Lessons Learnt in Evaluation Reports that may be of General Applicability

1. 2007 March BMC – 12/07
2. 2006 March BMC – 08/06
3. 2005 April BMC – 13/05
4. 2004 March BMC – 08/04
5. 2003 April BMC – 08/03
6. 2002 April BMC – 06/02
Compilation of Lessons Learnt in Evaluation Reports 
That May Be of General Applicability

Introduction

At the meeting in July 2000, the BMC asked the APEC Secretariat to “collate lessons learnt from fora evaluation reports that may be of general applicability to other APEC projects” for the future consideration of the BMC.

Since 2001 the lessons learnt have been collated from the evaluation reports of both APEC-funded and solely self-financed projects submitted to the BMC and have been presented to the BMC meetings.

At the BMCI meeting in 2006, the APEC Secretariat presented the selected lessons learnt compiled from evaluation reports submitted from 2001 to 2005 which could be considered as generally applicable and useful for those who are involved in planning and management of APEC project as Project Overseer or any other form (2006/BMC1/008).

Compilation of the Lessons Learnt

The attachment to this paper sets out the compilation of selected lessons learnt updated with additional inputs from evaluation reports submitted to BMC since BMCI meeting last year as well as inputs from the AEPC Secretariat.

In 2007 the APEC Secretariat is planning to establish “Project Management Unit” within the Secretariat to improve the project management of the APEC projects. One of its tasks will be to consider how we could feedback these lessons learned from the project evaluation to the project formulation and management process.

Dissemination of Lessons Learnt

This document will be put on the APEC website for the easy reference of the potential Project Overseers and others to be involved in the potential APEC projects. With a hope and for the purpose of direct utilization by the Project Overseers, this document will also be attached, as has been the case with previous document, to our correspondence to the Project Overseers by which the Secretariat notify the approval by the Ministers Meeting of their projects.

APEC Secretariat 
March 2007
Lessons Learnt from Evaluation Reports That May Be of General Applicability

General points

- For smooth implementation of the APEC project, understanding the Guidebook on APEC Projects is indispensable.

- It is important for the Project Overseer to develop a two-way communication with the APEC Secretariat early in the process of the implementation of the project in order to understand and meet all requirements of the guideline of APEC. It is good to review the budget table and timetable jointly with the AEPC Secretariat once the project is approved.

- Careful planning and early preparation can avoid most of the problems arising from unexpected situation in the implementation stage.

- Communication difficulties could arise from time zone differences among member economies, which could lead to logistical problem in the implementation of the project particularly in urgent situation.

- In the project cycle stages (planning, developing, implementing and evaluation), if gender is not considered at the planning stage, it will be absent in all subsequent stages. Project Overseer should consider gender at the planning stage so that gender integration can take place in subsequent stages.

Seminar, symposium and workshop

- The event should be timed so that it does not clash with other major events in the region as well as the APEC events organized by other APEC fora. If the event is planned in the margin of SOM the host economy should be consulted well in advance; similarly with an event to be held in the margins of a Working Group meeting.

- Organizing an event back-to-back with forum meeting in the margin of SOM is effective in attracting many participants. However, the schedule of the event should be carefully chosen not to have conflict with other relevant fora meetings and events in order to secure the targeted participants.

- To select topics which is timely and reflecting the concerns shared in member economies is important element for active participation of member economies.

- Early invitation is extremely important to secure a good speaker and key to successful seminar. Project Overseers often consume a lot of time to find alternative speakers after the targeted speakers are not available. Early ticketing for speakers will also help saving travel costs and avoid visa problems. PO should also note that it takes about one month to arrange travel for speakers.

- There may be difficulties in finding appropriate speakers for cross-cutting issues or topics that APEC fora are not working specifically on.

- To engage speakers early in the preparatory process would ensure their commitment and valuable contribution to the seminar/symposium.

- It is desirable to circulate a draft program to member economies for comments in advance to discuss it at the forum meeting. This approach is useful in bringing in inputs from member
- Active contribution by participants in case studies would make the seminar more interactive and practical than a presentation on the general topic.

- To ensure that all participants receive reading materials well in advance will facilitate active participation of the participants.

