

Business Mobility Group
Report for the
CTI ANNUAL REPORT TO MINISTERS

For AMM’s information

(a) Key outcomes and achievements in 2025:

- In May, the BMG endorsed and published the **“Performance Review Study of the APEC Business Travel Card (ABTC) Scheme”**. The report sought to assess how well the ABTC scheme is functioning and meeting its goals in the post-pandemic era. The report describes the history of the ABTC scheme and presents case studies about the implementation and management of the ABTC in five economies. The report contains the key findings from 2 surveys and a workshop held in Lima, Peru, and concludes with a set of recommendations for APEC policymakers regarding the areas for potential improvement. This timely review of a key APEC initiative will benefit the BMG in ensuring ongoing improvement of the ABTC Scheme to achieve APEC goals.
- The BMG endorsed a project concept note from Japan: **“Enhancement of the interoperability of ABTC platforms”**. The project aims to enhance the interoperability among the platforms of interested APEC economies for application, pre-clearance and issuance of ABTC. The project will build on past project and discussions at BMG to promote the ABTC scheme. The project will deliver 2 in-person workshops and a final research report. Successful delivery of this project is intended to support systems which will ultimately result in faster, more accurate and more secure processing of ABTC applications.
- The BMG engaged constructively with the APEC Policy Partnership for Science, Technology and Innovation (PPSTI) throughout 2025 on Korea’s proposed development of an APEC Scientist Card. PPSTI provided presentations to BMG members at SOM1 and SOM3 and the BMG requested more information on the challenge PPSTI was looking to solve and the scope of its proposal
- On 21 April, the Republic of Korea completed the transition to issuing the **virtual ABTC**. This provides ABTC holders from Korea the opportunity to access and use their ABTC’s digitally through the ABTC app. As of 2025, there are 14 of 19 fully participating economies who have completed the transition to offering digital ABTC solutions for their cardholders.

(b) Work undertaken by fora in pursuit of the Putrajaya Vision 2040, including through the Aotearoa Plan of Action (APA) :

The BMG contributes to the Putrajaya Vision 2040 and all three APA economic drivers through:

- enhancement and digitalization of the ABTC Scheme, including through seeking to improve transparency, simplicity, and reliability.
- sharing innovations and best practices associated with safe and seamless cross-border travel facilitation and people-to-people connectivity, in consideration of economic participation, resilience and recovery.
- advancing the ABTC Scheme for all, including for MSMEs.

Supporting the advancement of the ABTC

Some economies continue to explore opportunities and remove barriers to advancing the ABTC Scheme, including for MSMEs. This included discussions and activities on the uptake of the ABTC; data gaps to report such information; and the implementation of policies and practices that support the advancement of the ABTC.

This focus aligns with the Putrajaya Vision 2040, and relevant aspects of the APA.

Online lodgment

The APEC Business Travel Card (ABTC) facilitates short-term business travel within the APEC region by streamlining the entry process into APEC economies. It helps facilitate business-to-business interaction to boost economic growth in the region. Australia continues to work with Singapore and Thailand on a pilot to facilitate online lodgment. The progress towards online lodgment for economies will further streamline the application process for economies and its business travelers. This directly aligns with the objectives of the Putrajaya Vision 2040: *“We will promote seamless connectivity, resilient supply chains and responsible business conduct”* and APA to: *“Improve digital connectivity in the region”*.

Virtual ABTC

The BMG continues to explore ways to modernize the ABTC Scheme through initiatives aimed at digitizing and enhancing its efficiency and integrity. This includes ongoing work to transition all member economies to the virtual ABTC. This focus directly aligns with ‘Innovation and Digitalisation’ within the Putrajaya Vision 2040 and the APA to: *“Adopt new and emerging technologies to stimulate growth, connectivity and digital transformation”*.

(c) Work Undertaken by the fora in response to Ministerial, SOM and CTI direction:

- The BMG focused on advancing an enabling business travel environment, including by promoting and engaging MSMEs within the immigration and border management and business environments.
- BMG member economies were active at SOM3 2025 in continuing to advance resource efficiency through sharing best practices on, and implementing, streamlined and digital practices. With some economies noting significant gains through the adoption of automatic border clearance gates as well as improved processing times for ABTC applications both foreign and domestic.
- BMG economies are also actively engaged in ways to improve the sharing of information across economies.

• The BMG Convenor joined the Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy (PPWE) as a speaker at the Second Meeting of PPWE 2025 on 9 August. The BMG Convenor provided insights and ideas on how the PPWE could support the work of the BMG on the topics of “Advancing Women’s Economic Empowerment Through Strengthened APEC Cross-Fora Collaboration”. Ms Anita Pena Saavedra (Chair, PPWE) also provided a video presentation on the La Serena Roadmap to the BMG.
(d) Key Issues Under Discussion by the Fora (if any): • ABTC Growth • Passport Checking Service (PCS) system enhancements • Implementation of the Ichma Statement on “A New Look at the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific agenda” • Proposal of the Policy Partnership on Science, Technology and Innovation to develop an APEC Scientists Card • Increasing ABTC data collected and shared between fully participating members • Outcomes and recommendations from Australia’s ‘Performance Review Study of the ABTC Scheme’
(e) Private sector / Stakeholder engagement and cross-fora collaboration in 2025 (if any) • International Air Transportation Association • International Civil Aviation Organization • World Customs Organization • Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy (PPWE) • Policy Partnership for Science, Technology and Innovation (PPSTI) • APEC Business Advisory Council • APEC Communications and Public Affairs Unit • APEC Project Management Unit • Friends of the Chair on Connectivity • Small and Medium Enterprise Working Group • Sub-Committee on Customs Procedures
(f) Items to submit to Senior Officials or Ministers (if applicable) • N/A