Long-Term Evaluations of APEC Projects:

Final Report: Phase II

Pilot Evaluation of APEC Projects

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APERC	Asia Pacific Energy Research Center
BCP	Business Continuity Plan
BMC	Budget and Management Committee
CAP	Collective Action Plan
CTI	Committee on Trade and Investment
EC	Economic Committee
EGEDA	Expert Group on Energy & Data Bases
EPWG	Emergency Preparedness
EWG	Energy
FotC	Friends of the Chair
GRP	Good Regulatory Practice
IEE	Institute of Energy Economics
JODI	Joint Energy Data Inventory
LAISR	Leaders' Agenda to Implement Structural Reform
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
PO	Project Overseer
POC	Host economy point of contact
PD	APEC Project Director
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PREE	Peer Reviews of Energy Efficiency
RIA	Regulatory Impact Assessment
SCE	Steering Committee for ECOTECH
SCSC	Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance
SMEWG	Small and Medium Enterprise Working Group

Executive Summary

In line with trends towards more stringent measures of organizational effectiveness, APEC is working to introduce a rigorous monitoring and evaluation system to assess the effectiveness of APEC projects. Towards that end, the APEC Budget and Management Committee (BMC) endorsed an effort to establish a comprehensive evaluation framework for projects. As laid out in the BMC Discussion Paper, "Longer Term Evaluation of APEC Projects," APEC seeks to develop a more systematic evaluation framework to assess the impact of its capacity building projects, describing the two primary objectives for project-related evaluations as:

- To assess how collectively APEC projects contribute to the achievement of APEC capacity building objectives; and
- To assist in improving the results-orientation of APEC projects and decision making processes with the aim of improving the overall quality of APEC's interventions.

The immediate objective of the pilot evaluation was to: (i) to develop a project evaluation methodology and evaluation framework for systematic application to future APEC projects; and (ii) to test the feasibility of the proposed approach and provide resulting recommendations to the BMC. Within the limitations of a pilot, the evaluations also sought to provide initial insights into the performance of the streams of work covered. A methodological framework laid out in the paper "Long-Term Evaluations Of APEC Projects, Proposed Methodological Framework" was endorsed at the BMC 1 meeting in January 2013, and the BMC instructed that it should be piloted. This paper presents the results of that pilot (Phase 2) and recommendations on how APEC can generate information on program performance that would allow APEC to institutionalize rigorous evaluations and thereby improve the overall quality of its program portfolio.

The pilot evaluation focused on five sub-fora: the Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance; the Economic Committee; and the Emergency Preparedness, Energy, and Small and Medium Enterprise Working Groups. Under each sub-forum, 2-3 projects representing a "stream of work" were identified. Thus, a total of 16 projects were covered, representing a total budget allocation of approximately $1,260,000, and actual expenditures of $700,000.

The pilot used four standard evaluation criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. Data was drawn from a desk review of project documents and a survey of Project Overseers (POs) and project participants. A total of 147 respondents participated in the survey (9 POs and 138 participants), representing 14% of the total possible population which reportedly took part in the activities.[1]

The pilot exercise demonstrated that it is possible to more rigorously evaluate APEC activities and to generate quantitative data on program performance that would allow APEC to improve the overall quality of its project portfolio if this approach is institutionalized. However, the pilot evaluation encountered a

[1] According to project completion reports, approximately 960 participants took part in these projects. Of these, the evaluators were able to obtain contact information for 404. (Contact information for the remainder could not be obtained from host economy Points of Contact.) Approximately 10% of those addresses were no longer valid. The total response was 138 project participants (exclusive of POs). Thus, the sample constitutes 34% of those emailed and 14% of those who participated in the activities.

number of challenges that would need to be addressed to implement a future evaluation strategy that can provide more definitive assessments of program performance. These challenges included:

- There is an effort underway currently to develop strategic plans. Until recently, however, most sub-fora did not have strategic plans and instead were guided by annual workplans (for Working Groups) and Collective Action Plans (CAPs) for sub-fora under the Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI). In many cases, these documents focus on activities rather than priorities or intended outcomes. Where these documents lay out objectives, these tend to be very high level and broad (e.g., "align APEC economies domestic standards with international standards"), which allows APEC sub-fora to pursue activities that are consistent with but not material to the broad objective. The absence of tightly defined priorities makes it difficult to judge the level of relevance of activities. Most projects are being proposed as a result of anecdotal requests for training or a wish by the sponsoring economy to introduce a topic that is of interest to them without an objective means of verifying that the topic is of equal interest to others.

- The feasibility of assessing the aggregate impact of a cluster of capacity-building activities under a stream of work is limited by the fact that while multiple projects are being implemented on a similar topic, they often do not work towards a consistent, measurable objective. Consequently, while several projects might relate, for example, to food safety as an overarching goal, they focused on different aspects of that topic and could not be seen as jointly contributing in a measurable sense to "food safety" or a common intermediate output that could logically be linked to "food safety." Thus, even when projects relate to the same topic, they are often "one off" in nature.

- Projects commonly use broadly-defined project objectives (e.g., "sharing of best practices") that do not articulate in a measurable sense how practice, policy or behavior is expected to change as a result of the activity. As a result, evaluations are usually unable to determine whether objectives were met in a meaningful sense. In addition, there are no baseline data or general descriptions of what level of knowledge/capacity is assumed at baseline, which would allow a comparison of the *ex ante* and *ex post* situations.

- The APEC Secretariat has only incomplete information regarding project participants, such as names and official email addresses. The APEC Secretariat does not keep comprehensive records of project participants which made it difficult to identify and contact beneficiaries for the evaluation. Given that this evaluation was reviewing activities sometimes years after the conclusion of activities, it may not be surprising that such information was unavailable, but a serious evaluation framework will need to tap into such a database so that survey data can be more representative (based on a statistically significant sample) in future.

Making changes to support robust evaluations and institutionalize the kind of approach demonstrated below will require action by the Project Management Unit (PMU) and Project Overseers (POs) to amend current project design, project ranking, and reporting processes. Such amendments, described in the recommendations, will require action by most of the parties and individuals currently engaged in the delivery of APEC projects. This implies that the BMC and APEC Secretariat will need to encourage and possibly enforce such changes through its oversight and funding authorities.

As for the evaluations demonstrated in the pilot, projects were considered by sub-fora and as a group. Viewed in aggregate, the findings were positive in terms of relevance. Close to 100% of respondents across the projects felt that the activity they participated in was a priority or of interest to their economy. However, less than a quarter of respondents felt the projects addressed “top” priorities of their economy, suggesting there remains room for improvement. This is particularly true since this pilot selectively focused on streams of work that were considered of importance by Chairs.

Targeting of participants appears relatively effective, with over 75% of respondents saying the activity they joined addressed a core or occasional work responsibility. Nonetheless, less than 50% of respondents indicated that the topic of the training related to a core responsibility, indicating that POs in future should be encouraged to more clearly define the intended audience of their activity.

Findings related to the quality of trainings and the appropriateness of material was again quite positive, with nearly 90% of respondents finding the trainers above average or excellent. However, comments as to the appropriateness of the material were extremely mixed, highlighting the challenges in designing programs that are appropriate for developing and developed economies within APEC. In addition, actual application of material was somewhat problematic, with one in five (21%) respondents saying they rarely or never used what they had learned. Combined, these findings suggest the need for clear guidelines as to the intended audience for a particular activity. Broader coverage of activities by evaluations would establish a benchmark for improving portfolio quality over time.

Perhaps most importantly, 37% of respondents identified changes in policy or practices in their home institutions as a result of evaluated projects. This rate suggests that the programs are having impact on policies and practices that may be surprisingly high given the current profile of APEC projects, but still leaves open the question of the significance and sustainability of those changes.

Given the purposive sampling of projects and the very low response rates to the survey, these results cannot be considered representative or generalizable over the entire portfolio of APEC activities. The activities covered by the pilot evaluation were selected at least partly because they were expected to be able to generate information that could test the evaluation framework. The overall program portfolio presumably includes activities for which such information would not be available.

Recommendations to support systematic evaluations of projects in future include:

- As sub-fora develop their strategic plans, they should be encouraged to identify a limited number of priorities, rather than seeking to encapsulate all of the activities which have previously been in their workplans. In terms of impact and sustainability, the findings of this pilot evaluation suggest that fora may wish to prioritize policy, regulatory and procedural changes to improve systems and the “rules of the game” rather than focusing on the capacity building of specific individuals, as there may be high levels of staff turnover in certain Ministries/agencies. These strategic plans should be accompanied by the development of a logical framework which clearly shows the links between objectives, expected outcomes, and the inputs and outputs that are required to achieve those expected outcomes. The strategic plans should then direct which projects will be recommended for funding. The ability to improve prioritization of projects is affected by broader organizational issues, including the composition of the project trust funds, the Annual Funding Criteria, and the ranking system. These are outside the scope of this evaluation, but need to be assessed elsewhere to determine how conducive they are to successful projects that are highly relevant to APEC's core mandate;

- POs should be required to develop tailored indicators that are relevant to the project and focused on outcomes rather than outputs. Such indicators will be specific to each activity, but in every case will need to be objectively and transparently determined and quantitative in nature. Program Directors (PDs) and POs should be encouraged to collect baseline data that would allow measurements of improvements on these indicators. This may require needs assessments surveys of member economies that would also establish baseline policy or practices. Implementing these recommendations would require additional investment during the planning and post-project stages that may not be justified for one-off projects and thus increased investment in multi-year projects may better support a robust M&E framework. In addition, this new requirement will likely require assistance from the Secretariat, both PMU and PDs, especially in the early stages. The PMU may wish to consider developing a training module on M&E indicators in conjunction with its current trainings on project quality;

- APEC should encourage POs to improve targeting of participants (or beneficiaries), for example, by making more explicit the level of the intended audience and assumptions as to the *ex-ante* level of knowledge as well as the types of work responsibilities for the target audience. The findings of the pilot evaluation suggest that current practices of inviting APEC delegates on the sidelines of APEC meetings, while reducing travel costs, is unlikely to target the participants who are most likely to most value the opportunity. Given the nature of APEC's goals, designing projects to meet the needs of *specific* regulatory agencies and policy bodies in APEC economies, and then investing greater effort and resources in ensuring that the right people working in those agencies attend the programs, is more likely to be successful – and cost-effective - than more generalist topics attended by more generalist participants;

- The Secretariat should consider making it mandatory that completed and verified attendance lists or other means of identifying beneficiaries/participants are reported to the Secretariat- even for activities conducted in a host economy separate from a regular APEC meeting- and entered into the database[2], and should emphasize the importance of POs and participants responding to evaluation-related surveys. In addition, while self-funded projects were outside the scope of this exercise, the evaluators note that they are often used to introduce or continue activities in streams of work that also have APEC-funded projects. To the extent that APEC seeks to evaluate streams of work in future, expanding the APEC M&E framework to self-funded projects may be desirable; and

- The evaluation framework piloted here is recommended as being significantly more robust than the current practice of circulating feedback forms at the end of activities. Moreover, the evaluation framework would be even more robust were it introduced during the project design phase and recognized as integral to the implementation process, as some of the limitations experienced during the pilot exercise reflect the challenges of implementing evaluations *ex post* rather than weaknesses in the evaluation framework, *per se*. Should APEC stakeholders wish to have the kind of quantitative data provided below – which will allow the institution to benchmark

[2] The PMU is currently assessing how to improve its knowledge management systems and this could be addressed as part of that effort.

performance and measure progress over time – it is recommended that the BMC approve independent evaluations as a regular part of the M&E framework. Aspects that would need to be considered in institutionalizing evaluations would include scope, timing and cost-effectiveness as follows:

- The scope of the evaluation framework could be inclusive of all activities over a certain budget amount (perhaps $150,000) to ensure that all of the largest activities are evaluated, but could also include a random sample of projects below that budget threshold to encourage incorporation of M&E planning in all activities and to provide information regarding the effectiveness of smaller activities;
- Response rates will be improved if evaluations are conducted 6 months to one year after the activity took place, as long as the expected program impact can be reasonably expected to be manifested within that time period; and
- For cost-effectiveness purposes, APEC may also wish to combine project evaluations with the kind of sub-fora institutional evaluations currently being conducted by the Steering Committee for ECOTECH (SCE). While the latter focus primarily on management issues, those done to date have also included a general assessment of projects. The tools and methodology piloted here could be applied by those independent consultants to provide a more quantitative basis of assessment. However, the independent assessments currently only apply to Working Groups under SCE; sub-fora under CTI would need to be covered by some other evaluation mechanism.

I. INTRODUCTION

APEC supports a range of capacity-building projects to further the goals of trade and investment, regional economic integration, and economic and technical cooperation among its 21 member economies. APEC projects generally have relatively small budgets (averaging roughly US$100,000) and are short-term in nature, consisting mostly of one-off seminars or workshops, analytical and research studies, and the development of databases.[3] Member economies voluntarily contribute funds for APEC projects via a variety of trust funds; the amount in these trust funds fluctuates annually.[4] In addition, member economies may self-fund projects through direct contributions for activities of specific interest or relevance to the funder.

In line with trends towards more stringent measures of organizational effectiveness, APEC is working to introduce a rigorous monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approach to understand better the effectiveness of these projects. In 2010, the Budget and Management Committee (BMC) endorsed recommendations to develop an initial M&E framework, resulting in new program development and reporting requirements. The BMC now seeks to establish a comprehensive evaluation framework for projects that will be more rigorous than the self-evaluations currently conducted by the Project Overseers (POs) at the completion of projects. Towards that end, two consultants were engaged to propose an appropriate analytical framework and methodology (Phase 1, completed in January 2013) and subsequently pilot the agreed approach to demonstrate its relevance to APEC's structure of programming and its existing portfolio of activities (Phase 2). This paper presents the results of Phase 2.

The pilot evaluation focused on five sub-fora: the Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance (SCSC) under the APEC Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI); the Economic Committee (EC), which operates directly under the auspices of Senior Officials; and three Working Groups under the Steering Committee on ECOTECH (SCE) focusing on Emergency Preparedness (EPWG), Energy (EWG), and Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEWG). These sub-fora were selected, with generous agreement from their Chairs, because each conducts a large number of projects, making it possible to test the applicability of the proposed M&E methodology in a wider range of institutional contexts. Under each sub-forum, 2-3 projects representing a "stream of work" focused on a particular objective of the sub-forum and completed after 2009, were selected. Thus, a total of 16 projects are covered in this pilot evaluation, representing a total budget allocation by APEC of approximately $1,260,000.[5]

II. OBJECTIVE

As laid out in the BMC Discussion Paper, "Longer Term Evaluation of APEC Projects," APEC seeks to develop a more systematic evaluation framework to assess the impact of its capacity building projects.

[3] The importance of conducting more strategic, higher value, longer term projects was one of the key BMC project management reforms approved in 2010. BMC members approved a pilot phase of multi-year projects in 2010 that commenced in late 2011. A review of the pilot phase is scheduled for mid-2013.

[4] Projects may be funded through the Operational Account, the Trade and Investment Liberalization & Facilitation Special Account, or the APEC Support Fund and its sub-funds. The largest sub-fund, representing roughly half of available project funds in FY12, is dedicated to energy efficiency.

[5] Actual investment was approximately $700,000, representing roughly 44% of the overall projected budget as a result of cost savings or reduced program scope.

The two primary objectives for project-related evaluations are: to assess how collectively APEC projects contribute to the achievement of APEC capacity building objectives; and to assist in improving the results-orientation of APEC projects and decision-making processes with the aim of improving the overall quality of APEC's interventions. Evaluators therefore sought to assess the extent to which capacity-building assistance has resulted in policy and procedural changes within APEC economies. Possible impacts as described in or inferred from project planning documents included: attitudinal changes (affecting awareness, attitudes or perceptions towards particular issues), behavioral changes, policy changes at the domestic and international levels, and/or encouraged or facilitated discursive commitments. In no cases did these documents include explicit quantitative outcome targets as a result of the projects; in most cases, the absence of such *ex ante* performance targets makes it very difficult to determine whether the resulting outputs or impacts could be deemed a programmatic success.[6]

The immediate objectives of the pilot evaluation were: (i) to develop a project evaluation methodology and evaluation framework for systematic application to future APEC projects; and (ii) to test the feasibility of the proposed approach and provide resulting recommendations to the BMC. Some managers were hopeful that the piloted evaluations could also provide initial insights into the performance of the streams of work covered in the pilot evaluation.

III. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

The analytical framework included four standard evaluation criteria:

- Relevance – the degree to which specific activities are consistent with the overall goals of the organization; the stated strategy of the Working Group or Sub-Forum; and the degree to which specific activities are consistent with the programming context;
- Efficiency – the use of resources, including financial, institutional and professional, in the conduct of activities to achieve specific results;
- Effectiveness – the degree to which activities achieve their intended results; and
- Sustainability – the extent to which program achievements will be taken up and practiced by member economies in the future without further APEC resources (i.e., after the project is completed).

The objective of Phase 2 was to develop and test a methodology that would be broadly applicable to APEC projects for future replication. This informed the design of the pilot evaluations as follows:

- A range of sub-fora were included to demonstrate that the approach was appropriate for a wide range of subject areas, types of projects, and Chairs and Project Overseers from both developed and developing economies;

[6] This observation is a central finding and will be highlighted throughout the document. Given that few, if any, of these projects warrant a rigorous impact evaluation using experimental designs, such as randomized control trials, APEC will need to consider requiring explicit performance targets as part of the funding process to establish at least an objective and transparent internal evaluation process. Currently, such targets are not being provided by project designers, but the pilot evaluation does demonstrate that such information needs are not beyond the capacity of APEC member economies.

- Projects to be evaluated were selected from streams of work (i.e., a series of projects in the same subject area working towards a clearly defined objective of the sub-fora) rather than one-off stand-alone activities for two reasons: such activities were expected to have clearer documentation of program strategy and expected impacts; and evaluating multiple activities within a few work streams was expected to be more a cost-effective use of evaluation resources; and
- Survey instruments (questionnaires) were designed to be easy to administer and applicable to a range of APEC projects.[7]

After discussions with the APEC Secretariat and sub-forum Chairs, the evaluation focused on the 5 sub-fora and 6 streams of work, as shown in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: SAMPLE FRAMEWORK

Sub-forum	Stream of Work	Number of Projects	Total Possible Sample Size	Achieved Sample
Economic Committee (EC)	Regulatory Impact Assessment	3	662 (including 10 in-economy trainings)	57
Emergency Preparedness Working Group (EPWG)	Private sector preparedness	2	56	19
Energy Working Group (EWG)	1. Peer Review for Energy Efficiency	4	14 from 9 economies + 30 trainees in VN	6
	2. Energy Database and Analysis	3	85 trainees in INA, VN, & RP	11
Sub-Committee on Standards & Conformity (SCSC)	Scientific Methods for Food Safety	2	65	34
Small and Medium Enterprise Working Group (SMEWG)	Access to Global Markets	2	48	11
Total		**16**	**960**	**138**

NB: According to project completion reports, approximately 960 participants took part in the projects. Of these, the evaluators were able to obtain contact information for 404. (Contact information for the remainder could not be obtained from host economy Points of Contact.) Approximately 10% of those addresses were no longer valid

[7] If APEC moves forward to implement this evaluation framework, such post-program surveys should be tailored to better fit each activity.

and the total response was 138 project participants (exclusive of POs). Thus, the sample constitutes 34% of those emailed and 14% of those who participated in the activities. See Annex 2 for more detailed information.

The pilot evaluation used two methods of data collection:

- **Desk review of available documents.** These included sub-forum organizational documents, as available, including strategic plans, medium-term plans, annual workplans, Collective Action Plans (CAPs), and SCE Independent Assessments. In addition, for each of the projects, the concept papers, midterm progress reports, completion reports, project self-assessments and other reports being generated by the PMU's M&E system were reviewed. Only projects implemented after 2009 were considered as the monitoring system (and reporting requirements) were instituted in that year.

- **Survey of Project Overseers (POs) and project participants.** An online survey was administered to Project Overseers and trainees and/or workshop participants, or host economy point of contacts for reviews and studies. In each case, the number of respondents who could be contacted was much lower than the number of participants cited in completion reports because of missing or outdated information or inability to obtain contact lists from POs. The questionnaires are provided in Annex 1. A total of 147 respondents participated in the survey, comprising 9 POs and 138 participants.[8]

Limitations and Challenges Encountered During the Research

This pilot exercise had the primary objective of testing a methodology for a systematic approach to future evaluations. As such, the evaluation did not seek to comprehensively evaluate all the projects of any particular sub-forum, and instead focused on purposively selected projects. This approach and methodology was agreed by BMC members at BMC1 in January 2013 in Jakarta. The exercise, moreover, was important for identifying the gaps in information or other challenges that might impede future implementation of the evaluation framework. Indeed, the pilot evaluations described here are often limited exactly because important information was not provided in early project documents and plans were not made earlier to track participants and collect their responses months or years after the activities. Consequently, these pilot evaluations are able to provide some information regarding past performance, but they are particularly helpful in illuminating what will need to be done going forward to implement an evaluation strategy that can provide better and more definitive assessments of program performance.

The development of an overarching evaluation framework encountered two primary challenges. The first was in identifying which projects should be included in the pilot. The proposed evaluation framework sought to assess the aggregate impact of a collection or cluster of capacity-building activities under a particular work stream, sector or sub-sector. This was done to increase the efficiency of the evaluation, so that the cost of conducting the evaluation was commensurate with the investment in the projects. However, under closer examination of projects conducted by the sub-fora, the evaluators found that while multiple projects are commonly implemented on a similar topic, they often do not work towards a consistent measurable objective. Consequently, while several projects might relate, for example, to food safety as an overarching goal, they focused on different aspects of that topic and could not be seen as

[8] The survey received a total of 149 participant responses, of which 11 were rejected as incomplete or duplicate.

jointly contributing in a measurable sense to “food safety” or a common intermediate output that could logically be linked to “food safety.” In this sense, the evaluation found that most of the projects, even those that are characterized as elements of a common strategy, essentially constitute “one off” projects. The only exception to this pattern was found in the Energy Working Group (EWG) projects, where the goals, methodology and outputs are roughly similar year-to-year.

The second challenge was encountered in the effort to identify and contact respondents. Currently, the APEC Secretariat does not keep records (contact details including email addresses and phone numbers) of participants of trainings or workshops conducted in a particular host economy unless the participant received APEC support for travel to the workshop/training. The evaluators therefore sought to obtain participant lists directly from Project Overseers (PO) or the host economy Point of Contact (POC). This proved difficult, particularly for older projects going back to 2009 that were being covered by the pilot. In some cases, POCs, POs, or people within the relevant Ministry or Department to handle APEC affairs were no longer in the same position. Due to these challenges, it was not possible to identify participant lists for some trainings conducted in a host economy, and these were dropped from the pilot evaluation as a result. This applied to two trainings held in host economies on energy data collection under JODI and 6 of 10 trainings conducted last year on RIA.

In other cases, where multiple Ministries or Agencies had been invited to a training activity, often the POC was only able to supply contacts for their home Ministry. This meant that there were sometimes discrepancies between the numbers of participants reported in completion reports and the number of contacts that could be obtained. Such discrepancies were also caused where APEC had lists of travel eligible participants but not those from non-travel eligible economies. Selection bias among respondents, therefore, is another limitation of this pilot evaluation, as people who elected to respond may be motivated by higher than average levels of satisfaction, or conversely dissatisfaction, or other reasons, for example, respondents from the PO’ economy might be encouraged to respond to the survey at higher rates than others. All of these factors mean the final pool of respondents may not be representative of the total population which took part in the activities. Potential bias is heightened by the low response rates to the survey.

Even where contact information could be located, email addresses were sometimes no longer valid. For two projects, over 40% of addresses were found to be invalid. Overall, 10% of emails were no longer valid. Recommendations to reduce these challenges in future are presented in the recommendations below.

Thus the evaluation findings given in this report should be read with the understanding that there was selection bias in projects; selection bias in respondents; and a lack of any ex ante benchmarks for success on any of the 5 metrics.

IV. Findings by sub-forum

Background information and the evaluation findings are presented below, discussed by sub-forum.

A. Economic Committee (EC)

Introduction

The EC was established in 1994 and works to remove behind-the-border barriers to trade by promoting structural reform within APEC. The EC (like other forum outside of SCE) does not currently have a strategic plan or a medium-term workplan but is guided by the Leaders' Agenda to Implement Structural Reform (LAISR) that was endorsed by APEC Leaders in 2004. LAISR identifies five areas for structural policy reform: regulatory reform, competition policy, public sector governance, corporate governance, and strengthening economic and legal infrastructure. Sub-committees led by Friends of the Chair (FOtC) exist for each of these streams of work. The FotC propose workplans and update members on the status of ongoing or proposed projects at the regular meetings of the EC.

In collaboration with the EC Chair, regulatory impact assessment (RIA) was selected as the sub-stream of work to be the focus of this evaluation. Work on RIA is organized under the auspices of the FotC for Regulatory Reform Group.

RIA is seen as an important practice for enhancing the quality of economic governance in member economies by providing valuable information regarding the expected costs and benefits of policies and regulations under consideration. Many member economies already have some form of RIA required by law, but coverage may be incomplete and the quality of the practice also varies across and within economies, so the suggestion that some member economies could benefit from access to a training program aimed at improving the practice of RIA does not seem to be controversial.

The APEC Project grants for EC covered by this evaluation are shown in Table 2. Total planned APEC investment in these projects was $213,433 over three years.