- To place discussion time at the end of the program after all presentations by speakers are completed may allow participants to have enough time to digest what has been presented for productive discussion.

- Time allocated for presentation should be kept reasonably rigidly, while a flexible amount of time should be provided for discussion. In some cases participants have voiced the lack of discussion time and suggested the discussion for the follow-ups in the questionnaire.

- Representatives from business community or speakers who share experience of “reality” as practitioners could make valuable contributions to workshops.

- To arrange a small group discussion where the participants are asked to answer questions could serve as an effective mechanism to gauge how much they learned from the resource persons. Their answers from the perspective of each member economy will allow participants to learn that the prevailing situations in one economy may not be similar as in other parts of the world. It will also give an opportunity for the participants to voice out their opinions about the topics of the workshop.

- In some cases engaging the services of a professional meetings manager or a workshop facilitator could be more efficient and cost effective in preparing for and conducting a seminar/workshop than assigning the tasks to “in house” contractors. However, the cost of this should be considered.

Survey, analysis and research

- It is important that the Project Overseer work closely with the consultant to ensure the project proceed according to the objectives and timeframe. The Project Overseer also needs to spend considerable time to ensure that the project consultant’s final report is on the right track and of acceptable quality.

- The consultants should be informed of the Guidelines of APEC publications at an early stage to avoid possible problems related with the APEC publication standard after printing the final report.

- The questionnaires need to be shorter and more precise to ensure that busy respondents of member economies are not being asked to commit too much time to answering questions.

- In many cases the response to the assessment survey for the workshop is extremely low. The project team needs to be vigilant in reminding delegates, speakers and participants about the survey.

- Collecting data/information for the survey from member economies often takes longer time than expected, which could cause significant delay in the following analytical work.

- It is difficult to undertake extensive consultations with member economies to produce final report summarizing the results of survey, particularly if the issue is complex. This could lead to delay but consultation is still a necessary and very important step of the process.

- Significant amount of time is required for member economies to provide comments so as to produce high quality report of the research project.
Short-term training course

- Targeted participants should be seriously considered and identified. Workshop and training modules should be tailored to the needs of target participants.

- Course presenters should be provided with a profile of participants, including their current level of subject matter knowledge, expectations of the course, specific areas of interest, and fluency in English as part of the course planning process.

- It is useful to send out a short survey to participants to identify their specific training needs prior to finalizing the program. This could also take the form of a pre-questionnaire for participants attending the seminar so as to provide course presenters with a clear profile of the audience.

- Relevant course materials should be provided to participants prior to their attendance at the course. This is particularly important where the course is to be presented in a language other than their first language.

- When the course is delivered in a language other than participants’ first language, presenters should be careful to present their topics at a pace and using language appropriate to their audience’s needs.

- It is useful for participants to share experiences in earlier sessions, which would provide the basis for discussion during the seminar and the opportunity for participants to seek advice from each other.

- To invite one former trainee as a speaker to share experience of the application of what had been learned from an earlier workshop, based on actual practice, is effective in making training course relevant to participants.

- Course presenters should adopt a flexible approach to their presentations and be prepared to adapt or modify their content as required during the course in order to maximize participants’ understanding and knowledge.

- Both sessional and daily/weekly evaluation forms are useful to monitor participants’ views on course content, delivery and administration so that appropriate changes could be made in response to their comments.

- All course material should be provided in electronic form which allows more extensive distribution of course material among relevant persons within their home organizations.

- It is important to prepare relevant and easily understood scenarios for the case study learning modules. All case studies should be relevant to multiple cultures and understandable for all participants with different skill levels.

Database and website

- The following should be seriously considered in planning database/website project.
  - Who will update the content of the website or database?
  - How to update the information/contents
  - How to keep the information/contents relevant
  - How to bear the cost for updating the information/contents

- If each member economy does not have a strong commitment in maintaining the database, its usefulness should be seriously diminished. If there is no serious follow-up on the data residing in the database, it has to be terminated.
Compilation of Lessons Learnt in Evaluation Reports
that may be of General Applicability

Introduction

At the meeting in July 2000, the BMC asked the Secretariat to “collate lessons learnt from fora evaluation reports that may be of general applicability to other APEC projects” for the future consideration of the BMC”.

