



## IFIAR 2017 Member Profile – ACRA

<b>1. Jurisdiction</b>	<p><b>1.1 Insert the name of the jurisdiction in English:</b></p> <p>Singapore</p>
<b>2. Member<sup>1</sup></b>	<p><b>2.1 Insert the name of the Member, both in the local language and in English:</b></p> <p>Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA)</p>
	<p><b>2.2 Include relevant contact information, including postal address, telephone numbers, a link to the website and other relevant information:</b></p> <p>10 Anson Road #05-01/15          International Plaza          Singapore 079903          Tel: (65) 6248 6028          URL: <a href="http://www.acra.gov.sg">www.acra.gov.sg</a></p>
	<p><b>2.3 Include the basis for establishment of the Member, as well as the legislation or regulations which provide the Member the authority/mandate with respect to audit regulation. Please describe with an appropriate level of detail the mission and responsibilities of the Member with respect to audit regulation:</b></p> <p>The Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA) is the national regulator of businesses, public accountants and corporate service providers in Singapore. Established under the ACRA Act, it was formed on 1 April 2004, following the merger of the former Registry of Companies and Businesses and the Public Accountants’ Board.</p> <p>ACRA’s mission is to provide a responsive and trusted regulatory environment for businesses, public accountants and corporate service providers. With regard to public accountancy sector, ACRA’s objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise the bar for quality audits and financial information</li> <li>• Build market confidence in the quality of Singapore’s public accountants</li> <li>• Maintain and enhance collaborative partnerships with our stakeholders to promote quality financial reporting and audits</li> </ul>



	<p><b>2.4 Have there been any major changes to the Member’s organization or to the governing legislation since completing last year’s Member Profile?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes                      <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><b>If yes, please describe these changes with an appropriate level of detail:</b></p>																		
<p><b>3. Governing Body Composition and members</b></p>	<p><b>3.1 Describe with an appropriate level of detail the current composition of the Member’s governing body, including the ratio between Board members who are independent from the audit profession and those who are not. The audit profession includes, for example: audit firms, professional accountancy bodies and bodies or entities associated with the audit profession.<sup>2</sup></b></p> <p>The highest governing body of ACRA is the ACRA Board whose members are appointed by the Singapore's Minister of Finance. The Board comprises individuals from the business, investment and regulation communities as well as the legal and audit profession. The majority of ACRA Board is made up of non-practitioners, and hence is independent of the audit profession.</p> <p>ACRA Board Members (as of 31 December 2016):  <b>3 Audit Practitioners (denoted *); 13 Non-Audit Practitioners</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="440 1224 1406 1753"> <thead> <tr> <th>No</th> <th>Name</th> <th>Designation / Professional Activity</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Ms Lim Soo Hoon (Chairman)</td> <td>Permanent Secretary (Finance) (Performance), Ministry of Finance</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Mr Kenneth Yap</td> <td>Chief Executive, ACRA</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Mr Sajjad Akhtar*</td> <td>Chairman, PKF International</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Mr Adrian Chan</td> <td>Head of Corporate Department &amp; Senior Partner, Lee &amp; Lee Advocates &amp; Solicitors</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Mr Muthukrishnan Ramaswami</td> <td>President, Singapore Exchange Limited</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	No	Name	Designation / Professional Activity	1	Ms Lim Soo Hoon (Chairman)	Permanent Secretary (Finance) (Performance), Ministry of Finance	2	Mr Kenneth Yap	Chief Executive, ACRA	3	Mr Sajjad Akhtar*	Chairman, PKF International	4	Mr Adrian Chan	Head of Corporate Department & Senior Partner, Lee & Lee Advocates & Solicitors	5	Mr Muthukrishnan Ramaswami	President, Singapore Exchange Limited
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<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this Member Profile, the audit profession does not include an individual who is a CPA, Chartered Accountant, or holder of another equivalent qualification, as long as this individual is not employed by or affiliated to a registered audit firm, nor employed by or affiliated to of a professional accountancy body, nor employed by or affiliated to bodies or entities associated with the audit profession.