TABLE 2: EC PROJECTS EVALUATED

Year	Project Name	APEC Funding[9]	Sponsor/ Co-sponsor	Project Number
2009	Workshop on Improving Public Consultation in the Rulemaking Process	$54,000	US/Indonesia, Japan	EC 04 2009A
2011	Using RIA to Improve the Transparency and Effectiveness in the Rulemaking Process	$58,000	US/Indonesia, Mexico, Viet Nam	EC 04 2010A
2012	Enhancing RIA within APEC	$101,500	Australia/Mexico, New Zealand, Russia	EC 02 2011A

The 2009 Workshop was attended by 22 participants. Outputs included case studies on public consultation in rulemaking practices in four APEC economies. While the emphasis of the workshop was on transparency, RIA featured prominently in the case studies. The objectives, per the project proposal, were to: "facilitate knowledge and information sharing," "foster understanding of legal, regulatory and administrative procedures" and "increase awareness of the benefits of public consultation."

The 2011 RIA project was intended explicitly to build on the 2009 workshop. The two-day training was attended by 43 participants from 17 economies. The objectives of the workshop were for "participants to

[9] Figures given in all tables are rounded. Funding amount is taken from the project proposals and does not reflect actual investment.

better understand RIA and its relevance," and "share approaches and practices to RIA in member economies."

The 2012 project consisted of a series of two-day, trainings conducted in 10 host economies. The trainings were conducted in the Russian Federation, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Hong Kong, China, Chinese Taipei, Viet Nam, Chile, and Peru. Altogether, per project documents, over 600 officials, academia, media and NGO representatives participated in this project. The objective of the training was to "encourage the development of better regulation," "build an understanding of RIA… to enhance domestic frameworks for best practice regulation," and "help economies develop evidence-based, transparent and participatory regulatory systems." Consequently, the evaluation approached the three projects as components of a coherent strategy aiming to enhance knowledge of RIA and the use of good regulatory practices.

SURVEY DATA

A total of 60 people, including the three POs, participated in the survey. This sample included 5 of 17 participants contacted for the "Workshop on Improving Public Consultation," and 9 of 40 participants of the "Using RIA Workshop." Of the 10 economies that participated in the "Enhancing RIA" trainings, Hong Kong, China, Peru, and Viet Nam circulated the survey to participants in their economies. In Peru, 9 of 52 contacted participants responded. In Viet Nam, 6 of 37 participants responded. Hong Kong, China circulated the survey to 18 participants and Chinese Taipei circulated the survey to 5 participants, all of whom responded.[10] Given the low response rates, the findings for "Enhancing RIA" are aggregated across economies as the training subject and delivery was relatively consistent (acknowledging attempts by the PO to tailor the training to the needs of individual economies). Evaluators were not able to obtain participant lists from the POCs for the other 6 economies which are therefore not included in the evaluation.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

Relevance

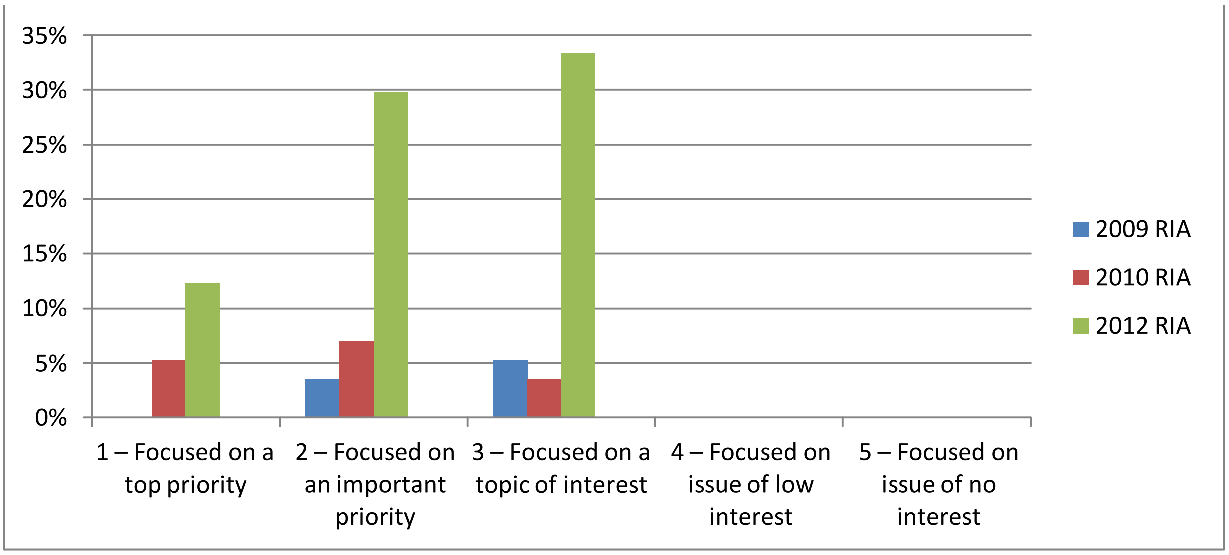
Per project documents, the importance of good regulatory practice (GRP) is affirmed in numerous APEC Leaders' statements, most recently at the Leader's Meeting in Honolulu in 2011, at which Leaders committed to taking specific steps to implement GRP, including RIA. Public consultation and transparency, the subject of the 2009 training, are also consistently cited, including in the Osaka Agenda. Responses by the POs also note that RIA was a priority of the US during its 2011 host year when one of the activities took place and a second was designed.

From the perspectives of participants, the perceived relevance of RIA trainings was somewhat mixed. Overall, 17% (10 of 57) of the respondents considered RIA trainings to address a top priority, with another 40% considering RIA an important priority. Combined, almost 3 out of 5 respondents reported

[10] There are significant discrepancies between the number of participants for whom contact information was available and the total number of participants per economy as reported in the project completion report. For example, the completion report cites 60 participants in the training in Hong Kong, China, 65 in the training in Chinese Taipei, and approximately 50 for Viet Nam (no figure is given for Peru). For this exercise, the difficulty in compiling consistent numbers and useful contact information helps highlight the need for proactive measures pre-implementation to ensure data can be collected after conclusion to enable proper evaluation.

fairly strong positive views of the relevance of the training. Further, the absence of *any* negative responses is compelling; no respondent selected the options “low” or “no interest.” However, the fact that 42% of the respondents indicated that the subject was only “of interest” suggests that further inquiry is warranted as to whether the project targeted the right participants or was delivered in places where there was little contemporary interest. Moreover, the absence of any benchmark here in the project planning document makes it hard to assess whether having almost 60% of participants acknowledging the high relevance of the program is “good enough” or not.

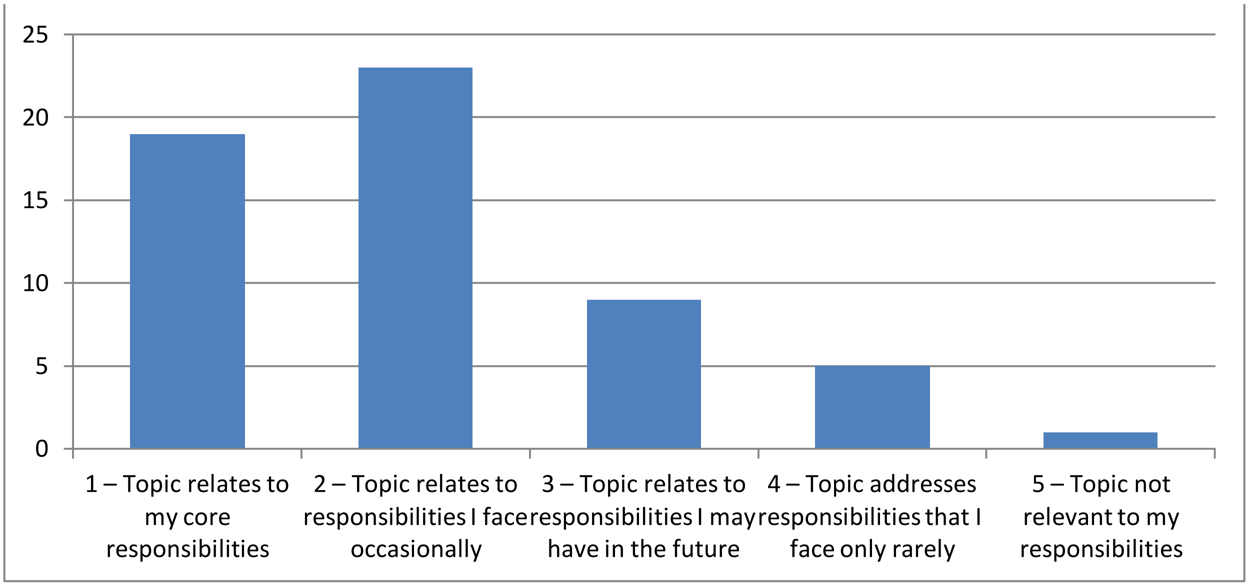
FIGURE 1: EC- DID THE WORKSHOP ADDRESS A PRIORITY OF YOUR ECONOMY?



Source: Online Survey. N = 5 for 2009; N = 9 for 2010; N = 43 for 2012.

Most participants (73%) stated that the training was related to their core or occasional responsibilities, as shown in Figure 2. Only one respondent said the topic was “not relevant” to their responsibilities. In terms of relevance, the responses are positive, but it is impossible to judge after the fact whether such numbers constitute success or not because project documents do not set out to achieve any specific targets as to how often organizers hoped the material would be applied.

FIGURE 2: EC- HOW RELEVANT WAS THE TRAINING TO YOUR CURRENT POSITION?



Source: Online Survey. N = 57 (5 for 2009; N = 9 for 2010; N = 43 for 2012).

Efficiency

The ability of APEC funds to leverage investment by the organizing economy can be seen as one measure of efficiency. The ratio of APEC funding to self-funding varied among the three projects. As budgeted in the proposals, the 2011/2012 Enhancing RIA in-economy trainings (EC 2 2011) were 75% APEC funded, whereas the 2010/2011 workshop (EC 4 2010) was 35% APEC-funded and the 2009 workshop on Public Consultation (EC 4 2009) was approximately 39% APEC-funded.

The cost per participant of conducting the workshops varied considerably. The 2009 workshop, which was conducted in Indonesia, cost approximately $1,300 per participant, while the 2010 workshop conducted on the sidelines of a SOM meeting cost $740 per person to deliver. The difference in unit price presumably reflects travel costs. The RIA trainings conducted in host economies cost only $133 per participant.[11]

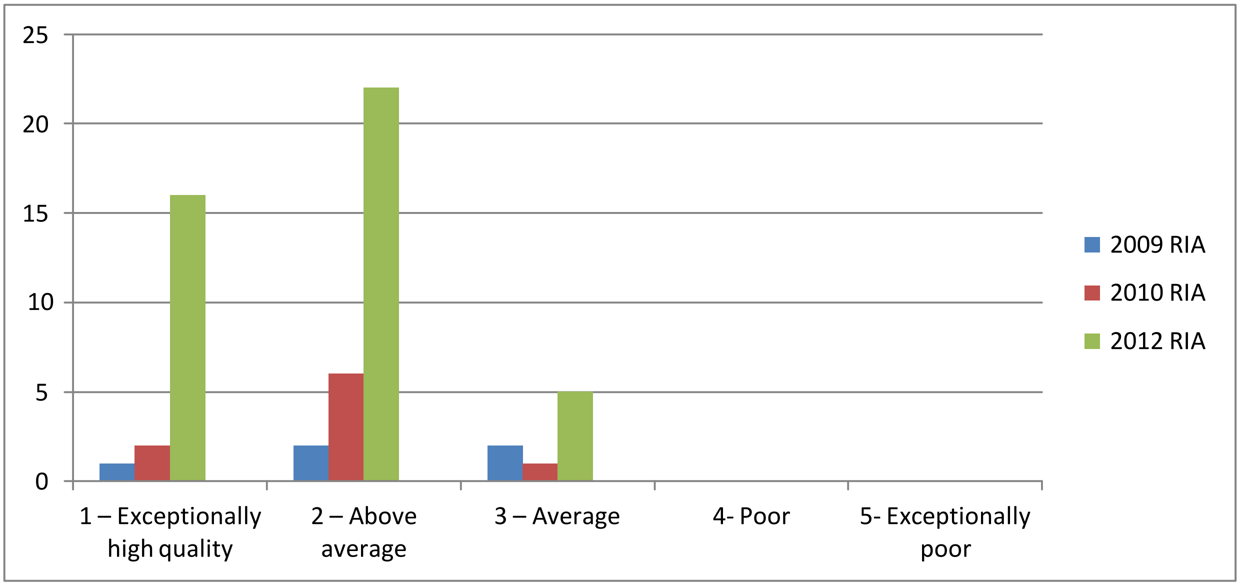
All three programs came in under budget (i.e., were implemented for less than the financial resources made available). The 2010 and 2009 trainings were 47% under-budget. Responses from the PO for the 2009 and 2010 trainings indicate that some of the under-spending may have been due to difficulty in attracting the budgeted numbers of participants. The 2012 Enhancing RIA trainings was 21% under budget. According to the PO for that project, savings were achieved by conducting back-to-back trips, thus reducing travel costs for trainers. The resulting savings were used to extend the trainings to two additional economies not originally in the proposal (Hong Kong, China and Chinese Taipei).

Effectiveness

[11] Cost-per-participant calculations throughout the report were made based on the number of participants reported in the completion reports and should be considered approximate.

Respondents were well satisfied with the quality of presenters, with 86% stating that they were "exceptional" or "above average" as shown in Figure 3. No respondents selected "poor" or "exceptionally poor."

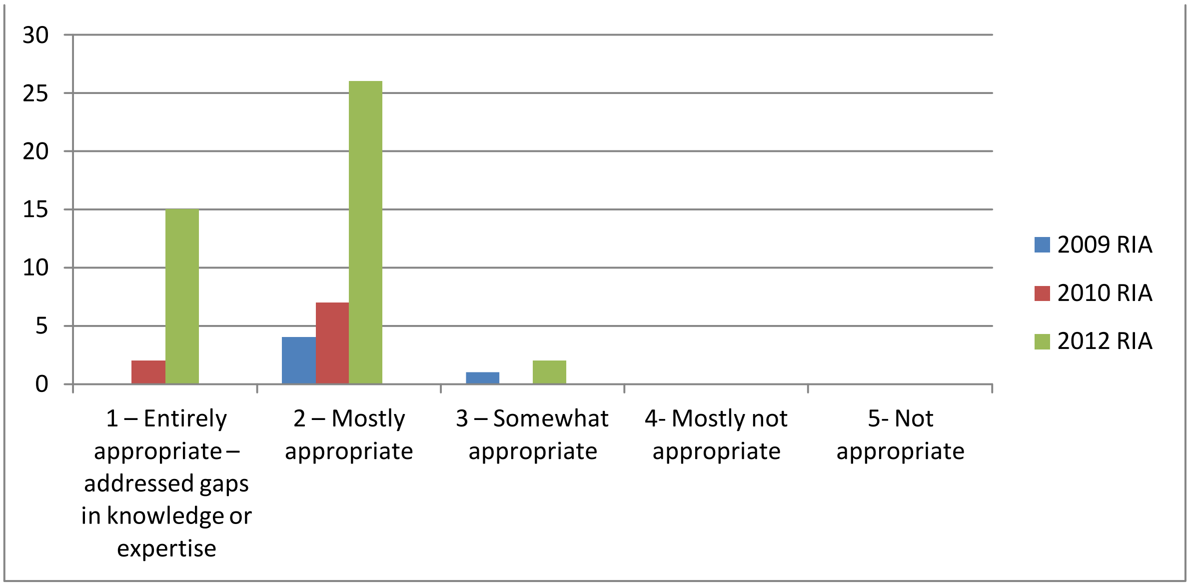
FIGURE 3: EC- HOW DO YOU RANK THE QUALITY OF THE PRESENTERS?



Source: Online Survey. N = 5 for 2009; N = 9 for 2010; N = 43 for 2012.

The majority of respondents (65%) felt the training material was "mostly appropriate," as shown in Figure 4. No respondents selected the options "mostly not appropriate" or "not appropriate." However, no participant in the 2009 workshop felt the material was entirely appropriate. Among the 25 respondents who commented on the nature of the material which was not entirely appropriate, 40% stated that the material was too basic, 32% indicated that the material wasn't entirely relevant, and 28% stated that some material was too technical. There was no discernible pattern to these responses. Indeed, the responses highlight that training materials developed for APEC audiences may always struggle to get the level right; given the diversity in the technical capacity across economies, some participants will almost always find the material too basic while others will find it too technical. Such a context makes it even more important to establish expectations upfront as to what level of suitability is expected for a program to be considered a success.

FIGURE 4: EC- WAS THE LEVEL OF THE TRAINING/WORKSHOP APPROPRIATE?

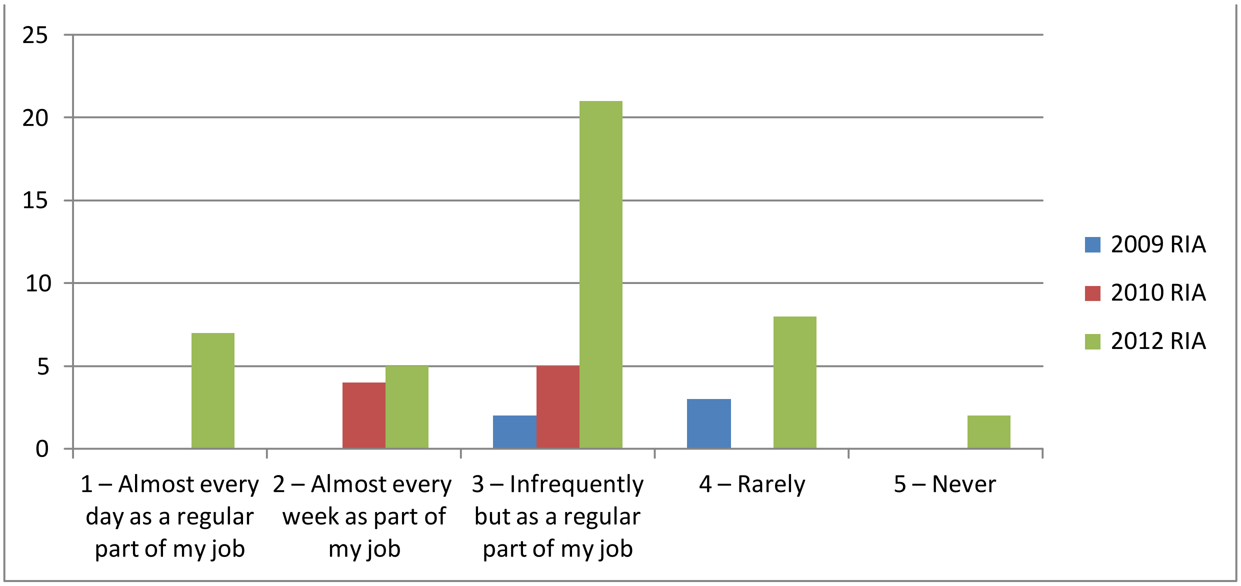


Source: Online Survey. N = 5 for 2009; N = 9 for 2010; N = 43 for 2012.

Respondents were asked whether they consulted any publications or materials resulting from the workshops. Eleven of 53 respondents (21%) selected "frequently" while roughly half (49%) selected "sometimes." These were primarily respondents from the RIA trainings in 2012. Only 13% of respondents (7 of 53) provided formal presentations of what they learned to colleagues after the training. Approximately 72% (38 of 53) discussed the workshop informally with colleagues. Again, this is predominately participants of the "Enhancing RIA" 2012 training. Given the stated objections of information and lesson sharing of the 2009 and 2010 RIA trainings, these findings indicate that information sharing did not extend far beyond the workshop itself.

Only 28% of respondents stated that they apply what they learned in the workshop "daily" or "weekly" as part of their work responsibilities, while nearly 23% of respondents (13 of 57) said they applied what they learned "rarely" or "never." Responses are shown in Figure 5.

FIGURE 5: EC - HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED IN THE WORKSHOP?



Source: Online Survey. N = 5 for 2009; N = 9 for 2010; N = 43 for 2012.

Examples that were given of how respondents are applying what they learned include:

> *"Our work is to evaluate regulations in order to avoid additional cost to companies and consumers that are greater than the benefits of the regulation ... To do that we use RIA tool partially, principally the part of the identification of the problem and the evaluation of the ways to achieve the solution."*

> *"I have applied the methodology of RIA to several bills discussed in Peru .... the RIA methodology [is a] more precise tool to assess such impact."*

> *"[I am] currently participating in the drafting of the new forestry and wildlife law ... [we] carefully reviewed the procedures in order to provide a mechanism for checking the legal origin and the chain of custody for the products, using tools that do not constitute technical barriers to trade or bureaucratic barriers."*

> *"When politician[s] demand relaxation based on some grey area of existing policy, I try to use RIA to examine the likely impacts of my proposed actions/options."*

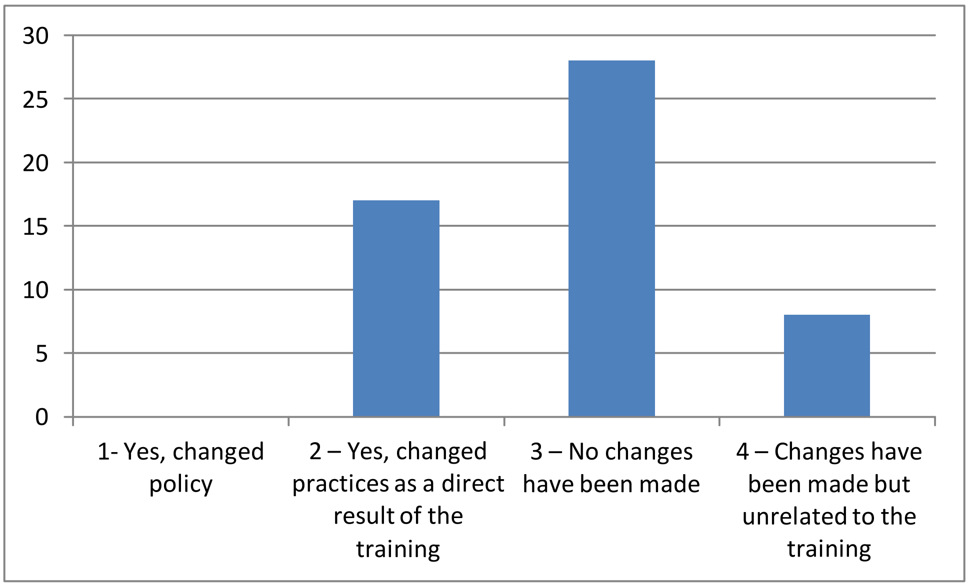
> *"In considering RIA institutional arrangements, experiences of other economies learnt in the workshop were taken as reference."*

> *"Working in the Inspections Bureau of the Police Service Quality Department required the study of issues of topical concerns impacting on the Force's professionalism and image. Very often, we need to adopt a collaborative stakeholder approach to deal with problems. The framework I learnt from the RIA course offers an easy and digestible approach to deal with and map out options and resolutions. The approach has become the lifeblood of my daily routine."*

Among respondents who stated that they are not applying what they learned, 4 of 6 responded that the material was not relevant to their work and the remaining 2 responded that they had not received direction from their management to apply the new techniques.

Beyond information and capacity gained by individual respondents, it appears that the 2010 and 2012 RIA workshops have also had some impact on changed practices, with 32% of respondents overall stating there had been changes in practices as a result of the workshops. No respondent selected "changes in policies as a direct result of the training."

FIGURE 6: EC- HAS THE TRAINING/WORKSHOP CHANGED THE WAY THAT YOUR DIVISION/DEPARTMENT OPERATES?



Source: Online Survey. N = 4 for 2009; N = 9 for 2010; N = 40 for 2012.

Sustainability

Among respondents who stated the topic was relevant to their core responsibilities (see Figure 2 above), 68% (13 of 19) held either permanent positions or expected to be in their posts for more than 5 years. The sustainability of capacity-building efforts therefore seems promising. On the other hand, the findings do not suggest significant sustained impact from the 2009 training as demonstrated by the reported lower levels of relevance and application of material learned.

B. Emergency Preparedness Working Group (EPWG)

Introduction

The EPWG supports APEC's human security agenda to "protect business, trade and economic growth from disruptions and strengthen the region's capacity to achieve a secure and resilient economic and social environment."[12] The EPWG is guided by the "Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Preparedness Response of the Asia Pacific from 2009-2015" and a medium-term plan which runs 2010-2015 and sets out the following goals:

[12] This section is based on information from the Medium-Term Workplan (2010-2015).

- Help political decision-makers in APEC better understand the costs of disaster and inaction;
- Identify gaps in regional disaster risk reduction approaches and deliver capacity building initiatives; and
- Develop practical mechanisms to help APEC economies build business and community resilience.

The EPWG priority areas are listed in the 2010-2015 workplan as:

- Business and community resilience;
- Public-private partnerships;
- Disaster risk reduction;
- Cooperation and coordination; and
- Preparations for the recovery phase.

EPWG does not have any activity that is conducted regularly or repeatedly; rather, activities tend to be one-off. In collaboration with the Co-Chair and Program Director, two projects were identified that were specific to private sector resiliency implemented with APEC funding during the target period. These are shown in Table 3 below. Total planned APEC investment was $148,000.

TABLE 3: EPWG PROJECTS EVALUATED

Year	Project Name	Amount	Sponsor	Project Number
2009	Public Private Partnerships for Business Resilience Workshop	$41,000	Australia	TFEP 05 2009A
2011	Workshop on Private Sector Emergency Preparedness	$107,000	U.S/Japan	EPWG 02/2011

The objective of the Workshop on Private Sector Emergency Preparedness was "to share information and experiences on private sector preparedness and business continuity planning (BCP) … to encourage BCP adoption among APEC economies." The outputs of the Workshop were a survey of the current level of BCP in the Asia-Pacific region and a draft BCP reference guide.

The intended outcome of the PPP project was that "following the workshop, APEC economies (emergency management authorities, regionally focused businesses and peak business organizations) will be able to identify practical ways and mechanisms in which PPPs can be maximized in preparedness, planning, response and recovery processes." This statement is an excellent example of how project documents can clearly articulate the intended impact of the project, and was perhaps the only such example amongst the projects evaluated here. Going forward, APEC may need to require such statements in every project for which a serious evaluation is planned, as they establish the performance standard upon which program performance can be assessed. The primary output of the activity was "APEC Principles on Public Private Partnerships and Disaster Resilience."

