

Q1 : What is ASEAN EE MRA?

Ans : The ASEAN EE MRA is an agreement signed by the Economic Ministers of ASEAN Member Countries which aims to facilitate the free movement of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) in the region through reduction on duplication of testing and certification for EEE manufactured in ASEAN.

Q2 : What does ASEAN EE MRA cover?

Ans : The ASEAN EE MRA covers all new EEE that is intended to either directly be connected or plugged into a low voltage power supply or is battery-powered. Low voltage power supply means a power supply with a voltage rating of between 50 and 1000 V for AC and between 75 and 1500 V for DC.

The ASEAN EE MRA does not cover medical devices and products already included in the ASEAN Telecommunications MRA.

Q3 : What are the benefits of ASEAN EE MRA?

Ans : The Agreement allows a regulated EEE if tested by a Listed Testing Laboratory and/or certified by a Listed Certification Body in the exporting Member Country to be accepted by the importing Member Country without having to undergo further testing and/or certification.

Q4 : How will ASEAN EE MRA impact on the EE industries?

Ans : Manufacturers and traders of EEE made in ASEAN will find it easier and less costly to export their EEE to ASEAN Member Countries. They can plan their new product launches with greater certainty and shorter time-to-market. They will save on cost of testing and certification when they have their EEE tested and/or certified by LISTED CAB. The result of conformity assessment will be accepted in the importing Member Country without further testing and/or certification.

Q5 : Who should be concerned with ASEAN EE MRA?

Ans : (a) Manufacturers, Suppliers, Importers and Exporters who intend to place regulated EEE in the markets of ASEAN Member Countries.

(b) Designating Body

This is the government agency in each Member Country with the legal mandate to assume the role of Designating Body (DB) which include, amongst others, identification and monitor of testing laboratories and/or certification bodies as specified in the ASEAN EE MRA.

(c) Accreditation Body

The national accreditation body (NAB) in a Member Country and signatory of the APLAC, and/or ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) for testing laboratories and/or a signatory of the PAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) for certification bodies.

Where there is no NAB in a Member Country, the Member Country may consider appointing an accreditation body in another ASEAN Member Country that is a signatory to the APLAC, ILAC and PAC MRA to undertake accreditation.

(d) Conformity Assessment Body

This is a Testing Laboratory and/or a Certification Body in a Member Country undertaking testing and/or certification, respectively.

A Testing Laboratory and/or a Certification Body with the necessary technical competency can apply to be a Designated Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) through the Designating Body in the respective Member Countries in order to undertake testing and/or certification to the mandatory requirements of ASEAN Member Countries.

Q6 : What is the role of the Designating Body (DB)?

Ans : The role of DB are as follows:

- (a) Assess prospective CAB against the criteria for designation.
- (b) Ensure prospective CAB has the relevant technical competence to test or certify regulated EEE to the requirements of ASEAN Member Countries before granting it the status as Designated CAB.
- (c) Submit in writing the proposal for listing of Designated CAB through its JSC representative for JSC's consideration of the proposal.
- (d) Conduct regular surveillance* visits to LISTED CABs after designation to ensure that it maintains its technical competence; the frequency of such visits shall be **at least once a year.**
- (e) Issue a Notice of Suspension and Notice of Withdrawal to the LISTED CABs indicating the reason of its intention in writing of suspension and/or withdrawal.
- (f) Request LISTED CABs whose designation has been withdrawn to return its Certificate of Designation to the DB for cancellation.
- (g) Meet the suspended LISTED CABs to discuss corrective measures to be undertaken by the suspended CAB.

(*) As and when required, the DB may delegate assessment of LISTED CABs to the National Accreditation Body (NAB). In this case, NAB is to ensure that the LISTED CABs has the relevant technical competence to test or certify regulate EEE to the requirements of ASEAN Member Countries. NAB will report to the DB any non conformities or failure to maintain the competence as LISTED CABs immediately.

- (h) Disallow LISTED CABs whose designation has been suspended or withdrawn to discontinue any advertisements that relates to its listing, and stop making further advertisement or other representation as to such listing.
- (i) Disallow LISTED CABs whose designation has been suspended to issue any Test Reports and Certifications during the period of suspension.
- (j) Inform JSC and the ASEAN Secretariat to remove LISTED CABs whose designation has been withdrawn.

Q7 : What are the preparations required to participate in ASEAN EE MRA?

Ans : A Member Country intending to participate in the ASEAN EE MRA should take the following steps:

Step 1 - Establishment of Necessary Technical Infrastructure

- (a) Establish a National Standards Development Structure

As standards are the basis for the implementation of the MRA, it is therefore essential for a Member Country to establish a National Standardisation Development structure as a first step in the process for participating in the MRA. Alternatively, the Member Country concerned can declare its acceptance of IEC Standards.
- (b) Setting up Testing Laboratories

It is not compulsory for a Member Country to set up testing laboratories in order to participate in the ASEAN EE MRA. This is because Article 17(3) of the ASEAN EE MRA states that "Parties may engage the services of testing laboratories and/or certification bodies of other parties to undertake the requisite conformity assessment activities, should it not have

its own facilities to do so". However, if the Member Country intends to set up a testing laboratory, it shall be accredited to ISO/IEC 17025: 2005, or is a CBTL under the IECEE CB Scheme.

