



**Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation**

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## **Health Working Group Strategic Plan 2021-2025**

Purpose: Information  
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# Health Working Group Strategic Plan 2021-2025

*FINAL*  
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## Introduction

1. In October 2003, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum established the Health Task Force (HTF) to address health-related threats to economies' trade and security, focusing mainly on emerging infectious diseases, including naturally occurring and man-made diseases. In 2007, as a result of a review of the APEC fora, the HTF became the Health Working Group (HWG).
2. The HWG is a sub-forum of the APEC Senior Officials' Meeting Steering Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation (SCE ECOTECH). The development of Strategic Plans amongst all SCE ECOTECH sub-fora commenced in 2010 as a way to ensure alignment with APEC's broader vision and objectives. In July 2013, the HWG endorsed its first Strategic Plan, *Strategic Plan 2013-2015*, and in August 2016 endorsed *Strategic Plan 2016-2020*.
3. A Key Performance Indicator (KPI) of *Strategic Plan 2016-2020* was that it be reviewed and updated by HWG member economies before 31 December 2020. In August 2019, a sub-working group was struck to update the *Strategic Plan 2016-2020* to outline how the HWG will continue to reach its goals and objectives, while ensuring alignment with the broader APEC agenda. Sub-working group member economies included Australia, Canada (lead economy), People's Republic of China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, and Thailand. The Life Sciences and Innovation Forum was also represented on the sub-working group.
4. The *Strategic Plan 2021-2025* was presented to the wider HWG at the SOM1 2020 HWG meeting for comment and at the second Health Working Group meeting held virtually in September 2020 for endorsement in a manner consistent with the *Process for the updating of Health Working Group Documents* (endorsed February 2014).
5. The *Strategic Plan 2021-2025* maintains the same timeline of five-years in alignment with *Strategic Plan 2016-2020*, which allows the HWG to set its medium-term strategic objectives and ensure they are fulfilled within a realistic timeframe.
6. *Strategic Plan 2021-2025* incorporates core strategic tenets of the *Healthy Asia Pacific 2020 (HAP2020) Initiative*, and the associated *HAP2020 Roadmap*, and learnings from the implementation of these strategic documents. It also aligns with the succeeding document, *The North Star – A 2030 Strategy for Enabling Resilient Health Systems and Promoting the Health of our Populations in the Asia Pacific (the North Star)*, which outlines the APEC Health Working Group's and the Life Sciences Innovation Forum's strategic priorities for the period 2021-2030.
7. The Strategic Plan for 2021-2025 is consistent with recommendations from the 2014 *Report for Independent Assessment of the HWG* and the *Terms of Reference for the Health Working Group* (ToR) that were updated in 2018.

8. Recent guidance to the HWG from APEC Leaders and Ministers Statements was drawn upon to identify key issues that will shape the activities of the HWG, including the following recurring key issues:

Topic	Declaration or Statement
Universal health coverage (UHC) and strengthened health systems	2016 APEC Ministerial Meeting (AMM) Joint Statement 2016 APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting (AELM) Leaders' Declaration 2017 AMM Joint Ministerial Statement 2018 APEC Ministerial Chair's Statement
Healthy aging	2017 AMM Joint Ministerial Statement 2019 theme's Leader Statement
Non-communicable diseases, including mental health	2016 AMM Joint Statement 2018 APEC Ministerial Chair's Statement
Multi-sectoral collaboration and cooperation	2016 AMM Joint Statement 2017 AMM Joint Ministerial Statement
Health investment and sustainable health financing	2016 AMM Joint Statement 2017 AMM Joint Ministerial Statement
Women's economic empowerment through health	2016 AELM Leaders' Declaration 2017 AMM Joint Ministerial Statement
Environmental determinants of health	2016 AMM Joint Statement

