



**Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Engineering and Technology  
Laboratory Division**

January 22, 2021

**MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENTS**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Mutual Recognition Agreements/Arrangements (MRAs) are government-to-government trade facilitating measures aimed at a global approach to conformity assessment. *(These agreements should not be confused with the Mutual Recognition Arrangements between accrediting organizations.)* The government-to-government agreements can be multi-sector, as in the US-EU MRA, covering more than one group of products. The agreements can also be multi-lateral, as in the APEC Tel MRA, providing a framework for all member economies (countries) to follow. In each of the agreements, participating countries agree to accept the test results and/or product approvals performed by the Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) of the other country.

MRAs only address the issue of acceptance of conformity assessment results and do not attempt to harmonize regulatory requirements or technical standards. A primary objective of the MRAs is to ease the manufacturer's burden and reduce the cost and time to market for products by implementing transparent conformity assessment processes while ensuring that products that reach the market comply with applicable technical regulations of the importing economy.

For more information on Mutual Recognition Agreements, see: [NIST – EMC and Telecommunications Mutual Recognition Agreements](#).

**II. CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT BODY**

Within the context of the Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) the term Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) was developed to identify the organizations performing conformity assessment. A CAB is a body that may include a testing laboratory or a private third-party certification body that is recognized to perform conformity assessment to an importing Party's technical regulations under the terms of the MRA.

Under the FCC's Equipment Authorization Program there are two types of Conformity Assessment Bodies:

- Accredited testing laboratories are used to perform testing of equipment subject to the Certification equipment authorization procedure.<sup>1</sup> ([Search of FCC recognized accredited testing laboratories](#)).

---

<sup>1</sup> FCC recognized accredited testing laboratories are also required for testing devices subject to the equipment authorization procedure Declaration of Conformity (DoC). In FCC Report and Order 17-93 the FCC eliminated the DoC procedure but allowed for a transition period. Devices subject to the DoC procedure are now subject to the equipment authorization procedure Supplier's Declaration of Conformity (SDoC). Equipment now subject to SDoC may be authorized using the former DoC procedure prior to November 2, 2018.

- A Telecommunication Certification Body (TCB) is used to perform third-party certification of equipment subject to the FCC requirements that require the product to be certified. ([Search of FCC recognized TCBs](#))

### **III. PARTICIPATION**

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) participates in the following MRAs:

- [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation \(APEC\) Telecom MRA](#)
- [The Inter-American Telecommunications Committee \(CITEL\) of the Organization of American States MRA](#)
- [European Union MRA](#)
- [European Free Trade Association \(EFTA\) MRA](#)
- [Japan MRA](#)
- [Israel MRA](#)
- [Mexico MRA](#)
- [United Kingdom MRA](#)

### **IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF MRAS FOR CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT**

The FCC implements MRAs in accordance with the following policies.

#### **A. Introduction**

The purpose of an MRA for Conformity Assessment of Telecommunications Equipment is to facilitate trade by allowing Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) in one country to test and/or certify products to the technical standards of another country. Participation is voluntary for APEC and CITEL; however, if a country agrees to participate then certain rights and obligations apply. Once an MRA for Conformity Assessment of Telecommunications Equipment is in place, the United States implements the MRA by exchanging letters with the participating country, which identifies the responsible parties and their obligations. The exchange letters also identify the scope (acceptance of test reports and/or equipment approval) of the MRA.

#### **B. General Requirements to Implement MRA**

1. A government-to-government MRA for conformity assessment of telecommunications equipment must be in place.
2. The governments of the participating countries must agree on the scope (acceptance of test reports and/or equipment approval) of the agreement.
3. The responsible parties in each country must be willing to participate and have the regulations in place which give them the proper authority to implement their obligations.