This accreditation can be obtained either from member's own National Accreditation Scheme or in the absence of which the laboratories can obtain accreditation from Member Countries' accreditation scheme.

(c) Setting up a certification system

Under the provision of Article 17(3) of the ASEAN EE MRA, it also enables Member Countries to engage services of other parties should they not have own facilities to do so. However, if such certification body is to be set up, it shall be accredited in accordance with ISO/IEC Guide 65 : 1996 or be a member of the IECEE CB-FC Scheme.

(d) Setting up a National Accreditation Scheme

This scheme may be set up if Member Countries intend to have their own accreditation to participate in the MRA. However the laboratories/certification bodies (CAB) can also obtain recognition through the IECEE CB Scheme or be accredited by other Member Countries' national accreditation body.

Step 2 - Preparation for Application

(a) Appointment of Designating Body

Member Countries intending to participate in the ASEAN EE MRA shall appoint a "Designating Body" with the responsibility to identify and monitor testing laboratories and /or certification bodies. This Designating Body shall fulfil the requirements as spelled out in Article 5 of the ASEAN EE MRA as show below:

- (i) Parties will ensure that Designating Bodies have the authority and competence in their respective territories to carry out decisions required under this Sectoral EE MRA.
- (ii) Designating Bodies will ensure that Testing Laboratories and /or Certification Bodies identified by them and listed in this Sectoral EE MRA are capable and remain capable of properly assessing conformity of products or processes, as applicable, and as covered in this Sectoral EE MRA. Designating Bodies will maintain the monitoring of such Testing Laboratories and/or Certification Bodies listed in this Sectoral EE MRA.
- (iii) The Designating Body may also appoint an accreditation body to accredit Testing Laboratories and /or Certification Bodies while maintaining full responsibility as a Designating Body under this Sectoral EE MRA.
- (iv) Designating Bodies will consult as necessary with their counterparts in the other Parties, to ensure the maintenance of confidence in conformity assessment procedures. This consultation may include joint participation in audits/ inspections related to conformity assessment activities or other assessments of Testing Laboratories and /or Certification Bodies listed in this Sectoral EE MRA.
- (v) Designating Bodies will consult, as necessary, with relevant Regulatory Authorities to ensure that all mandatory requirements identified in this Sectoral EE MRA satisfactorily addressed.

(b) Establishment of a Contact Point

The Member Countries intending to participate in the MRA shall identify a "Contact Point" as defined in the MRA.

- (c) Documentation for Participation

Member Countries intending to participate in the ASEAN EE MRA shall fill up the Notification Form.

Q8 : What should a prospective Conformity Assessment Body do if it wants to be designated to perform conformity assessment activity for ASEAN Member Countries?

Ans : A prospective Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) should first determine whether it meets the criteria for designation. Thereafter, to seek designation as a Testing Laboratory or a Certification Body with the DB in its country.

Q9 : What are the criteria to qualify for designation?

Ans : The criteria for designation as a Designated CAB i.e. Designated Testing Laboratory or Designated Certification Body to perform testing or certification respectively for regulated EEE to ASEAN Member Countries' mandatory requirements are:

- (a) It must demonstrate technical competence based on:
 - (i) technological knowledge of the relevant products, processes and services.
 - (ii) the understanding of the technical standards and the general protection requirements for which designation is sought.
 - (iii) the experience relevant to the applicable legislative, regulatory administrative provisions.
 - (iv) the physical capability to perform the relevant tests.
 - (v) an adequate management of the test and/ or certificate concerned
 - (vi) any other circumstance necessary to give assurance that the test and/or certificate will be adequately performed on a consistent basis.

- (b) It must be a legal entity, capable of suing and being sued in the country of designation.

- (c) It must have sufficient capital and financial resources to maintain viable operations.

- (d) It must be accredited by the National Accreditation Body (NAB) in accordance with the relevant International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) / International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) standards OR must be a member of the IECEE CB Scheme or the IECEE CB-FCS for testing laboratories and certification bodies, respectively.

CAB can be accredited by NAB based on the following standards:

- (i) ISO/IEC 17025: 2005 for testing laboratories.
- (ii) ISO/IEC Guide 65: 1996 for product certification bodies.

The accreditation shall be relevant to the product types and technical regulations for which designation is sought.

The NAB that conducts the accreditation must be a signatory to the APLAC, and/or I LAC MRA for testing laboratories and/or a signatory of the PAC MRA for certification bodies where it is subject to peer evaluation on the competence of accreditation bodies.

- (e) It shall not operate or be related to any other business that may compromise its role as a Designated CAB, so that there is no risk of conducting conformity assessment unfairly or with bias in the conduct of its business. However, manufacturers' own testing laboratories accredited by NABs of ASEAN that are signatories to ILAC/APLAC MRA are exempted from this requirement.