SURVEY DATA

A total of 21 people, including 2 POs, and 19 participants, were surveyed for the evaluation. Participants of both workshops included NGO and private sector representatives, as well as government officials. According to the completion report for TFEP 05 2009, there were 59 participants. However, contact information was only available for 31 participants, of whom 13 responded (22%). The completion report for EPWG 02 2011 cites 69 participants but contact information was available for only 18, of whom 6 responded (8% of total participants).[13]

Evaluation Findings

Relevance

According to the APEC Project Database, EPWG implemented 22 projects between 2009-2012. Of the 21 member economies represented in EPWG, 10 have implemented proposals during this period. A number of projects implemented by EPWG appear to have only limited relevance to APEC's core mandate of trade and economic growth, although they do have basis in various Leader and Ministerial Statements. For example, projects conducted between 2009-2012 have included: school earthquake safety, forest fire prevention, and sea search and rescue. The 2010 Independent Assessment of the EPWG provides recommendations regarding the need for more involved and rigorous proposal selection process.[14]

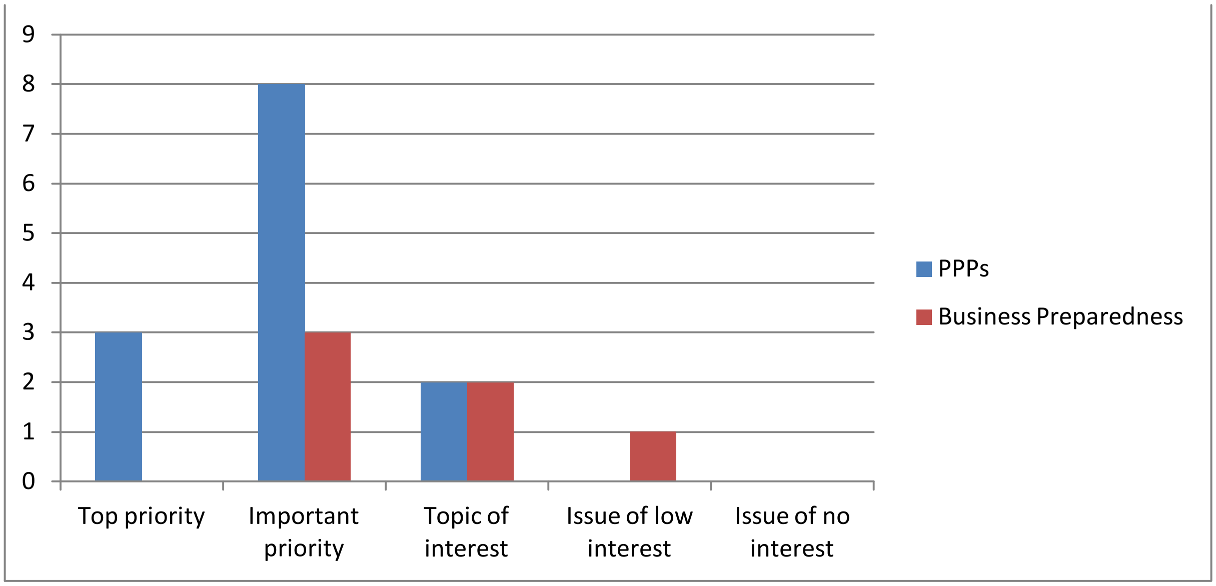
The topic of business resilience and PPPs for disaster recovery, however, is explicitly noted in the EPWG strategic plan and workplan and is therefore deemed relevant. Per project documents, the APEC Leader's Declarations in 2008 and 2009 called for "greater focus on disaster risk reduction … to reduce the threat of disruptions to business and trade."

Respondents were asked the degree of alignment with their economy's priorities. Responses are shown in Figure 7. The data show that a higher proportion of participants of the PPPs workshop (11/13, or 85%) felt that the program addressed a top/important priority than the participants in the Business Preparedness workshop (4/7, or 57%). Of course, interpreting these results is a challenge, as there is no expected level of relevance described as a target for success in the project documents. Even after the fact, however, the high level of positive responses by PPP participants seems to suggest a well-chosen topic, while the data for the Business Preparedness workshop is lower than one might have expected, but the small number of respondents prevents the evaluators from making any clear judgment of either workshop topic.

[13] Two of these respondents attended both workshops. Their responses are counted under TFEP 05 2009.

[14] See "Independent Assessment of the Emergency Preparedness Working Group Final Report" May 2010.

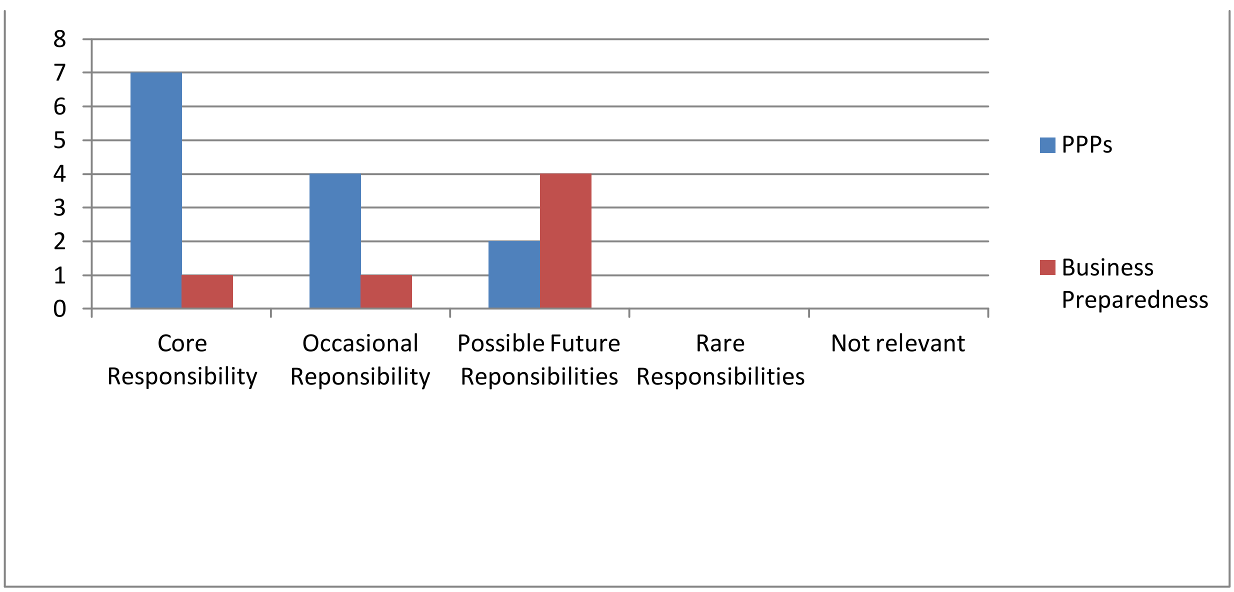
FIGURE 7: EPWG- DID THE WORKSHOP ADDRESS A PRIORITY OF YOUR ECONOMY?



Source: Online Survey. N = 13 for PPP; N = 6 for Business Preparedness.

The workshop on business preparedness also appears to have had greater difficulty in targeting participants, with far fewer participants (1/6, or 17%) stating that the topic was relevant to their core responsibilities as shown in Figure 8. In contrast, more than half (54%) of the participants in the PPPs workshop felt that the program addressed a core work responsibility. No respondent for either training activity selected “rare responsibilities” or “not relevant.”

FIGURE 8: EPWG- HOW RELEVANT WAS THE TRAINING TO YOUR CURRENT POSITION?



Source: Online Survey. N = 13 for PPP; N = 6 for Business Preparedness.

Efficiency

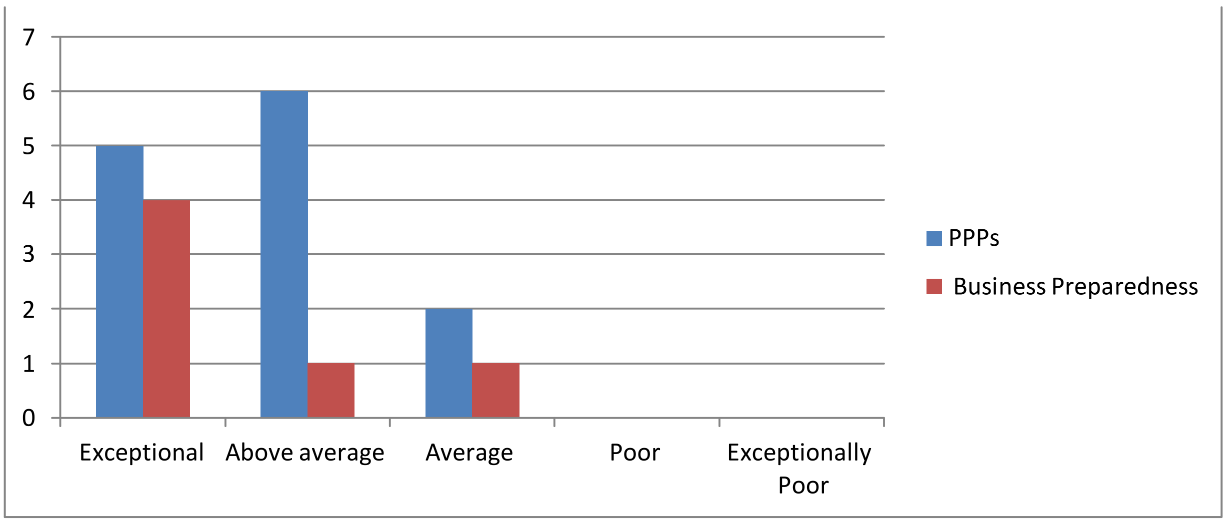
APEC investment in the PPP project was approximately 20% of the total, with the balance self-funded by Australia. The project was implemented for approximately 40% less than originally budgeted, for reasons not explained in the final report, for a cost of approximately $400 per participant.

APEC funding for the 2011 workshop on private sector emergency preparedness was 51% of total budget, with the balance funded by Japan and the U.S. According to the PO, expenses were increased as a result of the decision to hold the workshop in a secondary city in an expensive economy (Japan) but this was in fact integral to the topic of the workshop as the location was the site of the Sendai earthquake and tsunami. In addition, Japan contributed funds to compensate for the additional costs. Cost per person to deliver the workshop was approximately $870 and final expenditures were 44% under-budget.

Effectiveness

Participants were generally satisfied with the quality of the presenters, as shown in Figure 9. No respondent selected below average.

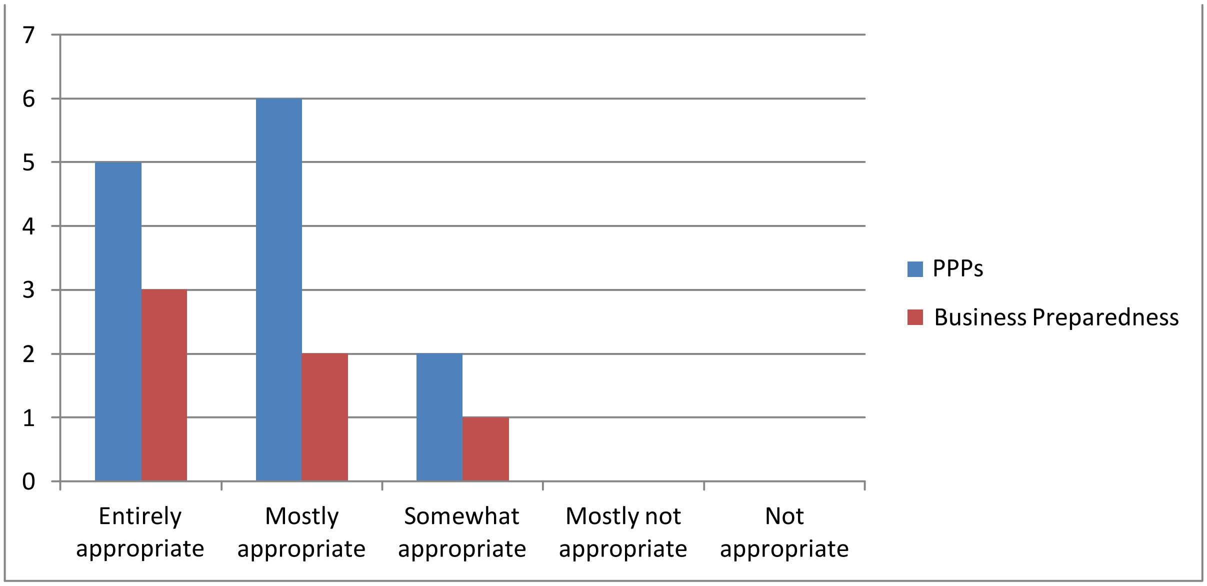
FIGURE 9: EPWG- HOW DO YOU RANK THE QUALITY OF THE PRESENTERS?



Source: Online Survey. N = 13 for PPP; N = 6 for Business Preparedness.

All respondents felt that the material was at least partly appropriate, as shown in Figure 10. Respondents were asked to comment on the material that they felt was not appropriate. A quarter of respondents (3/12) for the PPP project felt that the material was too technical, while 2 felt the material was too basic and one felt that some of the material was not relevant. The two respondents who felt that the material was too basic are both from developed APEC economies; this highlights the challenge of programming for the varied levels of APEC economies and may indicate the need for better targeting of participants. Among the 6 respondents from the business preparedness workshop, one commented that the material was too technical, while one felt that it was too basic.

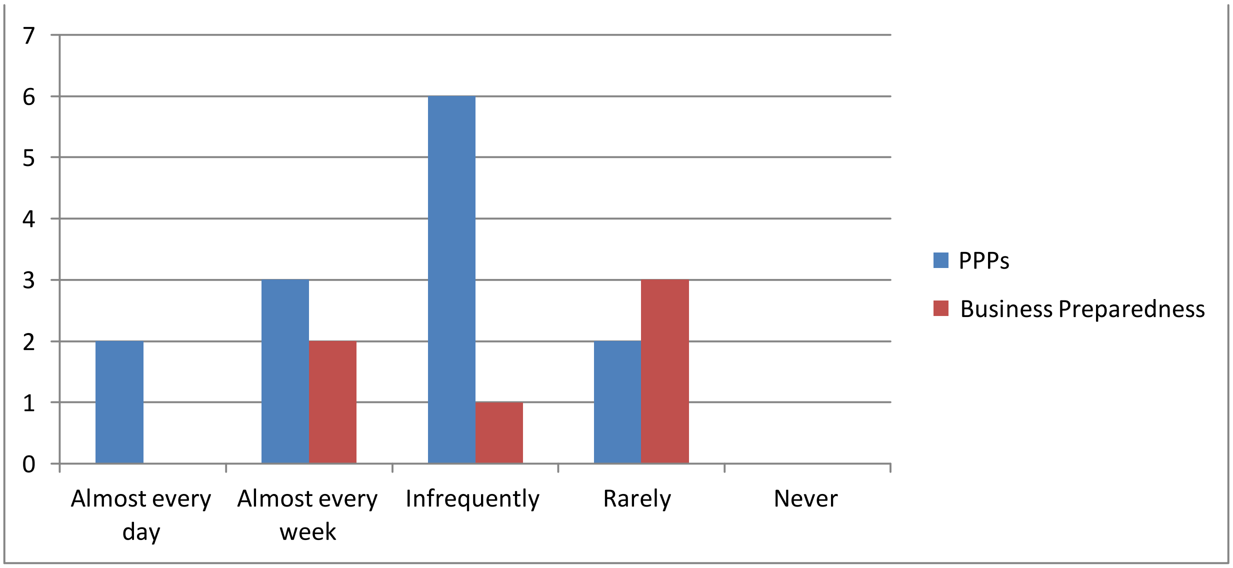
FIGURE 10: EPWG- WAS THE LEVEL OF THE TRAINING/WORKSHOP APPROPRIATE?



Source: Online Survey. N = 13 for PPP; N = 6 for Business Preparedness.

As shown in Figure 11, virtually all participants reported some utility to the information received at the workshop, as no respondent reported *never* using the new procedures on the job. However, only about one-third of the respondents (35%) reported using the new information on a daily or weekly basis, and almost two-thirds (65%) reported using the information on the job infrequently or rarely. It is unlikely that a workshop can ever expect to materially improve professional practices for 100% of participants, but it is also unlikely that program planners would describe such a relatively low effectiveness rate as "successful" in program planning documents provided to those who need to approve funding requests. Results like these highlight the importance of requiring expected performance targets in planning documents to enable fair assessment of effectiveness after program completion.

FIGURE 11: EPWG- HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED IN THE WORKSHOP?



Source: Online Survey. N = 13 for PPP; N = 6 for Business Preparedness.

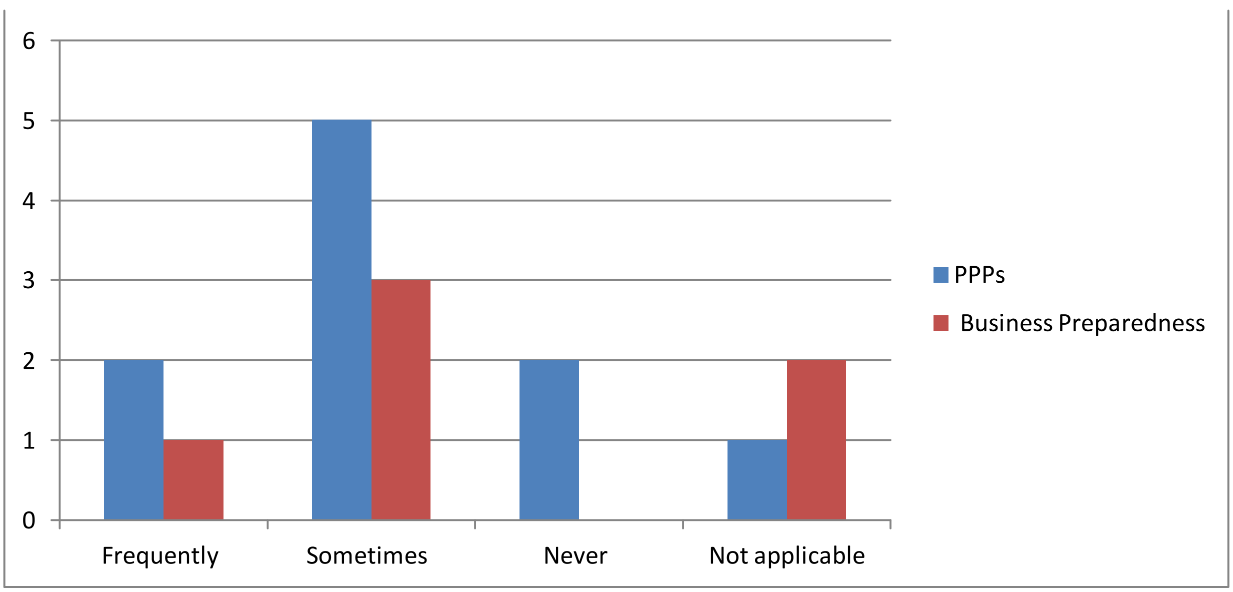
Among the one-third of participants who stated they were applying what they had learned, comments included:

> *"My organisation has also been involved in preparing a contingency plan in case of the occurrence of natural disaster. The knowledge gained from the training has been useful as an input to this plan."*
>
> *"I apply the information learned when discussing disaster preparedness with SMEs in areas chronically affected by predictable disaster cycles."*
>
> *"[I applied the learning] whilst doing awareness-building on a pilot landslide hazard mapping project."*

Among respondents who stated that they were not applying what they had learned in the workshops, 3 said it was because the topics were not relevant to their current responsibilities, one because their economy had insufficient resources to implement what had been learned, and one said the methods were not applicable to their economy.

Respondents were also asked whether they referred to any resulting publications from the workshop. The most frequent response for both groups of respondents was "sometimes," as shown in Figure 12.

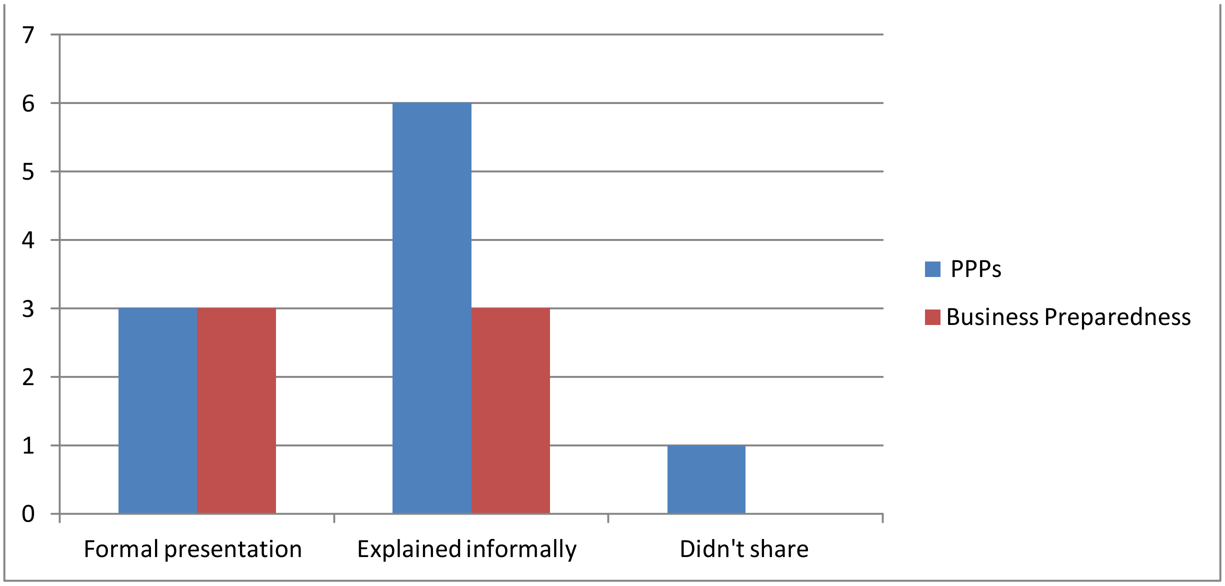
FIGURE 12: EPWG- DO YOU REFER TO ANY RESULTING PUBLICATION?



Source: Online Survey. N = 10 for PPP; N = 6 for Business Preparedness.

A very high percentage of respondents reported communicating their workshop materials to colleagues, as shown in Figure 13. However, this result must be read with caution, as far more reported "sharing lessons" than actually *used* those lessons on their job. In other words, this sharing of lessons could reflect passing on the information to other colleagues for whom it is more useful; it may also reflect little more than an institutional requirement upon return from a workshop or casual conversation amongst colleagues who themselves may see no great value to the new information.

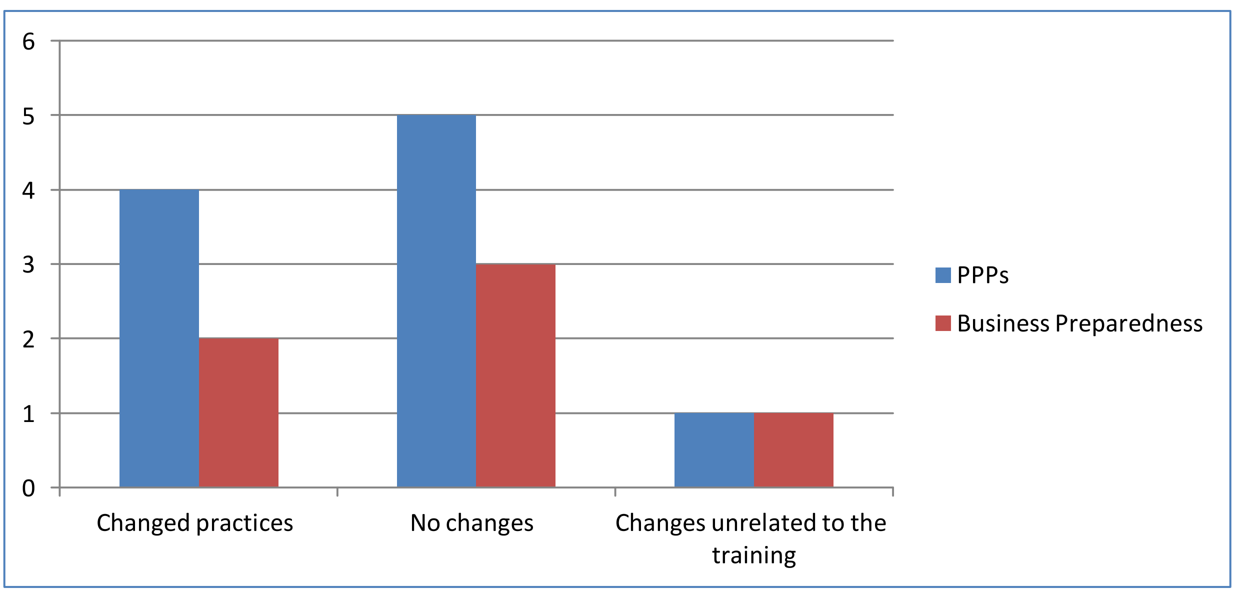
FIGURE 13: EPWG- DID YOU SHARE WHAT YOU LEARNED WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES?



Source: Online Survey. N = 10 for PPP; N = 6 for Business Preparedness.

Respondents were asked whether the workshop had contributed towards policy or operational changes in their respective Ministries or Departments. No respondent stated that the workshops had influenced changes in policy. As shown in Figure 14, 57% of participants (4/7) in the PPP workshop and one-third of participants in the business preparedness training stated that there had been some changes in practice as a result of the workshop.

FIGURE 14: EPWG- HAS THE TRAINING/WORKSHOP CHANGED THE WAY THAT YOUR DIVISION/DEPARTMENT OPERATES?



