Workshop on NGN Conformance and Interoperability Testing Centre(s) 2-4 August,2010 Nairobi, Kenya.

Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs)

Presented by
Bill McCrum
Consultant
Telecommunication
Standardization
Bureau

What is a Mutual Recognition Agreement/Arrangement (MRA)?

- An agreement/arrangement between *participating* countries/member states that agree to use trusted conformity assessment procedures.
- *Agreement* implies legally binding between the parties with ratification by duly authorized authorities of the member state
- *Arrangement* implies less formal basis for the cooperation but with specified procedures for engagement and disengagement
- Participation is voluntary; however, participating countries have certain rights and obligations.
- Allows Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) in participating countries to test (Phase I) or certify (Phase II) telecom products to the importing country's requirements
- Limited to conformity assessment procedures and does not attempt to address the issue of standards

What is an MRA ? (contd)

- An agreement, arrangement or understanding between countries or accrediting bodies
- Limited to conformity assessment
- Mutually agree to accept
  - Test results, and/or
  - Product approvals

Same standards not required

Types of MRAs

- Government to government
- Accreditation Bodies to Accreditation Bodies
- Limited to conformity assessment
  - Mutual acceptance of test reports
  - Mutual acceptance of equipment certifications
- Multi-lateral and bilateral
- Multi-sector and single sector

Key Elements of MRAs

- Scope: equipment subject to mandatory telecommunication requirements
- Coverage: EMC, Electrical Safety, Telecom
- Phases:
  - Phase I -- acceptance of test results
  - Phase II -- acceptance of equipment certification
  - CABs:
  - testing laboratories
  - certification bodies
- Competence: determined using ISO/IEC Guides/Standard 17025, 17011& Guide 65, plus appropriate technical regulations

Benefits of MRAs

- To Suppliers:

  - Products may be shipped directly to foreign markets without any further requirements for testing and/or certification, thereby reducing costs and time to market
  - Estimates of savings are up to $100K per product type approved, and up to 6 months in time to market
  - Facilitates trade by promoting market access
  - Reduces and minimizes non-tariff trade barriers
  - Promotes competition
  - Shortens the time for manufacturers to introduce their products into the importing countries

Benefits of MRAs

- To Service Providers and Users
  - larger selection of products in marketplace
  - new products appear earlier in home markets
  - potentially lower cost of products
  - greater marketplace stability through established regulatory system and technical standards
- To Regulators
  - reduction in wait times for regulatory processes
  - choice of CABs for certification services, hence reduced burden on national regulator
  - potential to privatize testing and certification services

Benefits of MRAs

- To RES 76 implementation and Council Decisions
  - promotes establishment of stable regulatory regimes
  - promotes establishment of sharing and networking among telecom agencies of the region
  - promotes building expertise through information sharing and interactions in negotiating and implementing MRAs
  - provides choice of testing and certification services
  - provides a framework whereby countries can become users or providers of test and certification services tuned to their individual state of development/readiness
  - provides a concrete focus for addressing the digital divide and knowledge/expertise disparity in the regions

Actors who take part in MRAs

- Telecom Regulatory Authorities
- Designating Authorities
- Recognition Authorities
- Accreditation Bodies
- Conformity Assessment Test Laboratories
- Manufacturers

Some Existing MRAs on Conformity Asessment covering Telecoms and EMC

- InterAmerican MRA on Conformity Assessment (CA) – 34 countries
- Canada/US/EU MRA on CA – 29 countries
- APEC TEL MRA on CA – 21 economies
- Canada/US/EFTA MRA on CA – 5 countries
- Canada/US/SWISS MRA on CA – 3 countries

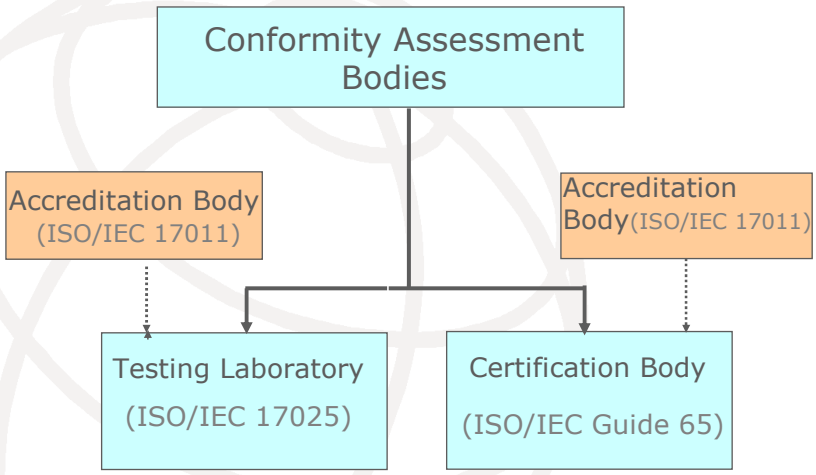
What is conformity assessment?