4. A participating country must use an accrediting body that operates in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011 – “Conformity Assessment – General requirements for accrediting bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies<sup>2</sup>.”
5. The governments of the participating countries must exchange letters detailing the process. The text of the letters is typically negotiated between the United States government and the foreign government. For the United States this process involves: Office of the United States Trade Representative ([USTR](#)), National Institute of Standards and Technology ([NIST](#)), and Federal Communications Commission ([FCC](#)). The exchange letters include the following information:
  - a. List of Designating Authorities or website where designating authority information is available.
  - b. List of Accreditation Bodies or website where accreditation body information is available.
  - c. The regulator(s) and technical regulations for which test reports and/or equipment approvals from other Parties will be accepted.
  - d. The responsible contact person(s) for the agreement.
6. Information is exchanged between the stakeholders in the participating countries regarding their processes and procedures to ensure that all parties understand each other’s conformity assessment program, to ensure that equipment is compliant with all applicable regulations. The information exchanged should include the following:
  - a. Identify sources for obtaining technical regulations.
  - b. Identify any items to be addressed during the accreditation assessment (for example, the FCC assessment checklists).
  - c. Training for CABs and Accreditation Body assessors on the technical regulations.

### **C. General Requirements for FCC Recognition of Accredited Testing Laboratories**

Procedure for the FCC recognition of Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) as accredited testing laboratories are as follows.

1. The FCC-recognized Designating Authority (DA) shall determine which accreditation bodies meet ISO/IEC 17011 requirements and are qualified to accredit CABs within their territory to perform testing to the FCC requirements.
2. The testing laboratory shall be accredited to ISO/IEC 17025<sup>3</sup> with a scope covering the applicable FCC requirements and test procedures.
3. The FCC has developed a tool, the [Accredited Test Laboratory Technical Assessment Checklist](#), (see [KDB Publication 853844](#)) to be used by the accreditation body to aid in the assessment of testing laboratories.

---

<sup>2</sup> It is noted that a new edition of the ISO/IEC conformity assessment standard has been issued. The Commission will accept either ISO/IEC 17011:2004 or ISO/IEC 17011:2017 editions at this time and is reviewing options to update the applicable FCC rules to specify the 2017 edition.

<sup>3</sup> It is noted that a new edition of the ISO/IEC conformity assessment standard has been issued. The Commission will accept either ISO/IEC 17025:2005 or ISO/IEC 17025:2017 editions at this time and is reviewing options to update the applicable FCC rules to specify the 2017 edition.

4. Requests for designation to the FCC from the CAB should be submitted to the DA in the laboratory's own country, requesting the CAB be designated to the FCC for recognition by the FCC as an accredited testing laboratory.
5. The DA reviews the accreditation information and makes a determination as to whether the CAB meets the requirements for designation.
6. Once the DA determines that the requirements have been met, it designates the CAB to the FCC by providing the information listed below for review and recognition by the FCC. When reviewing a request to recognize a testing laboratory the FCC will:
  - a. Evaluate the information submitted regarding the CAB.
  - b. Make a determination on whether to recognize the CAB.
  - c. Notify the designating authority of the determination.
7. When reviewing a request to recognize a testing laboratory, the FCC will look for the following information:
  - a. Procedure used by DA to evaluate and designate the CAB.
  - b. Name, address, location, and contact information. The CAB shall be physically located in a country that the FCC recognizes for the DA to perform assessments.
  - c. Designation number and [FCC Registration Number \(FRN\)](#).
  - d. An indication as to whether the test laboratory performs testing for entities other than just their own organization. A test laboratory that performs testing for the general public is known as a contract laboratory. All other testing laboratories are considered non-contract testing laboratories. Test laboratories recognized as non-contract do not appear on the FCC website public Test Firm search.
  - e. ISO/IEC 17025 Certificate of Accreditation. In cases where the accrediting body does not issue a certificate, equivalent information must be provided.
  - f. The FCC rule sections the accreditation covers. See [KDB Publication 974614](#) for more information.
  - g. The FCC test procedures the accreditation covers. See [KDB Publication 974614](#) for more information.
  - h. The expiration date and period of the accreditation. The FCC rules require that a testing laboratory must be re-evaluated by the accreditation body at least every two years.
  - i. Completed [Accredited Laboratory FCC Technical Assessment Checklist](#) (see [KDB Publication 853844](#)). For the designation of a newly accredited testing laboratory, a completed checklist shall be provided. For a renewal of the designation of an accredited testing laboratory, a statement indicating continued compliance with a previously submitted checklist is acceptable.
  - j. Compliance with [Accredited Testing Laboratory Roles and Responsibilities](#)(see [KDB Publication 974614](#)).
8. For the renewal of the recognition of an accredited testing laboratory, the FCC database expiration date shall be updated by the DA.
9. The FCC-required information may only be submitted by the DA, and is not accepted by the FCC when submitted directly from the CAB. The DA shall submit the information by completing the data fields on the designation web page and uploading the required supporting attachments.

