

## **SCE Report on Synergies within the ECOTECH Agenda 2018**

### **Background**

1. The SCE has tasked “the Secretariat to undertake a strategic assessment of synergies within the ECOTECH agenda after SOM1 and provide recommendations to SCE2 about gaps that may require SCE attention or direction” (point 7 of *SCE Report on Improving ECOTECH in APEC* (2013/SOM3/030)).
2. The first report by the APEC Secretariat (2014/SOM2/SCE/004) was submitted to the SCE2 in 2014. The second report was presented to the SCE2 in 2015.
3. As has been the case since 2016, the current version of the report is prepared and presented to the SCE Committee of the Whole Meeting (SCE-COW), in the view of helping to facilitate the discussion of cross-fora collaboration at the SCE-COW, given the attendance of sub-fora convenors or their representatives. It is also believed that the discussion of cross-fora collaboration early in the APEC year might have greater impact on the activities of the sub-fora throughout the year.
4. The 2018 report has been rationalised somewhat from recent versions. The current report does not include the tables attached to the previous versions which identified areas of potential cross-fora collaboration according to both sub-fora work plans and annual APEC priorities. For this specific information, one is invited to review the 2018 Work Plans of the SCE sub-fora, the template for which asks sub-fora to specify which other sub-fora or organisations it plans to collaborate with, and how. Similar reporting is sought in the template for annual Fora Reports submitted later in the APEC year.

### **Review of the annual work plans of the SCE fora**

5. The APEC Secretariat analysed fifteen (15) sub-fora work plans: ACTWG, ATCWG, CTWG, EGILAT, EPWG, EWG, HRDWG, MTF, OFWG, PPSTI, PPWE, TELWG and TWG submitted as of 1 March 2018 for approval at the SCE-COW; and draft work plans of HWG and SMEWG pending endorsement at the sub-fora level. The Secretariat analysis came to the following broad conclusions:
  - SCE sub-fora identified close to seventy areas of potential cross-fora collaboration, which represents a steady year-on-year increase.
  - Potential collaboration is being identified with other SCE sub-fora as well as with the sub-fora of the Economic Committee and the Committee on Trade and Investment.
  - The range of potential collaboration partners for each forum also appears fairly diverse, and often differs from project to project. Put another way, collaboration does not appear confined to the same or the more obvious partners.
  - A number of SCE sub-fora identify potential collaboration with external partners, including international and regional organisations such as the United Nations, World Bank, INTERPOL, International Energy Agency, ILO, WHO and OECD, or non-governmental organisations such as the Association of Pacific Rim Universities, Transparency International and The Nature Conservancy, to name but a few.

- Although the number and range of cross-fora collaboration opportunities appears to be increasing, work plans continue to include fairly modest details on the nature and extent of such collaboration.
- Although certain work plans have identified potential collaboration with ABAC and ASEAN, there likely is scope for more frequent collaboration with both entities, together with Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, given their respective roles within the broader APEC process.

### Discussion on how to promote cross-fora collaboration

6. At SCE3 in 2016, SCE members adopted eight recommendations to promote cross-fora collaboration (2016/SOM3/SCE/002):
  - a) *Make appropriate arrangements to facilitate more discussion on the cross-cutting issues and projects in the margins of the annual SCE-COW, including exploring possibilities of having themed discussions on specific cross-cutting areas under the lead of some fora convenors;*
  - b) *Request the APEC Secretariat to facilitate easier access to the annual work plans and other useful documents relevant for cross-cutting issues through centralized specific pages under ACS;*
  - c) *Create discussion boards on specific cross-cutting issues at the request of any SCE COW members on ACS and with the assistance from the APEC Secretariat;*
  - d) *Recommend the SOM to review the protocol on remote participation (2014/SOM2/035) with a view to enable APEC fora to easily utilize such IT facility as remote participation (i.e. Skype for Business) to engage with the other fora in certain circumstances;*
  - e) *Request the BMC Small Working Group to consider an approach to give further priorities to those cross-fora collaboration projects, which are of high priorities to APEC member economies, in the APEC funding approval process;*
  - f) *Encourage the CTI and EC representatives to participate in the SCE COW meeting and in other relevant occasions to discuss any cross-cutting issues in the margins of the SCE COW;*
  - g) *Encourage the fora to continue their efforts to coordinate across the fora through different avenues, including identifying specific areas for collaboration, holding multi-fora meetings or joint sessions in the margins of SOM meetings and using focal persons or Program Directors to coordinate with the other fora; and*
  - h) *Assess the fora on their efforts to collaborate or coordinate with the other fora, when the fora are subject to assessments.*
7. The SCE Chair and the Secretariat together with the SCE sub-fora have been implementing these recommendations since SCE3 of 2016. For instance, reforms have been introduced to the arrangements for the SCE-COW to facilitate the discussion of cross-fora issues and projects. In 2018, a thematic discussion focussed on key sub-fora deliverables and cross-fora opportunities is at the heart of the SCE-COW agenda. The Secretariat maintains all key documents of the SCE sub-fora (ie Terms of References, Strategic Plans, annual Work Plans and annual Fora Reports) on the APEC Collaboration System (ACS). Remote participation is being facilitated when requested, including in the context of 2018 SOM1 cluster meetings. Beginning in 2018, one of the criteria for scoring concept notes under the streamlined project approval process concerns cross-fora collaboration. The CTI and EC Chairs are routinely invited to attend the SCE-COW. We are witnessing an increasing number of joint or multi-group meetings during SOM clusters. The standardized fora assessment program to take effect in 2018 will measure data and indicators relating to cross-fora collaboration, among others.

8. In 2017, APEC Ministers welcomed the adoption of the *APEC Guidelines on Promoting Cross-Fora Collaboration*, which streamline existing best practices and highlight emerging issues in the view of encouraging more effective collaboration APEC-wide.
9. The one area which has witnessed modest progress is in the creation and use of discussion boards on the ACS to facilitate the exchange of information and inter-sessional discussions on cross-cutting issues. It is hoped that the increasing familiarisation with the ACS among sub-fora and member delegations will increase the prospects for its use toward this end.