

**A Guide for
Industry
to the
APEC TEL Mutual Recognition Arrangement**

**APEC Telecommunications &
Information Working Group**



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

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)

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. What is the MRA? | 3 |
| 2. So, how do I reduce export costs? | 4 |
| <i>Press Release Quotes</i> | 4 |
| 3. How does the MRA work?..... | 6 |
| <i>Current patterns</i> | 6 |
| <i>Phase One of the MRA</i> | 6 |
| <i>Phase Two of the MRA</i> | 6 |
| <i>Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Equivalence of Technical Requirements (MRA-ETR)</i> | 7 |
| <i>Supplier's Declaration of Conformity</i> | 7 |
| 4. Where does it work? | 8 |
| 5. Where do I get information on the MRA? | 9 |
| 6. Some frequently asked questions. | 10 |
| 7. MRA Contacts..... | 12 |
| 8. Glossary..... | 13 |

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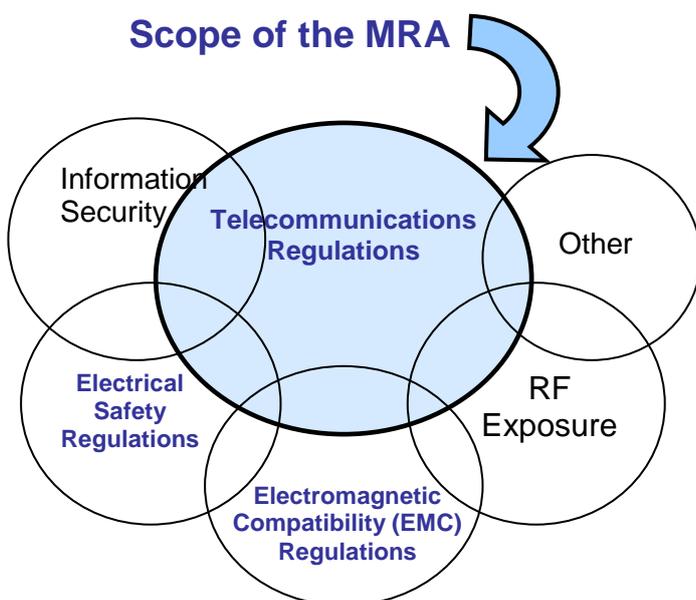
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1. What is the MRA?

Testing and certification of telecommunication products are expensive procedures for exporters, importers and regulators that increase the cost to users and delays the availability of products to consumers.

All stakeholders benefit from efficient 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 registration and/or 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 economies³.

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 MRA covers electromagnetic compatibility (EMC), RF Exposure (e.g. specific absorption rate - SAR) and electrical safety aspects as well as purely telecommunications aspects of the conformity assessment requirements.

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> or <http://mrams.com>.

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. 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 economy⁴ 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.

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.⁵

"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."⁶

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

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

6. 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.”⁷

"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.”⁸

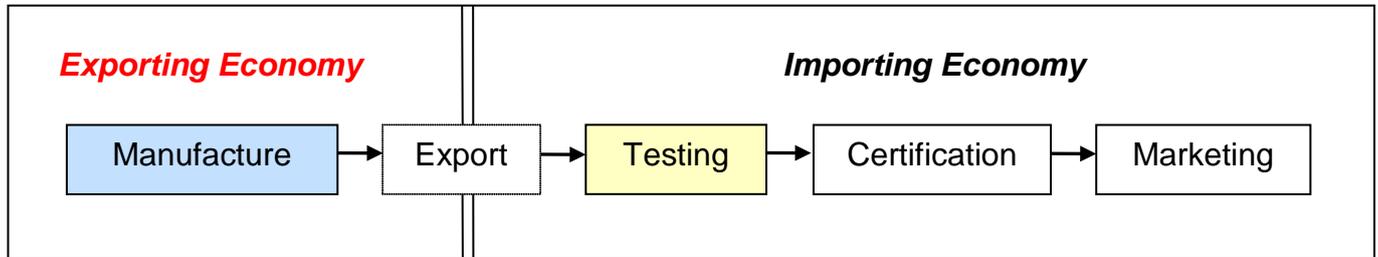
7. What is APEC and what can it do for business? APEC Business Advisory Council - ABAC is the official voice of the private sector within APEC. ABAC was established by APEC Leaders at the APEC Summit in Osaka in November 1995 to formalize private sector participation in APEC - http://www.abaconline.org/news/apec_eason.htm

8. 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?

