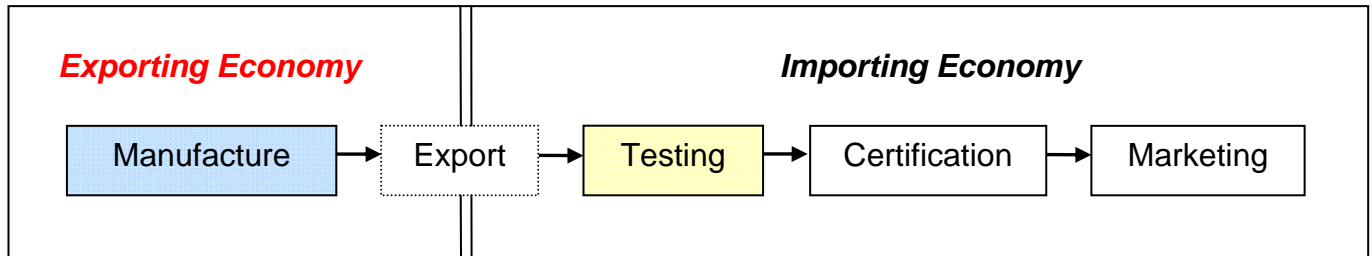
You can become involved by:

- Applying for accreditation to test or approve products to an importing economies' requirements;
- Becoming designated for the economies whose requirements you hold accreditation and being listed as a CAB on your designating authority's website;
- 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 using it to perform additional tests against other economy's standards where appropriate; and
- Having access to an economy's available information on the regulations, technical standards, legislation and interpretations via the Internet.

### 3. How does the MRA work?

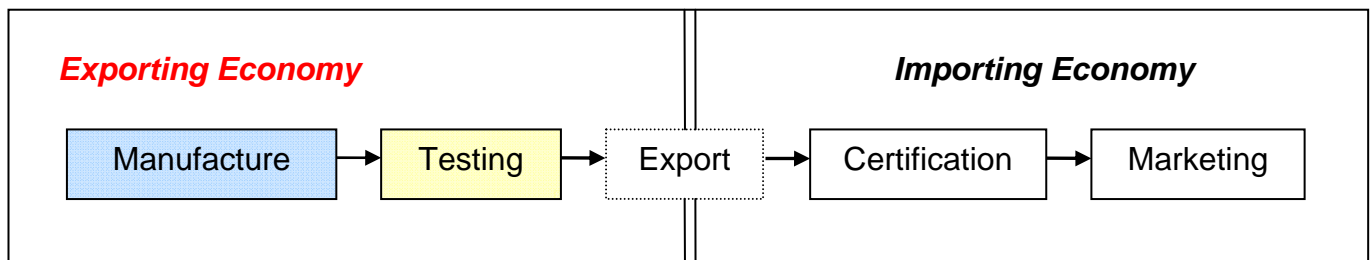
#### Traditional patterns

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



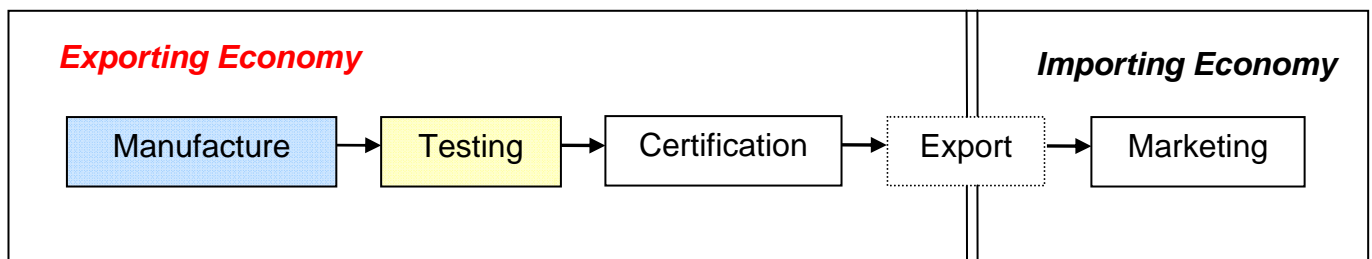
#### Phase One of the MRA

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 Guides and 17000 series of Standards.

## 4. Where does it work?

### Participating Economies

The APEC Leaders declared<sup>1</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.apectelwg.org](http://www.apectelwg.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.

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? <sup>1</sup>

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; 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](http://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.

If you do not have access to an internet connection, contact the Regulator 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) 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. 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. [12]

### 2) 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 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. [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]

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

Yes. 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 countries. Do I have to do more accreditations?

No. If you hold current accreditation from an accreditation body that is recognised by your economy's designating authority, you can seek designation for the economies whose technical requirements are covered by your accreditation and the importing economy's body recognising designations will confirm them.



## 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 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]

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

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

- Publish and maintain a list of all equipment certifications. [6.5]
- Identify equipment certified by it on request from a Party. [6.5]
- 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]

## 7) What are the obligations of a designated 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 transparency. As such, CABs need to:

- 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 designated under the TEL MRA;
- Keep up-to-date with changes in technical regulations for which they are designated and ensure their ongoing capability;
- To maintain a list of test certificates or certifications that they have issued under the scope of this Arrangement.

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

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

## 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 Guide 58 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>DCB</b>                         | A designated Certification Body.  |
| <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, Republic of the Philippines, Peru, Russian Federation, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, United States and Viet Nam. |
| <b>EMC</b>                         | Electromagnetic compatibility   |
| <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 1</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 2</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. |