Note: Information provided in support of the designation of an accredited testing laboratory is publicly available on the FCC webpage.

#### **D. General Requirements for Recognition of Certification Bodies**

Procedures for FCC recognition of Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) as accredited Certification Bodies to approve equipment are as follows.

1. In the United States, CABs that are recognized to authorize equipment subject to FCC Certification requirements are known as Telecommunication Certification Bodies (TCBs).
2. The accreditation body in the exporting party shall accredit the TCB to authorize equipment with regards to the FCC (importing party) regulations.
3. TCBs shall be accredited to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 and ISO/IEC 17025.
4. The FCC has developed a tool, the [TCB Program ISO/IEC 17065 Technical Assessment Form](#), (see [KDB Publication 668797](#)), to be used by the accreditation body to aid in the assessment of TCBs.
5. When the accreditation has been completed and it is determined the TCB is compliant, an application should be submitted to the DA in the TCB's own country requesting that the TCB be designated to the FCC.
6. The DA reviews the accreditation information and makes a determination as to whether the TCB meets the requirements for designation.
7. If the requirements are met the DA notifies the FCC by submitting the designation request to the FCC Equipment Authorization Website at [www.fcc.gov/tcb](http://www.fcc.gov/tcb) and using the TCB Designating Authority (TDA) login link.
8. The notification shall include all of the information required by the FCC for review and recognition by the FCC.
9. When reviewing a request for designation of a TCB the FCC will:
  - a. Evaluate the information submitted regarding the TCB.
  - b. Make a determination on whether to recognize the TCB.
  - c. Notify the DA of the determination.
10. When reviewing a request for designation of a TCB, the FCC will look for the following information:
  - a. Procedure used by DA to evaluate and designate the TCB.
  - b. Name, address, location, and contact information. The TCB shall be located in the country from which is it being designated.
  - c. Designation number and [FCC Registration Number \(FRN\)](#).
  - d. Scope of accreditation. For more information see [KDB Publication 641163](#).
  - e. The Certificate of Accreditation. In cases where the accrediting body does not issue a certificate, equivalent information must be provided.
  - f. The FCC rule sections the accreditation covers. For more information see [KDB Publication 641163](#).

- g. The FCC test procedures the accreditation covers. For more information see [KDB Publication 641163](#).
  - h. The expiration date and period of the accreditation.
  - i. Compliance with ISO/IEC 17025. A TCB must have an accredited test firm associated with it, which is FCC recognized and listed in the [FCC recognized test firm database](#).
  - j. Compliance with ISO/IEC 17065:2012.
  - k. Compliance with applicable FCC rules as addressed in the [TCB Roles and Responsibilities](#) (see [KDB Publication 641163](#)).
  - l. Completed [TCB Program ISO/IEC 17065 Technical Assessment Form](#). For new TCBs the submission of a completed evaluation form, or a statement from the accrediting body that the TCB fully complies, is required.
  - m. An indication that the TCB staff has successfully completed the appropriate TCB training with regard to their designation. This is provided via the Key Employee List.
10. The FCC-required information may only be submitted by the DA, and should not be submitted to the FCC by the TCB. The DA shall submit the information by completing the data fields on the designation web page and uploading any required attachments.

