# APEC Chemical Dialogue:

**Strategic Framework for Chemicals in the Asia-Pacific Region 2020-2023**

***Promoting sustainability and innovation through chemistry***

## Preamble

### Committee on Trade and Investment

Trade and investment liberalization and facilitation are the cornerstones of APEC's mission and activities. The Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI) is the coordinating body for all of APEC's work in these areas.

The CTI provides a forum for APEC's member economies to deliberate on trade and policy issues. Its objective is to help APEC economies achieve free and open trade and investment, while working to reduce impediments to business activities. The CTI oversees:

Eight sub-groups:

* Business Mobility Group (BMG)
* Electronic Commerce Steering Group (ECSG)
* Group on Services (GOS)
* Intellectual Property Experts' Group (IPEG)
* Investment Experts' Group (IEG)
* Market Access Group (MAG)
* Sub-Committee on Customs Procedures (SCCP)
* Sub-Committee on Standards Conformance (SCSC)

Three industry dialogues:

* Automotive Dialogue (AD)
* Chemical Dialogue (CD)
* Life Sciences Innovation Forum (LSIF)

The CTI was established in November 1993 by the Declaration of an APEC Trade and Investment Framework. APEC Leaders and Ministers direct its work and APEC Senior Officials provide guidance. The scope of the CTI's work was expanded and further clarified by the Osaka Action Agenda in 1995.

### Chemical Dialogue

The APEC Chemical Dialogue serves as a forum for government officials and industry representatives to find solutions to challenges facing the chemical industry and users of chemicals in the Asia-Pacific region. It reflects APEC member economies' recognition of the importance of engaging with the private sector and building public-private sector dialogue and cooperation for mutual benefit.

Issues addressed by the Chemical Dialogue include chemical sector liberalization, chemical trade facilitation, capacity building, regulatory alignment and product stewardship. The Chemical Dialogue raises awareness about the chemical industry as a provider of innovative solutions for sustainable economic, environmental, and social development, for example through its 2017 report. The Chemical Dialogue also focuses on improving regulatory policies and business practices with the aim to reduce trade barriers and protect public health, safety and the environment.

The Chemical Dialogue has developed this Strategic Framework to guide its work, to achieve its objectives, and to help position the industry as a strategic contributor to the economy, sustainable innovation and trade in the region.

The APEC Chemical Strategic Framework for 2020-2023 has been developed in line with the APEC Chemical Dialogue Terms of Reference and reflects broader APEC strategic objectives such as: strengthening regional economic integration and expanding trade; promoting green growth; and expanding regulatory cooperation and advancing regulatory convergence. The goals of the CD also support the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 and in particular the promotion of trade and investment, innovation and sustainable growth. The Framework also reflects the chemical industry’s commitment to health and safety and to mitigating the impact of COVID-19 in the Asia-Pacific region by providing the region and the world with essential materials needed to fight the pandemic.

This framework is designed to guide the strategic priorities and actions that the Chemical Dialogue will undertake in the years 2020 – 2023, including through its four Virtual Working Groups (VWG), which prepare outcomes for CD endorsement across a range of areas. The VWG on Regulatory Cooperation and Convergence advances CD initiatives designed to promote regulatory alignment and convergence through regulatory cooperation and the implementation of good regulatory practices. The VWG on the Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) promotes greater alignment by APEC economies to the UN GHS. The VWG on Marine Debris is a cross-cutting initiative to promote development of and investment in innovative solutions to land-based waste management and ensure coherence on marine debris initiatives across the Chemical Dialogue, the Oceans and Fisheries Working Group (OFWG), and other APEC fora and sub-fora. Finally, the VWG on Data Exchange is a platform for APEC economies and industry to share data and information on the sound management of chemicals[[1]](#footnote-1).

## Goals

The goals and supporting actions identified below give effect to the strategic objectives of the *APEC Chemical Dialogue Strategic Framework 2020 – 2023.* This Framework is designed to integrate health, environmental and sustainable development considerations related to the sound management of chemicals in a meaningful way.

### Shared Goal 1: To facilitate trade and raise the standard of sound management of chemicals by expanding and supporting regulatory cooperation and regulatory alignment in the region.