Source: Online Survey. N = 10 for PPP; N = 6 for Business Preparedness.

One participant in the PPP workshop provided the following example: "*These workshops provide evidence-based examples to show why the relevant topics are essential."* Another respondent stated that her economy after the PPP workshop is now *"engaging the private partners in DRRM Program, forging MOA/MOU with private partners, and involving them in simulation exercises."* One of the respondents from the business preparedness workshop said that the changes in his economy include *"emergency drills for technical operations were improved, and the network architecture was reinforced to ensure operational continuity."*

Judged against the stated objectives of the workshops, it appears that there has been positive benefit in raising awareness and informing participants about the technical material, but the responses do not document significant impact towards the more substantive objectives of maximizing PPPs and encouraging adoption of BCP.

Respondents made a number of suggestions to improve the workshops in future. These included:

> *"…it would be better to encourage more active participation by NGOs and business … and more cross-fora collaboration."*
>
> *"There should be more presentation on practical experience on how industrialized economies in the APEC region have designed their policies and laws to attract Public Private Partnership in Disaster Risk Management."*
>
> *"Select focused sector or sub-regions."*
>
> *"It would be of particular value to have those that have been affected by disasters discuss their lessons learned and experiences."*

Sustainability

The small number of examples given above of how the trainings have changed practices provides some indication that while impact may have been limited it has been sustained in some of the participating institutions. Of the 7 respondents from both trainings who stated they use what they learn on a daily or weekly basis, all expected to stay in their posts more than 5 years, suggesting that any increased capacity will continue to benefit their institutions.

C. Energy Working Group (EWG)

Introduction

The EWG implements the largest number of APEC projects of any APEC sub-fora.[15] The EWG has not had a strategic plan. Instead, activities have been conducted within the framework of medium-term workplans and more detailed annual workplans. The EWG is currently roughly half-way through the medium-term workplan for 2010-2015. According to this workplan, the primary objectives for the EWG relate to secure oil and gas supplies, efficient energy use, and low-carbon energy supply.

[15] According to data provided by the APEC Policy Support Unit, EWG received 22% of the APEC Project funding allocated to the SCE in the 1993-2012 period.

In collaboration with the EWG Co-Chair, two sub-streams of work were selected to be the focus of this evaluation. Both are regular activities of the EWG, funded annually as de facto Multi-Year Projects. Japan is the main funder of these activities and serves as Project Overseer (PO) of both projects.

The first sub-stream is **Peer Reviews of Energy Efficiency (PREE)**. In 2007, the APEC Energy Minister's Darwin Declaration called upon member economies to reduce energy intensity and endorsed the Peer Review mechanism as a tool to work towards that goal. Subsequently, EWG has offered peer reviews focusing on energy efficiency for 2 developing economies each year since 2009.[16] The key objectives of the PREE, as laid out in the project proposal, are to:

- Share information on energy efficiency performance and policies to improve energy efficiency;
- Assist with formulating energy efficiency goals and action plans and monitor progress towards those goals; and
- Provide recommendations on how implementation of action plans could be improved.[17]

In addition to the peer reviews, this activity includes publication of an annual compendium of APEC member economies' energy efficiency policies. Beginning in 2012, the EWG began including Follow-up PREEs to strengthen the M&E systems of select economies in order to allow them to better monitor their progress on policy recommendations made in the initial PREE. The first economy to host a follow up review was Viet Nam, which involved a five-day training for more than 30 government officials. The relevant APEC Project grants for PREE covered by this evaluation are shown in Table 3. Total planned APEC investment in these activities was approximately $446,000 over three years.

TABLE 4: PROJECTS EVALUATED FOR PREE

Year	Project Name	Amount	Sponsor	Economies Reviewed	Project Number
2009	PREE pilot	Self-funded	Japan/New Zealand	New Zealand	N/A
2009	PREE Phase 1	$150,000	Japan/ all economies	Chile, Viet Nam, Thailand	EWG 11/2009
2010	PREE Phase 2	$150,000	Japan/ all economies	Chinese Taipei, Peru, Malaysia	EWG 22/2009
2011	PREE Phase 3	$146,433	Japan/ all economies	Indonesia, the Philippines & Viet Nam (Follow Up Review)	EWG 02/2011

The second sub-stream is the **Joint Energy Data Inventory (JODI)**. The Osaka Leaders Meeting in 1995 called for a consolidated APEC energy data base. Since then, monthly oil data (and, since 2007, monthly gas data) has been collected as a regular, ongoing activity under the framework of the Joint

[16] Japan's proposal for the PREE was first endorsed at the EWG35 meeting in 2008.

[17] Beginning in Phase 3 (2011), the project proposal for the first time refers to input and output indicators, namely: number of experts in the review team, number of stakeholders met during the review, and number of recommendations resulting from the review.

Energy Data Inventory (JODI).[18] In addition to being available online, the data is analyzed and published in a series of annual statistical reviews, including APEC Energy Statistics, APEC Energy Handbook, APEC Energy Overview and a CD-Rom of APEC Energy Statistical Analysis Tool. Per the project proposal, the overarching goal supported by JODI is "to improve the quality of energy policy decision-making, improve the efficiency of the regional energy market, and strengthen regional energy security by improving the quality and availability of energy data and projections." The immediate objective of the activity is "to collect energy statistics from all APEC member economies, produce annual and quarterly statistical reviews of the data, and make them available through the operation of an online database."

Within EWG, the activity is managed by the Expert Group on Energy & Data Bases (EGEDA) and data collection and analysis tasks are done by the Institute of Energy Economics (IEE), Japan. The project also offers training and technical assistance aimed at harmonizing practices in data collection and reporting methods for economies that request assistance. Under the grants evaluated here, three trainings were organized: in Indonesia in 2009; in Viet Nam in 2010; and in the Philippines in 2011. The relevant APEC Project grants for JODI covered by this evaluation are shown in Table 4. Total APEC investment in these activities was approximately $85,000 over four years.

TABLE 5: PROJECTS EVALUATED FOR JODI

Year	Project Name	Amount	Sponsor	Project Number
2009	Operation of APEC Energy Database and Analysis	$29,800	Japan	EWG 01/2009
2010	Operation of APEC Energy Database and Analysis	$15,000	Japan	EWG 23/2009
2011	Operation of APEC Energy Database and Analysis	$20,000	Japan	EWG 6/2010
2012	Operation of APEC Energy Database and Analysis	$20,000	Japan	EWG 10/2011

SURVEY DATA

A total of 18 people, including the Project Overseer for PREE and counterparts in the host Economies were surveyed for the evaluation. Among the nine economies who have received a PREE thus far, contact information for 19 people was available and 6 people responded from 4 economies. These were New Zealand, Peru, the Philippines (3 respondents), and Thailand. It was not possible to obtain the contact information for the participants in the Viet Nam follow-up PREE training as attempts to reach the POC were unsuccessful. The evaluation therefore does not include an analysis of the Viet Nam follow-up. For the JODI trainings, Indonesia was not able to provide contact information nearly four years after the training, and the POC for Viet Nam could not be reached. Thus, the questionnaire was distributed to approximately 50 participants from the Philippines training, of whom 11 responded (22%). One respondent from the Philippines was involved with both PREE and JODI and responses were counted under PREE results as they were more relevant to that exercise.

[18] JODI is a collaboration of economic organizations (APEC, Eurostat, IEA, OLADE, OPEC and UNSD) reporting global energy data under the aegis of the International Energy Forum (IEF). These organizations also provide capacity building, including in Asia, to improve timeliness and accuracy of data reporting.

Evaluation Findings

1. PREE

Relevance

The evaluation found strong evidence that the relevance of PREE overall was high. The PREE project is explicitly called for and endorsed in the Energy Ministers Meetings and features in both medium-term and annual workplans. Further, it is co-sponsored by all economies of the Working Group indicating high levels of alignment with the priorities of the Working Group. Finally, Economies were selected entirely on a volunteer basis, suggesting strong alignment with internal priorities of the APEC member economy, as the review requires significant time and resources from the host.

Of the 6 participants who responded to the survey, 4 stated that PREE was a top priority for their economies, one respondent stated that it was an important priority, and one stated that it was a topic of interest. No respondent selected “low” or “no” interest. In addition, all respondents but one said that the topic related to their core responsibilities, and thus the selection of participants appears to have been well targeted. These respondents were asked how long they expected to stay in these positions. One held a permanent post, 2 respondents expected to stay more than 5 years, while the remaining 3 respondents expected to stay in their posts 2-3 years.

Efficiency

Japan provides substantial self-funding for this activity through the quasi-governmental Asia Pacific Energy Research Center (APERC), which manages the reviews. In addition to APERC staff, the 6-8 member technical teams that conduct the reviews include experts from various member economies. APEC Project funds are used primarily to cover the cost of travel for non-APERC staff to the host economy.

The budgeted cost of the reviews is approximately $250,000 per economy, of which APEC support is $50,000 while self-financing by Japan allocated for APERC salaries and staff travel covers the remainder. In addition, the host economy invests substantial amounts of time in preparing and hosting the visit. It was not possible to ascertain whether cost were comparable to peer reviews conducted by other international organizations. However, in practice the PREE did not absorb all available funds, coming 60% under-budget, on average. The reason for the high discrepancy between budgeted and actual costs, which is consistent over the three years, was not addressed by the PO in their response to the survey. However, the bulk of budgeted expenses related to travel for peer reviewers from APEC economies; the savings may indicate that it was not possible to attract as many peer reviewers as initially planned, and there is some indication of this in the project documents.

Effectiveness

While it is difficult to draw conclusions based on such a small sample size (N = 6), respondents from 3 of the 4 economies that responded to the survey stated that there had been changes to policy and practices as a result of the PREE. Respondents from one economy stated that there had been changes to policy and practices with introduction of relevant legislation, sharing of energy efficient technology with energy intensive sectors, and new initiatives on standards and labeling, and energy efficient building rating system. Respondents from two economies stated that there had been changes in practices as a direct result of the PREE. One respondent described the program effectiveness as follows: "*The peer review emphasized and reinforced aspects of our data management, indicators analysis and program evaluation processes providing good feedback and support for a necessary activity. We were able to report to our Board the external feedback from the Peer Review process. This had a high value to our leadership as it focused on energy efficiency, provided good external evaluation, and offered support to the strategies in operation.*" Another respondent elaborated, "*We are trying to develop some programs to promote energy conservation in transportation as suggested in PREE*."[19] Only one economy's respondent stated that there had been no changes made as a result of the PREE.

The PO stated that "PREE contributed to the overall reduction of final energy intensity in the APEC region, which between 2005 and 2010 has decreased by 8.7% (APERC analysis)." However, causality linking the PREE activity to the policy changes cannot be established with this kind of evaluation. It is possible, for example, that economies that were more likely to change their policies volunteered to participate to demonstrate their reform agenda to other APEC member economies.

Participants reported being generally satisfied with the quality of the review team with 4 of 6 respondents from 3 economies saying they were of "exceptionally high quality," one respondent selecting "above average" and one selecting "average." The respondent selecting "average" commented, "*A few genuine experts were offset by staff from the APERC secretariat that did not have the depth of experience nor represent the 'peers' that the peer review process demanded*." All of the respondents felt that the level of the review was entirely or mostly appropriate.

Respondents were asked how frequently they used what they learned during the review. Three respondents selected "almost every day or every week," three respondents selected "infrequently but as a regular part of my work," and no respondents selected "rarely or never." Respondents were evenly split as to whether they referred to resulting documents or reports "frequently" or "sometimes."

Respondents were asked how the exercise could be improved in future years. Two of the respondents felt that the exercise was "*perfect*" and "*excellent*" and could not recommend any changes. One asked that it be a genuine peer review rather than relying on APERC staff and another respondent stated "*quality of experts and sufficient background information*" could be improved.

Sustainability

The Peer Reviews were conducted between 2009-2011. The fact that the majority of respondents stated that there had been changes in policy and practice indicates that these changes have been sustainable. However, the PO questionnaire and project documents indicate that the ability to continue the peer reviews in the future for economies not yet covered by the exercise is dependent on continued support from APEC for the participation of non-APERC reviewers. Since the respondents felt that the "peer"

[19] The review of project documents finds that the minutes of EWG40 meeting in November 2010 state that Chinese Taipei had already partially agreed to implement 18 of the recommendations in their PREE. Per minutes of EWG41 in May 2011, Malaysia announced 7 steps they were taking in response to the recommendations. Unfortunately, this could not be corroborated through the survey.

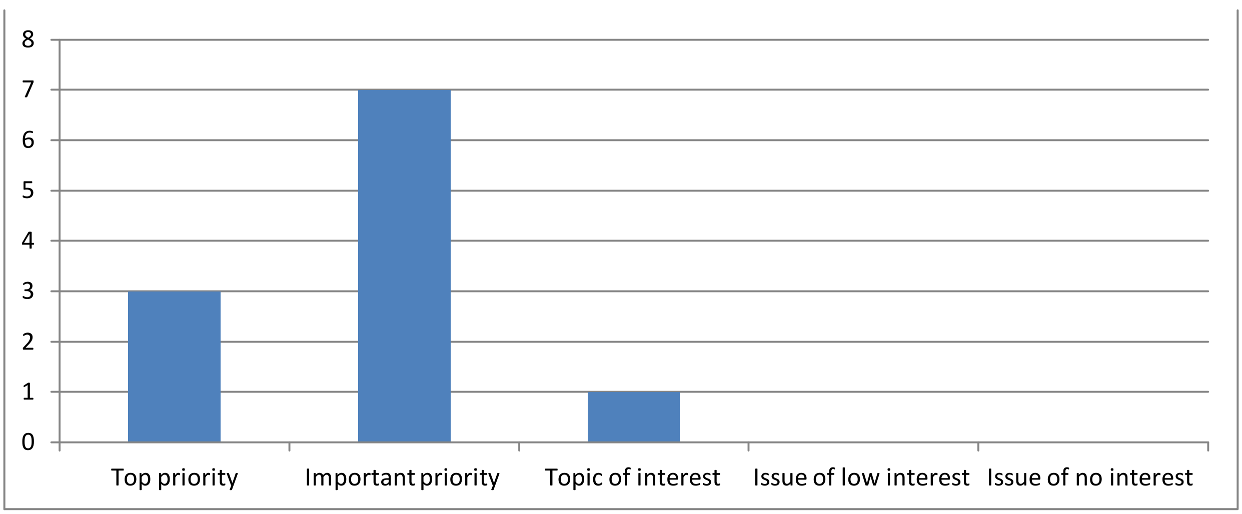
aspect of the review was important, and in the view of one respondent the primary benefit, this is an important consideration for APEC going forward.

2. JODI

Relevance

Per program documents, this activity is implemented under APEC's "Energy Security Initiative." The project aligns with the Osaka Leaders Meeting (1995) and the APEC Energy Ministers Darwin Declaration (2007). The responses to the survey clearly reflect that the program was perceived as relevant, at least among those responding to the survey. Over 90% (10 of 11) respondents indicated that the subject was either a "top" or "important" priority, and no respondent indicated that the topic was of "low" or "no" interest.

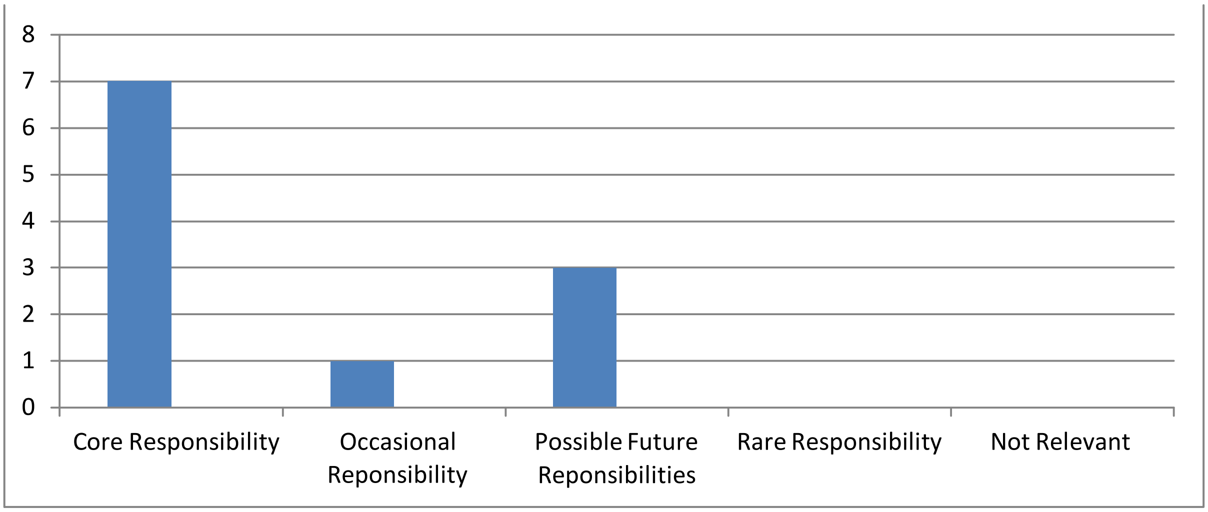
FIGURE 15: JODI- DID THE WORKSHOP ADDRESS A PRIORITY OF YOUR ECONOMY?



Source: Online Survey. N = 11.

The training apparently involved an entire department, and a majority of respondents (7 of 11) said the training related to their core responsibilities. This level of positive response may reflect selection bias, as participants who found the training relevant may have been more willing to respond. No respondent selected "rare responsibilities" or "not relevant," but approximately one-fourth of the respondents indicated that the training might be relevant to their professional responsibilities only in the future.

FIGURE 16: JODI- HOW RELEVANT WAS THE TRAINING TO YOUR CURRENT POSITION?



Source: Online Survey. N = 11.

Efficiency

This activity is supported primarily through self-funding by Japan in the form of budget support to the IEE for staff time. The U.S. and Australia also contribute self-funding. Budgeted APEC project funds across the 2008-2011 period have constituted approximately 12% of total funding, but this share has fallen steadily from 20% of the total in 2008 to only 8% of budget in 2010 and 2011. APEC funds were allocated for publication costs and travel for trainers to provide capacity building to developing APEC economies. JODI expenditures came in under-budget an average of 29% over the three years, partially due to the cancellation of one of the planned trainings.

Effectiveness

As reported in project documentation, the database appears to be a useful source of information, demonstrated by the high levels of traffic to the website. Per project documents, the APEC Energy Database received over 80,000 visits in 2008, 85,000 visits in 2010, and 71,000 visitors in 2011 (figures for 2009 are given in visits per month and are not directly comparable). The JODI database was accessed at the rate of 24,000 tables/month in 2011.[20] It was outside the scope of the current framework to survey JODI users as the collection and processing of the data is not funded as an APEC project, but such an effort is probably needed in the future to assess the value of this ongoing service to users.

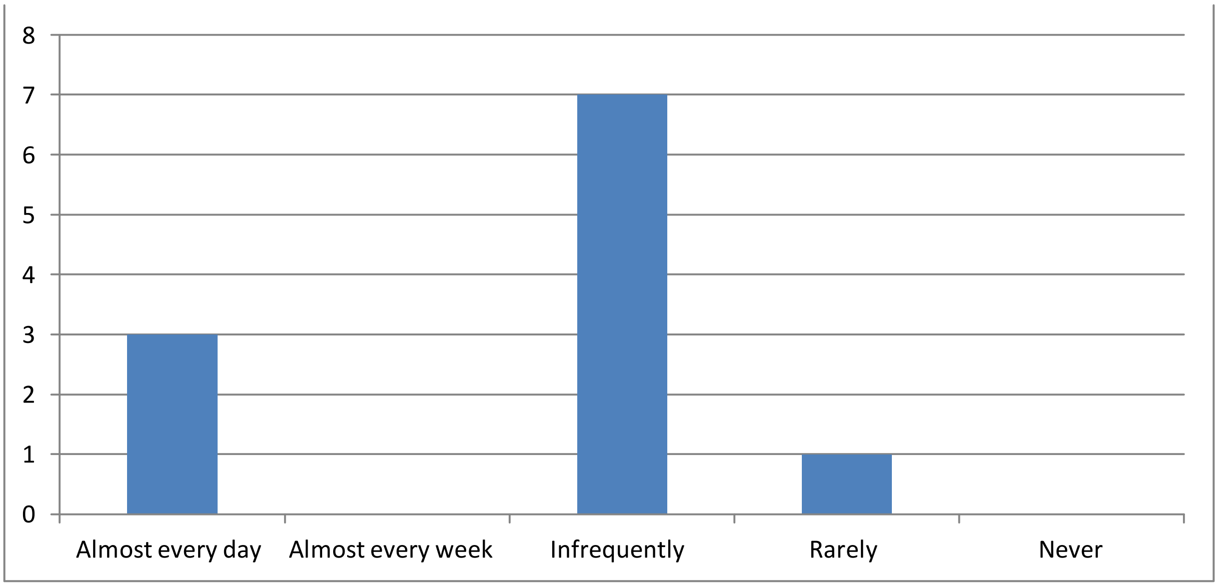
In relation to the capacity-building training in the Philippines, all respondents felt that the trainers were "exceptional" or "above average." Respondents were similarly positive regarding the appropriateness of the material with all respondents stating the material was "entirely" or "mostly" appropriate. Respondents were asked about the material that was not entirely appropriate and 4 stated that some material was too technical, 3 stated that there was material that was not relevant, and one respondent felt there was material that was too basic. Since all responses were from the same economy, the varying level of participants' baseline knowledge reflects again the importance of making expectations as to target audience clear

[20] These figures are from the respective completion reports which were prepared by IEE.

during project preparation. In addition to the perceived high quality of the trainers and materials, 80% of respondents (8 of 10) stated they consult resulting publications "frequently" or "sometimes."

However, only a quarter of respondents state that they use the material daily as part of their work, as shown in Figure 17. The majority of respondents apply what they learned "infrequently" or "rarely," But no participants indicated that they *never* used the resource. It is possible that these results are influenced by the fact that APERC collects and reports on data on a monthly basis.

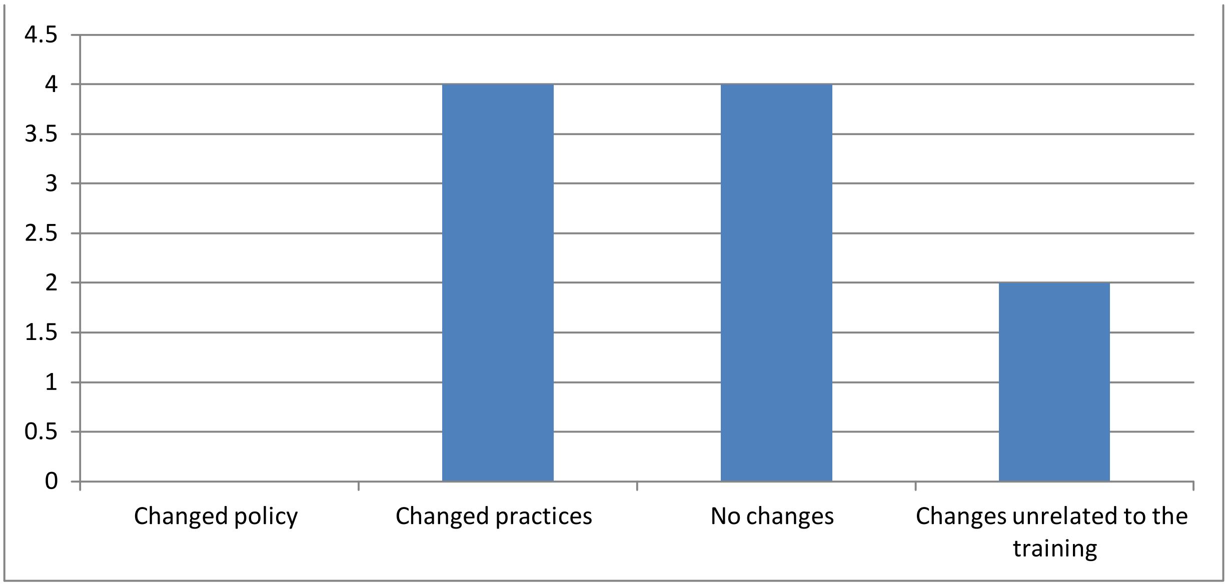
FIGURE 17: JODI - HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED IN THE WORKSHOP?



Source: Online Survey. N = 11.

The implicit objective of these trainings is to improve the timeliness and accuracy of oil and gas data submissions to IEE for the APEC database. Among the Philippine trainees, 40% of respondents felt that there had been changes in their department's work as a result of the training, as shown in Figure 18. However, the evaluation did not determine whether these changes have had the intended effect of enhancing timeliness and accuracy of data submission. No respondent selected the option "Changed policy." The others (60%) felt that there were no changes or no changes attributable to the training. EGEDA project documents speak broadly to overall performance of aggregated reporting economies but do not address whether there are any perceived improvements by economies which have received training. In fact, according to project documents, Viet Nam stopped submitting oil data in October 2010 after they had received training, presumably for unrelated reasons.

FIGURE 18: JODI- HAS THE TRAINING/WORKSHOP CHANGED THE WAY THAT YOUR DIVISION/DEPARTMENT OPERATES?



Source: Online Survey. N = 11.

Among respondents who said they were applying what they had learned, several offered examples including:

> *"Among the instances where I was able to apply what I learned were: 1. In updating/maintaining energy databases, particularly energy demand, and specifically on sectoral/industrial oil demand; 2. In responding to numerous requests for energy data and statistics."*

> *"We apply the knowledge acquired in the annual energy supply and demand forecasting and Philippine energy situation. This requires a reliable and credible energy database which can also be used for energy policy research."*

> *"In the questionnaire design and processing aspect of the Energy surveys, things I learned from the workshop clarified/helped me in analyzing the process involved."*

> *"[We are applying] a systematic way of gathering data, and coordination with other units/bureaus who participated in the said training and with other statistical agencies."*

However, a minority of respondents cited barriers to applying what was learned:

> *"We plan to incorporate some of the training/ workshop learned but because of some hindrances we were not able to apply it. The workshop introduced methods that could expedite the generation of our data but due to some constraints, it does not push through."*

> *"The participants rarely apply the knowledge gained in the seminar/workshop."*

Participants were also asked what could improve similar trainings in the future. A sample of these comments included:

"Involvement of decision-makers so that they would have a better appreciation of how these trainings could further assist in the achievement of the Department's vision and mandate."

