



**Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation**

# **Independent Assessment of the Policy Partnership on Women and The Economy**

**SOM Steering Committee on Economic and Technical  
Cooperation**

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# POLICY PARTNERSHIP ON WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY (PPWE)

## Independent Assessment: Final Report

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Preparing an assessment on the APEC's Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy (PPWE) was particularly challenging due to the fact that the mechanism has only been into effect since May 2011. This short timing between its creation and its evaluation was a concern that a number of Member Economies expressed and it is closely related to the assessments key findings.

The first important finding to stress is that the creation of the PPWE has caused a mix of skepticism and high expectations within its members. High expectations are closely related and positively justified by the fact that Member Economies do consider that PPWE has been able to elevate to a higher level of importance gender issues within APEC. Even though some actions can be taken to assure this and are part of the present assessment, a positive result is that PPWE is in fact being more efficient than the former Gender Focal Point Network (GFPN) in obtaining higher level-support.

Skepticism has two main explanations. First of all, Member Economies consider crucial for PPWE to have targeted, result oriented and concrete actions. Achievements in gender issues within APEC have been sound, including the integration of gender sensitive criteria into the earliest stages of project development and evaluation. Nevertheless, it is still difficult to measure PPWE success not only because of its recent creation, but also because of the lack of concrete mechanisms to identify how recommendations and PPWE's activities influence other fora or policies within Member Economies.

Skepticism is also influenced by the private sector's reaction to PPWE's creation, especially members of the former Women Leader's Network (WLN). One of the main objectives of PPWE's creation was to have a single mechanism unifying private and public efforts to work on gender issues within APEC. On this regard, a number of Member Economies expressed that, excluding ABAC's positive interaction with PPWE, they were especially concerned for a weak participation of the private sector in PPWE's meetings. This finding is alarming as PPWE was originally conceived as to give more opportunities for private sector's involvement and networking. Specific recommendations to review this situation are offered in the present assessment.

Finally, some of the challenges of GFPN are still present on PPWE's work including the lack of a communication strategy to inform on PPWE's achievements, the need to improve cooperation with other working groups to assure gender's handling as an APEC cross cutting issue and the necessity to have an efficient mechanism to identify women participation in APEC.

Key recommendations to these and other findings of this assessment are:

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### 1. Regarding PPWE strategic planning:

**1.1 Adopt as soon as possible PPWE's Strategic Plan.** In this regard, the following is recommended:

- Take advantage of APEC's Secretariat proposal to technically assist sub-fora in the creation of a strategic plan.
- Adopt a strategic plan with a clear vision and objectives from which a Working Plan will be easier to define.
- To continue to set a reduced number of targeted topics for each meeting to focus PPWE's work and make it more efficient.
- To review PPWE work plan annually through the efforts of volunteering economies representing different development levels. The review outcomes and suggestions should be reported in PPWE meetings for economies to follow.

### 2. Regarding measuring progress and recommendations implementation:

**2.1 Create a Performance Chart** that would include concrete variables of advancement on gender issues for both Member Economies and APEC fora to provide PPWE concrete tools to measure progress and success. Introducing gender variables in the vital information of APEC economies' performances would also help Leaders to better include gender into economic development policies.

**2.2 Prioritize and focus** on a small set of strategies and achievement of targets that should be followed up over the following year.

### 3. Regarding publicizing PPWE's activities and recommendations:

**3.1 Develop and Implement an efficient publicity and communications strategy** both within Member Economies and across APEC Fora to elevate recognition on gender achievements<sup>1</sup>. To help with this work the following actions could be implemented:

- A compound including gender actions and achievements since 1996 could be prepared and be widely distributed and publicized.
- This compound should be publicized at APEC and WEF websites, should include links to this section from other fora web pages. Email alerts can be sent to all

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that in 2008 this recommendation was agreed but there haven't been sound results of an outreach strategy on gender issues.

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focal points as and when new information and updates are uploaded into the websites.

- Maintain this compound updated by providing a summary of achievements at the beginning of each PPWE meeting.
- Report relevant achievements on gender-inclusiveness at the beginning of other fora meetings

#### **4. Regarding high level representation and participation of all PPWE Members:**

**4.1 Strengthening HLPDWE as a formal mechanism of the PPWE** to elevate its recommendations within APEC. To do so, the following could be considered:

- Include it as part of PPWE Terms of Reference.
- Invite Economic and Trade Ministers and Advisers to attend the HLPDWE to ensure better mainstreaming across APEC.
- Assure that the HLPDWE includes closed sessions to lead to agreement on actions and not only restrict the meeting to the presentation of economy-statements. A closed session may also facilitate the host economy to delegate activities to other economies to follow up throughout the year to promote the integration of gender considerations within APEC.

**4.2 Implement strategies to encourage former WLN members to actively participate**

#### **5. Regarding the use of gender equality in APEC projects:**

**5.1 Formalize as soon as possible PASC** to be able to reassume PPWE's work in assuring the use of gender-sensitive criteria in APEC projects.

**5.2 Strengthen the assessment process** through the following actions:

- Defining the assessment framework to be followed within PPWE to evaluate projects. Results from the APEC Symposium on GFPN Strategies held in Chinese Taipei in May 2010 could be revised. The correlation with other fora should be carefully addressed.
- Extend gender considerations in the QAF. Currently they form one part of consideration of whether a project is satisfactory or unsatisfactory against "impact criteria". The inclusion of a specific, stand-alone criterion in the QAF to determine if an economy has adequately mainstreamed gender in project methodology, implementation and anticipated impact could be very helpful to assure a successful gender perspective.