9. The dual economic and health crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic that the APEC region is currently facing will also shape the activities of the HWG moving forward and reinforces the importance of ensuring that health remains a priority in APEC.
10. Key elements of *Strategic Plan 2021-2025* include the Mandate, Vision Statement, Mission Statement, Objectives, and Strategic Framework (including Critical Success Factors [CSF] and Key Performance Indicators [KPIs]).
11. The strategic framework for *Strategic Plan 2021-2025* takes into consideration the structure of both *Strategic Plan 2013-2015* and *Strategic Plan 2016-2020*.
12. KPIs not fulfilled under *Strategic Plan for 2016-2020*, which continue to be relevant to the HWG beyond 2020, are progressed through the KPIs in *Strategic Plan 2021-2025*.

## Mandate

13. As agreed by the SCE ECOTECH and outlined in the ToR, the mandate of the HWG is to work together to improve people's health and well-being, aiming to promote trade, security, inclusive growth and development in the APEC region.

## Vision Statement

14. The HWG strives towards an APEC region with:

- Resilient and sustainable health systems that mitigate health-related threats to the region's people, trade and economic security, and
- Healthy populations, with improved health outcomes throughout the life course.

## Mission Statement

15. As outlined in the ToR, the HWG aims to reduce the impact of health-related threats to the economy, trade and security of member economies, and to strengthen health systems to increase their efficiency, responsiveness and resilience to achieve and maintain universal health coverage.

## Objectives

16. Emphasizing the goals and impacts of trade and economic development, the HWG promotes a “Health in All Policies, “whole-of-society”, and coordinated regional approach to improving people's health and well-being by working to achieve the following three objectives:
- Enhancing preparedness, response, and recovery systems for public health emergencies and disasters, including prevention and control of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases;
  - Strengthening health systems to support UHC, providing the whole population with access to safe, effective, quality, affordable, and sustainable primary health care;
  - Supporting healthy populations across the life-course, including the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, including mental health, and promoting healthy aging;
17. To ensure the HWG's discussions remain topical and responsive to shifts in the regional health landscape, host economies may wish to introduce a special theme of work for their host year complementing the ongoing objectives of the HWG.

## Core Working Principles

18. The HWG will work on the principle of consensus, and further build on and not duplicate, the work of other global, regional, and multilateral bodies that work on health, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the G7, the G20, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), amongst others.
19. The HWG will encourage and facilitate both cross-sectoral collaboration and collaboration with other APEC fora and international health bodies and ensure the HWG is maximizing contributions at the intersection of health and the economy.
20. The HWG will encourage and support policy work, research and its translation into practice, and innovation, including in digital health, to achieve its objectives and improve health outcomes and health systems in the APEC region while addressing the current and future needs of all APEC member economies.

## HWG Strategic Framework

21. Three pillars of work have been identified for the HWG to fulfil its mandate, mission, and vision: 1) Project and Policy Development; 2) Communication, Collaboration, and Cooperation; and 3) Governance.
22. Within each of these three pillars are Critical Success Factors (CSFs), paired with associated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The identified CSFs are elements that are necessary for the HWG's success. These are broader factors that must be taken into consideration in all HWG efforts and are not necessarily measurable. The identified KPIs are quantifiable measures of success, including time frames if possible, that will be used to measure the progress towards advancing the HWG's objectives.
23. This strategic framework is intended to guide the key work and activities of the HWG, allowing it to fulfil its vision and mission, while ensuring that efforts are deliverable and measurable.
24. The HWG Chair(s) or Chair's Office will be responsible for tracking progress on the KPIs using the KPI Tracker Template (Annex A), with support from member economies and the Secretariat. The HWG Chair(s) or Chair's Office will also be responsible for reporting on the progress on the KPIs during the SOM3 HWG meeting every year.
25. The strategic framework is to be reviewed annually at the SOM1 HWG meeting to ensure they remain relevant and reflective of the needs of the HWG. Member economies may request review and amendment of CSFs and KPIs on an as needed basis.

