

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Conformity Assessment of Telecommunications Equipment

Introduction

The APEC Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Conformity Assessment of Telecommunications Equipment (APEC TEL MRA)¹ was endorsed by the APEC Telecommunications and Information Industry Ministers in June 1998 and commenced in July 1999. APEC TEL MRA is a voluntary arrangement intended to streamline the conformity assessment procedures for a wide range of telecommunications and telecommunications-related equipment and thereby facilitate trade among the APEC economies². It provides for mutual recognition by the importing economies of conformity assessment bodies and mutual acceptance of the results of testing and equipment certification procedures undertaken by those bodies in assessing the conformity of equipment to the technical regulations of importing economies.

Procedures of APEC TEL MRA

2. There are two different sets of procedures for the implementation of APEC TEL MRA. The first set of procedures is referred as the Phase I Procedures while the second set is referred as the Phase II Procedures. In essence, these two sets of procedures can be described as follows -

- Phase I Procedures – mutual recognition of testing laboratories as conformity assessment bodies and mutual acceptance of test reports
- Phase II Procedures – mutual recognition of certification bodies as conformity assessment bodies and mutual acceptance of equipment certifications

3. According to the official definition of APEC, Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) is a testing body, which may include a third party or a supplier's testing laboratory or a certification body that performs conformity assessment to the technical regulations of an importing economy.

¹ For details, please refer to the [Official TEXT on APEC TEL MRA](#).

² As of December 2020, there are 21 APEC Member Economies including Australia; Brunei Darrussalam; Chile; Canada; People's Republic of China; Hong Kong, China; Chinese Taipei; Indonesia; Japan; Republic of Korea; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Peru; The Philippines; Russia; Singapore; Thailand; The United States and Vietnam.

Scope of APEC TEL MRA

4. Pursuant to the requirement of APEC TEL MRA, each participating economy is required to specify its technical regulations and make them publicly available so that the recognised CABs of other APEC economies can follow in conducting testing or certification of telecommunications equipment to be marketed in the importing economy. Specifically, technical regulations are those technical requirements, legislative and regulatory provisions, and administrative arrangements that a participating economy has specified with respect to which compliance is mandatory. APEC TEL MRA applies to the technical regulations specified separately by each participating APEC economy relating to conformity assessment, including electromagnetic compatibility and electrical safety.

5. The scope of equipment covers network terminal equipment or other equipment subject to telecommunications regulation of each participating economy, including wireline and wireless equipment, and terrestrial and satellite equipment, whether or not connected to a public telecommunications network.

Implementation of APEC TEL MRA

6. Basically, APEC TEL MRA is a voluntary scheme. Any member economy intending to participate in the scheme is only required to notify the APEC TEL Working Group (WG) Chair at any time it is prepared to do so. Once the APEC TEL WG Chair has identified the voluntary participation of a member economy, it will notify all other member economies so that any two participating economies can contact each other for the exchange of detailed information necessary for the implementation of Phase I / II Procedures.

7. Hong Kong is one of the APEC economies that has notified the APEC TEL WG Chair its readiness for participation in the Phase I Procedures since the commencement of APEC TEL MRA in July 1999. By that time, Hong Kong also made arrangements with Australia, Singapore and Chinese Taipei for the implementation of Phase I Procedures of APEC TEL MRA and entered into Phase I MRA with Canada in 2002. In April 2005, Hong Kong and the United States (US) reached MRA for the implementation of Phase I and II Procedures. The US is the first partner with which Hong Kong implements Phase II Procedures of APEC TEL MRA. In February 2008, Hong Kong entered into Phase II MRA with Canada.

8. To further facilitate the trade in telecommunications goods in the Asia Pacific region, Hong Kong will continue its effort in reaching MRA with more APEC economies for the implementation of Phase I / II Procedures.

Designation of CAB

9. Any party interested in becoming a CAB designated by the Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA)³ should refer to the document OFCA MRA 003 “Criteria and Procedures for the Designation of Hong Kong Testing Laboratories and Certification Bodies by OFCA as Conformity Assessment Bodies” on [OFCA website](#). To become a CAB designated by OFCA, the pre-requisite is that a testing laboratory or certification body must be located in Hong Kong and accredited by the Hong Kong Accreditation Service (HKAS) which is the accreditation body in Hong Kong. Upon designation by OFCA and subsequent recognition by an APEC economy, a CAB is authorised to undertake testing and/or certification of equipment to the technical requirements of the APEC economy concerned. The scope of designation of a CAB is limited to its scope of accreditation.

10. Designation of CAB will be recognised only when the arrangement with the relevant participating economy is still valid and in force.

11. Local manufacturers, suppliers or vendors of telecommunications products planning to develop their market in APEC economies may approach the designated CABs for equipment testing or certification. They are advised to refer to the list of designated CABs maintained by OFCA to select a CAB suitable for them.

Recognition of CAB

12. Any testing laboratory or certification body in the APEC economies may seek OFCA’s recognition as a CAB to perform testing / certification of equipment to the technical regulations of Hong Kong. It has to be properly accredited by an accreditation body and applies to OFCA through its own designating authority. In particular, any party interested in becoming a testing laboratory or certification body recognised by OFCA should refer to the documents OFCA MRA 001 “Procedures for the Recognition of Foreign Testing Laboratories and Certification Bodies by OFCA as Conformity Assessment Bodies” and OFCA MRA 002 “Criteria and Requirements Applicable to Foreign Testing Laboratories and Certification Bodies Seeking Recognition by OFCA as Conformity Assessment Bodies” on [OFCA website](#).

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³ Pursuant to the Communications Authority Ordinance (Cap. 616), with effect from 1 April 2012, all duties and powers of the Telecommunications Authority (TA) are conferred on the Communications Authority (CA), and all duties and powers of the Office of the Telecommunications Authority (OFTA) are conferred on the Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA), the executive arm of the CA.