1. Building support for and participation by chemical regulators in the Chemical Dialogue’s Regulators’ Forum to:
   * increase capacity and technical capabilities among chemical sector regulatory officials in APEC economies;
   * exchange information on best practices in the sound management of chemicals;
   * increase regulatory cooperation and alignment within the region in order to lift the capability and capacity of developing economies; and
   * facilitate the flow of essential goods and services to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly regarding open regional markets and supply chain resilience.
2. Identifying opportunities to enhance regional economic integration in chemicals through:
   * Regulatory cooperation and convergence;
   * Supply chain mapping for key industrial chemical supplies and products, in particular in the area of COVID-19 essential goods;
   * Understanding areas of strategic importance and stress points within regional supply chains; and
   * Cross fora collaboration with other APEC fora and sub-fora (e.g., the Health Working Group, the Economic Committee, and the OFWG)
3. Promoting alignment in GHS implementation, taking the UN’s recommendations and members’ laws and policies into consideration, across member economies and sharing information on GHS implementation status.
4. Identifying specific opportunities to engage with key international fora working on chemicals-related issues such as the OECD, UN, WTO and WHO.
5. Conducting outreach to include SMEs, and entities such as downstream users and article manufactures along the value chain in the sound management of chemicals, in order to promote common understanding, and facilitate regional economic integration.
6. Continuing to serve as a forum to exchange information about chemical regulatory initiatives within and outside of the APEC region.

### Shared Goal 2: To promote understanding of the chemical industry’s role as a provider of innovative solutions for sustainable economic, environmental and social development.

1. Identifying barriers to and opportunities for the use of chemicals, products and processes to achieve the three pillars of sustainable development: economic, environmental and social.
2. Highlighting the importance of products and technologies enabled by chemistry for advancing global sustainable development; promoting the sound management of chemicals and waste; and facilitating progress towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
3. Encouraging the development of enabling policy and regulatory frameworks to facilitate the innovation and deployment of chemical technologies and solutions, for example to address the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. Promoting the development of new innovations and technologies to improve waste management as well as increased investment across the lifecycle of chemicals to use resources more efficiently and sustainably.

### Shared Goal 3: To enable effective cooperation between industry and governments to improve chemical product stewardship and safe use.

1. Leveraging voluntary industry stewardship activities (e.g. industry’s Responsible Care program); industry commitments to provide appropriate hazard, use and exposure information and to demonstrate transparency and collaboration for products along the supply chain , processes or initiatives that promote safe use of chemicals and informed sustainability decision-making and risk information and management, Best Available Techniques (BAT), ecolabelling).
2. Taking into account the special needs of SMEs, develop specific tools that can enhance chemical management capabilities (e.g. life cycle assessment and risk assessment).
3. Promoting chemical product stewardship and consumer information as components of the safe use of chemicals, in partnership with external stakeholder groups, where appropriate.
4. Promoting the responsible production of chemicals to achieve high standards of protection for human health and safety and the environment.

**Key Documents**

* [2008/SOM2/CD/002rev1 Principles for Best Practice Chemical Regulation](http://mddb.apec.org/Documents/2008/CDSG/CD/08_cd1_002rev1.doc)
* [2016/MRT/007 Best Practice Principles Checklist for Chemical Regulations](http://mddb.apec.org/Documents/2016/MM/MRT/16_mrt_007.pdf)
* [2017/SOM3/CD/018 Chemical Trade Paper A: Chemical Trade Data – Regional Flows](http://mddb.apec.org/Documents/2017/CD/CD2/17_cd2_018.pdf)
* [APEC#220-CT-01.5 Survey for Review of Chemical Management Regulatory Systems Worldwide – Summary](https://www.apec.org/Publications/2020/04/Survey-for-Review-of-Chemical-Management-Regulatory-Systems-Worldwide---Summary)

1. Additional information regarding the APEC Chemical Dialogue Virtual Working Groups may be found on the APEC website at: https://www.apec.org/Groups/Committee-on-Trade-and-Investment/Chemical-Dialogue [↑](#footnote-ref-1)