

## **Improvement on Cross-Fora Collaboration**

### **Background**

1. At the SCE2 of 2015, the SCE members put forward a number of ideas to promote further cross-fora collaboration, including :
  - 1.1. Encouraging cross-referencing in Strategic Plans;
  - 1.2. Clear identification of such cross-fora initiatives as MOI and TFI;
  - 1.3. Additional premium for those cross-fora project proposals;
  - 1.4. Streamlining governance of fora on reporting;
  - 1.5. Early engagements of other fora in designing projects;
  - 1.6. More active role by the Secretariat Program Directors;
  - 1.7. Better coordination among the Economies' focal points;
  - 1.8. Further exploration of cross-fora collaboration topics by sub-fora; and
  - 1.9. Invitation of convenors of other fora to enhance cooperation among the fora.
  
2. Some of these suggestions are already being implemented. Many fora have identified MOI and TFI in their workplans (1.2). SCE1 of 2016 adopted new reporting template and timeframe (1.4). SCE2 of 2015 decided to encourage early engagement of other fora in designing projects (1.5). PDs in the Secretariat have come up with a number of cross-cutting maps to facilitate any cross-fora collaboration (1.6). More areas have been identified this year for cooperation.
  
3. Certain delegations and convenors at the SCE COW of 2016 put forward such preliminary ideas as more effective coordination within the Secretariat, coordination within each economy, use of such facilities as remote participation and cross-cutting meetings in the margins of annual SCE COW meetings.
  
4. The SCE COW of 2016 requested the APEC Secretariat to develop a paper with suggestions on how to promote cross-fora collaboration for discussion at SCE2. At the same time, the SCE COW members were given an opportunity to submit their comments and suggestions by 15 March 2016. One economy made a submission, which reiterates its suggestions made at the SCE COW meeting and recorded as above.

### **Discussion**

#### *Cross-referencing the other fora in Strategic Plans*

5. Cross-referencing the other fora in any forum's Strategic Plans would be a workable option, if such cross-fora work would continue to be valid in the medium term planning. This approach can be implemented through a couple of options. The fora can be generally encouraged to make such reference to any joint efforts with the other fora when drafting or updating their Strategic Plan. And the SCE would provide specific guidance when reviewing the Strategic Plans submitted by the fora.

#### *Making more efficient use of SCE COW*

6. Considering the attendance of the fora convenors at the SCE COW meeting, more efficient structure within the SCE COW and its related events would benefit the cross-fora discussion and cooperation.
  
7. The current arrangements for the SCE COW and SCE are i) a half day for Lead Shepherds/Chairs Meeting, ii) Informal Lunch with the convenors and Senior Officials, iii) a half day for SCE COW and iv) a half or a full day for SCE. Additionally, MOI has been meeting separately and was held back to back with the SCE COW meeting.

8. The Host and the Secretariat could coordinate so that any cross-cutting issue discussion, such as MOI or TFI, could continue to be scheduled close to the SCE COW meeting. Furthermore, the normal half day session of Lead Shepherds/Chairs Meeting could be restructured to have some time slots for certain fora convenors to have discussions with some other convenors on specific issues. Such arrangements could be facilitated through the Secretariat. The Secretariat can invite any request to make such arrangements in advance of the SCE COW and work with the Host to look for appropriate venue and time slots. For the economy of the proceedings, any such meetings may be led by a specific forum convenor, who then will be able to report to the SCE COW on their discussions.
9. The SCE COW Chair and the APEC Secretariat could also consider organizing the work plan presentations at the SCE COW so that the cross cutting issues or fora's joint efforts are highlighted and interactive discussions are encouraged. The agenda and program setting may depend on the Host Year priorities and the SCE COW Chair should have the flexibility to adjust any such approach.

#### *Disseminating and sharing more information*

10. The APEC Secretariat could play more active roles in disseminating relevant information across the fora and also in liaising among the stakeholders on certain cross-cutting issues. This may include making the annual Work Plans of the fora and other relevant documents on the SCE's ACS so that the other convenors and stakeholders will be able to easily identify any possible cross-fora collaboration opportunities. Another example could be the project documents relevant to the cross-fora collaboration and/or the list of the projects applying for specific project rounds. Furthermore, if any SCE fora convenor(s) request(s) to create a discussion board on the SCE's ACS, the Secretariat could establish such discussion board to facilitate the discussions.

#### *Remote participation*

11. Currently, the APEC Secretariat provides a remote participation facility through Skype for Business. This facility could be used with the help from the Secretariat. SOM2 of 2014 that was held in Qingdao, China on 14-15 May 2014 did approve the Remote Participation Governance Guidelines in APEC (2014/SOM2/035).
12. However, these Guidelines will apply for limited remote participation, such as remote listening or viewing a physical meeting either in real time or potentially recorded time. They also have a long process for approval.
13. A review on the Guidelines may be necessary to accommodate possible demands for an interactive discussion under certain limited circumstances within a short timeframe for preparation.

*Premium to cross-fora collaboration projects*

14. Giving additional premium to cross-fora collaboration projects would mean a change to the current project approval procedures. As the BMC Small Working Group (BMC SWG) has started its deliberations to review these procedures, the SCE could recommend the BMC SWG to consider this approach.

*Cooperation beyond SCE*

15. Some cross-fora collaboration activities go beyond the SCE. Both MOI and TFI are inviting CTI fora in their process. Certain CTI and SCE fora also implement joint projects. The SCE COW also invites CTI and EC to its meeting, while the contradicting meeting schedules are very challenging for these fora representatives to attend the COW.
16. The participation of those fora representatives at the SCE COW could be urged and such other activities as small group meetings in the margins of the SCE COW could also invite the other Committees' representatives to their meetings.

**Recommendations**

17. It is recommended for SCE to :
  - 17.1. Make appropriate arrangements to facilitate more discussion on the cross-cutting issues and projects in the margins of annual SCE COW, including exploring possibilities of having themed discussions on specific cross-cutting areas under the lead of some fora convenors;
  - 17.2. Request the APEC Secretariat to facilitate easier access to the annual work plans and other useful documents relevant for cross-cutting issues through centralized specific pages under ACS;
  - 17.3. Create discussion boards on specific cross-cutting issues at the request of any SCE COW members on ACS and with the assistance from the APEC Secretariat;
  - 17.4. Recommend the SOM to review the protocol on remote participation (2014/SOM2/035) with a view to enable APEC fora to easily utilize such IT facility as remote participation (i.e. Skype for Business) to engage with the other fora in certain circumstances;
  - 17.5. Request the BMC Small Working Group to consider an approach to give further priorities to those cross-fora collaboration projects, which are of high priorities to APEC member economies, in the APEC funding approval process;
  - 17.6. Encourage the CTI and EC representatives to participate in the SCE COW meeting and in other relevant occasions to discuss any cross-cutting issues in the margins of the SCE COW;
  - 17.7. Encourage the fora to continue their efforts to coordinate across the fora through different avenues, including identifying specific areas for collaboration, holding multi-fora meetings or joint sessions in the margins of SOM meetings and using focal persons or Program Directors to coordinate with the other fora; and,
  - 17.8. Assess the fora on their efforts to collaborate or coordinate with the other fora, when the fora are subject to assessments.