

Report of the APEC Secretariat Executive Director on the Alignment of Fora Work Plans with APEC's Overall Vision and Objectives

2018

Introduction

1. In line with the recommendations for *Strengthening Economic and Technical Cooperation in APEC* issued in 2010, the APEC Secretariat Executive Director provides an annual report on how SCE sub-fora work plans address APEC's overall vision and objectives.
2. The SCE sub-fora annual work plans are tabled at the annual SCE-Committee of the Whole Meeting (SCE-COW) seeking approval in accordance with the recommendations of the 2010 ECOTECH Report.
3. The 2018 alignment report considers how well the activities set out in the work plans align with the priorities established by Leaders and Ministers and the annual 2018 APEC priorities. The current report is rationalized somewhat from recent versions, with the charts contained in the Annex of recent reports not included. Among other reasons, the information contained in such charts, together with data and indicators on engagement, effectiveness, collaboration and alignment with APEC and ECOTECH priorities, will be collected and presented in a manner allowing for a more comprehensive picture to emerge through the reports generated by the standardized fora assessment program being implemented beginning in 2018. This report seeks therefore to avoid unnecessary duplication or confusion.
4. Recent versions of this report also summarised meeting attendance information including whether quorum of attendance by fourteen economies was being met. New governance requirements agreed by SOM in 2017 (2017/SOM2/002) contemplate rather specific steps being taken in the event quorum is not met by a sub-forum at two successive meetings irrespective of the year. It is therefore assumed that Senior Officials will consider more specific and timely reporting on quorum issues APEC-wide. Again, this report seeks to avoid unnecessary duplication or confusion.

Status of Work Plan Submission

5. The SCE Terms of Reference stipulate that Working Groups and Task Groups should submit their annual work plans three weeks prior to the annual SCE-COW on the margins of SCE1. The APEC Secretariat analysed fifteen (15) sub-fora work plans: ACTWG, ATCWG, CTWG, EGILAT, EPWG, EWG, HRDWG, MTF, OFWG, PPSTI, PPWE, TELWG and TWG submitted as of 1 March 2018 for approval at the SCE-COW; and draft work plans of HWG and SMEWG pending endorsement at the sub-fora level.
6. The work plans of GOFD and TPTWG were not submitted to the SCE-COW as they were not endorsed by the respective sub-forums.
7. The SCE sub-fora are asked to develop their work plans in accordance with a template approved at SCE2 in 2016. In 2017, guidance was added to the template to encourage identification of gender-related initiatives or aspects thereof.
8. The Secretariat conducted an analysis of the work plans and came to the following general conclusions:

Alignment of Work Plans with Broader APEC Objectives

- Most SCE sub-fora focused their activities to respond to the mandates given to them by the Leaders and Ministers. Many sub-fora, such as ACTWG, CTWG, EGILAT, EPWG, EWG,

HRDWG, HWG, OFWG, PPWE, SMEWG and TWG, specifically cite recent instructions of Ministers.

- A number of these also refer to 2018 APEC priorities. It is noted, however, that some work plans may have been developed before the 2018 APEC priorities were widely circulated.
- All work plans also make linkages between their specific activities and the relevant ECOTECH Medium Term Priorities, which is facilitated by the new template.

Planning Elements (Cross-fora collaboration, Capacity Building and Expected Deliverables)

- All submitted work plans identify some degree of collaboration with other sub-fora on cross-cutting topics. The Secretariat presents its analysis in a separate paper.
- Most initiatives and projects have been identified as capacity building, which is in keeping with ECOTECH priorities.
- A number of the work plans responded to the work plan guidance seeking identification of gender-related initiatives or aspect thereof.
- Sub-fora work plans could do a better job of focusing on deliverables, or outputs and outcomes, which advance APEC priorities, rather than on activities and routine administrative issues.
- Reforms to the SCE-COW arrangements have aided a focus on concrete deliverables.

Secretariat Comment

9. A stronger emphasis on expected deliverables, or outputs and outcomes, in work plan preparation could aid Senior Officials in developing a qualitative understanding of work plan alignment.