

## **Report of the APEC Secretariat Executive Director on the Alignment of Fora Work Plans with APEC's Overall Vision and Objectives 2021**

### **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 2021 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 2021 APEC priorities.
4. The continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to continued region-wide travel disruptions as well as a shift of focus on work toward COVID-19 related issues.

### **Status of Work Plan Submission**

5. The SCE Terms of Reference stipulate that Working Groups and Policy Partnerships should submit their annual work plans three weeks prior to the annual SCE-COW on the margins of SCE1. The APEC Secretariat analyzed [thirteen (13)] sub-fora work plans: Anti-Corruption Working Group; Agricultural Technical Cooperation Working Group; Experts Group on Illegal Logging and Associated Trade; Emergency Preparedness Working Group; Energy Working Group; Human Resources Development Working Group; Health Working Group; Oceans and Fisheries Working Group; Policy Partnership for Science, Technology, and Innovation; Policy Partnership for Women and the Economy; Small and Medium Enterprises Working Group; Telecommunications and Information Working Group; and Tourism Working Group as of 30 April 2021.
6. The work plans of Emergency Preparedness Working Group; Experts' Group on Illegal Logging and Associated Trade; Policy Partnership on Science, Technology, and Innovation; Small and Medium Enterprises Working Group; Telecommunications Working Group; and the Tourism Working Group were submitted at SCE-COW as they were endorsed by the respective sub-fora.
7. The SCE sub-fora are asked to develop their work plans in accordance with a template approved at SCE2 2016. In 2017, guidance was added to the template to encourage identification of gender-related initiatives or aspects thereof. Additional guidance was provided in 2021 to focus reporting on those deliverables that align with the 2021 priorities.
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**

- The majority of SCE sub-fora focused their activities to respond to the mandates given to them by the Leaders and Ministers. The majority of sub-fora, such as ATCWG, HWG, OFWG and PPWE, and SMEWG specifically cite recent instructions of Ministers.
- 11 out of 13 refer to 2021 APEC priorities.
- All work plans also make linkages between their specific activities and the relevant ECOTECH Medium Term Priorities, which is facilitated by the template.

- 10 of the 15 work plans have specific references to the La Serena Roadmap for Women and Inclusive Growth and gendered perspective projects or work streams.

**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.
- Ten of the work plans responded to the work plan guidance seeking identification of gender-related initiatives or aspect thereof.
- There remains room for improvement amongst sub-fora work plans 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.

**Executive Director Comment**

9. Upon completion of the Putrajaya Vision Implementation Plan revision of the work plan template could help groups focus on those areas of the Vision and Implementation Plan that are most pertinent to their respective fora leading to clear concise work plans.
10. A continued emphasis on expected deliverables in work plan preparation could aide Senior Officials and conveners in maximizing capacity building through cross-fora collaboration.