

APEC Guidelines for Promoting Cross-Fora Collaboration

Preliminary

APEC Leaders' continue to underscore the importance of cross-fora collaboration in achieving its core goals of Regional Economic Integration; open trade and investment; business facilitation; connectivity; human security; and economic and technical cooperation.¹

In seeking to actively foster cross fora collaboration, APEC equally looks to ensure that fora activities and targets continue to be delivered in an efficient and effective manner. Hence, the importance in ensuring more deliberate and guided measures for cross-fora collaboration.

Purpose

The APEC Guidelines for promoting Cross Fora Collaboration (“the Guidelines”) streamlines ongoing efforts to promote cross-fora collaboration and provide, as a bare minimum, some standard measures and considerations for APEC fora to take account of and apply, as they seek to effectively engage in activities and advance work in their own specific areas, while at the same time remain cognizant of work undertaken in other working groups and fora.

These Guidelines seek to complement various elements of cross-fora collaboration contained in existing principles and practices such as the *APEC’s Framework on ECOTECH Principles* (1996 & 2012) and the *APEC Capacity Building Policy 2015*, amongst others. It also identifies further elements of cross-fora collaboration requiring operational guidance, such as co-endorsement processes, cross-committee collaboration, joint implementation of projects, in addition to other issues which are pertinent in ensuring successful collaboration amongst fora in APEC.

Scope

The Guidelines apply to cross-fora collaboration activities within Fora, and have an added focus on issues pertaining to collaborating across committees and the Fora that fall under each.

Key Terminology

For the purposes of the Guidelines –

“*Co-endorsement*” means endorsement of APEC projects by more than one APEC Fora. Refer to paragraph 6.0 of these Guidelines.

“*Cross-Fora issues and activities*” refer to issues and activities that are cross-cutting in nature, or that may be of interest or concern to more than one APEC Fora.

¹ APEC Leaders' Statement 2015 – Manila, Philippines: “We are pleased with the joint efforts and progress made in improving the delivery of capacity building and cross-fora collaboration among working groups and fora.

“*Cross-Fora Collaboration*” refers to coordination amongst APEC Fora on cross-cutting issues and activities, which includes, but is not limited to, joint projects, information sharing, joint meetings, joint reporting, and other examples of cross-fora outreach.

“*Joint Projects*” refer to APEC projects endorsed and implemented by more than one APEC Fora.

Guiding Principles

- Building a **Culture of Collaboration** amongst APEC Fora;
- Encouraging **Diversity in Views** on cross-cutting issues;
- **Multi-disciplinary Approaches** to discussing issues and finding solutions;
- Promoting **open dialogue** and **free exchange of information**;
- **Optimization of Resources** in progressing APEC Work.

1.0 Identifying cross-fora initiatives

- 1.1. Fora should endeavour to identify, where practicable, cross-fora issues and activities, and seek to effectively coordinate and communicate potential or ongoing activities with the fora concerned.
- 1.2. Fora may undertake to initiate cross-fora collaboration; or may jointly determine with other Fora, opportunities for collaboration; or under strategic direction at Committee level (where applicable), Senior Officials, or higher-level policy direction including from Ministers and Leaders.

2.0 Intra-fora coordination and strategic planning

- 2.1. Fora are encouraged to discuss within their groups, potential collaboration on issues and activities concerning their respective mandates and innovative approaches to better coordinating these matters.
- 2.2. In the planning and administration of annual and multi-year activities, fora may identify within its own work plans and strategic plans, cross-fora issues and activities that may involve or require collaboration with other APEC Fora and how these will be pursued.
- 2.4. Fora are generally encouraged to cross-reference joint efforts with other fora when drafting and amending key fora strategic documents.
- 2.5. The APEC Secretariat shall assist fora in identifying and referencing cross-fora issues and activities in fora strategic planning.

3.0 Inter-Fora Coordination and Information Sharing

- 3.1 Fora should be encouraged to coordinate amongst themselves, and initiate and maintain dialogue on cross-fora issues and activities. This may include reporting and sharing of information.
- 3.2 Fora are encouraged to utilize the APEC website and other electronic platforms to effectively enhance sharing of information on cross-fora issues and activities, in accordance with the APEC Publication Guidelines.
- 3.3 Fora leads play an important role in ensuring coordination between fora where synergies have been identified, and to nurture discussions on existing and potential cross-fora collaboration in line with the *revised Guidelines for Lead Shepherds and Chairs of APEC Working Groups and SOM Task Forces*.
- 3.4 Fora leads are encouraged to actively pursue cross-fora issues and activities through reporting at other fora meetings, with particular focus on discussing issues relating to the implementation of cross-fora issues or activities, and how each fora is being engaged in the implementation of such activities and the sharing of benefits from these activities and initiatives.
- 3.5 Reporting and sharing of information across committees and the fora under each of these committees, is encouraged. As a minimum, sub-fora must ensure to report to the committees on their cross-fora issues and activities being pursued at the technical level, and/or seek committee level approval on pertinent issues relating to the mandates of the committees which may impact their work. Where there is any doubt as to whether a cross-fora issue or activity requires committee level approval, guidance shall be provided by the committee at appropriate times.