Since 2001 the lessons learnt have been collated from the evaluation reports of both APEC-funded and solely self-financed projects submitted to the BMC and have been presented to the BMC meetings.

Compilation of the Lessons Learnt

The attachment to this paper sets out compilation of selected lessons learnt collated from 2001 to 2005 which could be considered as generally applicable and in particular useful for those who are involved in planning and management of APEC project as Project Overseer or any other form.

Lessons learned are categorized according to the type of the project so that user could refer to the relevant lessons easily. The wording and language of lessons learnt may not be identical with original text in the evaluation reports. They are edited in parts to make the points clear as the lessons for future projects.

Dissemination of Lessons Learnt

As has also been the case with previous documents, this document will be put on the APEC website for the easy reference of the potential Project Overseers and others to be involved in the potential APEC projects. With a hope and for the purpose of direct utilization by the Project Overseers, this document will also be attached, as has been the case with previous document, to our correspondence to the Project Overseers by which the Secretariat notify the approval by the Ministers Meeting of their projects.

The BMC may wish to take note of this paper for their consideration.

APEC Secretariat
March 2006
Compilation of Lessons Learnt in Evaluation Reports that may be of General Applicability

Seminar, symposium and workshop

- The event should be timed so that it does not clash with other major events in the region.
- Early invitation is important to secure a good speaker.
- To engage speakers early in the preparatory process would ensure their commitment and valuable contribution to the seminar/symposium.
- It is good to circulate a draft program to member economies for comments well before the forum meeting. This approach is useful in bringing in inputs from member economies, helping working out a satisfactory agenda.
- Topics in the several sessions should be selected and placed in order in a way that discussion in one session could be the basis for the discussion in the following session.
- To select accurate topics to timely reflect the sharing concerns in APEC region and to successfully highlight the key issues.
- To place discussion time at the end of the program after all presentations by speakers are completed would allow participants to have enough time to digest what has been presented before they raise questions for discussion.
- It is important to prepare relevant and easily understood scenarios for the case study learning modules. All case studies should be relevant to multiple cultures and understandable for all participants with different skill levels.
- To ensure that all participants receive reading materials well in advance will facilitate active participation of the participants.
- Time allocated for presentation should be kept reasonably rigidly while flexible amount of time should be provided for discussion.
- Representatives from business community or speakers who share experience of “real life” as practitioner could make valuable contributions to workshop.
- The small group forum where the participants are asked to answer questions could be served as a mechanism to gauge how much they learned from the resource persons. Their answers from the perspective of each member economy will allow participants to learn prevailing situations in one’s economy may not be similar as in other parts of the world. It also will give an opportunity for the participants to voice out their opinions about the topics of the workshop.
- In some cases engaging the services of a professional meetings manager or a workshop facilitator could be more efficient and cost effective in preparing for and conducting a seminar/workshop than assigning the tasks to “in house” contractors.

Survey, analysis and research

- It is important that the Project Overseer work closely with the consultant to ensure the project proceed according to the objectives and timeframe. The Project Overseer also needs to spend considerable time to ensure that the project consultant’s final report is on the right track and of acceptable quality.
- The questionnaires needed to be shorter and more precise to ensure that busy respondents of member economies are not being asked to commit too much time to answering surveys.

- In many cases the response to the assessment survey for the workshop is extremely low. The project team needs to be more vigilant in reminding delegates, speakers and participants about the survey.

- It is difficult to undertake extensive consultations with member economies so as to produce reports as results of survey, particularly if the issue is complex, or significant amount of time is required to provide views or information. This could lead to delay but consultation is still a necessary and very important step of the process.

**Short-term training course**

- Targeted participants should be seriously considered and identified. Workshop and training modules should be tailored to the needs of target participants.

- Course presenters should be provided with a profile of participants, including their current level of subject matter knowledge, expectations of the course, specific areas of interest, and fluency in English as part of the course planning process.

- It is useful to send out a short survey to participants to identify their specific training needs prior to finalizing the program. This could also take the form of a pre-questionnaire for participants attending the seminar so as to provide course presenters with a clear profile of the audience.

- Relevant course materials should be provided to participants prior to their attendance at the course. This is particularly important where the course is to be presented in a language other than their first language.