"We need to have the participation of our stakeholders to institutionalize their submission to our division, to let them appreciate where does their data go and how we use them."

"Invite other statistical agencies; fluent English speaking resource persons if coming from other Economies [so participants] clearly understood the topic; and maybe additional number of days of training."

"More hands-on activity."

"The training/workshop can be improved by focusing on specific approaches towards database management, as well as focusing on specific types of energy data."

Sustainability

In financial terms, the collection, analysis and reporting of JODI Oil and Gas data is almost entirely self-funded, and the contributing economies in various Statements and Declarations state that the activity is of high importance to them. Thus, longer-term sustainability of the core work of compiling and analyzing JODI data does not seem to be at risk as the Economies funding the primary activity report seeing significant value to the exercise. However, the withdrawal of APEC funding would require that EGEDA members find new sources of funding for publishing hard copies of the resulting Statistical Yearbooks and any future capacity-building trainings. Since conclusions could not be drawn regarding the impact of the trainings on the timeliness and accuracy of data, it is difficult to determine the potential repercussions on the quality of JODI data should capacity-building trainings be suspended in future due to lack of resources.

In regards to the capacity building conducted in the Philippines, the fact that 40% of trainees reported two years later that the training had resulted in changes of practice suggests that there have been at least some medium-term benefits to the capacity of relevant departments, and, by extension, to their collection and reporting of JODI data. Among the 10 respondents who said they were applying what they learned, 5 are in permanent positions, and another 2 expect to be in their posts at least 5 years, indicating good prospects that the added capacity will stay in the department.

D. SUB-COMMITTEE FOR STANDARDS AND CONFORMITY (SCSC)

INTRODUCTION

The SCSC was established in 1994. Its Terms of Reference (TOR) lists among its objectives: "to reduce negative effects on trade and investment … due to differing standards, etc.," "facilitate enhanced market access through improved standards" and "encouraging greater alignment among member economies' standards." As a sub-forum of the Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI), the SCSC is governed by an annually updated Collective Action Plan (CAP) which takes the place of strategic plan and workplans. The 2011 CAP, which was in force during the period under evaluation, lists activities under 8 priority areas including "alignment," "good regulatory practice," and "technical infrastructure development."

The SCSC implemented a total of 32 projects between 2009-2011, according to the APEC project database. An analysis of these projects found that 7 (21%) related to food safety, representing one of the most common topics of SCSC projects, consistent with directives at various leader and Ministerial meetings that had identified this topic as a priority. These projects covered a range of specific narrower topics, including food safety cooperation and management systems and food recall systems. In discussions with the Chair and Program Director, it was decided to focus on more technical capacity-building efforts under food safety. The two projects included in the evaluation are shown in Table 6. Total planned APEC investment in these two projects was approximately $220,000 from the TILF account, with APEC funding used to cover travel for eligible economies.

TABLE 6: SCSC PROJECTS EVALUATED

Year	Project Name	Amount	Sponsor	Project Number
2011	Laboratory Capacity Building for Determination of Toxic Contaminants in Seafood	$135,000	Peru	CTI 21 2011
2011	APEC Scientific Workshop on Food Safety Risk-Benefit Analysis	$85,000	The Philippines	CTI 22 2011

The project overseen by Peru was intended to "develop laboratory capacity to measure heavy metals in seafood" and involved a training course, followed by a proficiency test, and a concluding workshop where results were discussed. The project implemented by the Philippines aimed to foster "open debate on scientific approaches … for conducting a risk-benefit analysis of food" and "assess policy approaches in each member economy." The three-day workshop was intended for scientific staff of the relevant food safety authorities.

SURVEY DATA

A total of 36 people, including both POs and 34 participants in the two projects were surveyed for the evaluation. This included 12 of 19 (63%) participants in CTI 21 2011 on Laboratory Testing of Seafood for whom contact information was available and 20 of 44 (45%) for CTI 22 2011 on Risk-Benefit Analysis for whom contact information was available.

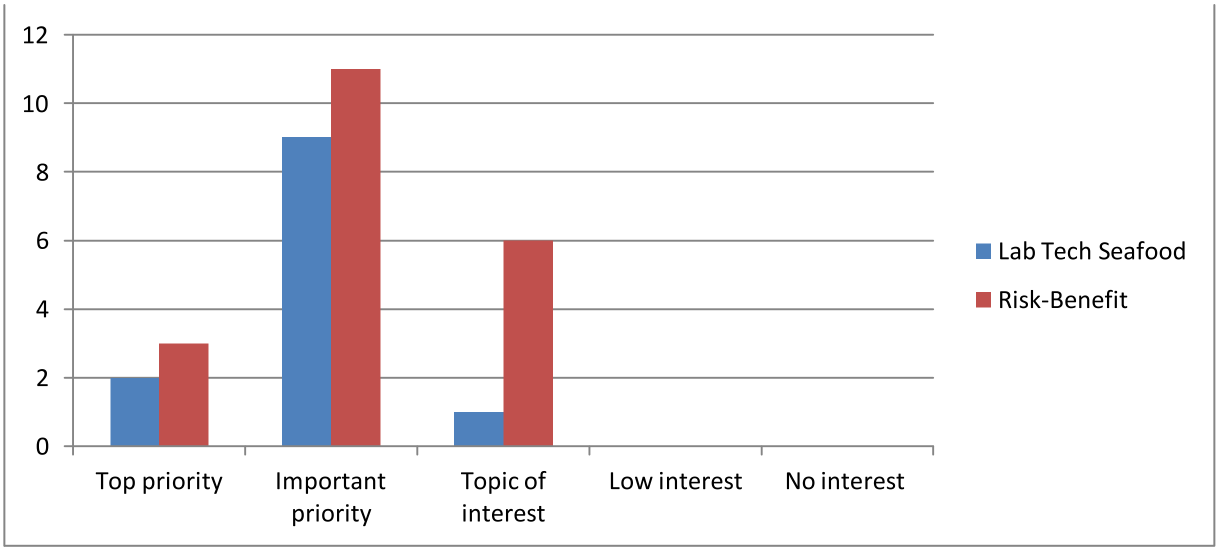
EVALUATION FINDINGS

Relevance

The relevance of the activities can be seen by how they relate to specific strategic planning documents. Both projects are included in the CTI CAP for 2011, and per project documents were considered to fall under the "Technical Infrastructure Development" scope of activity in SCSC's Terms of Reference. Project proposals cite an APEC's Leaders' Statement of 2010 identifying food safety as a priority area. Further, the workshop on laboratory testing of seafood was co-sponsored by six economies, indicating good alignment between the workshop and those member economies' priorities. The PO for the project on Laboratory Testing of Seafood also states that the training followed on recommendations from an earlier project (CTI 20 2009) and supported objectives of the APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum on laboratory capacity building.

From the perspective of participants, more than three-fourths (78%) found that the workshops addressed top or important priorities; the remaining respondents indicated that it was a topic of interest. No respondent selected “low” or “no” interest. The difference in the pattern of responses across the two workshops was not statistically significant.

FIGURE 19: SCSC- DID THE WORKSHOP ADDRESS A PRIORITY OF YOUR ECONOMY?



Source: Online Survey. N = 12 for Laboratory Techniques and N = 20 for Risk-Benefit Analysis.

A number of respondents commented on the relevance of the trainings to their economy. A sample of comments includes:

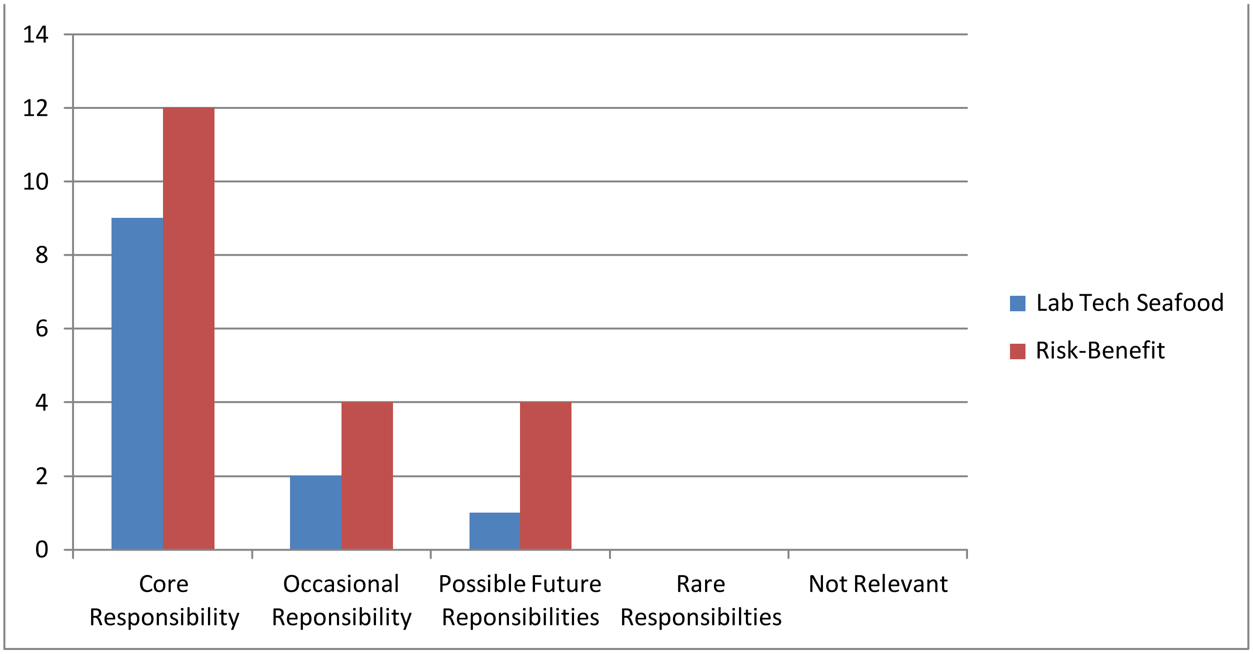
> *“The topics presented in the workshop [were] very relevant ... Adequate confidence in the data results was instilled to the staff in the conduct of food testing.”*

> *“Seafood analysis, especially essential and toxic elements, was one of the major issues [in my economy] for laboratory accreditation to facilitate trade.”*

> *“...good results and accuracy in method analysis are very important. Many exports [from my economy] were rejected because of high levels of contaminants. Our department needs to increase skills and knowledge [to address these issues].”*

Given the highly technical nature of both trainings, project proposals emphasized the importance of targeting relevant scientific staff and this appears to have been done successfully. As shown in Figure 20, more than four out of five participants (84%) reported that the materials covered in the workshops addressed “core” or “occasional” responsibilities. Only 13% reported the prospect of using the information in future positions and no respondent selected “rare responsibility” or “not relevant.”

FIGURE 20: SCSC- HOW RELEVANT WAS THE TRAINING TO YOUR CURRENT POSITION?



Source: Online Survey. N = 12 for Laboratory Techniques; N = 20 for Risk-Benefit Analysis.

Efficiency

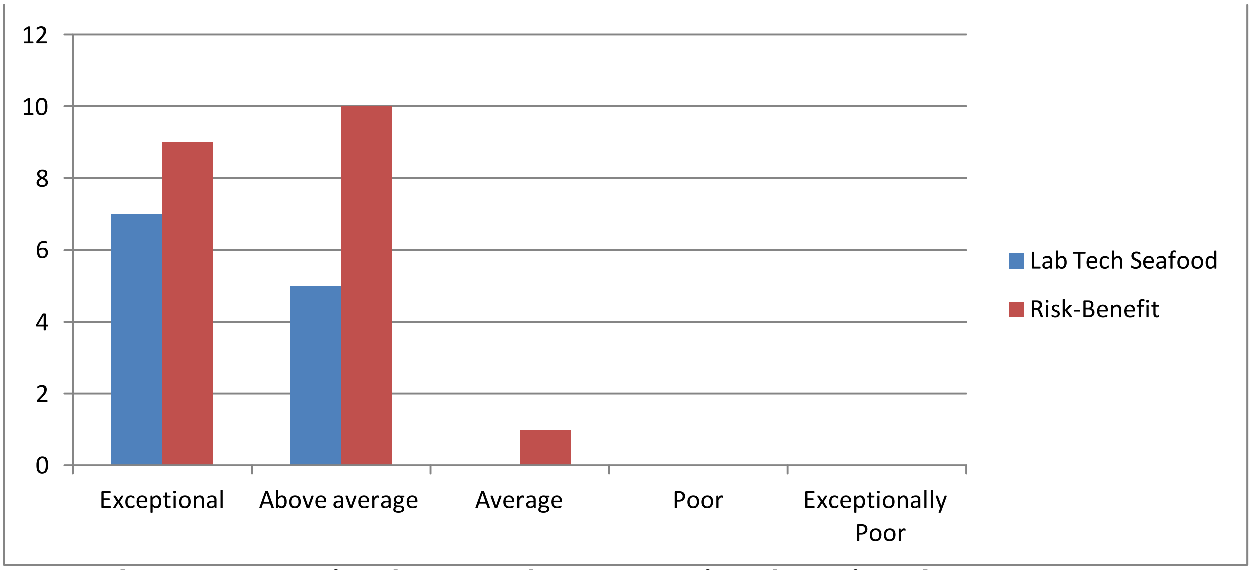
The total planned budget of the Laboratory Testing for Seafood project was $179,000 of which Peru self-funded $40,000 (22%). Actual costs were $4,600 per trainee. The relatively high per-unit cost in comparison to other projects in this evaluation presumably reflects the "practicum" nature of the activity. The PO stated that this was less expensive than similar exercises and suggested that savings could have been made by holding the training in a less expensive location and asking for higher self-funding contributions from participants. The PO further stated that the training would not have taken place without APEC funding.

The total planned budget of the workshop on risk-benefit analysis was approximately $108,000 or which the Philippines contributed $23,000 (21%). Actual investment was $1,200 per participant, with the majority of funds being used to sponsor travel for participants from travel-eligible economies. The PO stated that the expenses were commensurate with the cost of doing similar activities in their economy and suggested that costs could have been contained by combining several relevant programs. The two programs were implemented 38% under-budget on average.

Effectiveness

Respondents were well satisfied with the quality of trainers for both workshops, as shown in Figure 21. Only one respondent felt the trainers were "average" and no respondent selected "poor" or "exceptionally poor."

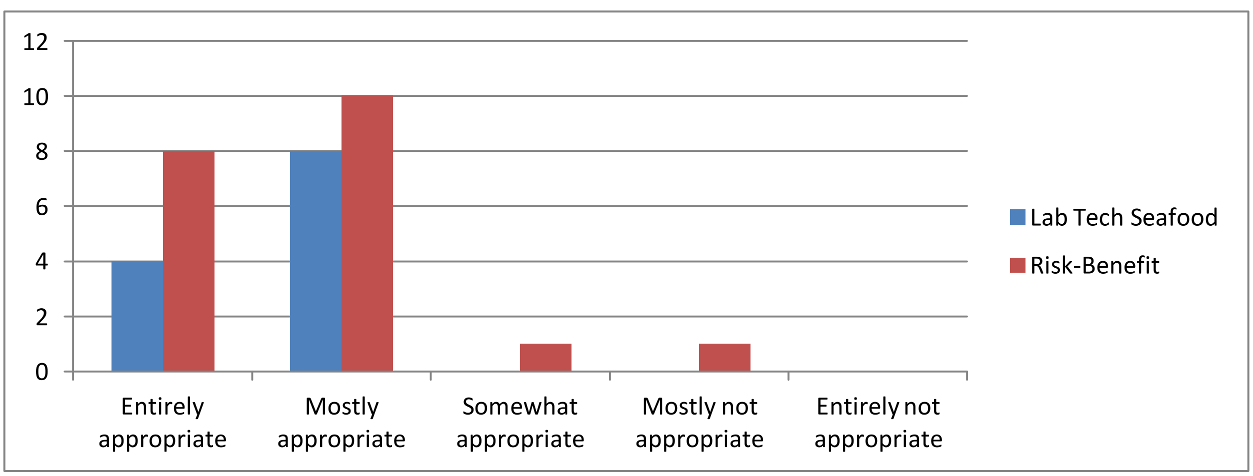
FIGURE 21: SCSC- HOW DO YOU RANK THE QUALITY OF THE PRESENTERS?



Source: Online Survey. N= 12 for Laboratory Techniques; N= 20 for Risk-Benefit Analysis.

Respondents also felt that the level of the workshop content was generally appropriate given their level of knowledge and expertise, as shown in Figure 22. The respondent who felt that the content was “mostly not appropriate” commented that they found the material too basic. However, 25% of participants (8 of 32) found the material “too technical.”

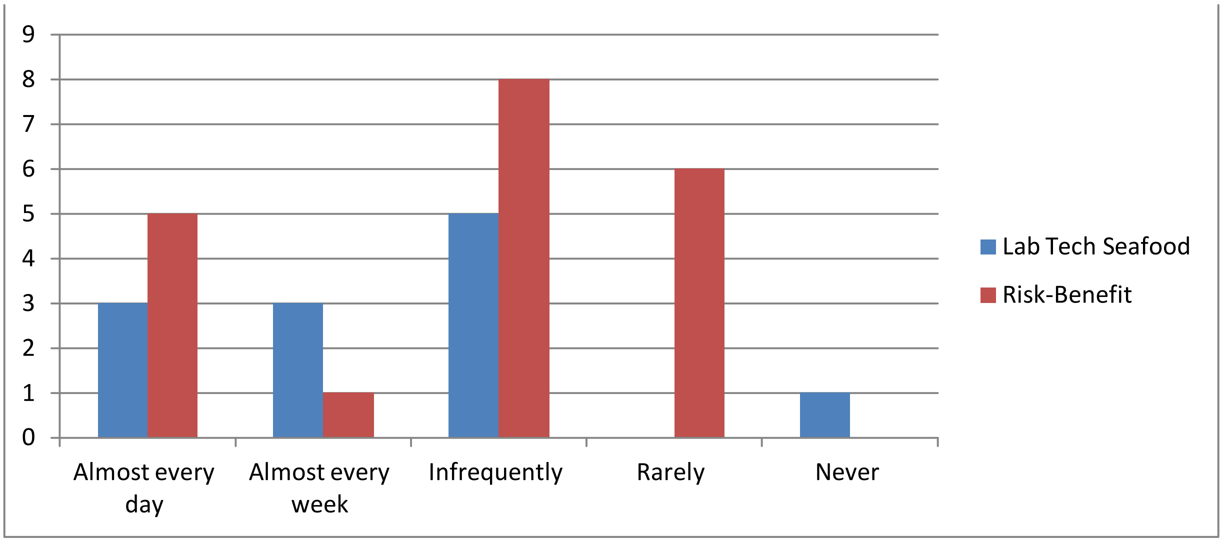
FIGURE 22: SCSC- WAS THE LEVEL OF THE TRAINING/WORKSHOP APPROPRIATE?



Source: Online Survey. N = 12 for Laboratory Techniques; N = 20 for Risk-Benefit Analysis.

The training on Toxins in Seafood had higher practical application to the respondents’ work responsibilities than the risk-benefit analysis training, as shown in Figure 23. A high (70%) proportion of participants in the risk-benefit analysis workshop stated that they apply what they learned only infrequently or rarely. This may reflect that the training was intended to introduce a new methodology rather than strengthen an established practice.

FIGURE 23: SCSC- HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED IN THE WORKSHOP?



Source: Online Survey. N= 12 for Laboratory Techniques and 20 for Risk-Benefit Analysis.

Respondents gave the following examples of how they are applying what they learned in the trainings:

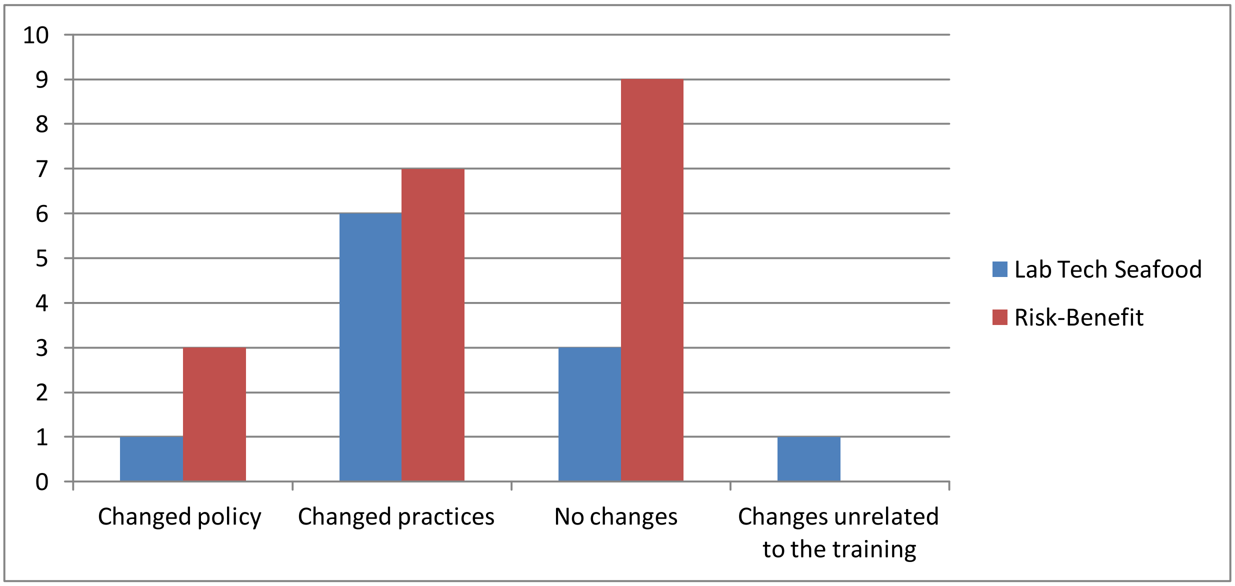
> *"We are currently using the methodology from the workshop to analyse for toxic and essential elements in seafood in the laboratory."*
>
> *"We review[ed] our current test methods and accommodated …what I learned in Thailand."*
>
> *"[We have] already applied Calculation for Measurement of Uncertainties using top down approach; other methods and techniques learned during the training [are] already in the pipeline, such as the purchase of microwave digester."*
>
> *"At the residues laboratory we are trying to get the ISO 17025 certification in order to improve our residues detection in animal and plant products for human feeding. Also, we have improved our regulations."*
>
> *"We are conducting exposure assessment studies on food additives, food contaminants. We also develop food consumption for exposure assessment studies. We still have to enhance our expertise on these areas before we can perform risk-benefit analysis."*

The sole respondent from the Laboratory Capacity Building for Toxins in Seafood workshop who stated that s/he never used what they learned in the workshop felt that resource limitation in his/her economy was the main reason. Among the respondents who had participated in the Risk-Benefit workshop and said they did not apply what they had learned, 3 stated that the information was not relevant to their current position, 3 cited resource limitations in their economy, and one stated that more hands-on training would be needed before they could apply risk-benefit analysis.

Regarding the utility of resulting publications, more than half of the respondents to both workshops (10 of 12 responses for Toxics in Seafood and 16 of 20 responses for Risk-Benefit) consult the resulting publication or materials "sometimes" or "frequently." All of the respondents said they shared what they learned with their colleagues, with 37% of participants (12 of 32) providing formal presentations in their home economies.

Respondents stated that the workshops had resulted in changes to policy or practice in the institutions of 7 of 11 respondents for the Laboratory Capacity Building workshop and 10 of 19 respondents for the risk-benefit workshop, as shown in Figure 24.

FIGURE 24: SCSC- HAS THE TRAINING/WORKSHOP CHANGED THE WAY THAT YOUR DIVISION/DEPARTMENT OPERATES?



Source: Online Survey. N = 11 for Laboratory Techniques; N =19 for Risk-Benefit Analysis.

Comments from respondents who participated in the Laboratory Capacity Building workshop include:

> *"Some approaches have changed, e.g. Measurement of Uncertainties; before we used bottom up, now, top to bottom is applied. Sample digestion method [also] made some modifications."*
>
> *"Before this training, technicians have their own methods and such in analyzing seafood samples, but after this training, I've come back and implemented the methodology as standard for seafood analyzing and since [then] have only used this method to analyse seafood samples."*
>
> *"Made some modification on the sample digestion technique."*

Comments from respondents who participated in the risk-benefit workshop include:

> *"We are strongly looking for a certification of our laboratories, we have trained all our field professionals to know the new rules in food safety, food sampling for the laboratory testing, and we are working to certificate animal food or plants producers."*
>
> *"[We are] looking at changing and adopting policies in terms of food safety legislation."*

In addition, 9 respondents from the Risk-Benefit Analysis Workshop felt there should be additional follow-up training to institute the relatively new approach to food safety. When asked how similar trainings could be improved in future, respondents generally suggested more practical hands-on exercises and greater number of days for training. This presumably reflects the highly technical nature of the subject matter and the relevance of the material to their actual professional duties.

Within the small sample of participants who responded for the project on "Laboratory Capacity Building," the stated objective to "develop laboratory capacity to measure heavy metals in seafood" appears to have been largely met. The project itself included a lab test by a third-party laboratory; the final report by this laboratory found that participants were able to test for 3 of the 4 metals satisfactorily (only 50% of participants, however, were able to analyze iron content correctly). Moreover, half of respondents who participated in the workshop (9 of total 18) report changes in policy or practices as a result of what they learned.