### *PILLAR 1: Policy and Project Development*

The HWG is a valuable forum in the global health landscape as it takes a strong economic perspective on health challenges, which differs from the primary foci of more traditional health fora, while bringing together a unique group of member economies. There have been significant efforts to promote the HWG as a policy-oriented forum with the ability to act as a catalyst to address priority global health issues at the nexus of health and the economy within the regional and global health landscape. Ensuring a strong policy-focus and the strategic leveraging of projects undertaken is critical for the HWG to fulfil its mandate and achieve its mission.

#### **1A – Implementation of *The North Star – A 2030 Strategy for Enabling Resilient Health Systems Promoting the Health of our Populations in the Asia Pacific* (the North Star) strategic document:**

- KPI: HWG policy activities and projects should support the outcomes and recommendations of the North Star.

#### **1B - Continued strategic annual theme setting and work plan development:**

- KPI: The HWG annual theme and work plan should clearly align with key strategic documents, including the *Terms of Reference for the Health Working Group, Strategic Plan 2021-2025*, and *The North Star*.

**1C – Maintenance of a policy-focus for HWG activities:**

- **KPI:** The HWG holds at least one policy activity (e.g. policy discussion, policy dialogue, workshop on policy options, report on policy developments) on a health topic of interest to all member economies each year.

**1D - Implementation of strategic approaches to HWG project proposals:**

- **KPI:** Project proposals adhere to the *Concept Note Operating Protocols* (endorsed August 2019) which ensures approved projects follow the Endorsement Criteria Checklist.
- **KPI:** Member economies will only provide brief presentations on the implementation of ongoing projects at the HWG meetings, as the concept notes will be reviewed electronically and intersessionally.

***PILLAR 2: Communication, Collaboration, and Cooperation***

Communication, collaboration, and cooperation are necessary elements to ensure joint and coherent efforts within the APEC region and the broader global health landscape, the leveraging of HWG activities, and the minimizing of any duplication of work. The HWG is well-positioned for multi-sectoral work given the numerous sub-working groups that are a part of APEC.

**2A – Strong communication mechanisms for the HWG activities:**

- **KPI:** By 31 December 2021, all documents created since the HWG’s inception, including HWG Strategic Plans, summaries of current and completed projects, and the outcomes of policy activities and HWG meetings will be uploaded by the Secretariat, with support from Member Economies, to the HWG website.
- **KPI:** By 31 December 2022, the HWG will have undertaken and completed a review of its communication activities and identified a communications strategy for HWG work and projects, including:
  - Identifying important audiences that should be informed about HWG work and projects, such as external policy, technical, professional, media organizations, senior officials, Leaders and Ministers;
  - Determining the communication channels that should be used, such as the HWG website; and
  - Determining the main messages that should be conveyed.

**2B – Continued robust partnership with the LSIF:**

- **KPI:** The HWG and LSIF meetings are held close together each year, creating synergies and facilitating member economies’ attendance at both meetings.
- **KPI:** The HWG and LSIF maintain clear and substantive joint policy activities (e.g. High-Level Meeting on Health and the Economy) on at least one key health topic each year.
- **KPI:** The APEC Secretariat shares the key documents endorsed at LSIF and HWG meetings between the two fora.

## **2C- Cooperation with other APEC fora<sup>1</sup>:**

- **KPI:** The Chair(s) or Chairs Office will proactively work with other APEC fora in advance of every meeting to identify potential areas of collaboration and partnership as part of the Work Plan and agenda development for each meeting.
- **KPI:** Collaborative policy activities with other APEC fora will be promoted, focusing on advancing HWG objectives, regional relevance, multi-sectoral approaches, and relevance to APEC's broader agenda.

## **2D - Strengthened dialogue with other global health partners:**

- **KPI:** The Chair(s) or Chairs Office will proactively work with global health partners in advance of every meeting, share the meeting agenda, and ensure their involvement, where appropriate, in HWG events and activities.
- **KPI:** At least one policy or project deliverable per year is completed in collaboration with a global health partner (e.g. invited to policy discussion; participant in panel; or, submission to partners' best practices portal).