- When the course is delivered in a language other than participants’ first language, presenters should be careful to present their topics at a pace and using language appropriate to their audience’s needs.

- It is useful for participants to share experiences in earlier sessions, which would provide the basis for discussion during the seminar and the opportunity for participants to seek advice from each other.

- To invite one former trainee as a speaker to share experience of the application of what had learned from the workshop to the actual practice is effective in making training course relevant to participants.

- Course presenters should adopt a flexible approach to their presentations and be prepared to adapt or modify their content as required during the course in order to maximize participants’ understanding and knowledge.

- Both sessional and daily/weekly evaluation forms are useful to monitor participants’ views on course content, delivery and administration so that appropriate changes could be made in response to their comments.

- All course material should be provided in electric form which allows more extensive distribution of course material among relevant persons within their home organizations.

**Database and website**

- Some keys for planning successful database/website are to consider;
  - how to update the information/contents
  - how to keep the information/contents relevant
  - how to bear the cost for updating the information/contents
- If each member economy does not have a strong commitment in maintaining the database, its usefulness should be seriously questioned. And the data manager plays a critical role in liaising with member’s economies to make sure that the data are correct. If there is no serious follow-up on the data residing in the database, it has to be terminated.

Others

- For smooth running of an APEC project, understanding on the Guidebook on APEC Projects among those involved is indispensable.

- It is important for PO to develop a two-way communication with the Secretariat early in the process of the implementation of the project in order to understand and meet all requirements of the guideline of APEC.

- It should be noted that logistical and communication problems arising from geographic and time zone differences could impede the process of steering and overseeing the project.

- Multiyear projects tends to be delayed or become more complicated by events within an overseeing/host economy, such as reorganization and the need to establish new counterparts.

- In the project cycle stages (planning, developing, implementing and evaluation), if gender is not considered at the planning stage, it will be absent in all subsequent stages. Project overseers should consider gender at the planning stage so that gender integration can take place in subsequent stages.
Lessons Learnt in Evaluation Reports
that may be of General Applicability

Introduction

At the meeting in July 2000, the BMC asked the Secretariat to “collate lessons learnt from fora evaluation reports that may be of general applicability to other APEC projects” for the future consideration of the BMC”.

The attachment to this paper sets out extracts of “lessons learnt” in evaluation reports which could be regarded as generally applicable.

Collation Lessons Learnt

The lessons learnt have been collated from the evaluation reports of both APEC-funded and solely self-financed projects that were submitted to the BMC meeting in August 2004 and April 2005.

These are categorized according to the different stages where the areas for improvement were recognized, namely, proposing stage, implementation stage and others. The types of project, from which lessons learnt are collated, are also indicated. In this paper, the wording and language may not be identical with that in evaluation reports. They are sometimes edited, added or combined to try to make the points and circumstances clear.

Dissemination of Lessons Learnt

As has also been the case with previous documents, this document will be put on the APEC website for the easy reference of the potential Project Overseers and others to be related to the potential APEC projects. With a hope and for the purpose of direct utilization by the Project Overseers, this document will also be attached, as has been the case with previous document, to our correspondence to the Project Overseers by which the Secretariat notify the approval by the Ministers Meeting of their projects.

The BMC may wish to take note of this paper for their consideration.

APEC Secretariat
April 2005
Type of projects, indicated in the bracket at the end of each item

(S) - seminar/symposium
(T) – short-term training course
(O) - others

- The type of project, indicated in bracket at the end of each item below, follows the description/markings in the relevant evaluation report from which lessons learnt is collated. It should be noted that there are possibilities that a lessons learnt from a particular type of project could also be applicable to other types of projects, and should be treated accordingly.