The stated goals of the risk-benefit analysis workshop to "debate scientific approaches" and "assess policy approaches" were defined in terms that would be difficult for an evaluation to measure. Nonetheless, approximately 22% of participants (10 of 46 total possible respondents) report some change in policy or practice as a result of the workshop.

Sustainability

Approximately one and a half years after the trainings, it appears that the information taught in the two workshops is influencing policy and practices in at least some of the member economies, with 56% of respondents reporting such changes. However, this finding is limited by the small sample size and potential selection bias (i.e., those who found the workshops useful may have been more willing to respond to the survey).

Most of the participants expect to stay in their current positions for a long time, which presumably increases the value of the training to the professionals and their home agencies. Only two respondents said that they expected to remain in their posts for less than two years, with the majority expecting to stay in their posts at least five years, but as noted above there may be selection bias to this response since respondents who have already moved to other posts may be among those participants that did not respond to the survey.

E. Small and Medium Enterprise Working Group (SMEWG)

Introduction

The SMEWG was given permanent status in 2010. According to its Strategic Plan (2009-2012),[21] its priority areas of focus during this time were:

- Business and Regulatory Environment
- Management Capability and Entrepreneurship
- Markets Access and Internationalization

[21] A new strategic plan for 2013-2016 is now in place and focuses on management, entrepreneurship and innovation; finance; and business environment and access to markets. However, the previous strategic plan is cited here, since it was in effect when the evaluated projects were implemented.

- Innovation
- Financing
- Sustainable Business Practices
- Cross-cutting theme: youth, women and minorities

In cooperation with the Chair of the SMEWG, the sub-stream "access to markets and internationalization" was identified as the focus of the evaluation. The SMEWG projects covered by this evaluation are shown in Table 7. Total planned investment in the two projects was $135,000 over two years.

TABLE 7: SMEWG PROJECTS EVALUATED

Year	Project Name	Amount	Sponsor	Project Number
2009	Workshop on Developing Trading House for Strengthening SME's Global Market Network	$60,000	Indonesia	SME 08 2009
2010	Study on SME Internationalization Best Practices	$75,000	Singapore	SME 03 2010

The 2009 Workshop on Trading Houses involved a four-day training and study tour in Indonesia for 50 participants from nine member economies.[22] The key objectives were to "share experiences on implementing trading houses," "discuss barriers and success factors for trading houses," and "gain commitment from participating economies to support global market network for SME products." Unfortunately, although the completion report for SME 8 2009 cites 50 participants, contact information was available for only 18 people. Of these, only 4 participants responded to the survey, one of whom was an observer from a non-APEC economy.[23] The evaluators therefore were unable to evaluate the Trading House Workshop. This highlights the challenges in conducting an evaluation several years after a project was completed, but may also raise questions as to the sustainability of the trainings if people are no longer in the same agency or position several years later.

The 2010 study mapped trade facilitation services in eight APEC economies, sought to identify best practices, and discussed the findings in a workshop prior to publishing the final report. The workshop was held in the margins of the 31st SMEWG meeting in September 2010. The objectives of the project were to "highlight best practices in promoting internationalization," and "recommend strategies to enhance practices and address gaps."

SURVEY DATA

A total of 13 people were surveyed for the evaluation, including both POs. For SME 3 2010, a total of 30 participants were contacted, of whom 11 participants from 8 economies responded (including 2 people

[22] The completion report has a discrepancy, citing 50 and then 67 participants.

[23] Two others also attended the workshop on SME Internationalization Best Practices and only provided one set of responses; these are counted under that workshop's results.

who attended both workshops).[24]

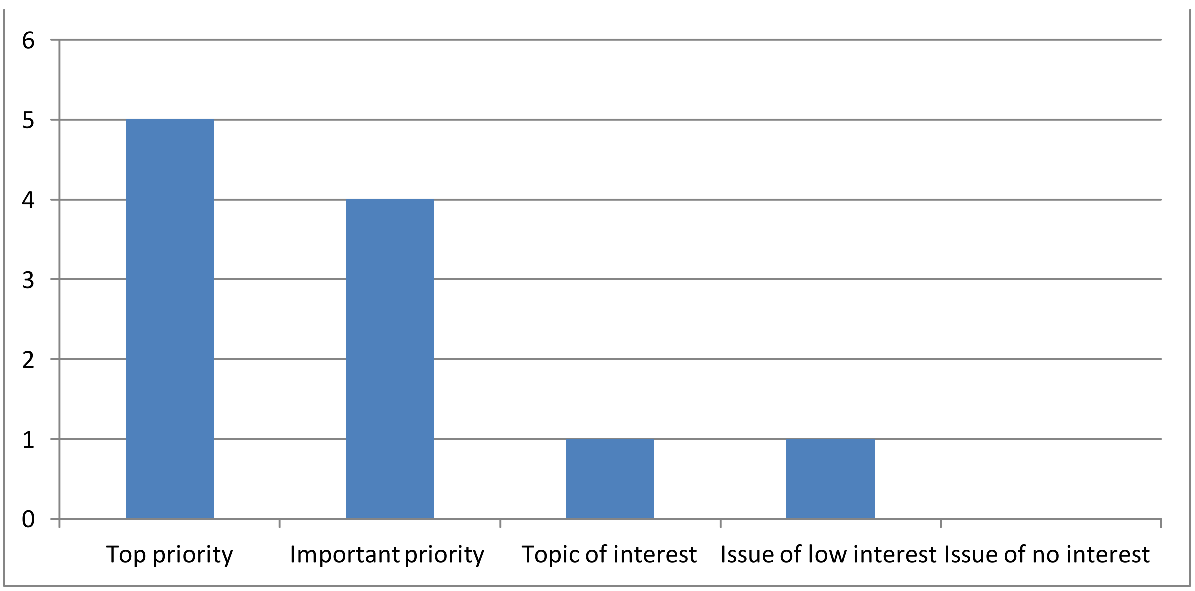
EVALUATION FINDINGS

Relevance

A review of the APEC Project Database found that from 2009-2012, the SMEWG implemented 39 APEC-funded projects. Projects Overseers came from 14 of the 21 member economies. The bulk of projects were proposed by the United States (12), Korea (8), Indonesia (5), and Chinese Taipei and Peru (4 each). A review of project titles (an admittedly imprecise method of determining content) indicates that the most common topic for the projects was sustainable or green business practices (6 projects), women entrepreneurs (5 projects), and Technology for SMEs (5 projects). Other seemingly core areas, such as business enabling environment and finance (each only having 2 projects) and access to markets (with 3 projects), received considerably less attention in the portfolio of projects, while issues seemingly unrelated to the strategic plan, including business ethics and disaster resilience, were included, with 4 projects devoted to each subject. Case-by-case decisions for funding, presumably made on a variety of grounds, may be generating a portfolio that does not fully reflect the strategic plan.[25]

Respondents generally stated that the topic of SME Internationalization was a "top" or "important" priority for their economies, as shown in Figure 25. Participants were well targeted with 9 of 11 respondents stating the topic was relevant to core or occasional responsibilities. Two respondents selected "possible future responsibilities." No respondents selected "rare responsibilities" or "not relevant."

FIGURE 25: SMEWG- DID THE WORKSHOP ADDRESS A PRIORITY OF YOUR ECONOMY?



Source: Online Survey. N = 11

[24] Another respondent to the SME Study survey also attended both food safety trainings under SCSC. Their responses are counted under SCSC as they were more relevant there.

[25] See "Independent Assessment of the Small and Medium Enterprises Working Group" for further analysis and recommendations regarding project design. Per communication with the Chair, the SMEWG is seeking to conduct a gap analysis in 2013 that would help inform future projects.

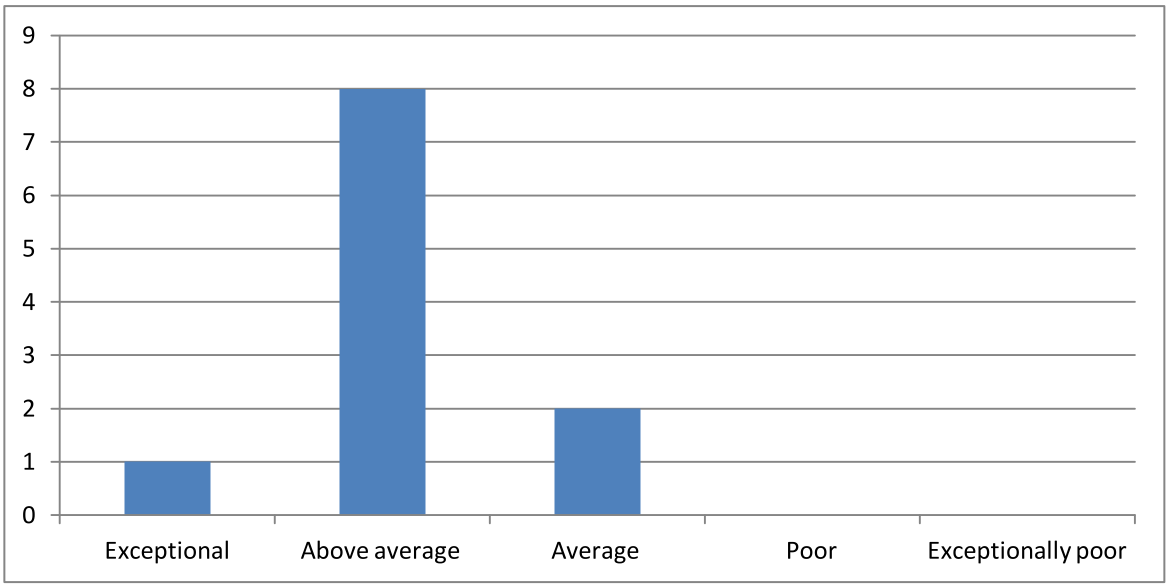
Efficiency

The total budget for the 2009 activity on trading houses was $76,000 or which APEC funded $60,000 to cover travel for participants and speakers. Actual expenditure per reported participant was $825. The total planned budget of the 2010 activity was $119,000 of which APEC funded 63%. As funds were used for research as well as the workshop, an analysis of final financials was not made to calculate the per person cost. In implementation, both projects were delivered 42% under-budget on average.

Effectiveness

Respondents were generally satisfied with the quality of the presenters, as shown in Figure 26.

FIGURE 26: SMEWG- HOW DO YOU RANK THE QUALITY OF THE PRESENTERS?

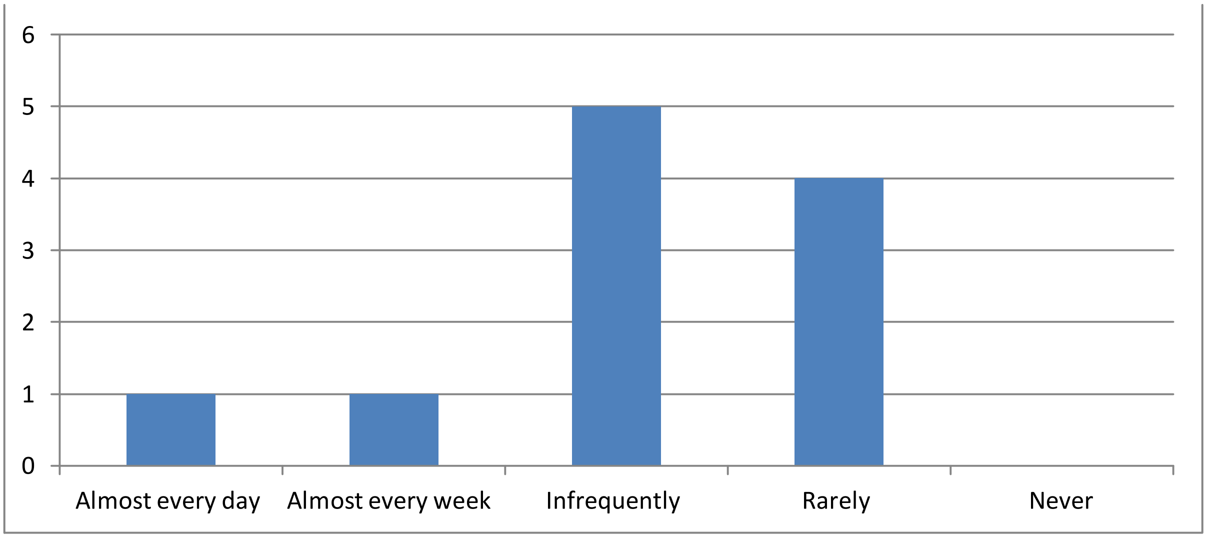


Source: Online Survey. N = 11

The majority (9 of 11) of respondents also felt that the material was “entirely” or “mostly appropriate.” Of those who considered some of the material not to be appropriate, one stated that there was some information that was too technical, 2 stated some material was not relevant, and 2 stated some information was too basic. Six of the 11 respondents stated that they refer to the resulting publication “frequently” or “sometimes.” Two respondents stated that they “never” refer to the publication. Most of the respondents shared the information they learned with their colleagues after the workshop, 4 of 10 in formal presentations and 3 of 10 informally (one non-response).

However, the information conveyed in the workshop appears to have limited utility to respondents’ work, as shown in Figure 27. The majority of respondents (82%) apply what they learn only “infrequently” or “rarely.”

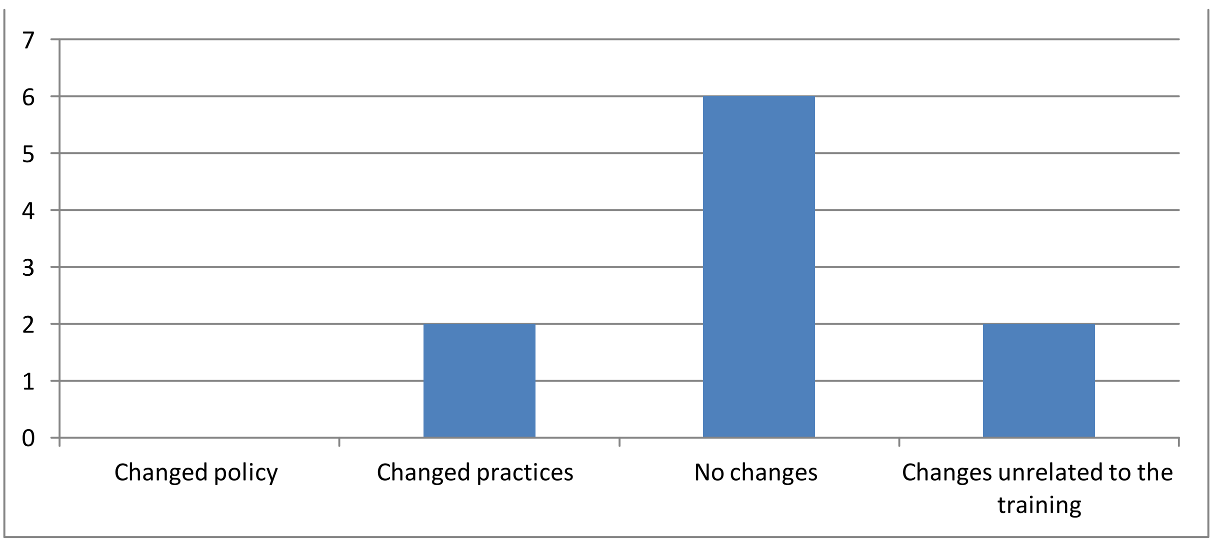
FIGURE 27: SMEWG - HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED IN THE WORKSHOP?



Source: Online Survey. N = 11

This is reflected in low impact on policy and practice, as shown in Figure 28, with only 2/11 respondents citing changed practices as a result of the workshop.

FIGURE 28: SMEWG- HAS THE TRAINING/WORKSHOP CHANGED THE WAY THAT YOUR DIVISION/DEPARTMENT OPERATES?



Source: Online Survey. N = 10 (one respondent did not answer this question).

Despite this finding, respondents did cite gains in knowledge as a result of the workshop or its materials. Some of the comments included:

> *"I use the knowledge I gained in improving the concept/design of my agency's projects towards helping SMEs to upgrade their export capabilities."*

> *"I considered some of the best practices presented, including the results of the study in developing local policies, to assist in upgrading the capabilities of SMEs to internationalize."*

"I refer to the outcome of the Workshop when I build our strategy on international marketing."

"Exchanging ideas & practices on SME development will be precious to [an economy like mine]. As my Agency focuses on supporting & developing enterprises… learning experiences from other economies in this field is our task. During the workshop I realized that only one-day is not enough time to discuss in details & express practical ideas.

Only three respondents provided a reason why they weren't applying what they learned. One cited lack of resources, another selected "No directions from superiors to implement this new method" and the third selected both of those reasons. The responses to these questions are particularly salient for determining the impact of this training program and demonstrate that it is possible to document changes as a result of APEC projects. However, for the evaluation to provide useful information, the project design should describe first what level of change is anticipated and needed for the project to be considered successful. Then, considerable effort will need to be devoted to ensure that all – or most – participants respond so that results have higher validity.

Respondents were asked what they would recommend to improve similar projects in future. The set of responses included:

"Some subjects should be expanded... [and] it is very important to create a platform to follow up participants' action plans after the workshop to make the workshop more effective."

"Publication of a simple toolkit or information guide on SME internationalization can be explored."

"Maybe have more visits or practical work rather than theory."

Sustainability

Given that few policies and practices were actually changed as a result of these programs, it is unlikely that the long-term effects would be significantly greater than the short-term effects and probably would be expected to decline over time instead. While the stated objective was to identify ways that economies could fill gaps in their current SME internationalization policies, as noted above, several respondents felt that without follow up on action plans, there was unlikely to be sustainable impact of this kind of activity. To the extent that the activity built capacity in individuals who attended, roughly one-third of the respondents were in permanent positions, one-third expected to be in their posts more than 5 years, and one-third expected to be in their posts 2-3 years.

Project Overseer (PO) Survey

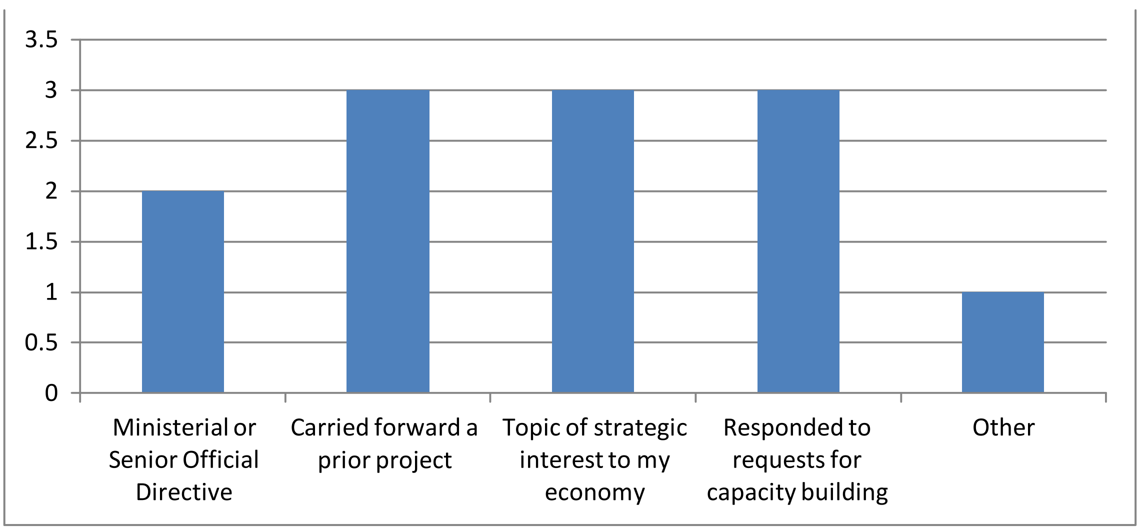
The 16 projects covered by this evaluation were proposed and managed by a total of 11 POs, of whom 9 participated in the survey. While the POs are from heterogeneous economies, they were a relatively small group and their responses were analyzed below for information relevant to how the design and implementation of APEC projects can be conducted for maximum efficiency and impact.

Relevance

Respondents were asked the impetus for their project proposal. The nine respondents provided a real mix of responses. Only one-third of the respondents indicated that the training program was a direct response to an articulated need by participants. An equal percentage indicated that the program reflected a topic of strategic interest to the POs' economy. Responding to a Ministerial or Senior Official Directive, was selected only twice (2/9 respondents or 22%), whereas more informal mechanisms appear to be more important.

These responses also serve to highlight the challenge of establishing "relevance," as the determination may vary depending on the interests of the respondent. A project might be deemed highly relevant given its connection to the Annual Funding Criteria or a strategic planning document, but some participants might still deem the topic to be irrelevant to their specific needs. Similarly, a project that is designed and implemented specifically in response to a request from one or more economies might be highly relevant to their needs, even if it is not connected to the Working Group's strategy. Here, and going forward, relevance may best be understood by APEC as connected to the strategic priorities identified together at the Working Group level, but this approach might very well discourage projects that are designed in response to specific requests outside of those priorities.

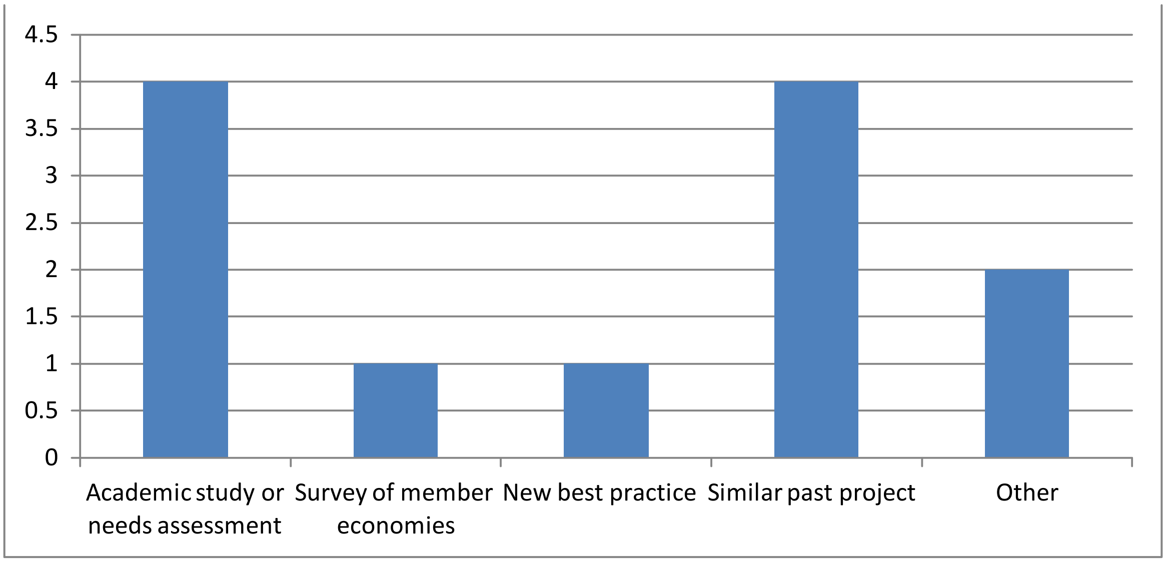
FIGURE 29: WHERE DID THE IDEA FOR THIS PROJECT FIRST COME FROM?



Source: Online survey. N = 12, multiple responses were permitted.

The suggestion that project design is driven primarily by "internal" incentives is supported by the relatively low level of evidence-based needs assessment, as shown in Figure 30. Only 4/9 POs cited academic studies or needs assessments as informing their project design. This may reflect the relatively small levels of funding available, which may make it difficult to justify rigorous analysis of needs within member economies. However, the evaluators note that there are some relatively informal practices already evident within APEC for determining needs. For example, EPWG surveyed members as to what kind of capacity-building training they would like as part of a "stock taking" exercise, as identified during the document review. These practices could be replicated more broadly within APEC fora, and would further support efforts to provide baseline data.

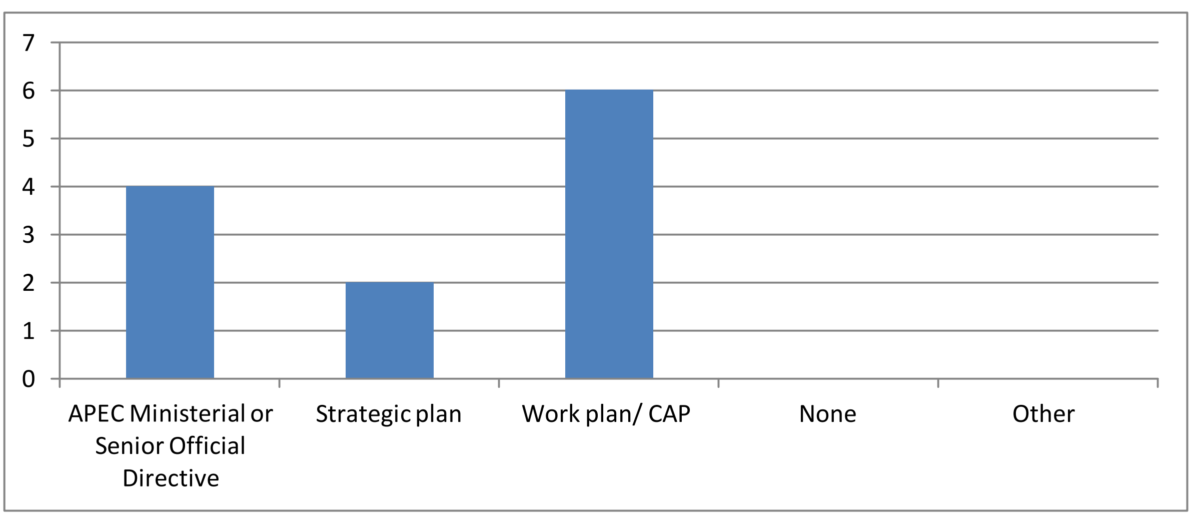
FIGURE 30: WHAT EVIDENCE DID YOU HAVE FOR THE NEED FOR THE ACTIVITY?