4.0 Joint Meetings

- 4.1 Joint meetings between Fora are encouraged based on cross-fora issues and activities identified by them
- 4.2 Fora leads may facilitate joint meetings, as and where necessary, based on the fora core mandates and key fora activities. Fora leads should remain cognizant of and remind the Fora of APEC's overarching core objectives, and the value that cross-fora collaboration may add.
- 4.3 Fora shall determine the arrangements for joint meetings, and shall promote the rational use of resources and the full maximization of hosting joint meetings.
- 4.4 The SCE-COW process should be utilized as an effective means to promote cross-fora collaboration, through the promotion of dialogue between SCE Fora, and where appropriate and necessary, dialogue with other committees.

5.0 Remote Participation

- 5.1 Mindful of the costs involved in convening face-to-face meetings, Fora are urged to take full advantage of remote participation facilities to facilitate interactions at meetings between the Fora and representatives from other APEC Fora.

5.2 Where practicable, remote participation may be facilitated through the APEC Secretariat in accordance with the *Remote Participation Governance Guidelines in APEC*.

6.0 Project Collaboration

6.1 Fora are encouraged to pursue cross-fora collaboration so that diverse views can be shared and the benefits from the output can be widely experienced.

6.2 Early engagement in the designing of projects is strongly encouraged. Fora should seek collaboration on projects, where appropriate and necessary, to optimize gains from APEC funding.

6.3 As a minimum, early engagement should involve:

- (a) sharing of concept notes for information purposes, where the proposed project seeks to address certain elements of a cross-fora issue or activity which mostly concern the originating fora.
- (b) developing joint projects on cross-cutting issues for consideration of the fora concerned.

6.4 Where a joint project is being proposed, endorsement must be sought from the fora concerned, in addition to the endorsement of the originating fora. Such endorsement should be in line with the respective foras' agreed processes and the terms of reference for the funding source.

6.5 Concept notes must clearly distinguish between a "joint-project" and a project that has been shared with other fora for information purposes

6.6 The Concept Note must outline the way, or ways, in which cross-fora collaboration will be undertaken. For example, if the project will be implemented jointly, then the roles of each fora should be outlined. Project overseers should be prepared to provide greater detail regarding implementation arrangements at the project proposal stage.

6.7 Strong cross-fora collaboration in projects is identifiable by the following indicators:

- (i) Evidence of the necessary endorsement from the fora concerned (where applicable), and the level of involvement of other fora in the initiative (that is, whether it is joint-project or otherwise);
- (ii) Relevance of the initiative/project to the work of the fora concerned;
- (iii) Clear articulation of the sharing of benefits and output from the proposed initiative amongst the fora concerned;
- (iv) A strong identification of the cross-fora issue being addressed and its importance towards achieving APEC's goals and objectives, and annual theme and priorities;
- (v) Other considerations which demonstrate the need for cross-fora collaboration.

6.8 Self-funded projects should indicate whether the project is a joint-project, or a project that has been shared with other fora for information purposes. Where the agreed processes or terms of reference of the fora require, the relevant endorsement should be sought. As a bare

minimum, self-funded projects demonstrating cross-fora collaboration should seek early engagement, and should as best as possible, indicate elements identified under sub-paragraph 6.7.

7.0 Cross-Fora Mapping Exercise

7.1 As an effective tool for promoting cross-fora collaboration, cross-cutting maps may be developed annually to effectively illustrate synergies in relation to:

- (a) thematic discussions in APEC;
- (b) cross-fora issues;
- (c) host year priorities;
- (d) global issues which have been determined to be relevant to APEC; and
- (e) other issues or initiatives based on high-level directions.

7.2 The APEC Secretariat shall be responsible for the development of cross-cutting maps and related activities.

8.0 Economy Focal Point Coordination

8.1 Coordination between economy focal points is critical for strengthening cross-fora collaboration.

8.2 Fora leads should encourage communication of joint efforts and cross-fora initiatives (ongoing or planned) between economy focal points, and to utilize these focal points in the promotion of cross-fora collaboration.

9.0 Administration of Guidelines

9.1 The monitoring of the implementation of these Guidelines shall be carried out at the Senior Officials' level, who shall also provide leadership on matters pertaining to cross-fora collaboration.

9.2 All APEC Fora are encouraged to report, through their respective reporting processes, progress and outcomes of cross-fora collaboration, and share ideas on how best to strengthen cross-fora collaboration.

9.3 Appropriate measures may be employed for the realization and enhancement of these Guidelines and shall be supported through the APEC Secretariat.

9.4 Fora are encouraged to observe these Guidelines in the conduct of their activities, and to continue to consider possibilities on enhancing cross-fora collaboration.