**5.3 Evaluate the Gender Equality Guideline.**

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- To receive other fora feedback on the use of the Gender Equality Guideline and be able to improve it, a half day workshop on the topic could be very useful. Currently Economies are unaware if the Guideline has been successful and facilitates other fora activities.

**5.4 Assist to other fora meetings and promote consciousness** regarding gender equality principles and the importance of their inclusion in project proposals.

#### 6. Regarding PPWE projects:

**6.1 Increase the capacity for cross-fora project funding and collaboration.** Identify 2 or 3 Working Groups with whom to work on an activity or project to address gender as a cross cutting issue.

#### 7. Regarding Member Participation:

**7.1 Identify a strategy to reactivate former WLN members to actively participate in PPWE.**

- Take advantage of PPWE newly creation to ask Member Economies to provide a point of contact list for private sector delegates.
- Evaluate the possibility of reusing APEC funded scholarships for female private sector delegates to attend as part of their economies delegation.

**7.2 Implement actions to share amongst PPWE, ABAC's women activities to identify projects to collaborate and avoid effort duplication.**

**7.3 To increase interaction during the Public-Private Dialogue on Women,** identify one issue on best practices of public-private collaboration per meeting and discuss it on a round table.

#### 8. Regarding Women Representation:

**8.1 Review current PPWE mechanism** to request that all Economies and APEC Fora report on the proportion of women and men on their delegations and meetings to be effectively reported.

#### 9. Regarding Best Practices Sharing:

**9.1 Create an executive** (including only relevant information in a synthesized manner), easy to access, to read and to update database on best gender integration best practices.

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- 9.2** Create an executive (including only relevant information in a synthesized manner), easy to access, to read and to update database on APEC's gender achievements.
- 9.3** Both databases should be available on APEC website and publicized for Member Economies and all fora to visit. E mail alerts could be considered once new information is available.
- 9.4** Individual Action Plans should also be circulated prior to PPWE meetings in a standardized manner to give Member Economies an opportunity to compare and contrast with their own.

### **10. Regarding PPWE meeting logistics**

- 10.1** Agenda could be decided and circulated to PPWE points of contact earlier. Host Economies could commence their collaboration on preparing agenda for next year right after the meeting and generate pre-PPWE teleconferences to enrich the agenda and to help enhance communication among economies.
- 10.2** PPWE Management Council (PPWEMC) should meet before PPWE Meeting in order to effectively guide PPWE efforts. It should take place back to back with other relevant WG meetings to enable collaboration. Economies are encouraged to have a long term participation in the PPWEMC to facilitate the comprehensiveness and the coherence of the agenda preparation as well as the improvement for economies participation in PPWE meetings.

### **11. Regarding cooperation**

- 11.1** Include in PPWE Strategic plan a specific strategy to increase cross fora cooperation. Actions such as the following could be considered:
- Identify three APEC relevant Working Groups to work with in an annual base. Include in this cooperation the assistance to their meetings as well as an invitation to PPWE's ones and share relevant documentation.
  - Name other working groups co-chairs as gender contacts to share PPWE's information or achievements, remind about the importance of use of gender criteria in project development and assist to PPWE's meetings

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### INTRODUCTION

Even though the Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy (PPWE) was only established in May 2011, APEC has been aware of the importance of Women and the Economy, as plans to achieve gender integration have been discussed by different mechanisms amongst APEC economies since 1996. It is important to note that Member Economies were particularly concerned about the assessment being able to capture integrally gender achievements prior to PPWE due to the reduced spectrum of timing provided to evaluate its activities. Considering the latter, the assessment will focus on the current PPWE priorities, activities and structure but will also take into consideration a general review of past achievements to provide a more integral assessment.

To achieve so, the report will be divided into the following sections:

- **PPWE alignment with APEC priorities**, which reviews in first instance PPWE priorities and main challenges considering the new mechanism and afterwards its alignment to APEC largest ones.
- **Projects**, which provides an overview of the process to include gender sensitive criteria into all APEC fora projects and the development of projects under PPWE umbrella
- **Forum operations**, which examines the most important changes to the mechanism including the merger between the private and the public sectors
- **Cooperation**, which reviews particularly intra-fora cooperation as well as work with other international organizations
- Summary of **recommendations**, which is also included in the executive summary

### Assessment's Background, Objectives and Methodology

Following APEC's ongoing efforts and commitment to work as an effective and efficient mechanism that constantly reviews its activities and structures in order to improve its impact and operations, in March 2012 SOM Steering Committee on ECOTECH (SCE) issued a request for proposals for an independent consultant to review PPWE activities to ensure that economic and technical cooperation (ECOTECH) activities are targeted and that APEC is making the best use of scarce resources. The outcome of the assessment, including Member Economies recommendations and comments, is expected to help bringing a more strategic perspective to APEC's capacity-building and technical assistance.

According to the assessment's terms of reference, the main objectives of the present work are:

- Review key APEC policy documents, to assess the outcomes and how they support the main objectives/goals of PPWE and APEC and their impacts in APEC member economies;
- Evaluate whether PPWE is operating effectively and efficiently

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- Identify ways to strengthen PPWE's strategic priorities and direction for future work;
- Provide recommendations on how the forum can better focus and more efficiently and effectively manage its tasks and assure that its capacity building activities are providing benefits according to Leaders' and Ministers' priorities;
- Identify ways to develop synergies among the work of the forum and other relevant APEC groups;
- Identify opportunities and provide recommendations for greater collaboration with non-APEC parties, including the private sector, civil society and other international organizations;
- Identify ways for PPWE to tap resources for programs;
- Explore how PPWE can better take into account the APEC commitment to give gender greater consideration in accordance with directions outlined by the Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy.