Proposing Stage

(suggestion on organizing effective seminar/symposium/workshop)

- Organizing an effective program is one of the keys to successful seminar/symposium. One such way is that topics in the several sessions should be selected and placed in order in a way that discussion in one session could be the basis for the discussion in the following session. (S)

- It is important to prepare relevant and easily understood scenarios for the case study learning modules. All case studies should be relevant to multiple cultures and understandable for all skill levels. (S)

- To invite one former trainee as a speaker to share experience of the application of what had learned from the workshop to the actual practice is effective in making training course relevant to participants. (T)

Implementing Stage

(suggestions for successful seminar/symposium/workshop)

- To engage speakers early on in the preparatory process will ensure their commitment and valuable contribution to the seminar/symposium. (S)

- To place discussion time at the end of the program after all presentations by speakers are completed will allow participants to have enough time to digest what has been presented before they raise questions for discussion. (S)

- To ensure that all participants receive reading materials well in advance of the workshop will facilitate the active participation of participants at the workshop. (O)

Others

- It is important for PO to develop a two-way communication with the Secretariat early in the process of the implementation of the project in order to understand and meet all requirements of the guideline of APEC. (S)
Lessons Learnt in Evaluation Reports
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Introduction

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The attachment to this paper sets out extracts of “lessons learnt” in evaluation reports which could be regarded as generally applicable.

Collation Lessons Learnt

The lessons learnt have been collated from the evaluation reports of both APEC-funded and solely self-financed projects that were submitted to the BMC meeting in July 2003 and March 2004.

These are categorized according to the different stages where the areas for improvement were recognised, namely, proposing stage, implementation stage and others. The types of project, from which lessons learnt are collated, are also indicated. In this paper, the wording and language may not be identical with that in evaluation reports. They are sometimes edited, added or combined to try to make the points and circumstances clear.

Dissemination of lessons learnt

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APEC Secretariat
March 2004
Type of projects, indicated in the bracket at the end of each item

(S) - seminar/symposium
(T) – short-term training course
(R) - survey or analysis and research
(D) - database/website
(O) - others

• The type of project, indicated in bracket at the end of each item below, follows the
description/marking in the relevant evaluation report from which lessons learnt is
collated. It should be noted that there are possibilities that a lessons learnt from a
particular type of project could also be applicable to other types of projects, and should be
treated accordingly.

Proposing Stage

- (adding value in exchanging ideas and experience) When the type of a project is to
exchange ideas and experience, one possible way of adding value to it could be to invite
a few known experts in the field from both the Asia and Pacific regions to participate in
it, in addition to trying to open the invitation to many in the field. (S)

Implementing Stage

- (some keys to more successful symposium)

- To well select speakers and allow plenty of time for questions and discussion, which
ensures active participation of those attending, and to allow ample scope for
participants to put forwards their perspectives on discussion topics.

- To select accurate topics to timely reflect the sharing concerns in APEC region, and
to successfully high light the key issues.

- To ensure excellent administration with flexible, intensive and live atmosphere, so
as to present wide range topics with excellent division, which ensure participants
from various trades have the most possible gains from either speakers or discussions.

(S)

- (suggestions on participants and modules for successful symposium/training
course)

- Targeted participants and targeted beneficiaries should be seriously considered and
identified.
- Workshop and training modules should be tailored to the needs of target participants.

(S)(T)

- (providing effective distance-learning) To maximize the benefits of a distance-learning project, it will be more effective to set a more specified range of potential/targeted users. It will facilitate the development of learning materials at the specific level of the environment and educational background of potential users. (T)

- (suggestions to improve future technical assistance training)
  - It will save time if results and process of tests conducted by experts are provided to participants in advance of the training.
  - Sometimes it is useful to take more time to explain the topics concerned, depending on the requests from the participants.
  - It is also useful to circulate materials for the training, such as presentation materials, prior to the activity.

(T)

- (some keys to consider in constructing database/website)
  - how to update the information/contents
  - how to keep the information/contents relevant
  - how to bear the cost for updating the information/contents

(D)

Others

- (continuity of multi-phased project) When the project is multi-phased, it is recommendable that close cooperation with the proposing economy should continue in place of programmed assistance, such as between contacts in the area, to achieve sustainability of the project.

(T)(O)
Lessons Learnt in Evaluation Reports that may be of General Applicability

Introduction

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The attachment to this paper sets out extracts of “lessons learnt” in evaluation reports which could be regarded as generally applicable.

Collation Lessons Learnt

The lessons learnt have been collated from the evaluation reports of both APEC-funded and solely self-financed projects that were submitted to the BMC meeting in July/August 2002 and March 2003.