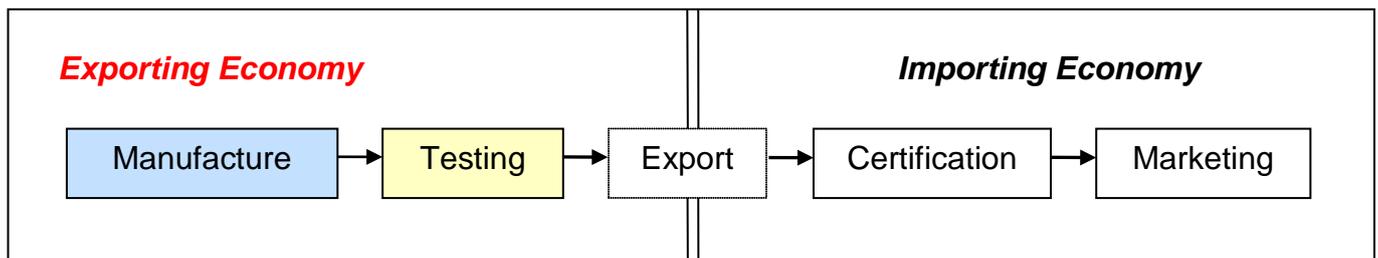
Traditional patterns

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



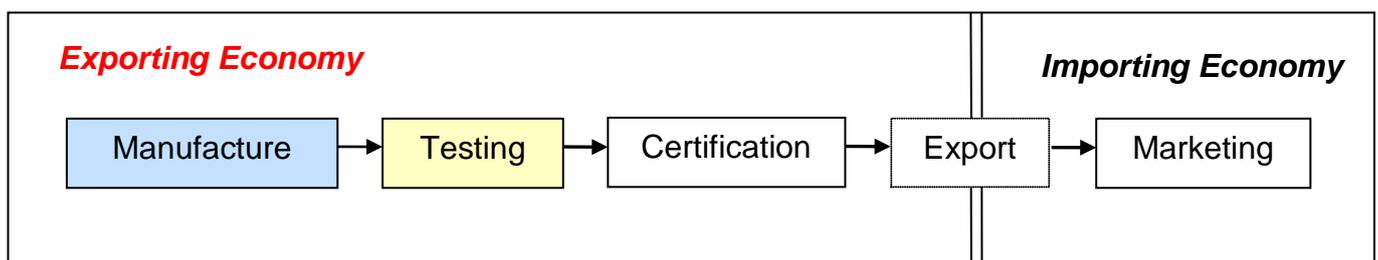
Phase One of the MRA

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.



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

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 economies requirements.

4. Where does it work?

Participating Economies

The APEC Leaders declared⁹ 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.apec.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.

9. 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 is 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.apec.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.

6. Some frequently asked questions.

1) My company has internal test labs already accredited to test in 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.

2) How do these changes affect standards?

These changes do not 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.

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.
- 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

4) What are the stakeholder roles?

- The RA, DA and AB must ensure that the CABs 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.

5) 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.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 on the APEC TEL Working Group site at www.apec.org and following the link to the economy of interest.

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

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/IEC 17000 series of Standards 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. |
| 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, the Philippines, Peru, Russia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, the United States and Viet Nam. |
| EMC | Electromagnetic compatibility |
| APEC TEL MRA-ETR | APEC TEL Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Conformity Assessment of Telecommunications Equipment Equivalence of Technical Requirements |
| 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 I | 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 II | 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. |