	6	Mr Ho Meng Kit	Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Business Federation
	7	Professor Ho Yew Kee	Vice Dean (Finance and Administration), NUS Business School
	8	Mr Lee Boon Ngiap	Assistant Managing Director (Capital Markets), Monetary Authority of Singapore
	9	Mr Max Loh Khum Whai*	Managing Partner, Ernst & Young (Asean and Singapore)
	10	Ms Chandra Mallika	Group Chief Operating Officer, Asia Pacific, Deutsche Bank AG, Singapore Branch
	11	Mr Alan Rupert Nisbet	Company Director
	12	Mr Ow Fook Chuen	Accountant-General, Accountant-General's Department
	13	Professor Tan Cheng Han	Professor, Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore
	14	Mr Yap Chee Keong	Chairman & Director, NetLink Trust
	15	Mr Tham Sai Choy*	Chairman, KPMG Asia Pacific
	16	Ms Melissa Khoo Ming	Director (Strategic Planning & Futures), Strategy Group, Prime Minister's Office
<p>A committee comprising ACRA Board Members called the Public Accountants Oversight Committee (PAOC) is appointed to assist the ACRA Board with matters relating to the regulation of public accountants. The PAOC is responsible for registering, monitoring and disciplining public accountants and their public accounting entities, as well as prescribing the code of ethics, professional conduct and other standards applied by public accountants when providing public accountancy services<sup>3</sup>. ACRA ensures the PAOC is independent from the</p>			

<sup>3</sup> "Public accountancy services" means the audit and reporting on financial statements and the doing of such other acts that are required by any written law to be done by a public accountant.



audit profession by ensuring that the Chairman of PAOC as well as a majority of PAOC members are non-practitioners.

PAOC Members (as at 31 December 2016)

**3 Audit Practitioners (denoted \*); 4 Non-Audit Practitioners**

No.	Name	Designation
1	Professor Tan Cheng Han (Chairman)	Professor, Faculty of Law National University of Singapore
2	Mr Sajjad Akhtar*	Chairman, PKF International
3	Mr Ow Fook Chuen	Accountant-General Accountant-General's Department
4	Mr Alan Rupert Nisbet	Company Director
5	Mr Max Loh Khum Whai*	Managing Partner, Asean and Singapore Ernst & Young
6	Mr Yap Chee Keong	Chairman & Director NetLink Trust
7	Mr Tham Sai Choy*	Chairman, KPMG Asia Pacific

**3.2 What are the eligibility criteria / requirements and composition requirements for the members of the governing body?**

The Accountants Act provides that at least one member of the PAOC shall be an public accountant. ACRA ensures the PAOC's independence from the audit profession by ensuring that the majority of PAOC comprise non-audit practitioners. Further, the Chairman of the PAOC is independent from the audit profession and not a public accountant.

**3.3. Is each member of the governing body independent from the audit profession? The audit profession includes, for example: audit firms, professional accountancy bodies and bodies or entities associated with the audit profession.<sup>4</sup>**