## **PILLAR 3: Governance**

APEC's wide-ranging economic work program makes it uniquely positioned to address the multi-sectoral impact of today's health threats. The ongoing strengthening and improving of governance structures and processes in the HWG are critical to maintain recent gains in establishing the HWG's role as a regional health forum that demonstrates the value of health to economic growth and development as well as the return on investment on health.

### **3A – Consistent implementation of core governance documents:**

- **KPI:** A discussion on the implementation of core HWG governance documents will be held by the Chair or Co-Chair each year during SOM3. Critical governance documents include:
  - *The Terms of Reference for the Health Working Group* (revised March 2018)
  - *The Guidelines for Engagement between the Health Working Group (HWG) and Private Sector* (revised and endorsed August 2019);
  - *The Concept Note Operating Protocols* (endorsed August 2019);
  - *The HWG Strategic Plan 2021-2025* (endorsed September 2020)
  - *The North Star* document (endorsement TBC)

### **3B – Proper document and guidance management:**

- **KPI:** The APEC Secretariat will provide clear and timely requests to member economies. Timeframes for responses to requests will be proportional to the request to allow appropriate consultation and consideration.
- **KPI:** Member economies will provide information requested intersessionally by the APEC Secretariat, including submission of project proposals, in a timely manner to assist informed discussion in-session at HWG meetings.

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<sup>1</sup> APEC fora for cooperation include, but are not limited to, the Human Resource Development Working Group, Agricultural Technical Cooperation Working Group, Emergency Preparedness Working Group, Transportation Working Group, and Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy.

- KPI: The APEC Secretariat will include a standing item on the HWG agenda at both SOM1 and SOM3 to address issues of relevance, including the issue of adherence to timeframes for the submission of documents.
- KPI: New documents will be uploaded to the website within 30 days of finalisation to ensure there is a single reference point for the HWG's cumulative work over time and facilitate knowledge exchange and transfer.

**3C – Continued governance coordination between the Secretariat and Chair(s) or Chair's Office**

- KPI: The HWG Chair or Co-Chairs maintain strong communication with the APEC Secretariat and adhere to the *Terms of Reference for the Health Working Group*.

**3D – Maintenance of responsive strategic documents**

- KPI: The strategic framework is reviewed annually at the SOM1 HWG meeting and Member Economy requests to review and amend CSFs and KPIs are completed as needed.
- KPI: The Chair or Co-Chair's Office tracks progress on the KPIs using the KPI Tracker Template (Annex A) with input from member economies and reports on the progress on the KPIs during the SOM3 HWG meeting each year.
- KPI: *Strategic Plan 2025-2030* will be endorsed by HWG member economies by 31 December 2025.

### Annex A: KPI Tracker Template

The HWG Chair or Co-Chair will be responsible for conducting a review of the HWG’s progress on the outlined CSFs and KPIs on a yearly basis as described above. The following should be indicated as necessary: “✓” for successful completion of the KPI in that year, a “✗” if KPI not completed, a “–” for a KPI in progress, or a blank space should it not be relevant to report on the KPI at that time.

		Critical Success Factors (CSFs)	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>PILLAR 1: Policy and Project Development</b>	1A	Implementation of <i>The North Star – A 2030 Strategy for Enabling Resilient Health Systems and Promoting the Health of our Populations in the Asia Pacific (the North Star)</i> strategic document	HWG policy activities and projects will support the outcomes and recommendations of the <i>North Star</i> – strategic document.					
	1B	Continued strategic annual theme setting and work plan development	The HWG annual theme and work plan clearly align with key strategic documents, including the <i>Terms of Reference for the Health Working Group, Strategic Plan 2021-2025</i> , and <i>The North Star</i>					
	1C	Maintenance of a policy-focus for HWG activities	The HWG holds at least one policy activity (e.g. policy discussion, policy dialogue, workshop on policy options, report on policy developments) on a health topic of interest to all member economies.					
	1D	Implementation of strategic approaches to HWG project proposals	Project proposals adhere to the <i>Concept Note Operating Protocols</i> (endorsed August 2019) which ensures approved projects follow the Endorsement Criteria Checklist.					