As a first step, a profound review and analysis of key APEC documentation was conducted. Documents included Leaders' and Ministers statements, PPWE records of meetings, key project documentation and the 2008 Independent Assessment of the Gender Focal Point Network (GFPN).

As a second stage, the independent consultant attended the Second Meeting of the APEC PPWE, the PPWE Management Council Meeting, the Public-Private Dialogue on Women and the Economy and the High Level Policy Dialogue on Women and the Economy, all taken place in Saint Petersburg, Russia in June 2012. During the meetings a more profound understanding of PPWE structure and activities was achieved and one on one informal conversations were conducted with Delegates. This provided an interesting overview of Member Economies expectations of the work of PPWE.

A questionnaire was also sent to PPWE's points of contact to officially receive Member Economies comments and recommendations to assure that gender equality, women and economy issues are taken into consideration in APEC fora, are included in project proposals and are documented as best practices to be shared amongst the wide variety of economies and cultures represented at APEC. Comments from eight Member Economies<sup>2</sup> were taken into consideration and are included in the assessment.

Finally, a first draft was circulated amongst PPWE's points of contact and was reviewed by APEC Secretariat. Further suggestions were taken into consideration and are included in this final report. The present work synthesizes the findings of all stages in the most concrete manner to provide SCE and PPWE an efficient and effective evaluation as well as viable and practical recommendations.

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<sup>2</sup> The Independent Consultant kindly thanks Hong Kong, Mexico, Russia, Australia, Philippines, Chinese Taipei, Singapore and Japan's contributions to enrich the assessment. All comments were taken into consideration and were very helpful.

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#### **ALIGNMENT WITH APEC PRIORITIES**

When APEC was conceived, gender issues were not specifically considered. Nevertheless, the original vision was integral and targeted a community with higher living and education standards as well as sustainable growth for all people. In 1994, Bogor Declaration established an important work baseline focused on developing human resources to reduce economic disparities and improving economic and social well being. This baseline was gender defined in 1996, when Leaders met in Manila encouraging women's full participation and recognizing that gender is a cross cutting issue with implications in all APEC fora.

After 1996 first stone, an important step on integrating gender concerns and value into APEC priorities can be dated to 1999 when the "Framework for the Integration of Women in APEC" was established and the forum's gender agenda was detailed by setting up its main priorities and objectives.

Since then, APEC's mechanism to work on gender issues has evolved actively through time but maintaining its cross cutting structure and considering the same main priorities, to look for the best tools to elevate its recommendations and to have concrete results amongst all areas. The Framework has been implemented by different structures including the Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) Ad-Hoc Advisory Group on Gender Integration (AGGI), the GFPN and the recently created PPWE, always looking to create greater awareness of gender issues as an economic and social issue of national and regional importance.

#### **High Expectations versus Skepticism**

An important first finding of this assessment is the fact that members of PPWE vary between skepticism and high expectations regarding a new structure responsible of gender issues. On the positive side, many opinions converged on what PPWE's priorities are and should continue to be: to elevate to the highest level PPWE's and gender recommendations and to better mainstream gender perspective across APEC.

There is also an acknowledgment regarding the advancement APEC has had in implementing its Framework and in attaining achievements such as the inclusion of gender sensitive criteria to project proposals, development and evaluations since the earliest stages and the encouragement to other fora to work on projects targeted to women. A special recognition needs to be given to the production of useful guiding documents for APEC fora such as the Guides for Gender Analysis, on Collection and Use of Sex Disaggregated Data, on Involvement of Women in APEC and the Practical Guide on Gender Criteria for APEC Project Proposals and Evaluation Forms.

The increase in women appointments to APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) following 2011 San Francisco Declaration to make efforts to include at least one woman into its membership is

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also s a tangible example on how a gender recommendation resulted in a policy change at APEC regional level. Economies also reported to have learnt from the experiences of economies in trying to increase gender diversity in corporate boardrooms and in businesses and that APEC gender recommendations have provided positive contexts to implement gender reforms in their economies. Such is the case of Australia’s governmental reforms implemented this year with high impact on women’s economic participation and security as well as Chinese Taipei’s “Gender Impact Assessment” introduced in 2009 to enforce all the central government agencies to incorporate gender impact assessments into mid and long term projects in order to integrate gender perspectives in policies and regulations. Based upon PPWE activities, Japan is also promoting women economic activities for economic revitalization. Economies also highlighted the APEC Leadership Forum on Women: Powerhouse for Economic Growth hosted by Japan as a good follow-up to the APEC Women and the Economy and the San Francisco Declaration and as a lead-up to the APEC Women and the Economy Forum in St. Petersburg.

Considering 2008 Independent Assessment on the GFPN, it is worth pointing out that there has also been an improvement on the level of consideration amongst gender issues. PPWE’s representatives did recognize that current recommendations have higher level consideration than the former GFPN and therefore have higher expectations on this structure. There was a particular positive note on behalf of the High Level Policy Dialogue on Women and the Economy (HLPDWE). Member Economies consider this mechanism as an efficient manner to elevate gender priorities relative to former GFPN but did consider that the forum needs to be strengthened.