**E. MRA Stakeholders**

In the United States, the Regulatory Authority, Designating Authority, and Accrediting Bodies are all different entities. The Regulatory Authority (FCC) and the United States Designating Authority (NIST) typically work with the [Office of the United States Trade Representative \(USTR\)](#) to implement MRAs. The USTR in the United States is the entity that typically signs the exchange letters. Once the MRA becomes operational, the regulatory and designating authorities handle most of the operational processes. The table below provides website links to information about FCC-recognized stakeholders:

TCB Designating Authorities (TDAs)	<a href="https://apps.fcc.gov/oetcf/tcb/reports/accreditor_report.cfm">https://apps.fcc.gov/oetcf/tcb/reports/accreditor_report.cfm</a>
Designation Authorities for Accredited Testing Laboratories (these entities are also known as test firm accrediting bodies (TFABs))	<a href="https://apps.fcc.gov/oetcf/mra/reports/AccreditingBodyReport.cfm">https://apps.fcc.gov/oetcf/mra/reports/AccreditingBodyReport.cfm</a>
Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) for Certification (TCBs)	<a href="https://apps.fcc.gov/oetcf/tcb/reports/TCBSearch.cfm">https://apps.fcc.gov/oetcf/tcb/reports/TCBSearch.cfm</a>
Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) for Accredited Testing Laboratories	<a href="https://apps.fcc.gov/oetcf/eas/reports/TestFirmSearch.cfm">https://apps.fcc.gov/oetcf/eas/reports/TestFirmSearch.cfm</a>

**F. New CAB Recognitions in Countries with which the United States has an MRA**

For a CAB in a country with which the United States has an applicable MRA for Conformity Assessment of Telecommunications Equipment, the process to be recognized is as follows.

1. Determine the scope of recognition (*i.e.*, testing laboratory or TCB).
2. Contact the Designating Authority (DA) in the CAB’s country to determine the DA’s procedures. See Section E for DA contact information.

3. Contact the Accrediting Body and obtain the required accreditation.
4. Submit the completed accreditation certificate and other required information to the DA with a request to be recognized by the FCC. Be sure to follow the procedures required by the DA.
5. The DA will review the submitted information and if they determine the CAB is acceptable to be designated. The DA will submit the information to the FCC. CABs should not submit information directly to the FCC.
6. Once the FCC reviews the information submitted and is confident that the CAB is competent, the FCC will recognize the CAB, and the name of the CAB will appear on the FCC Website at the appropriate link listed in Section E.

#### **G. New CAB Recognitions in Countries with which the United States does not have an MRA**

The FCC does not recognize TCBs in countries with which the United States does not have an MRA for Conformity Assessment of Telecommunications Equipment. An interested TCB in one of these countries should contact the Regulatory Authority in their own country to express their interest in an MRA. Per Section 2.949 of the FCC rules, the FCC has recognized several test firm accrediting bodies to assess and designate to the FCC capable accredited test laboratories in specific non-MRA countries. A search filter for countries is available at [Test Firm Accrediting Bodies](#).

#### **Change Notice**

**02/23/2016:** 901874 D01 Telecom MRA v01r01 replaces 901874 D01 Telecom MRA v01. Changes to the document include editorial corrections.

**03/02/2018:** 901874 D01 Telecom MRA v01r02 replaces 901874 D01 Telecom MRA v01r01. Changes to the document include editorial corrections, specification of year for standards, note to allow use of 2017 edition of ISO/IEC 17011 and 17025, updates to the stakeholder information and updates to reflect the FCC recognizing accredited testing laboratories in specific non-MRA countries.

**01/22/2021:** 901874 D01 Telecom MRA v01r03 replaces 901874 D01 Telecom MRA v01r02. Changes to document the implementation of United Kingdom MRA.