Yes                       No

**3.4 If the answer to question 3.3 is "No", is the majority of the members of the governing body non-practitioner?**

Yes                       No

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



	<p><b>3.5 If the answer to question 3.3 is “No”, which safeguards are in place to provide for the Member’s overall independence from the audit profession?</b></p> <p>As a general principle, ACRA Board members are required to declare all interests such as directorships and external committee appointments upon their appointments by ACRA and from time to time (arising from changes in appointments). They will also be recused from meetings / agenda items which they are deemed to have conflict of interest.</p> <p>At the PAOC level (the deciding authority on audit regulatory and oversight matters), our Accountants Act provides that at least one member of the PAOC shall be a public accountant. Independence is safeguarded with ACRA ensuring that the majority of the PAOC comprises non-practitioners. Further, the Chairman of the PAOC is independent from the profession and not a public accountant. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chairman of the PAOC shall have a casting vote.</p> <hr/> <p><b>3.6 Is there a restriction or recusal process that is applicable to members of the governing body of the Member who are current or former auditors/practitioners?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes                      <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><b>Does this include a “cooling-off” period for former auditors?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes                      <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><b>If yes to either of the above, please describe:</b></p> <p>Members who are public accountants or former public accountants are recused from meetings / agenda items which they are deemed to have potential conflict of interest (e.g. deliberation of audit inspections of their own / previous firms).</p>
	<p><b>3.7 Other than the governing body, are members of the profession involved in the Member’s organization (e.g., in a management or inspection function)?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes                      <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><b>If yes, please describe their role with an appropriate level of detail:</b></p> <p>The inspection of public accountants in the non-listed segment is performed by inspectors who are employed by Institute of Singapore Chartered Accountants (ISCA).</p>



	<p>Under the oversight of ACRA. The same authority (PAOC) approves the appointment of these inspectors and decides on the outcomes of inspections in this segment. Hence, the same benchmark of compliance with the auditing standards is maintained across all inspections.</p>
<p><b>4. Funding Arrangements</b></p>	<p><b>4.1 Describe the main funding arrangements of the Member, including the setting and approval of the budget and the fees, if any:</b></p> <p>ACRA is a statutory body established by Act of Parliament. The composition of funds and property of ACRA is set out in section 13 of the ACRA Act. In practice, ACRA is self-funding. Its main sources of income are from statutory fees payable under the Acts administered by ACRA (including filing and registration fees for business entities and from provision of information services related to such entities).</p> <p>On the setting and approval of budget, ACRA's finance department will first seek inputs from the various departments. Following which, the finance department will seek ACRA's Board approval for the overall budget. Once approved, ACRA's parent ministry (Singapore's Ministry of Finance) will be informed of this budget, which will be gazetted as a public announcement.</p> <hr/> <p><b>4.2 Is the funding free from undue influence by the profession?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes                      <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><b>Please describe with an appropriate level of detail the safeguards in place to prevent undue influence by the profession:</b></p> <p>Whilst ACRA recovers fees from audit inspections (charged to the public accounting entities), the fees received are well below inspection costs incurred. Together with the registration fees of public accountants and public accounting entities, they also form an insignificant proportion of ACRA's funding. Hence, ACRA's funding is not reliant on, and cannot be reasonably influenced by the audit profession.</p>
<p><b>5. Inspection System</b></p>	<p><b>5.1 Does the Member have the responsibility for recurring inspections of audit firms undertaking audits of public interest entities (PIEs)?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes                      <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>



	<p><b>5.2 Is this responsibility undertaken directly or through oversight of inspection conducted by another organization?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Directly                      <input type="checkbox"/> Through Oversight</p> <p>If through oversight of another organization, please describe with an appropriate level of detail the other organization, its relation to the Member, its role, and the arrangements for oversight:</p> <hr/> <p><b>5.3 Please describe with an appropriate level of detail the requirements and practices regarding the frequency of inspections:</b></p> <p>Public accounting entities with a client portfolio of more than 10% share of the market capitalisation of listed companies in Singapore will be inspected annually. These are typically the Big-4 audit firms. Other public accounting entities that audit PIEs will typically be inspected once every three years, unless a previous inspection result had not been satisfactory in which case, the following inspection may be brought forward.</p>
<b>6. Audit and Financial Market</b>	
<p><b>6. Audit and Financial Market</b></p>	<p><b>6.1 Provide the number of audit firms subject to inspections. Include an indication of the number of public interest audits (PIEs) and other audits that fall under the Member's oversight or mandate.</b></p> <p>Number of registered public accounting entities and public accountants (as at 31 March 2016)          PIE segment: 16 public accounting entities (338 public accountants)          Non-PIE segment: 673 public accounting entities (738 public accountants)</p> <p>As at 31 December 2015, there were 767 entities listed with the Singapore Stock Exchange.</p> <hr/> <p><b>6.2 What are the sizes and market shares of each of the largest audit firms in the Member's jurisdiction?</b></p> <p>The Big-4 audit firms collectively audit approximately 60% of the 767 entities listed on the Singapore Exchange as at 31 December 2015 (representing about 60% of the total market capitalisation of \$905 billion).</p>
<b>7. Main Other Responsibilities of the Member within the area of Audit Oversight</b>	
<p><b>7. Main Other Responsibilities of the Member within the area of Audit Oversight</b></p>	<p><b>7.1 Please indicate whether the Member has responsibility for tasks other than Inspections within the area of Audit Oversight:</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Registration/Licensing  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audit and/or Ethics Standard Setting  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Permanent Education of Auditors</p>