Finally, 2008 Independent Assessment also highlighted a lack of involvement of all economies in gender issues, especially for Fora Gender Focal Points, which caused an ineffective functioning of the GFPN as a network. Even though it is recognized that economies across APEC are at very different stages of development and therefore have different levels of resources to engage with APEC and in gender issues in particular, there is a general conception that the higher level of representation and better organization of PPWE has increased commitment and participation of Member Economies.

On the other side, skepticism prevailed because as happened with previous structures, PPWE has been ineffective in providing tangible results and advances in gender issues across APEC Economies and APEC fora. If progress is not measurable, it is difficult to maintain high expectations.

There is also skepticism and in some cases, direct concern, regarding the role that the private sector will have in PPWE structure. Even though PPWE was conceived as a single entity unifying business and government representatives, there is a clear perception that the response from the private sector, excluding ABAC’s involvement, was poor and resulted in reduced participation causing lesser networking opportunities that were available in the Women Leaders Network (WLN).

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This ambiguity amongst expectations and PPWE's priority setting proves that the most pressing challenges for gender issues within APEC remain the same:

- To adopt a strategic plan which would eliminate this ambiguity through a clear vision and work plan for PPWE
- To accomplish that both Member Economies and other APEC fora make positive, tangible and concrete use of APEC's gender guidelines and recommendations.
- To publicize PPWE work so that there is a proper recognition of gender activities.
- To engage all members of PPWE to assure high level representation and to actively participate in the discussions and meetings.

Considering these general challenges regarding PPWE expectations, the following recommendations are proposed:

#### **I. Regarding PPWE strategic planning:**

**1.1. Adopt as soon as possible PPWE's Strategic Plan** (the draft is currently being prepared by PPWE's Chair Office). In this regard, the following is recommended:

- Take advantage of APEC's Secretariat proposal to technically assist sub-fora in the creation of a strategic plan.
- Adopt a strategic plan with a clear vision and objectives from which a Working Plan will be easier to define.
- To continue to set a reduced number of targeted topics for each meeting to focus PPWE's work and make it more efficient.
- To review PPWE work plan annually through the efforts of volunteering economies representing different development levels. The review outcomes and suggestions should be reported in PPWE meetings for economies to follow.

#### **II. Regarding measuring progress and recommendations implementation:**

**2.1. Create a Performance Chart** that would include concrete variables of advancement on gender issues for both Member Economies and APEC fora to provide PPWE concrete tools to measure progress and success. Introducing gender variables in the vital information of APEC economies' performances would also help Leaders to better include gender into economic development policies.

**2.2. Prioritize and focus** on a small set of strategies and achievement of targets that should be followed up over the following year.

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**III. Regarding publicizing PPWE's activities and recommendations:**

**3.1. Develop and Implement an efficient publicity and communications strategy** both within Member Economies and across APEC Fora to elevate recognition on gender achievements<sup>3</sup>. To help with this work the following actions could be implemented:

- A compound including gender actions and achievements since 1996 could be prepared and be widely distributed and publicized,
- This compound should be publicized at APEC and WEF websites, should include links to this section from other fora web pages. Email alerts can be sent to all focal points as and when new information and updates are uploaded into the websites.
- Maintain this compound updated by providing a summary of achievements at the beginning of each PPWE meeting.
- Report relevant achievements on gender-inclusiveness at the beginning of other fora meetings

**IV. Regarding high level representation and participation of all PPWE Members:**

**4.1. Strengthening HLPDWE as a formal mechanism of the PPWE** to elevate its recommendations within APEC. To do so, the following could be considered:

- Include it as part of PPWE Terms of Reference.
- Invite Economic and Trade Ministers and Advisers to attend the HLPDWE to ensure better mainstreaming across APEC.
- Assure that the HLPDWE includes closed sessions to lead to agreement on actions and not only restrict the meeting to the presentation of economy-statements. A closed session may also facilitate the host economy to delegate activities to other economies to follow up throughout the year to promote the integration of gender considerations within APEC.

**4.2. Implement strategies to encourage former WLN members to actively participate**

**Alignment with larger APEC priorities**

Following these first more general findings regarding PPWE's own priorities; an important result of the present assessment is that PPWE efforts and activities align positively to larger APEC priorities.

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<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that in 2008 this recommendation was agreed but there haven't been sound results of an outreach strategy on gender issues.

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For example, both the 2011 San Francisco Declaration and the 2012 APEC Women and the Economy Forum Statement align PPWE efforts to larger APEC's priorities, including ECOTECH's medium and long-term priorities and annual APEC objectives as set by the host economy:

2011 San Francisco Declaration	ECOTECH's priorities
<p>Identified key barriers which limit women's economic participation and enumerates specific actions to overcome them.</p> <p><b>Access to Capital:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal status review</li> <li>• Inclusive access to financial services for women entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Inventory on current SME lending programs</li> <li>• Survey and workshop on best practices in accessing capital</li> <li>• Data collection of sex disaggregated data on SME</li> </ul> <p><b>Access to Markets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practices to remove barriers for women to obtain up-to-date information and take advantage of market opportunities</li> <li>• Networks to assist women to access business connections and distribution channels.</li> </ul> <p><b>Capacity and skills building:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage empowerment and eliminate discriminatory practices</li> <li>• Survey and workshop to identify best practices on entrepreneurial counseling and training opportunities.</li> <li>• Incorporate gender analysis into SME assistance programs</li> <li>• Survey and workshop on best practices of use of technology in women training</li> <li>• Inventory of good business models for women</li> </ul> <p><b>Women's Leadership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage upcoming generation of women leaders</li> <li>• Raise awareness and publicize positive economic effects of gender equity</li> <li>• Focus on rural and indigenous women</li> <li>• Identify model measures of women profiles to promote women's leadership</li> <li>• Include at least one woman in ABAC</li> </ul>	<p><b>Long-term:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing human capital</li> <li>• Developing stable and efficient markets through structural reform</li> <li>• Developing and strengthening the dynamism of small and medium enterprises</li> <li>• Facilitating technology flows and harnessing technologies for the future</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium-term:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration into the global economy</li> <li>• Promoting the development of knowledge-based economies</li> <li>• Addressing social dimension of globalization</li> </ul> <p><b>Annual APEC Priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding regulatory cooperation and advancing regulatory convergence</li> </ul>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support women in public and private senior positions</li> </ul>	
<b>2012 APEC Women and the Economy Forum Statement</b>	<b>ECOTECH's priorities</b>
<p><b>Innovative Economy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop policies which support equality of access to the tools women need to be innovators and business leaders in their societies.</li> <li>Promote equal access to technology, including mobile phones and internet, especially in rural and indigenous regions to ensure women's equal opportunity to benefit from the innovative economy.</li> <li>Identify and discuss effective measures and best practices to harness business and innovation potential of women and girls</li> </ul> <p><b>Business Opportunities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support equal rights for women and to decrease barriers in accessing: capital and assets; markets and networks; skills and capacity building; information and role models; and technology to further encourage women's participation in SMEs.</li> <li>Assess and analyze gender dynamics in business opportunities in APEC economies</li> </ul> <p><b>Human Capital:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in policies and initiatives to promote work-life balance.</li> <li>Enhancing women's economic participation through the promotion of healthy lifestyles, health education and reducing the incidence of domestic violence.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Long-term:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing human capital</li> <li>Developing stable and efficient markets through structural reform</li> <li>Developing and strengthening the dynamism of small and medium enterprises</li> <li>Facilitating technology flows and harnessing technologies for the future</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium-term:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integration into the global economy</li> <li>Promoting the development of knowledge-based economies</li> <li>Addressing social dimension of globalization</li> </ul> <p style="background-color: #d9ead3;"><b>Annual APEC Priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intensive cooperation to foster innovative growth</li> <li>Trade and Investment liberalization, regional economic integration</li> <li>Strengthening food security</li> <li>Establishing reliable supply chains</li> </ul>

Members from PPWE confirmed this perception of alignment with ECOTECH priorities providing in average the highest and the lowest scores to the following:

Highest Scores	Lowest Scores
<p><b>Long-term priorities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing human capital</li> <li>Developing stable and efficient markets through structural reform</li> </ul>	<p><b>Long-term priorities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening economic infrastructure</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium-term priorities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addressing social dimension of</li> </ul>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitating technology flows and harnessing technologies for the future</li> <li>Developing and strengthening the dynamism of small and medium enterprises</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium-term priorities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integration into the global economy</li> </ul>	<p>globalization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human security and counter-terrorism capacity building</li> </ul>
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Gender issues have also been taken into consideration and have enriched Leaders and Ministerial objectives including Leaders and Minister's Statements, APEC Leaders Growth Strategy and Sectoral Ministerial Statements.

A few examples of these contributions include:

<p><b>2009</b></p>	<p>Singapore Declaration - <i>Sustaining Growth, Connecting the Region</i></p> <p>Ministerial Statement:</p>	<p>In the context of the new growth paradigm including balanced, inclusive, sustainable and secure, Leaders recognized the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on enhancing women access to education, training, financing, technology and infrastructure to enhance their economic opportunities.</li> <li>Develop outreach strategies to inform on the positive multiplier effect that women's economic engagement can have on productivity and sustained growth.</li> <li>Support opportunities for women workers and entrepreneurs especially on SME's.</li> <li>Maximize economic opportunities for women by investing in targeted policies and programs that promote gender equality and women security: including, women access to capacity building programs, technology and infrastructure, supporting measures to promote safe employment for women in informal and vulnerable sectors, access to financing, growth in women led SME's and support for social enterprises for women</li> </ul>
<p><b>2010</b></p>	<p>Yokohama Declaration - <i>The Yokohama Vision - Bogor and Beyond</i></p>	<p>In the context of APEC's new strategy for structural reform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote policies to create more and better jobs, enhance education and training with equal</li> </ul>