Source: Online survey. N = 12, multiple responses were permitted.

As regards alignment of projects with broader APEC priorities, almost half of the POs (4/9) stated that the activity was aligned with a Ministerial or Senior Official Directive. Since only two of the sub-fora covered in this pilot had strategic plans during the period under review, alignment with the strategic plans could be, and was, selected only by the two relevant POs. While the majority of POs stated their activity is aligned with annual workplans or CAPs, these documents appear to be drafted after discussion of proposals rather than driving proposal content (per interviews with Program Directors). However, no PO stated that there project was not aligned with at least one of these documents. Annual changes in the amounts available in various trust funds, as well as the Annual Funding Criteria (both of which are factors outside the control of the sub-fora) have significant, even primary, influence over which projects are approved and may not reflect the capacity building needs as expressed by Member economies.

FIGURE 31: WITH WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES WAS THE ACTIVITY MOST CLOSELY ALIGNED?

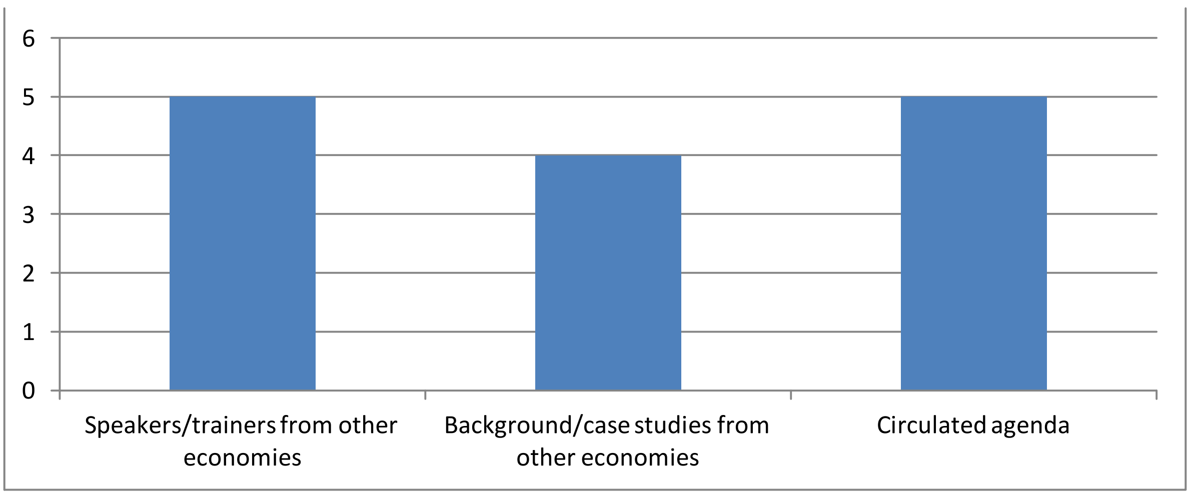


Source: Online survey. N = 12, multiple responses were permitted.

The absence of any requirement for evidence-based need and/or direct alignment with directives from the Senior Official level or above – compounded by the proposal selection process which assigns proposal ranking to the relevant sub-fora – creates a relatively informal process which may lead to the approval of projects that are not relevant with respect to strategic priorities. Interviews with APEC Program Directors indicate that in many cases the high value placed on collegiality within APEC reduces incentives to provide critical feedback of project design. These factors may play a role in those cases identified in the pilot evaluation wherein the majority of participants did not feel the workshop addressed a primary priority for their economy.

Attempts to enhance the relevance of material during implementation commonly tend to focus on sharing experiences from Member economies, as well as soliciting comments on the agenda, as shown in Figure 32.

FIGURE 32: WERE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING USED TO HELP SHAPE PROGRAM CONTENT?

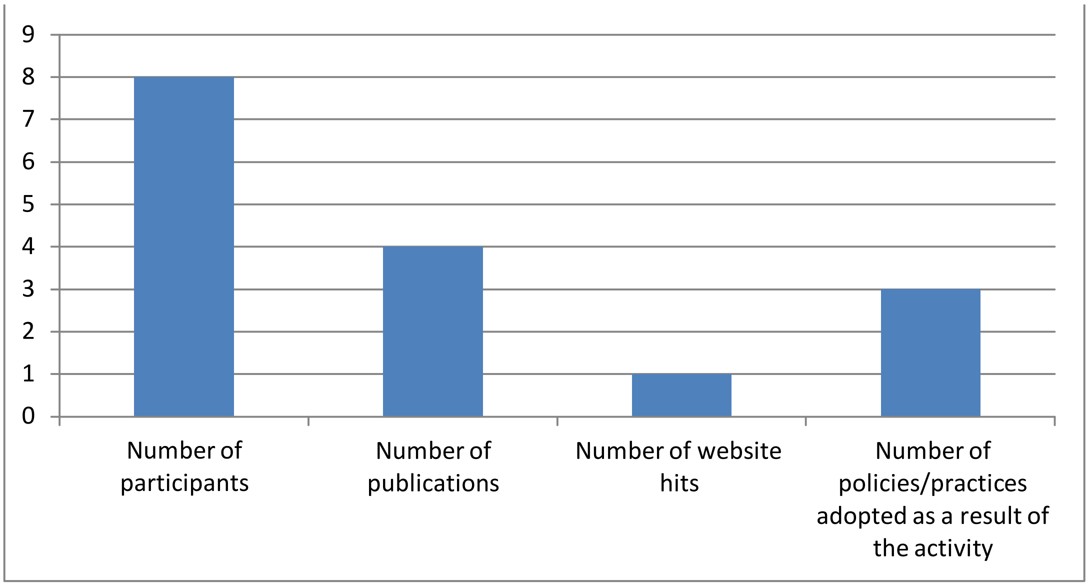


Source: Online survey. N = 14, multiple responses were permitted.

Effectiveness

As discussed above, review of the project proposals and other documents indicates that the objectives of the projects are often defined in broad terms with few measurable goals in terms of changes of policy or behavior. This is reflected in the indicators used by POs to measure success. As shown in Figure 33, these emphasize outputs, such as number of participants trained or number of publications issued. Only one-third of POs (3/9) indicated that they sought to measure the number of policies or practices that had changed as a result of their activity.

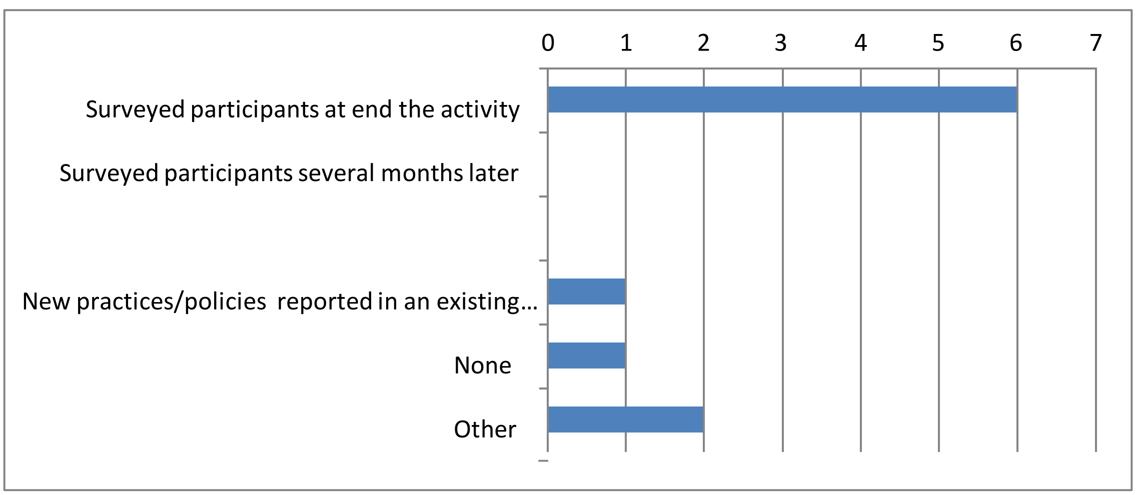
FIGURE 33: WHAT INDICATORS DID YOU USE TO MEASURE WHETHER THE PROJECT WAS SUCCESSFUL?



Source: Online survey. N = 16, multiple responses were permitted.

Moreover, the evaluation process (prior to this pilot exercise) was largely limited to circulating feedback forms at the end of workshops or trainings, selected by two-thirds of the POs (6/9) as shown in Figure 34.

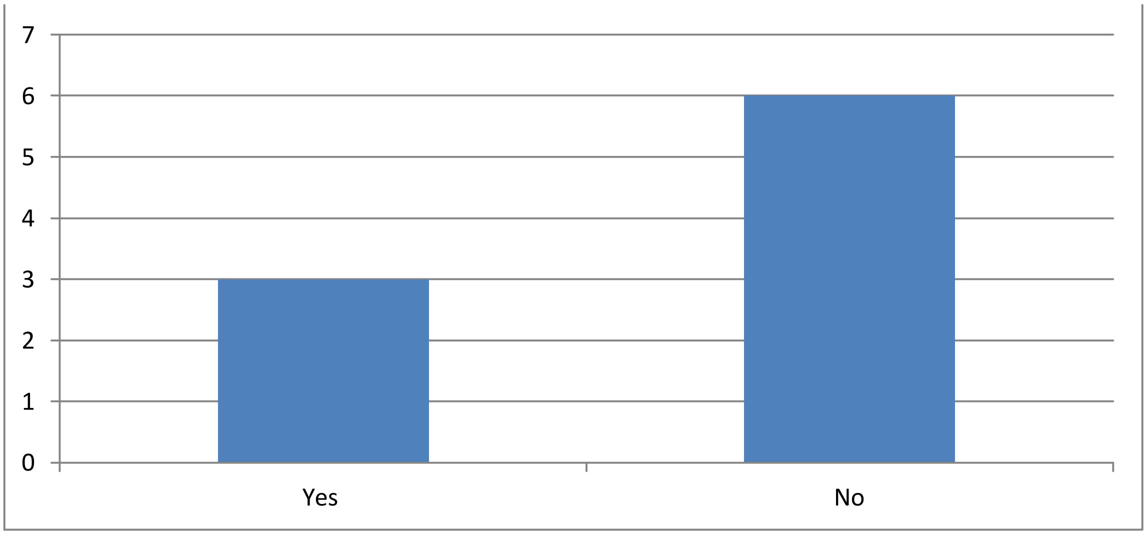
FIGURE 34: WHAT METHODS DID YOU USE TO COLLECT DATA ON WHETHER THE PROJECT WAS SUCCESSFUL?



Source: Online survey. N = 10, multiple responses were permitted.

Perhaps not surprisingly given the lack of an established evaluation framework, two-thirds of POs could not cite any evidence of changes in policies or practices as a result of their activity, as shown in Figure 35. Of the 3 POs that did cite a change, one referred to his own economy and a second cited follow-on APEC project proposals rather than changes in the policies and practices of member economies.

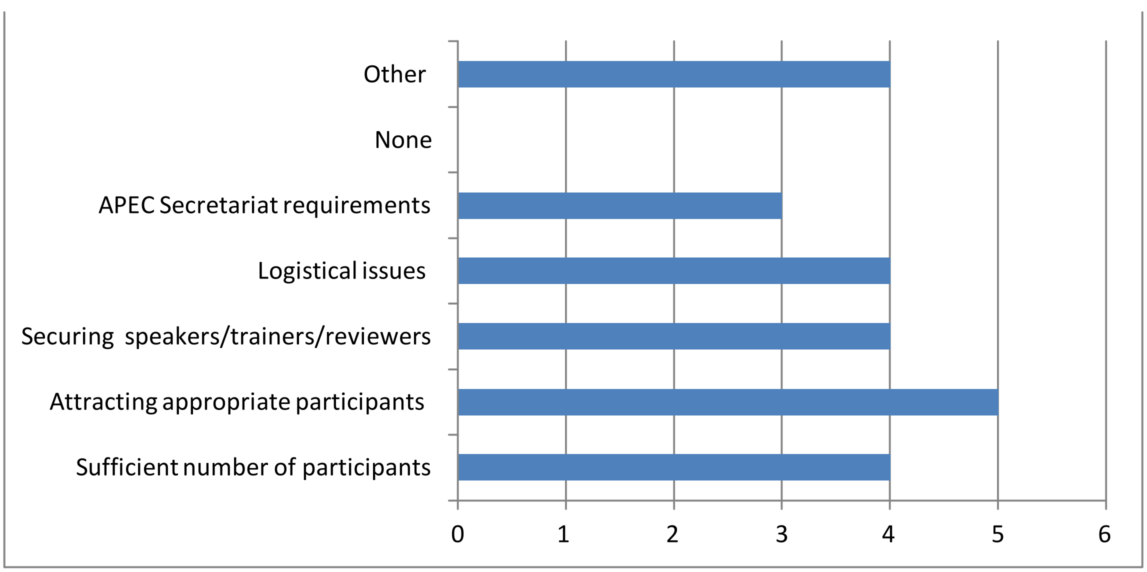
FIGURE 35: EVIDENCE OF ANY CHANGES IN POLICIES, OR PRACTICES AS A RESULT OF THIS ACTIVITY?



Source: Online survey. N = 9.

Lastly, in considering how projects could be more effective, POs were asked about the challenges they faced during project implementation. The most significant challenge reported by POs was in attracting sufficient numbers and appropriate participants, cited in roughly 38% of the responses to this question. This may again relate to the issue of relevance, if projects are in fact higher priority to proposing economies than to the intended audience, this could explain low uptake of proposed activities that leads to under spending of budgeted resources. Anecdotal information also indicates that POs depend upon host economies to nominate participants, which may be done with more or less accuracy relative to the list of most appropriate participants. Other respondents state that meetings are held on the sidelines of APEC meetings, open to all delegates. Such a general audience appears unlikely to result in significant and meaningful capacity improvements.

FIGURE 36: PRIMARY CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTION?



Source: Online survey. N = 24, multiple responses were permitted.

Comments related to APEC Secretariat requirements were consistent with the recent PO survey conducted by the PMU and included:

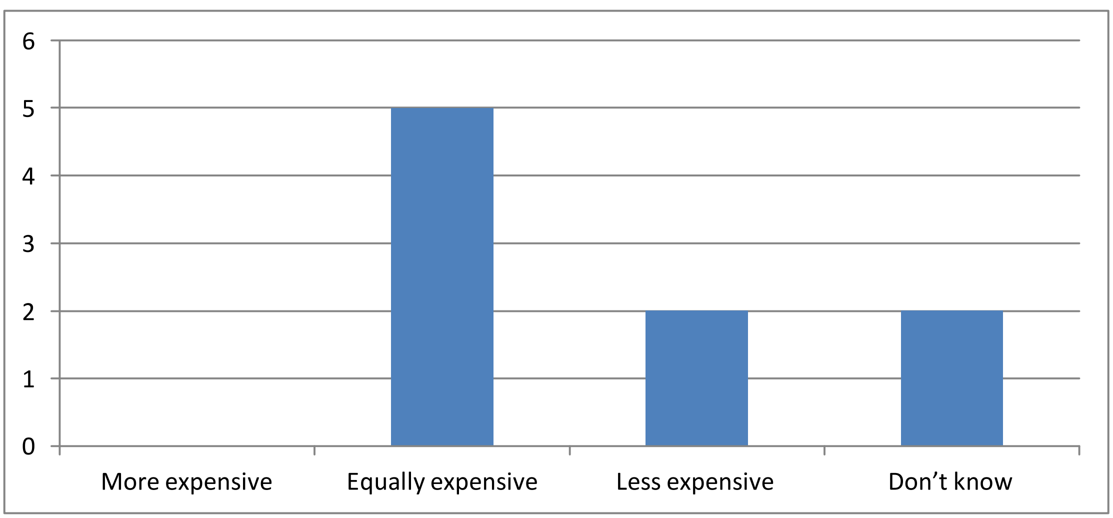
> *"The level of bureaucracy and paperwork associated with delivering the training through APEC was well above what [the organizers] encountered elsewhere and beyond their expectations and resourcing. The approval process to obtain letters of guarantee from the APEC Secretariat took too long, making it difficult to secure conference room facilities. Certification procedures were also onerous and the twelve hour travel rule was questioned many times…"*

> *"Lengthy process to secure APEC funding, (e.g. filling out the concept notes, monitoring reports, completion reports.)"*

<u>Efficacy</u>

The current proposal and project management system may offer opportunities for significant improvements in efficiency, according to some of the comments above. In addition, POs were asked about the relative financial cost of their activities. Perhaps not surprisingly, no PO felt that their program was more expensive than similar activities they had participated in with 7/9 saying their activity was "as expensive" or" less expensive" than others they had been involved with.

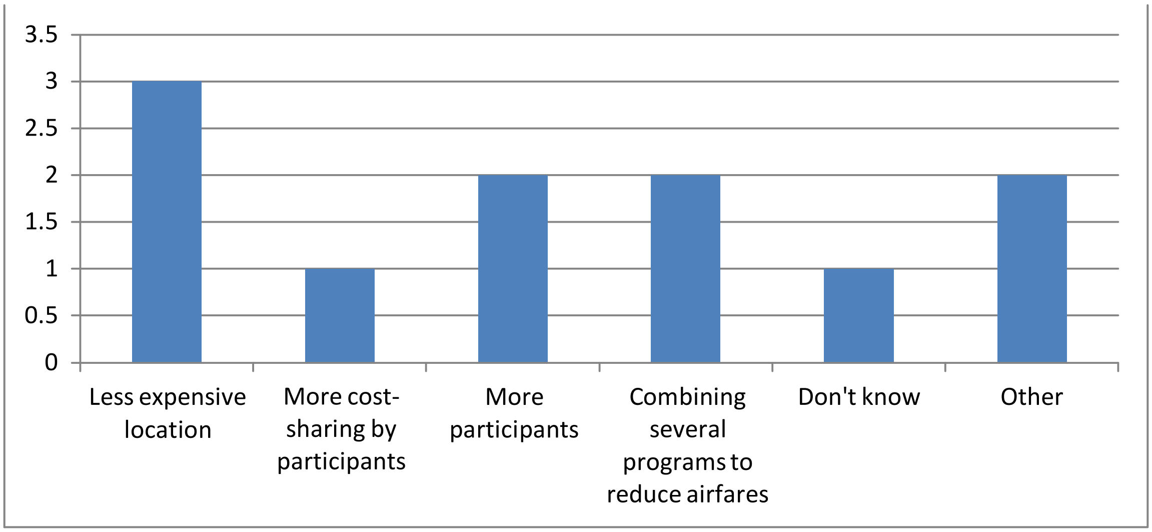
FIGURE 37: COMPARED TO THE COST OF DOING SIMILAR ACTIVITIES IN OTHER FORA, WAS THIS ACTIVITY:



Source: Online survey. N = 9.

When asked how costs could have been reduced without compromising quality, one-third of respondents selected "less expensive location."

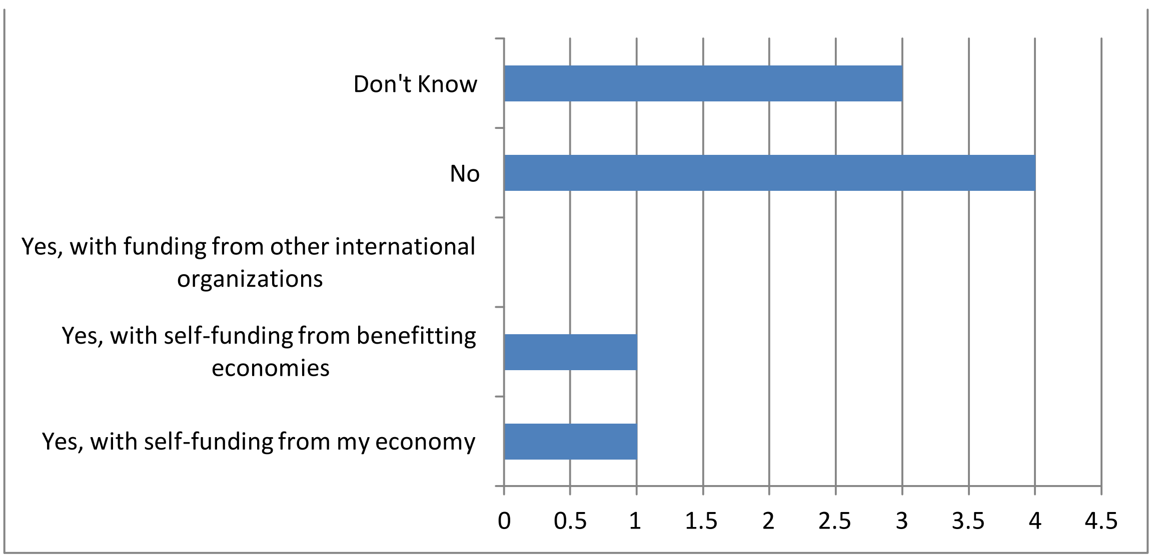
FIGURE 38: HOW COULD THIS PROGRAM HAVE BEEN DELIVERED AT A LOWER COST?



Source: Online survey. N = 11, multiple responses were permitted.

The majority (4/9) of respondents felt that the activity would not have taken place without APEC funding, with only 2/9 stating that participating economies would have been willing and able to pay the costs associated with the training programs. It is not clear from the responses whether this reflects actual institutional resource constraints within participating economies or a judgment as to the utility and value of the trainings to participating economies.

FIGURE 39: WITHOUT APEC FUNDING, WOULD THIS PROJECT STILL TAKE PLACE?



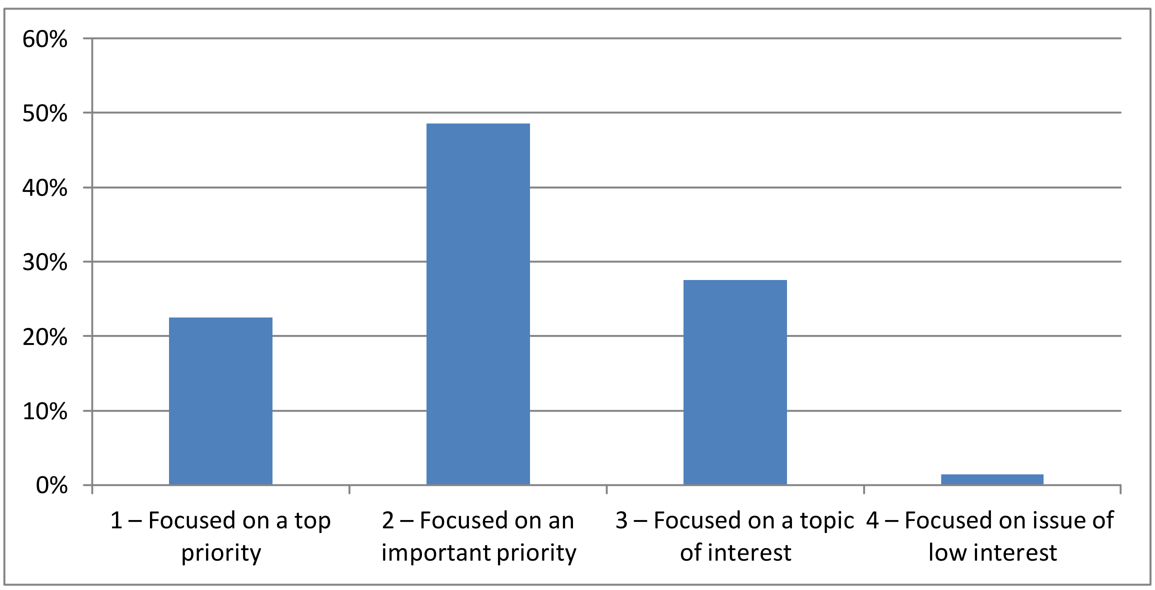
Source: Online survey. N = 9.

A rapid review of projected vs. final costs of the projects identified consistent under-spending across sub-fora (44% weighted average across all 16 projects). While savings are far preferable to budget over-runs, from a management perspective, significant under expenditure from budgeted costs presumably pose challenges for the APEC Secretariat, and in particular the PMU. Given reduced availability of project funds in recent years, and higher numbers of proposals being refused, consistent issues with projecting realistic budgets may be precluding additional participants from joining the existing portfolio of activities or additional worthy projects from being funded (at least until funds are re-programmed in future rounds). The findings unfortunately were silent on the question of why this is occurring at such high levels, but one suggestion is that POs consistently over-estimate the number of participants who would like to attend their workshop, as discussed above. Further research is recommended to conclusively identify the factors contributing to this situation.[26]

V. Overall Findings

In addition to considering the projects individually, it is also interesting to consider the findings collectively for indications of overall relevance and effectiveness of APEC projects. Viewed as a whole, the findings are positive in terms of relevance. Close to 100% of respondents across the projects felt that the activity they participated in was a priority or of interest to their economy. However, less than a quarter of respondents felt the projects addressed "top" priorities of their economy, suggesting there remains room for improvement. This is particularly true since, as noted above, this pilot selectively focused on streams of work that were considered of importance by Chairs. Thus the findings in Figure 40 may overstate relevance of the overall project portfolio.

FIGURE 40: AGGREGATE- DID THE WORKSHOP ADDRESS A PRIORITY OF YOUR ECONOMY?