- (f) It must have the knowledge, capability and competence to perform the testing or certification to relevant requirements specified by the Designating Body or stipulated under the ASEAN EE MRA, which are applicable to its designation.
- (g) It must fulfil all requirements stipulated under the ASEAN EE MRA .
- (h) It shall provide to the Designating Body (DB) any such other information or documents as may be required by the DB.

Q10 : What are the information to be furnished when applying for designation?

Ans : The information to be furnished are as applicable as follows:

- (a) The completed application form obtained from the DB.
- (b) A non-refundable application fee that may be required by the DB of the respective Member Country.

NOTE: The amount to be charged varies in different Member Countries, thus it is advised to check with the contact person of the respective Member Country directly on the fee structure.

- (c) Documents evidencing the prospective CAB's incorporation or registration with their National Registry of Companies and Businesses.
- (d) Relevant audited financial statements for the last 3 years including past claims on company arising from its operations, if any.

- (e) The Organisation Structure and Staffing Chart with evidence of qualifications of key personnel ¹⁾ and any other relevant information regarding integrity and professional standards accreditation including information that the prospective CAB has been accredited to:

- (i) ISO/IEC 17025: 2005 – for application as a Designated Testing Laboratory, or
- (ii) ISO/IEC Guide 65: 1996 – for application as a Designated Certification Body.

- (f) The Certificate of Accreditation by NAB with the scope of accreditation including information that the prospective CAB has been accredited to:

Alternatively, the prospective CAB may submit documentary evidence of membership with:

- (i) The IECEE CB scheme – or application as a Designated Testing Laboratory, or
- (ii) The IECEE CB-FCS – for application as a Designated Certification Body.

- (g) The Laboratory Layout (applicable only for application as Designated Testing Laboratory).

- (h) A Statement setting out the testing facilities and test methods to be used for testing products for compliance with the particular technical regulations, standards or specifications of the importing participating ASEAN Member Country.

¹⁾Key personnel include Technical Managers, Quality Manager, Board of Directors as well as testing personnel as defined by ISO/IEC 17025.

- (i) A sample copy of:
 - (i) A Test Report to be used by Designated Testing Laboratory.
 - (ii) A Certificate of Conformity to be used by Designated Certification Body.
- (j) The Quality Manual
- (k) Information on its key personnel, share holdings, directorship with other companies, criminal records and suspension records, if any.

Q11 : What are the costs and expenses to apply for designation?

Ans : The costs and expenses would be charged vary depending on the DB of the respective ASEAN Member Country. Therefore, it is advisable to check with the contact person of the respective Member Country on the fee structure before the prospective CAB submits an application to the DB.

Generally, a prospective CAB is expected to pay a nominal fee where applicable for the following type of application:

	Type of Application
1	Processing of New and Renewal as a testing laboratory.
2	Processing of New and Renewal as a certification body.
3	Processing of New and Renewal as a testing laboratory and certification body.
4	Assessment of the prospective CAB for the purpose of designation.
5	Subsequent assessments which must be conducted at least once a year.
6	Investigative assessment as a result of complaint filed with the DB.

Q12 : What happens after a prospective CAB submits its application for designation to the DB in its country?

Ans : Generally, the DB of a Member Country will commence assessment to ensure that the prospective CAB has the relevant technical competence to test or certify regulated EEE to the requirements of ASEAN Member Countries for which it is seeking designation. The assessment will cover the following:

- (a) Determine the quality system and technical competence of prospective CAB against the criteria for designation.
- (b) Determine whether the appointed staff of the applying CAB has the required technical knowledge to undertake conformity assessment activities for ASEAN Member Countries which it is seeking to be designated.
- (c) Determine whether the applying CAB has established the rules and procedures for the conformity assessment activities.

Once the technical capability of the prospective CAB is determined, the DB will designate the prospective CAB as Designated CAB and will issue a Certificate of Designation with the scope of designation. However, commencement of conducting conformity assessment activity is allowed only after it has been successfully listed by the Joint Sectoral Committee (JSC) of ASEAN EE MRA.

Concurrently, the DB will prepare the proposal for listing of Designated CAB and submit through the ASEAN Secretariat to the JSC for Member Countries' consideration. During the stipulated contestation period, the concerned members of JSC will send their decision through the ASEAN Secretariat whether they accept or reject the proposal.

Q13 : What is Joint Sectoral Committee?

Ans : Joint Sectoral Committee (JSC) is the regional committee responsible for the effective functioning of ASEAN EE MRA. The members of JSC are representatives from ASEAN Member Countries and are mainly regulators in their country. The JSC has the authority to list, verify, suspend and withdraw listed CABs that have been designated by the DBs of ASEAN Member Countries.

Q14 : What is the procedure for listing a Designated Conformity Assessment Body?

Ans : The listing procedure is illustrated on the following pages:

PROCEDURE /DIAGRAM FOR LISTING A DESIGNATED CONFORMITY ASSESTMENT BODY