- Conformity assessment is the evaluation of products, processes or services to determine the extent to which assurance may be given that they fulfill specified requirements
- Conformity assessment may take the form of
  - Sampling, testing and inspection
  - Evaluation, verification and assurances of conformity
  - Registration, accreditation and approval
  - Combination of the above
- No one right approach
  - Type of product
  - Perceived risk of non-compliance
- Approaches differ among countries
- Multiple approaches within each country, especially when there is more than one Regulatory Authority

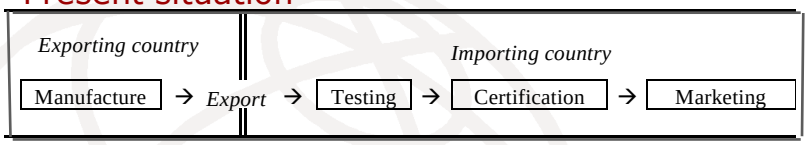
Conformity Assessment Options

- Is a conformity assessment system necessary?
  - A conformity assessment system is not necessary in all cases.
- What is Suppliers Declaration of Conformity and how it used?
  - SDoC is an internationally recognized procedure where the supplier tests to the applicable regulations and labels the product before it is placed on the market. In many cases, this procedure provides an acceptable level of assurance of compliance for most products. In some instances, use of an accredited laboratory is required.
- What is certification and how is it currently used?
  - Certification is a bilateral approval system which requires the supplier to submit a product for testing and approval to the regulator or a government recognized testing and/or approval center. Participation in a MRA requires the regulator to amend its legislative authority and rules to allow the private sector to test (Phase I) and/or approve (Phase II) a product before it is marketed.

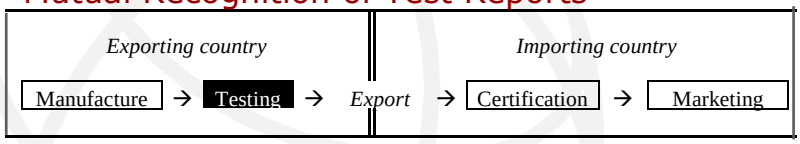
Conformity Assessment Bodies



Present situation



Mutual Recognition of Test Reports



Mutual Recognition of Certification

Contents of typical MRA text

Introduction

- Purpose of the agreement
- General Provisions
- Definitions and Interpretations
- Scope
- Designating Authorities
- Designation of CABs and Appointment of ABs
- Recognition of CABs and Mutual Acceptance of the Results of CA Procedures
- Verification of CABs
- Commencing the Agreement and Initiating Participation in Phase I or Phase II Procedures
- Information Exchange
- Joint Committee
- Additional Provisions
- Confidentiality
- Preservation of Regulatory Authority
- Fees
- Amendment and Termination of Agreement
- Final Provisions

Contents of typical MRA Appendices

I. Appendix A
   - A. Common Requirements
   - B. Designation of Testing Laboratories
   - C. Designation of Certification Bodies

II. Appendix B – Phase I procedures for mutual recognition of testing laboratories as CABs and mutual acceptance of test results
   - A. Scope
   - B. Designation and Recognition of CABs
   - C. Participation in Phase I Procedures
   - D. Transition Periods
   - E. Mutual Acceptance of Test Reports
   - F. Processing of Applications
   - G. Suspension of Mutual Recognition and Acceptance Obligations

III. Appendix C – Phase II procedures for mutual recognition of certification bodies as CABs and mutual acceptance of equipment certifications
   - A. A-G Same as above, except change Phase I to Phase II and testing to certification

IV. Annexes I – Annexes IV

Typical MRA Annexes

- Annex I – List of the Technical Regulations and requirements for Each Participating Country
- Annex II – List of Name and Address of Each Designating Authority and Accreditation Body for Each Participating Country
- Annex III – List of Name and Address of Each CAB Designated by Each Participating Country
- Annex IV – List of Name and Address of Each CAB or MRAs by AB Recognized by Each Participating Country

Thank you
Any Questions ?

Bill McCrum
Consultant
Telecommunication Standardization Bureau
tsbworkshops@itu.int