BUSINESS MOBILITY GROUP (BMG)

CONVENOR'S REPORT AND INPUTS FOR
2021 CTI ANNUAL REPORT TO MINISTERS

Key outcomes and achievements in 2021

- Modernization of the ABTC to the extent feasibly possible by actively pursuing:
    - the Virtual ABTC to increase the accessibility, efficiency, integrity, security and usability of the ABTC Scheme,
    - an APEC-wide Online Lodgment functionality to reduce the burden and timeframes in assessment of ABTC applications and increase efficiencies in the operation of the Scheme APEC economy-wide,
    - future automation and integration between the ABTC System, which facilitates operational cooperation, and member's individual border management systems, to improve the efficiency, convenience and desirability of the service;
- Improvement of the consistency and accessibility of ABTC processes, regulatory requirements and availability of public information across member economies as far as possible, so that use of the ABTC is a seamless, convenient business travel experience regardless of the origin or destination of the travel; and
- Consideration of broader developments in business mobility and their interaction with the ABTC (e.g. e-gates, biometrics, face-on-the-move and e-visa related technology) in order to inform avenues for development of business travel facilitation (including of the ABTC) in future years, including through a survey of the future of the ABTC Scheme.
- Consideration on the changes and challenges with the resumption of international travel Post-COVID-19 and how the ABTC Scheme can facilitate and support COVID-recovery with the resumption of business mobility as appropriate.
- Engage in cross collaboration with other APEC sub-fora to focus on the issues raised in the Cross-Border Mobility in the APEC Region report.
- An APEC Frequent Travel Card (AFTC) Proposal was presented to the Group by Thailand during SOM3.
- An APEC "COVID-19 Health Certification Mutual Recognition proposal", which aims to implement the health control policy at the international borders of member economies, was raised by Thailand and circulated for the Group's comments and intersesional feedback. The BMG Chair offered to share the proposal with the Health Working Group and other APEC sub-fora.

- **Work Undertaken by the fora in response to COVID-19 (in particular in fulfilling the 2021 Ministers Responsible for Trade Statement & two annexes & the 2020 Declaration on Facilitating the Movement of Essential Goods**

- The BMG focuses on facilitating business travel within the APEC region and has digitized the ABTC Scheme which aligns with the MRT Digital commitment. Further, the BMG will continue to consider ways to expand the ABTC to facilitate a broader group of people, including essential people and women.
- Between SOM1 and SOM3, the BMG circulated a Survey on economy responses to COVID-19.
- The BMG Convenor and members have attended meetings from other fora in relation to COVID-19 recovery, such as the Air Crew & Supply Chain Continuity Roundtable (24 August) and the First Roundtable on Safe Passage.

(a) Key Issues Under Discussion by the Fora (if any);

- Analyse and discuss the feasibility of the APEC Frequent Travel Card (AFTC) as a new scheme or to expand on the current ABTC scheme.
- Ways in which the group can support COVID recovery to facilitate the movement of business people.
- A survey of on future opportunities for the BMG will be circulated intersessionally with further discussion to take place during SOM1 2022.
- The BMG is currently reviewing the "APEC COVID-19 Health Certification Mutual Recognition proposal" presented by Thailand. The BMG Chair will share the proposal with other related APEC sub-fora, such as HWG or TPTWG, for further consideration.

(b) Items to submit to Senior Officials or Ministers (if applicable)

- Update to the BMG Terms of Reference 2022-2025: within 2022, the BMG to conduct formal discussion at SOM1 taking account of shared leadership arrangements, with updates to the TORs submitted for CTI and Senior Officials' approval at APEC 2022 Thailand.