**Eligibility Criteria and Guidelines for Accessing the Renewed APEC Agenda on Structural Reform (RAASR) Sub-Fund**

Operating within any APEC fora, economies can submit Concept Notes (CNs) that meet the scope and eligibility criteria of the RAASR sub-fund.

To be considered eligible for the RAASR sub-fund, CNs must describe projects that support the implementation of structural reform priorities in developing economies. CNs must include an explanation of how the proposed project will support the economy’s RAASR Individual Action Plan (IAP). Proposed projects may primarily benefit a single economy, but should have lessons for APEC members more broadly.

CNs must demonstrate that projects will focus on identifying developmental needs and building the capacity of individuals and institutions charged with the responsibility of undertaking structural reforms. The building of this capacity could involve, for example, acquiring a particular set of technical skills, obtaining new knowledge or gaining experience through hands-on work.

Following receipt of CNs by the APEC Secretariat for an APEC Project Session, an Assessment Group will first undertake an assessment of each CN seeking funding from the RAASR sub-fund, for the purposes of determining eligibility.

The Assessment Group will consist of:

* The Economic Committee (EC) Chair
* The EC Program Director, APEC Secretariat
* Economies which have contributed to the RAASR sub-fund
* The Host economy, where the Host economy is a developing economy.   
  (Where the Host is a developed economy, the EC shall decide on which developing economy should occupy this role.)
* The APEC Policy Support Unit (PSU) will provide advice and feedback on CNs only.

The Assessment Group will use APEC’s Quality Criteria of *relevance, impact, effectiveness, sustainability*, and *efficiency* to assess each CN in implementing the RAASR IAPs.

The Assessment Group will operate in a transparent and fair manner, with any EC member entitled to observe proceedings.

The Assessment Group process would not affect any existing procedures in relation to other sub-funds and the scoring procedures undertaken by each economy at the fora level, and/or the committee level.

EC would continue to have full decision-making authority in relation to the endorsement of CNs proposed within the EC. Eligible CNs that have been endorsed by the EC, or another proposing fora, will be scored by either EC or the other fora, per existing process.

If the Assessment Group considers a CN requires further development, timely feedback will be provided to the Project Overseer (PO), and the Assessment Group will consider revised CNs in a timely fashion, including out of session if necessary. The Assessment Group’s feedback should be deemed as a preliminary assessment of a CN, in an effort to ensure high quality proposals go to the EC (or proposing fora) for endorsement.

CNs which are not eligible for the RAASR sub-fund may apply for funding under the ASF General fund.

**Priority projects**

Priority will continue to be given to projects that benefit APEC economies that are eligible for official development assistance (ODA) with an implementation period of at least 12 months. This does not preclude non-ODA eligible APEC economies from applying for and receiving funding, or projects of shorter timeframes from being proposed, if they are in line with the purpose of the sub-fund and meet the eligibility criteria.

Recalling that, in 2015, Structural Reform Ministers encouraged economies to implement unilateral services sector reforms as part their RAASR action plan, priority will also be given to projects that support market-oriented reform in the services sector. This does not preclude non-services related projects from receiving funding, if they are in line with the purpose of the sub-fund and meet the eligibility criteria.

**Administration of the sub-fund**

The APEC Secretariat will be responsible for the administration of the structural reform sub-fund. It will be subject to the procedures governing the APEC Support Fund, as set out in the Guidebook on APEC Projects.