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	<p>Ministerial Statement:</p>	<p>opportunities for women, youth and the elderly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition to the full potential of women to contribute to regional economy and improve women access to finance, education, training, technology and health by supporting entrepreneurship and greater leadership for women in business and government.</li> <li>• Recognition that economic growth and prosperity cannot be achieved without the full partnership and participation of women around the region.</li> <li>• Enhancing women's economic opportunities and entrepreneurship spreads the benefits of growth.</li> <li>• Welcomed working on three pillars: career development of women in organization, realization of women's entrepreneurship, and creating new economic opportunities for women.</li> <li>• First Women Entrepreneurship Summit, high-level policy dialogue in 2011 on women's economic opportunities within APEC as key components in implementing the APEC Leaders' Growth Strategy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2011</b></p>	<p>The Honolulu Declaration - <i>Toward a Seamless Regional Economy</i></p> <p>Ministerial Statement</p>	<p>Gender issues were considered as a “looking forward” concept emphasizing APEC’s efforts to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take concrete actions to expand economic opportunities for women in APEC economies, welcoming the San Francisco Declaration on Women and the Economy.</li> <li>• Stress on the importance of the inclusion of women in the full range of economic activities as a proven growth strategy.</li> <li>• Recognition of gender as a cross cutting issue and to the creation of PPWE.</li> <li>• Commitment to implement San Francisco Declaration and overcoming the four major challenges that inhibit women’s full participation in commerce: (1) access to capital, (2) access to markets, (3) capacity and skills building, and (4) women’s leadership.</li> </ul>

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#### PROJECTS

According to PPWE's Eight Tasks considered under its Terms of Reference, there are two levels of gender analysis within APEC projects:

#### Use of gender equality in APEC projects

An important achievement of APEC's gender mechanisms has been the inclusion of gender criteria in the assessment of its projects, following its nature of cross cutting issue. This process could be reinforced to better integrate PPWE's work into other APEC fora by strengthening gender criteria within the Quality Assessment Framework (QAF). It would also be very helpful to have formal feedback from other Working Groups on the use of the Gender Equality Guideline.

Member Economies reported that under former GFPN, gender-sensitive advice and input was provided on APEC projects, especially the ones proposed by their economy in other fora but that this activity has diminished under PPWE. Some others reported to continue to provide this advice or input on APEC projects presented by their economies, especially at the stage of the project proposal development.

To assure that this achievement on gender continues to be present and effective in APEC, it is crucial to activate the formation of the Project Assessment Standing Committee (PASC). This should reactivate assistance and evaluation of gender criteria in APEC projects and to help promote PPWE's forum and role. PASC should be able to produce objective and more in-depth deliberations on each project and help better allocate limited resources to projects that make the most impact. It is important to note that voluntary and willingness from member economies are crucial for PASC's effective functioning.

It is also important for Member Economies to define the assessment framework that will be used to evaluate the projects. After Saint Petersburg meeting, it was agreed that a list of general recommendations on how to improve gender inclusive and sensitive criteria in projects would be produced after revising APEC's project proposals. This mechanism has to be better defined and included as part of PPWE Strategic Plan. Some Member Economies have highlighted the fact that the recommendations provided by PASC should not be burdensome for the project confirmation process. There is a special concern on the fact that direct recommendations to project proposals could be treated negatively by the project proponents. These concerns need to be discussed in PPWE and evaluated. Some of the following recommendations could be considered to help in this regard:

**V. Regarding the use of gender equality in APEC projects:**

**5.1. Formalize as soon as possible PASC** to be able to reassume PPWE's work in assuring the use of gender-sensitive criteria in APEC projects.

**5.2. Strengthen the assessment process** through the following actions:

- Defining the assessment framework to be followed within PPWE to evaluate projects. Results from the APEC Symposium on GFPN Strategies held in Chinese Taipei in May 2010 could be revised. The correlation with other fora should be carefully addressed.
- Extend gender considerations in the QAF. Currently they form one part of consideration of whether a project is satisfactory or unsatisfactory against "impact criteria". The inclusion of a specific, stand-alone criterion in the QAF to determine if an economy has adequately mainstreamed gender in project methodology, implementation and anticipated impact could be very helpful to assure a successful gender perspective.

**5.3. Evaluate the Gender Equality Guideline.**

- To receive other fora feedback on the use of the Gender Equality Guideline and be able to improve it, a half day workshop on the topic could be very useful. Currently Economies are unaware if the Guideline has been successful and facilitates other fora activities.

**5.4. Assist to other fora meetings and promote consciousness regarding gender equality principles and the importance of their inclusion in project proposals.**

**PPWE project proposals**

Taking into consideration projects since 2008, date of the last GFPN Independent Assessment publication, there have been very few proposals presented to APEC by GFPN/PPWE and very few have been funded by APEC<sup>4</sup>.

Member Economies consider there is low level support and resources for gender related projects such as the USA's proposal of organizing workshops on access to markets and access to capital. These activities followed up directly to the San Francisco Declaration priorities and did not receive APEC funding even if they presented interesting added value such as the

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<sup>4</sup> APEC Symposium on GFPN Strategies: Integrating Gender perspectives to APEC Forums, APEC Workshop in Gender Analysis Training, APEC Workshops on Best Practices in Micro-Finance and Micro-Credit, Public Policies to Promote Women Entrepreneurs, The Study of Women in Times of Disaster

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workshop on best practices in accessing capital which was presented in partnership with the G20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion. An interesting proposal is also Chinese Taipei's multi-year project on "Innovation for Women and Economic Development" which is currently under APEC's consideration. Cross fora project funding is an activity that should be enhanced as a mechanism to better mainstream PPWE's work. Currently the project on Women and the Transportation should be followed and analyzed.

There was also a special recognition to projects developed which helped to elevate gender issues in APEC priorities such as Japan's APEC Women's Entrepreneurship Summit project proposal in 2010, which catalyzed the creation of the Women and the Economy Summit in 2011. It is still to be defined if 2012 Chinese Taipei proposal of multiyear project will be funded.

Considering the latter, the following recommendations could be considered:

#### **VI. Regarding PPWE projects:**

**6.1. Increase the capacity for cross-fora project funding and collaboration.** Identify 2 or 3 Working Groups with whom to work on an activity or project to address gender as a cross cutting issue.