	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Enforcement</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other:</b> _____</p> <p>Besides administering audit inspections, ACRA's statutory responsibilities in respect of audit oversight include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Considering all applications for the registration of public accountants;</li><li>• Determining, prescribing and reviewing the requirements to be satisfied by people seeking to be registered as public accountants;</li><li>• Approving of accounting corporations, accounting firms, and accounting limited liability partnerships;</li><li>• Administering the continuing professional education programmes for public accountants;</li><li>• Determining, prescribing and reviewing the codes of professional conduct and ethics for public accountants and the standards, methods and procedures to be applied by public accountants when providing public accountancy services;</li><li>• Inquiring into any complaint, or information relating to any professional misconduct, against any public accountant, accounting corporation, accounting firm or accounting limited liability partnership, and, if necessary, institute disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the Accountants Act; and</li><li>• Advising ACRA on any matter which relates to the profession of public accountancy.</li></ul>
	<p><b>7.2 If the Member has the responsibility for <u>Registration/Licensing</u>, please indicate whether this responsibility is undertaken directly or through oversight of Registration/Licensing conducted by another organization?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Directly</b>                      <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Through Oversight</b></p> <p><b>If directly, please describe the responsibility with an appropriate level of detail. If through oversight, please indicate the name of the other organization and its composition (i.e. whether practitioners from the audit profession<sup>5</sup> are involved in decision-making). Also give a description of the powers of the other organization and procedure applied, as well as the role of the Member in these procedures.</b></p> <p>All public accountants and public accounting entities seeking to provide public accountancy services are required to register with ACRA.</p>

<sup>5</sup> For the purpose of this Member Profile, the audit profession does not include an individual who is a CPA, Chartered Accountant, or holder of another equivalent qualification, as long as this individual is not employed by or affiliated to a registered audit firm, nor employed by or affiliated to of a professional accountancy body, nor employed by or affiliated to bodies or entities associated with the audit profession.



	<p>To register as a public accountant, an applicant has to satisfy prescribed requirements relating to qualifications, practical experience, continuing professional education and membership of ISCA.</p> <p>The general requirements for the setting up public accounting entities in Singapore include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) One of the primary objects of the entity must be to provide public accountancy services.</li><li>b) The business of the partnership/corporation so far as it relates to the supply of public accountancy in Singapore must be under the control and management of one or more partners/directors who are ordinarily resident in Singapore.</li><li>c) At least two-thirds of the partners/directors must be public accountants (if the partnership/corporation has two partners/directors, then one of those partners/directors must be a public accountant).</li></ul> <p>ACRA's PAOC approves the applications for registration of public accountants and public accounting entities. The structure and composition of ACRA's PAOC is as provided in Section 3 above.</p> <p><b>7.3 If the Member has the responsibility for <u>Audit and/or Ethics Standard Setting</u>, please indicate whether this responsibility is undertaken directly or through oversight of Audit and/or Ethics Standard Setting conducted by another organization?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Directly (Ethics)      <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Through Oversight (Audit)</p> <p><b>If directly, please describe the responsibility with an appropriate level of detail. If through oversight, please indicate the name of the other organization and its composition (i.e. whether practitioners from the audit profession<sup>6</sup> are involved in decision-making). Also give a description of the powers of the other organization and procedures applied, as well as the role of the Member in these procedures.</b></p> <p>The auditing standard-setter is the Institute of Singapore Chartered Accountants (Singapore's national accountancy professional body). Prior to standards' issuance by ISCA, all auditing and assurance standards are submitted to ACRA's PAOC for approval. For the purpose of administering ACRA's audit inspection programme, ACRA adopts the Singapore Standards on Auditing (SSAs) issued by ISCA as the standards upon which the public accountant's audit work will be assessed. The SSAs are substantially the same as International Standards on Auditing, with modifications made in exceptional cases (e.g. to conform with local legislative requirements).</p>
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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.