			Member economies will only provide brief presentations on the implementation of ongoing projects at HWG meetings, as the concept notes will be reviewed electronically and intersessionally.					
<b>PILLAR 2:</b> Communication, collaboration, and cooperation	2A	Strong communication mechanisms for the HWG activities	By 31 December 2021, all documents created since the HWG’s inception, including HWG Strategic Plans, summaries of current and completed projects, and the outcomes of policy activities and HWG meetings will be uploaded by the Secretariat, with support from Member Economies, to the HWG website.					
			By 31 December 2022, the HWG will have undertaken and completed a review of its communication activities and identified a communications strategy for HWG work and projects.					
	2B	Continued robust partnership with the Life Sciences Innovation Forum	The HWG and LSIF meetings are held close together each year, creating synergies and facilitating member economies’ attendance at both meetings.					
			The HWG and LSIF maintain clear and substantive joint policy activities (e.g. High-Level Meeting on Health and the Economy) on at least one key health topic each year.					
			The APEC Secretariat shares the key documents endorsed at LSIF and HWG meetings between the two fora.					

	2C	Cooperation with other APEC fora	<p>The Chair(s) or Chairs Office will proactively work with other APEC fora in advance of every meeting to identify potential areas of collaboration and partnership as part of the Work Plan and agenda development for each meeting.</p> <p>Collaborative policy activities with other APEC fora will be promoted, focusing on advancing HWG objectives, regional relevance, multi-sectoral approaches, and relevance to APEC’s broader agenda.</p>					
	2D	Strengthened dialogue with other global health partners	<p>The Chair(s) or Chairs Office will proactively work with global health partners in advance of every meeting, share the meeting agenda, and ensure their involvement, where appropriate, in HWG events and activities.</p>					
			<p>At least one policy or project deliverable per year is completed in collaboration with a global health partner (e.g. invited to policy discussion; participant in panel; or, submission to partners’ best practices portal).</p>					
<b>PILLAR 3:</b> Governance	3A	Consistent implementation of core governance documents	<p>A discussion on the implementation of core HWG governance documents will be held by the Chair or Co-Chair each year during SOM3.</p>					
	3B	Proper document and guidance management	<p>The APEC Secretariat will provide clear and timely requests to member economies. Timeframes for responses to the request will be proportional to the request to allow appropriate consultation and consideration.</p>					

		Timeframes for response to request will be proportional to request to allow appropriate consultation and consideration.					
		Member economies will provide information requested intersessionally by the APEC Secretariat, including submission of project proposals, in a timely manner to assist informed discussion in-session at HWG meetings.					
		The APEC Secretariat will include a standing item on the HWG agenda at both SOM1 and SOM3 to address issues of relevance, including the issue of adherence to timeframes for the submission of documents.					
		New documents will be uploaded to the website within 30 days of finalisation to ensure there is a single reference point for the HWG’s cumulative work over time and facilitate knowledge exchange and transfer.					
3C	Continued governance coordination between the Secretariat and Chair(s) or Chair’s Office	The HWG Chair or Co-Chairs maintain strong communication with the APEC Secretariat and adhere to the <i>Terms of Reference for the Health Working Group</i> .					
3D	Maintenance of responsive strategic documents	The strategic framework is reviewed annually at the SOM1 HWG meeting and Member Economy requests to review and amend CSFs and KPIs are completed as needed.					

			<p>The Chair or Co-Chair’s Office tracks progress on the KPIs using the KPI Tracker Template with input from member economies and reports on the progress on the KPIs during the SOM3 HWG meeting each year.</p>					
			<p><i>Strategic Plan 2025-2030</i> will be endorsed by HWG member economies by 31 December 2025.</p>					