## FORUM OPERATIONS

### Structure of the Forum

As stated before, there is a special concern amongst Member Economies on the role and the level of participation of representatives from the private sector under PPWE.

There seems to be a perception that WLN being subsumed within PPWE has resulted in reduced private sector participation and therefore reduced former networking opportunities that were available in WLN. For some Delegates, WLN members felt left behind with the creation of PPWE and for some others, public and private sectors have different agendas. This situation is alarming and should be taken into consideration, as the main purpose of creating the PPWE was to unify in one single entity both private and public sectors.

Concerning ABAC participation within PPWE, Member Economies consider it very helpful but were not aware of ABAC's Women Forum Initiative, which took by surprise many representatives. This work needs to be better publicized within PPWE points of contact to avoid duplication of activities and to increase collaboration and best practices sharing.

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Concerning the Public-Private Dialogue on Women, there is a consensus that the two way dialogue is low. Presentations by a private sector leader do not necessarily lead to an effective dialogue on how public and private sector can work together effectively within and between economies. Some Economies also commented that the usefulness of the sessions depends on the information shared by the speakers so that it could be useful to provide speakers with more guidance and suggestions on the areas which would be most relevant to the participants attending such for a. Beyond sharing personal experiences, representatives commented on the usefulness of speakers sharing strategies which women in similar challenges can adopt.

#### **VII. Regarding Member Participation:**

##### **7.1. Identify a strategy to reactivate former WLN members to actively participate in PPWE.**

- Take advantage of PPWE newly creation to ask Member Economies to provide a point of contact list for private sector delegates.
- Evaluate the possibility of reusing APEC funded scholarships for female private sector delegates to attend as part of their economies delegation.

##### **7.2. Implement actions to share amongst PPWE, ABAC's women activities to identify projects to collaborate and avoid effort duplication.**

**7.3. To increase interaction during the Public-Private Dialogue on Women, identify one issue on best practices of public-private collaboration per meeting and discuss it on a round table.**

#### **Women representation across APEC and within individual fora**

According to PPWE Terms of Reference, reporting on women representation across APEC and within individual fora is an important task. Unfortunately and even if it was both a concern and a recommendation of the previous assessment, there is no evidence of a standard quantitative or qualitative way of reporting women's participation. All Member Economies acknowledged balanced delegations and actively mentioned ABAC's actions to increase women membership but were not knowledgeable of statistics that could prove improvement in this regard.

#### **VIII. Regarding Women Representation:**

**8.1. Review current PPWE mechanism to request that all Economies and APEC Fora report on the proportion of women and men on their delegations and meetings to be effectively reported.**

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#### **Best practices sharing**

Another important PPWE task considered under its Terms of Reference is the collection and sharing of best practices in gender equality integration amongst fora and within PPWE.

To achieve so, an important mechanism has been the presentation of Individual Action Plans (IAPs), which according to Member Economies has been more effective than in the past. However, IAPs should be circulated prior to the meeting, should be presented available for consultancy at APEC's web page. Economies should also be informed of the order in which each economy will present its Women and the Economy Individual Action Plan during the PPWE meeting.

There should also be a mechanism to process the best practices found in IAPs and a mechanism to socialize this information between Economies and amongst other fora to make PPWE work more valuable.

Member Economies also highlighted that bilateral meetings have proved to be useful to best practices sharing.

#### **IX. Regarding Best Practices Sharing:**

- 9.1.** Create an executive (including only relevant information in a synthesized manner), easy to access, to read and to update database on best gender integration best practices.
- 9.2.** Create an executive (including only relevant information in a synthesized manner), easy to access, to read and to update database on APEC's gender achievements.
- 9.3.** Both databases should be available on APEC website and publicized for Member Economies and all fora to visit. E mail alerts could be considered once new information is available.
- 9.4.** Individual Action Plans should also be circulated prior to PPWE meetings in a standardized manner to give Member Economies an opportunity to compare and contrast with their own.

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#### Logistics

Regarding logistic issues, Member Economies consider PPWE is working effectively. In average, and on the assumption that 1 is lowest and 5 is highest, representatives rated PPWE meetings as followed:

Agenda preparation	4.14
Document dissemination	4
Meeting coordination	4
Post-meeting follow up	3.42

Nevertheless, some practical recommendations were provided:

#### **X. Regarding PPWE meeting logistics:**

- 10.1.** Agenda could be decided and circulated to PPWE points of contact earlier. Host Economies could commence their collaboration on preparing agenda for next year right after the meeting and generate pre-PPWE teleconferences to enrich the agenda and to help enhance communication among economies.
- 10.2.** PPWE Management Council (PPWEMC) should meet before PPWE Meeting in order to effectively guide PPWE efforts. It should take place back to back with other relevant WG meetings to enable collaboration. Economies are encouraged to have a long term participation in the PPWEMC to facilitate the comprehensiveness and the coherence of the agenda preparation as well as the improvement for economies participation in PPWE meetings.

#### **COOPERATION**

Following PPWE's Terms of Reference assist APEC fora and actively cooperate with them to identify priority gender equality and women and the economy issues within their work, including inviting the Chairs of the relevant sub-fora to the PPWE meetings is a priority task.