	<p>If through referral, please indicate the name of the other organization and its composition (i.e. whether practitioners from the audit profession<sup>8</sup> are involved in decision-making). Also give a description of the enforcement powers of the other organization and procedures applied, as well as the role of the Member in these procedures.</p> <p>-nil-</p> <hr/> <p><b>7.6 If the Member has the responsibility for other tasks within the area of Audit Oversight, please describe with an appropriate level of detail:</b></p> <p>-nil-</p>
<p><b>8. Main Other Responsibilities of the Member <u>outside</u> the area of Audit Oversight</b></p>	<p><b>8.1 Please describe with an appropriate level of detail whether the Member has responsibility for tasks outside the area of audit oversight such as Supervision of Financial Reporting or Securities Regulation:</b></p> <p>Besides audit regulation, ACRA is the national regulator of businesses, companies and corporate service providers in Singapore. Generally, ACRA's functions are set out in section 6 of the ACRA Act. These include the administering the following Acts (aside from the Accountants Act):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Names Registration Act;</li> <li>• Companies Act;</li> <li>• Limited Liability Partnerships Act; and</li> <li>• Limited Partnerships Act.</li> </ul> <p>In relation to financial reporting, ACRA enforces director's compliance to lay at annual general meetings financial statements that comply with the prescribed accounting standards in Singapore. To fulfill this role, ACRA administers the Financial Reporting Surveillance Programme, under which, ACRA reviews selected financial statements of mainly listed companies for compliance with the prescribed accounting standards in Singapore.</p>
<p><b>9. Major Events and Activities</b></p>	<p><b>9.1 Describe any recent major events and activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In August 2016, ACRA published a report on a study which gathered investors' views on financial reporting, audit and corporate governance. The objective of study is to raise investors' demand and awareness for quality financial statements and audits. The study surveyed over 200 retail and institutional investors, with a focus group discussion to gather deeper insights into these matters. The report is accessible at the following link: <a href="https://www.acra.gov.sg/Into_the_Minds_of_Investors/">https://www.acra.gov.sg/Into_the_Minds_of_Investors/</a></li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.



- In August 2016, ACRA released its 10<sup>th</sup> Practice Monitoring Programme Public Report, summarising the findings from audit inspections concluded from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 as well as trends over the last 10 years. The report is accessible at the following link:  
[https://www.acra.gov.sg/Publications/Reports/Practice\\_Monitoring\\_Programme\\_Public\\_Reports/](https://www.acra.gov.sg/Publications/Reports/Practice_Monitoring_Programme_Public_Reports/)
- In August 2016, ACRA announced six targets for audit quality indicators (AQIs). This is a follow-up to ACRA's AQIs disclosure framework launched in October 2015. The targets were introduced to provide public accounting entities and audit committees with a common yardstick to compare audit quality.
- In January 2017, ACRA held the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Audit Committee Seminar, in collaboration with the national stock exchange, Singapore Exchange (SGX) and the national association of directors, Singapore Institute of Directors (SID). Attended by over 550 audit committee members and senior management of listed companies, the seminar brought regulators and industry experts together to share the latest in audit and financial reporting regulatory developments. In conjunction with the seminar, an Audit Committee Guide covering key concepts, principles and approaches relating to duties and responsibilities of audit committees was launched at the seminar. A Mini-Guide focusing on things, to which the Audit Committee needs to focus on for FY2017, was also shared.