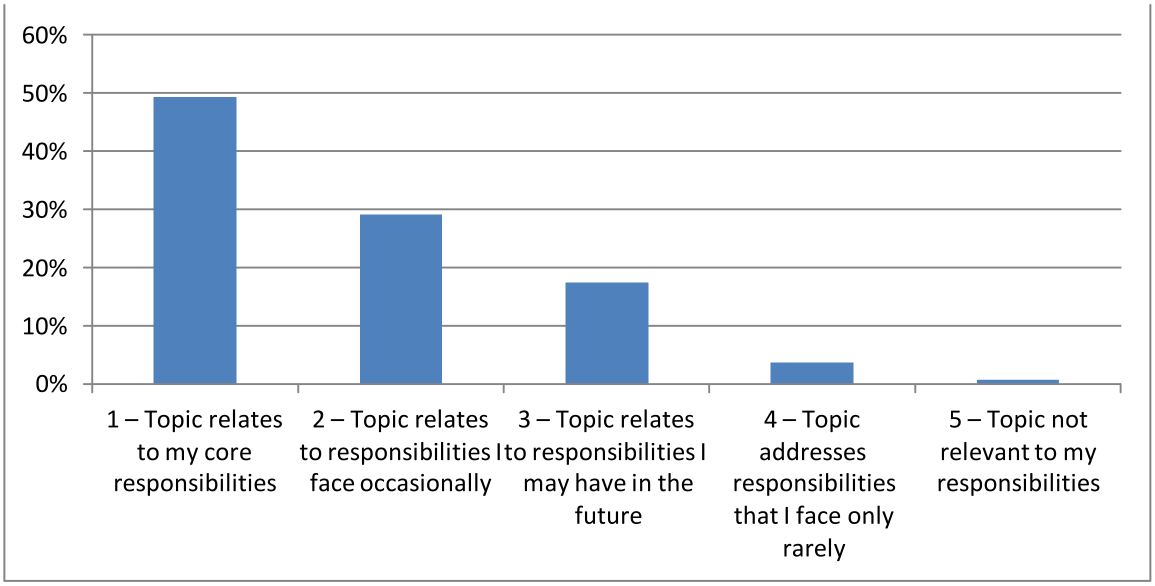
Source: Online Survey. N = 138.

Targeting of participants appears relatively effective, with over 75% of respondents saying the activity they joined addressed a core or occasional work responsibility. Only 5% of respondents said the activity selected the low utility responses. Nonetheless, fewer than 50% of respondents indicated that the topic of the training related to a "core" responsibility, indicating that POs in future should be encouraged to more

[26] Per communication with the PMU, steps have been taken since 2011 to attempt to address this issue. An analysis by PMU of projected to actual spending found that in general, projects are not as under-budget as in this sample.

clearly define the intended audience of their activity. These results may also be influenced by selection bias, as participants who felt they were benefitting from the workshops may have been more likely to respond than those who did not.[27]

FIGURE 41: AGGREGATE- HOW RELEVANT WAS THE TRAINING TO YOUR CURRENT POSITION?

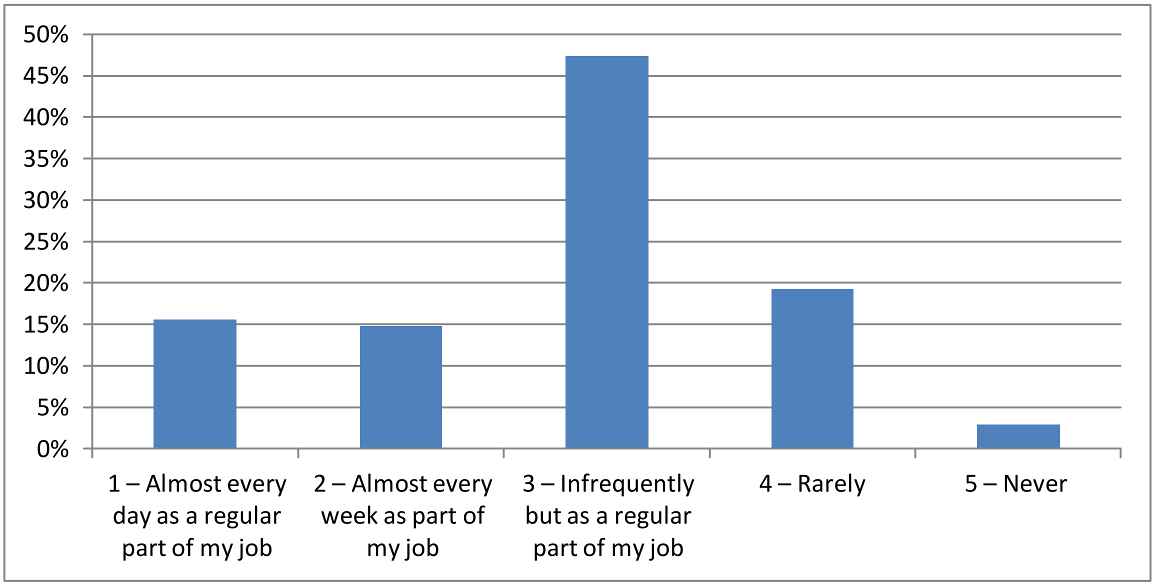


Source: Online Survey. N = 138.

Findings related to the quality of trainings and the appropriateness of material was again quite positive, with nearly 90% of respondents finding the quality of trainers above average or excellent. However, comments related to the appropriateness of the material were extremely mixed, highlighting the challenges in designing programs that are appropriate for developing and developed economies within APEC. In addition, actual application of material was somewhat problematic, with one in five (21%) respondents saying they rarely or never used what they had learned. Combined, these findings suggest the need for clear guidelines as to the intended audience for a particular activity. Moreover, broader coverage of activities by these evaluation surveys will provide a better sense of the average level of appropriateness and applicability of training materials and establish a benchmark for improving portfolio quality over time.

[27] Of course, the selection bias could be in the other direction, as those who felt the *least* relevance may have been motivated to respond. This ambiguity in interpretation highlights the importance of getting high and representative response rates from the participants in post-project surveys.

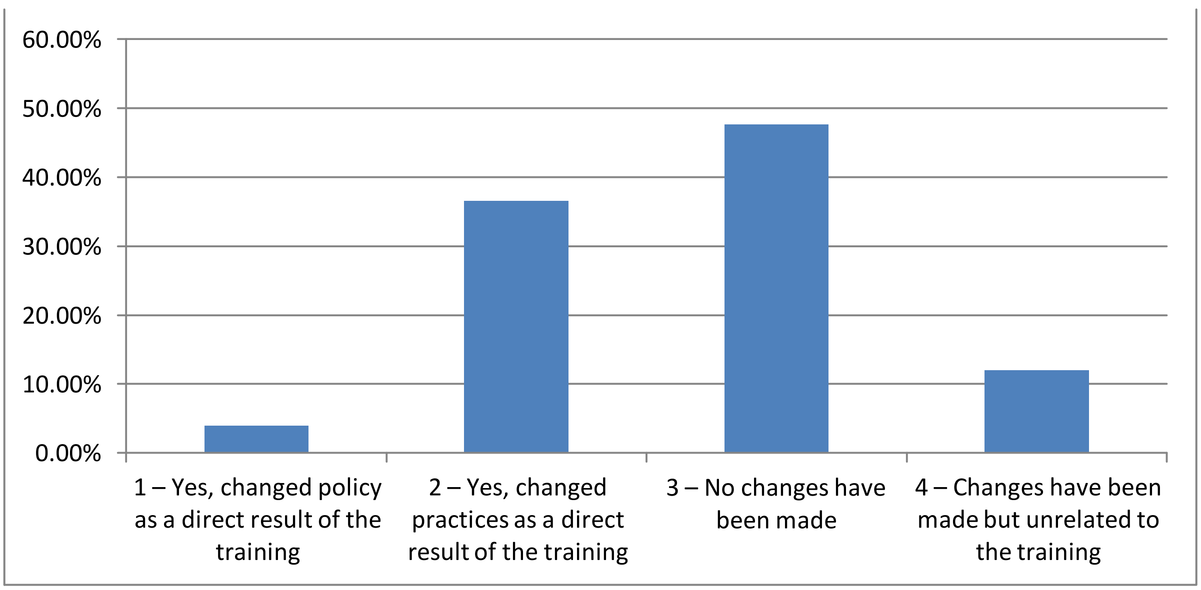
FIGURE 42: AGGREGATE - HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED IN THE WORKSHOP?



Source: Online Survey. N = 138.

Overall, the pilot evaluation finds that changes in policy or practices as a result of evaluated projects are identified by 37% of participants, as shown in Figure 43.

FIGURE 43: AGGREGATE- HAS THE TRAINING/WORKSHOP CHANGED THE WAY THAT YOUR DIVISION/DEPARTMENT OPERATES?



Source: Online Survey. N = 138.

This rate suggests that the programs are having impact on policies and practices that may be surprisingly high given the current profile of APEC projects (i.e., one-off workshops or trainings costing on average $100,000), but still leaves open the question of the significance and sustainability of those changes. Of course, given the purposive sampling of projects and the very low response rates to the survey, these results cannot be considered representative or generalizable over the entire portfolio of APEC activities.

This caveat is reinforced, perhaps, by the fact that two of the highest reported rates of change resulted from two relatively uncommon types of APEC projects: the peer reviews which are linked to explicit higher policy commitments by economies, and the Laboratory Capacity-Building which was highly technical and targeted in nature. For the more typical workshops and trainings, reported rates of resulting changes to policy and practice ranged enormously – from 0% to 78%.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This pilot evaluation had two related objectives. First, to test the feasibility of a methodology for conducting evaluations of APEC projects, that is, to identify what factors would be needed for such an evaluation to be conducted successfully and to demonstrate what such an evaluation would look like. Second, to provide insights into existing streams of work covered under the pilot evaluations. The evaluation framework that was tested for the pilot effort demonstrates that it is possible to document changes in policy and practice as a result of APEC projects. However, the pilot encountered a number of challenges that limited the usefulness of the resulting information and which should be addressed if evaluations are to be institutionalized in future.

Aspects of current practices that limited the ability of the evaluators to fully assess the projects were:

- **The absence of tightly defined priorities makes it difficult to judge the level of relevance of activities**. Even where strategic plans are in place, there may be a need for tighter prioritization to bring projects in line with APEC goals. Project Overseers are not generally relying on evidence-based needs assessments to justify APEC investment, and given the size of the projects it may be disproportionate to request such research. Thus, some other objective means of need identification (e.g., Senior Officials' directives, survey of member economies) is required to objectively evaluate relevance. As discussed in Chapter IV in the findings from the survey of POs, tendencies to introduce topics based on the interests of the proposing economy, anecdotal requests for a training, or other potentially subjective bases, may deserve special scrutiny to determine whether the target audiences find the programs and materials to be as valuable as do the economies and agencies providing the services. Even the most important, best-designed activities may have little impact if the participants are not convinced of the relevance of the subject to their own governance priorities and capabilities.

- **Project proposals commonly do not articulate a clear vision of how member economies' behavior or policy should/would change if the activity were to be considered successful**. This makes it extremely difficult or impossible for evaluators to assess whether the projects met their intended objectives. In addition, the lack of baseline data (e.g. any ex ante benchmarks for success) on any of the 5 metrics makes it difficult to state whether performance improvements occurred even if the objective is well designed.

- **Current "streams of work" are not designed comprehensively to build up core capacities considered essential to meeting APEC's priorities**. The current system of ad hoc introduction of project topics by sponsoring economies may have benefits of introducing a variety of topics and providing flexibility, especially to economies that may not be able to manage prolonged, large-scale projects. However, this practice encourages one-off projects which may have lesser impact and will be more expensive to evaluate.

- **The APEC Secretariat does not maintain comprehensive lists of project participants, making it very difficult to identify and contact participants for evaluation purposes subsequent to the activity.** In addition, the lack of any required reporting on self-funded projects makes it difficult to evaluate streams of work, since self-funding is often used to continue perceived successful past work.

- The Secretariat has lately conducted a number of evaluations including Independent Assessments of the Working Groups under SCE, and a survey of POs by the PMU. This caused some confusion among respondents and other stakeholders and may have contributed to the low response rate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The pilot exercise demonstrated that it is possible to more rigorously evaluate APEC activities and to generate quantitative data on program performance that would allow APEC to improve the overall quality of its project portfolio if this approach is institutionalized. APEC need not contemplate the most rigorous evaluations using experimental and quasi-experimental designs for its activities, as the scope and budget of those activities do not warrant these techniques. However, there is considerable room to institutionalize the evaluation framework piloted here, which would strengthen the current approach. This would require emphasizing strategic planning and project preparation that requires project proposal documents to establish evaluable performance expectations *before* the projects are implemented. Implementing such an evaluation framework requires a number of changes to the process by which projects are designed and described prior to approval. Based on the results of this evaluation, APEC may need to implement the following steps to institutionalize a more rigorous evaluation approach:

- The **piloted evaluation framework is recommended as being significantly more robust than the current practice** of circulating feedback forms at the end of activities. Should APEC stakeholders wish to have the kind of quantitative data provided in this pilot – which will allow the institution to benchmark performance and measure progress over time – it is recommended that the BMC approve independent evaluations as a regular part of the M&E framework. The scope of the evaluation framework could be inclusive of all activities over a certain budget amount (perhaps $150,000) to ensure that all of the largest activities are evaluated, but could also include a random sample of projects below that budget threshold to encourage incorporation of M&E planning in all activities and to provide information regarding the effectiveness of smaller activities.

- **As sub-fora develop their strategic plans, they should be encouraged to identify a limited number of priorities, rather than seeking to encapsulate all of the activities which have previously been in their workplans**. In terms of impact and sustainability, the findings of this pilot evaluation suggest that fora may wish to prioritize policy, regulatory and procedural changes to improve systems and the “rules of the game” rather than focusing on the capacity building of specific individuals, as there may be high levels of staff turnover in certain Ministries/agencies. These strategic plans should be accompanied by the development of a logical framework which clearly shows the links between objectives, expected outcomes, and the inputs and outputs that are required to achieve those expected outcomes. The strategic plans should then direct which projects will be recommended for funding. The ability to improve prioritization of projects is affected by broader organizational issues, including the composition of the project trust funds, the Annual Funding Criteria, and the ranking system. These are outside the scope of this evaluation, but need to be assessed elsewhere to determine how conducive they are to successful projects that are highly relevant to APEC's core mandate.

- **POs should be required to develop tailored indicators** that are relevant to the project and **focused on outcomes rather than outputs**. Such indicators will be specific to each activity, but in every case will need to be objectively and transparently determined and quantitative in nature. For example, a project focusing on food safety regulations might include:
    - Were relevant policies/regulations changed as a result of the activity to be consistent with international standards?
    - Percent of cases properly administered by regulatory agency;
    - Percent of commercial activity within the sector covered under the new procedures or rules;
    - Number (or value) of international commercial contracts disputed under new system (presumably less than under old system);
    - Percent of domestic businesses conforming to new standards after one year;
    - Change in commercial activity within the sector affected by new rules (could be positive or negative, depending on expectations);

  Collecting *ex-post* data on these indicators would presumably be done by an external evaluator, not the PO, but the existence of the indicators will allow evaluators to assess whether the project met its intended objectives. PSU data may be helpful in some cases in generating baseline and *ex-post* data, although their data can be on such a macro level that it would be difficult to show attribution. Baseline data and needs assessments could also be developed using surveys of member economies, as some fora are already doing.

  With baseline data in hand, the project design should describe first what level of change is anticipated (preferably in measurable terms) and needed for the project to be considered successful. Such information is essential for a project to be truly *evaluable*. If making such information required is not feasible, then the APEC Secretariat could use the evaluation framework to *encourage* such information and use it to identify projects that are evaluable. Over time, APEC could aim to increase the proportion of project funds that are directed at evaluable activities.

  Assisting POs to develop better indicators may require additional assistance from the Secretariat, for example adding a module on indicators to the project quality trainings or by having PDs assist with baseline data. Implementing these recommendations would require additional investment during the planning and post-project stages which may not be justified for one-off projects and thus increased investment in multi-year projects may better support a robust M&E framework.

- As part of project design, **APEC should encourage Project Overseers to improve participant targeting**. This could be done **by making more explicit the level of the intended audience and**

assumptions as to the ex-ante level of knowledge as well as the types of roles where the information would be most applicable, and how long beneficiaries would be expected to stay in those roles (if feasible). For trainings in host economies, there should be agreement with the host economy point of contact that they will select participants based on the target profile and make comprehensive contact information available to the PO (who would then be responsible for sharing it with the Secretariat).

Related to beneficiary targeting, the findings of the pilot evaluation suggest that current practices of inviting APEC delegates in the sidelines of APEC meetings, while reducing travel costs, is unlikely to correctly target the participants who are most likely to most value the opportunity. Given the nature of APEC's goals, projects designed to meet the needs of *specific* regulatory agencies and policy bodies in APEC economies, and then investment of greater effort and resources in ensuring that the right people working in those agencies attend the programs, are more likely to be successful – and cost-effective - than more generalist topics attended by more generalist participants As APEC starts documenting the quality of its programs, the organization can begin to benchmark performance outcomes such as participant targeting to inform organizers if a program was better or worse than average. This would, for example, allow APEC to establish a threshold below which the project was deemed to have been poorly targeted or above which the project was deemed to have been exceptionally targeted;

- The Secretariat should consider making it **mandatory that completed and verified attendance lists with contact information or other means of identifying beneficiaries/participants are reported to the Secretariat-** even for activities conducted in a host economy separate from a regular APEC meeting- and entered into the APEC database, and should emphasize the importance of POs and participants responding to evaluation-related surveys. Response rates will be improved if evaluations are conducted 6 months to one year after the activity took place, leaving sufficient time for issues of sustainability and institutionalization to manifest themselves while keeping the activity fresh in people's minds. Even with complete lists, considerable effort will need to be devoted to ensure that all – or most – participants respond. The more non-respondents, the more difficult it will be to interpret any patterns observed amongst the respondents. In addition, while self-funded projects were outside the scope of this exercise, the evaluators note that they are often used to introduce or continue activities in streams of work that also have APEC-funded projects. To the extent that APEC seeks to evaluate streams of work in future, expanding the APEC M&E framework to self-funded projects may be desirable; and
- For cost-effectiveness purposes, APEC **may** also **wish to combine project evaluations with the** kind of **sub-fora independent assessments** currently being conducted by SCE. While the latter focus primarily on management issues, those done to date have also included a general assessment of projects. The tools and methodology piloted here could be applied by those independent consultants to provide a more quantitative basis of assessment. However, the independent assessments currently only apply to Working Groups under SCE; sub-fora under CTI would need to be covered by some other evaluation mechanism.

ANNEX 1: QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaire: Project Overseer

1. Where did the idea for this project first come from?
   - □ APEC Ministerial or Senior Official Directive
   - □ Carried forward a prior project that was considered successful
   - □ Introduced a topic of strategic interest to my economy
   - □ Responded to requests for capacity building among other members of the sub-forum
   - □ Other (please specify in comment box below)

   Comment

   ____

2. Why was this project seen as necessary or useful?
   - □ Academic study or needs assessment of member economies identified need or opportunity to improve current practices
   - □ Survey of member economies identified their interest in this project
   - □ New research identified new best practice and project represented way of spreading information
   - □ Similar project had been implemented before and generated positive feedback
   - □ Other (please specify in comment box below)

   Comment

   ____

3. With which of the following guidelines was the activity most closely aligned?
   - □ APEC Ministerial or Senior Official Directive
   - □ Strategic plan of the relevant sub-forum
   - □ Work plan/ Collective Action Plan of the relevant sub-forum
   - □ None
   - □ Other (please specify in comment box below)

   Comment

   ____

4. As the project was being designed, were any of the following methods used to help shape program content?
   - □ Requested participation of speakers/trainers from other economies
   - □ Requested participant background information/case studies for use during the activity
   - □ Circulated agenda in advance of program for comments
   - □ None
   - □ Other (please specify in comment box below)

   Comment

   ____

5. Were all of the planned activities completed as designed and funded?

   □ Yes □ No

   If not, why?

   ____

6. If this project is part of a series, or similar to a project conducted in the past?

   □ Yes □ No

   If yes, what improvements have been made:

   ____

7. What is the primary achievement of this project?

   Please describe.

   ____

8. Are you aware of any new and improved practices being adopted as a result of this project by participants or the institutions they represent?

   □ Yes □ No

   If yes, please describe:

   ____

9. What indicators did you use to measure whether the project was successful?

   Please select all that apply.

   □ Number of participants
   □ Number of publications
   □ Number of hits or downloads on a resulting website/webpage
   □ Number of policies/practices adopted as a result of the activity
   □ None
   □ Other (please specify in comment box below)

   Comment

   ____

10. What methods did you use to collect data on whether the project was successful?

   □ Surveyed participants upon completion of the activity (please provide records if available)
   □ Surveyed participants several months after the activity had been completed (please provide records if available)
   □ Asked economies to report progress in follow-on meetings of the Working Group
   □ Adoption of new practices/policies is reported in an existing document/mechanism (e.g., PSU reports, Energy Efficiency Pledge)
   □ None
   □ Other (please specify in comment box below)

   Comment

   ____

11. What were the primary challenges in implementing the project? {Select as many as appropriate]

   □ Attracting sufficient number of participants
   □ Attracting appropriate participants from appropriate economies
   □ Securing appropriate speakers/trainers/reviewers
   □ Finalizing logistical issues related to venue, travel, etc.
   □ Meeting APEC Secretariat requirements
   □ None

□ Other (please specify in comment box below)

Comment

____

12. Compared to the cost of doing similar activities in your economy or in other international fora, was this activity, on a per-participant basis:
    - □ More expensive
    - □ Equally expensive
    - □ Less expensive
    - □ Don't know

    Comment

    ____

13. How could this program have been delivered at a lower cost without sacrificing program quality?
    - □ Less expensive location
    - □ More cost-sharing by participants
    - □ More participants
    - □ Combining several relevant program to cut down on airfares
    - □ Don't know
    - □ Other (please specify in comment box below)

    Comment

    ____

14. Without APEC funding, would this project still take place?
    - □ Yes, with self-funding from my economy
    - □ Yes, with self-funding from benefitting economies
    - □ Yes, with funding from other international organizations working on related topic
    - □ No
    - □ Other (please specify in comment box below)

    Comment

    ____

15. Do you have evidence of any changes in policies, regulations or professional practices as a result of this activity?

    □ Yes □ No

    If yes, please describe this change, including how long has the economy in question been practicing the new policies/methods: ____

Questionnaire: Trainees or Workshop Participants

1. To what extent did the training/workshop/review address a major concern or priority within your Ministry/Department?
   □ 1 – Focused on a top priority
   □ 2 – Focused on an important priority
   □ 3 – Focused on a topic of interest
   □ 4 – Focused on issue of low interest
   □ 5 – Focused on issue of no interest
   Comment ____

2. How relevant was the training/workshop to your **current** position in the government?

   □ 1 – Topic relates to my core responsibilities
   □ 2 – Topic relates to responsibilities I face occasionally
   □ 3 – Topic relates to responsibilities I may have in the future
   □ 4 – Topic addresses responsibilities that I face only rarely
   □ 5 – Topic not relevant to my responsibilities
   Comment ____

3. How would you rate the presenters/ trainers' level of knowledge, preparation and delivery?

   □ 1 – Exceptionally high quality
   □ 2 – Above average
   □ 3 – Average
   □ 4 – Poor
   □ 5 – Exceptionally poor
   Comment ____

4. Given your knowledge and professional expertise, was the level of the training/workshop:

   □ 1 – Entirely appropriate – addressed gaps in knowledge or expertise
   □ 2 – Mostly appropriate
   □ 3 – Somewhat appropriate
   □ 4 – Mostly not appropriate
   □ 5 – Not appropriate
   □ Other
   Comment ____

5. Of the material that was not appropriate, this information was:

   □ 1 – Too technical

□ 2 – Not relevant
□ 3 – Too simple or basic
□ Not applicable
□ Other
Comment ____

6. Have you been able to apply what you learned in the training/workshop?
□ 1 – Almost every day as a regular part of my job
□ 2 – Almost every week as part of my job
□ 3 – Infrequently but as a regular part of my job
□ 4 – Rarely
□ 5 – Never

7. If this activity resulted in a publication, report, or CD-Rom, how often do you refer to this information in the conduct of your work?
□ 1 – Frequently
□ 2 – Sometimes
□ 3 – Never
□ Not applicable

Comment ____

8. To what extent have you shared the information or lessons you learned during the workshop/training with your colleagues?
□ 1 – After returning from the program, I provided a formal presentation
□ 2 – I have explained some aspects of the program informally
□ 3 – I have not shared program information with my colleagues
□ Other :____

9. Has the training/workshop changed the way that your division/department operates?
□ 1 – Yes, changed policy as a direct result of the training
□ 2 – Yes, changed practices as a direct result of the training
□ 3 – No changes have been made
□ 4 – Changes have been made but unrelated to the training
If yes, please provide at least one concrete example:
____

10. What can you recommend that would improve this activity if it were repeated in the future?
[Open-ended]

11. How long do you expect that you will stay in this position (or a related position where you will need these skills?)

□ 1 – This is a permanent position
□ 2 – More than 5 years
□ 3 – 3- 5 years
□ 4 – 2- 3 years
□ 5 – Less than 2 years

12. If you are applying what you learned, please give a concrete example of how you are applying it:

____

____

13. If you don't use the skills, select the response that best reflects your explanation as to why the workshop/training is not applicable (please select all that apply):

□ Not relevant to my current responsibilities
□ Too technically difficult to implement
□ Insufficient resources to implement
□ No directions from superiors to implement this new method
□ Method does not seem relevant to our economy
□ Other

Comment

____

ANNEX 2: DETAILED INFORMATION ON SAMPLE FRAME

Project	Number of Attendees	Number of Questionnaires Mailed	Bounced	Number of Responses	% Responded of Those Attended	% Responded of Those Contacted
CTI 21 2011	19	19	1	11	58%	58%
CTI 22 2011	46	46	2	19	41%	41%
EC 04 2009	22	17	7	5	23%	29%
EC 04 2010	40	40	6	9	23%	23%
EC 02 2011	600	116	-	43	7%	37%
EWG PREE	44	19	1	6	14%	32%
EWG JODI	85	50	-	11	13%	22%
TFEP 05 2009	38	31	8	13	34%	42%
EPWG 02 2011	18	18	2	6	33%	33%
SME 08 2009	18	18	8	4	22%	22%
SME 03 2010	30	30	5	11	37%	37%
Total	960	404	40	138	14%	34%