In this regard, Member Economies informed that the level of contact with members of other APEC fora is considerably low. On average and on a scale 1 to 5 assuming 1 as the lowest, the questionnaire results indicate the following:

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Your level of contact with other participants in the PPWE during the year	3.14
Your knowledge of other APEC fora activities	2.57
Your level of contact with members of other APEC fora	2.28
Your level of contact with members of ECOTHEC sub-fora, specifically SMEWG and HRDWG	2.14

Almost all questionnaire respondents reported not to know who the representatives of other groups are. More promotion needs to occur within and between economies. Nevertheless, contact with other stakeholders was reported to be active.

As a cross cutting issue, cross fora cooperation is imperative to sustain the visibility and the development of PPWE. This cooperation is still fragile. Experience has proved to APEC that asking other fora to appoint Gender Focal Points was an ineffective mechanism, nevertheless, participating in other fora meetings and inviting others to PPWE's activities should be enhanced. An important example was the participation of the Health Working Group Chair at recent PPWE meetings as well as the presentation of the results of the APEC Women and the Economy Forum to the SMEWG. This interaction needs to be more active and to be institutionalized. PPWE's Strategic Plan needs to take into consideration a specific strategy to enhance this cooperation.

It could also be considered to name other working groups co-chairs as gender contacts to share PPWE's information or achievements, remind about the importance of use of gender criteria in project development and assist to PPWE's meetings.

There is no concrete evidence on work done by PPWE with other international organizations. There is nevertheless value in PPWE drawing on the work of other multilateral fora and organizations such as the outcomes from the UN's Commission on the Status of Women, UN Women, ILO and CEDAW to prevent duplication and provide greater impetus to make progress. Member Economies mentioned the importance of enhancing the creation of a network of networks on women issues to take advantage of global efforts.

**XI. Regarding Cooperation:**

**11.1** Include in PPWE Strategic plan a specific strategy to increase cross fora cooperation.

Actions such as the following could be considered:

- Identify three APEC relevant Working Groups to work with in an annual base. Include in this cooperation the assistance to their meetings as well as an invitation to PPWE's ones and share relevant documentation.
- Name other working groups co-chairs as gender contacts to share PPWE's information or achievements, remind about the importance of use of gender criteria in project development and assist to PPWE's meetings.

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND CLOSING REMARKS**

As US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently stated, taking into consideration the enormous challenges economies face today, no economy can afford to perpetuate the barriers women face to fully integrate into the workforce. Currently 60% of women in APEC economies are part of the formal workforces but there are still many challenges to overcome to achieve equal opportunities for them.

APEC fora have proved to be an effective mechanism to identify common agendas across economies with different priorities and level of development and to create a platform to present and share best practices.

In this context, gender issues have evolved in time and are currently analyzed and taken forward by a new mechanism, which needs to be strengthened to be as effective as APEC requires. The following are the main recommendations provided by the current assessment to do so.

**1. Regarding PPWE strategic planning:**

**1.1** Adopt as soon as possible PPWE's Strategic Plan (the draft is currently being prepared by PPWE's Chair Office). In this regard, the following is recommended:

- Take advantage of APEC's Secretariat proposal to technically assist sub-fora in the creation of a strategic plan.
- Adopt a strategic plan with a clear vision and objectives from which a Working Plan will be easier to define.

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- To continue to set a reduced number of targeted topics for each meeting to focus PPWE's work and make it more efficient.
- To review PPWE work plan annually through the efforts of volunteering economies representing different development levels. The review outcomes and suggestions should be reported in PPWE meetings for economies to follow.

#### 2. Regarding measuring progress and recommendations implementation:

**2.1 Create a Performance Chart** that would include concrete variables of advancement on gender issues for both Member Economies and APEC fora to provide PPWE concrete tools to measure progress and success. Introducing gender variables in the vital information of APEC economies' performances would also help Leaders to better include gender into economic development policies.

**2.2. Prioritize and focus** on a small set of strategies and achievement of targets that should be followed up over the following year.

#### 3. Regarding publicizing PPWE's activities and recommendations:

**3.1 Develop and Implement an efficient publicity and communications strategy** both within Member Economies and across APEC Fora to elevate recognition on gender achievements<sup>5</sup>. To help with this work the following actions could be implemented:

- A compound including gender actions and achievements since 1996 could be prepared and be widely distributed and publicized,
- This compound should be publicized at APEC and WEF websites, should include links to this section from other fora web pages. Email alerts can be sent to all focal points as and when new information and updates are uploaded into the websites.
- Maintain this compound updated by providing a summary of achievements at the beginning of each PPWE meeting.
- Report relevant achievements on gender-inclusiveness at the beginning of other fora meetings

#### 4. Regarding high level representation and participation of all PPWE Members:

**4.1 Strengthening HLPDWE as a formal mechanism of the PPWE** to elevate its recommendations within APEC. To do so, the following could be considered:

- Include it as part of PPWE Terms of Reference.

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<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that in 2008 this recommendation was agreed but there haven't been sound results of an outreach strategy on gender issues.

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- Invite Economic and Trade Ministers and Advisers to attend the HLPDWE to ensure better mainstreaming across APEC.
- Assure that the HLPDWE includes closed sessions to lead to agreement on actions and not only restrict the meeting to the presentation of economy-statements. A closed session may also facilitate the host economy to delegate activities to other economies to follow up throughout the year to promote the integration of gender considerations within APEC.

#### **4.2 Implement strategies to encourage former WLN members to actively participate**

### **5 Regarding the use of gender equality in APEC projects:**

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