These are categorized according to the different stages where the areas for improvement were recognised, namely, proposing stage, implementation stage and others. The types of project are also indicated where appropriate. In this paper, the wording and language may not be identical with that in evaluation reports. They are sometimes edited, added or combined to try to make the points and circumstances clear.

Observations

The BMC may wish to note that the Secretariat encountered various kinds of problems in financial and accounting work for a number of APEC-funded projects in the past because some Project Overseers were not familiar enough with the Guidebook on APEC Projects or omitted to contact/consult with the Secretariat. Although no evaluation reports of those recognized the problems specifically as lessons learnt, the Secretariat believes that Project Overseers should make improvement in this respect. For its part the Secretariat revised last year the Guidebook on APEC Projects to make it more user-friendly.

As was the case with BMC 06/02, this document will also be put on the APEC website for the reference of the future Project Overseers and others who will be related to the future APEC projects.

The BMC may wish to take note of this paper for their consideration.

APEC Secretariat
March 2003
Type of projects, indicated in the bracket at the end of each item

(S) - seminar/symposium
(T) - short-term training course
(R) - survey or analysis and research
(D) - database/website

- The bracket is left out if the type of project is clear from the description, or if the lesson seems to be applicable regardless of the type of project.

Proposing Stage
- **(Duration of courses)** Duration of courses needs to be carefully decided so as to accommodate, if necessary, ample opportunity for discussion and exchange of views. (T)

- **(Attention to broader context)** It is important to ensure that, where project proposals are narrowly focused, attention is given to the broader context within which the activity or process takes place. Without integrating other processes, they would merely add another layer of complexity to any system. (R)

- **(On the selection of participants)** With limited funding, it may be necessary in future for project proponents to indicate the criteria they will use in selecting participants to be funded (applicable for those projects for which active participants/trainees are to be funded). (S)

Implementing Stage

- **(Suggestions on areas for improvement; prior to the commencement of training courses)** (T)

  - Criteria for the eligibility of participants is to be developed and adhered to as part of the selection process, to ensure that those attending are persons most likely to benefit.

  - Sufficient time is to be given prior to the course to enable the content and coordination of topics to be presented in the course to be properly planned, including the specific topic areas to be covered by each presenter.

  - Course presenters are to be provided with a profile of participants, including their current level of subject matter knowledge, expectations of the course, specific areas of interest, and fluency in English as part of the course planning process.

  - Relevant course materials (including details of timetable, content and format) are to be provided to participants prior to their attendance at the course. This is particularly important where the course is to be presented in a language other than their first language.

  - Where practical, course materials is to be provided to participants as early as practical prior to sessions to enable participants to familiarise themselves with particular topics prior to their presentation.

- **(Suggestions on areas for improvement; during training courses)** (T)
- Course presenters adopt a flexible approach to their presentations, and are to be prepared to adapt or modify their content as required during the course, in order to maximise participants’ understanding and knowledge.

- The course content is to be adapted, where required, to suit the specific interest and needs of participants, as indicated by participants’ application forms.

- The materials used relate to the situation of the economies represented by participants to maximise their relevance and application.

- Course managers pay particular attention to the dietary and accommodation requirements of participants, as well as the facilities in which training is to be provided. Attention also to be given to the application of adult training methods suited to the cultural background of participants.

- Both sessional and daily/weekly evaluation forms are to be used to monitor participants’ views about course content, delivery and administration, including amenities, with appropriate changes made in response to their comments.

- When the course is delivered in a language other than participants’ first language, presenters is to be careful to present their topics at a pace and using language appropriate to their audience’s needs.

- Prior notice is to be given of the requirement for follow-up work after the course, and the nature and content of that follow-up work are to be designed in consultation with the participants’ employers at the outset to ensure adequate and appropriate resources for the follow-up work to be done.

- **(Suggestions on areas for improvement ; after training courses)**
  - Follow-up of participants and their employers is to be undertaken as an integral part of program evaluation to inform future course design. (T)

- **(Consulting with member economies)** It need to be taken note that it can sometimes be difficult to undertake extensive consultations with member economies so as to produce reports as results of survey, particularly if the issues on which they are being consulted are complex, or if a significant amount of their time is required to provide views or information. This can lead to delays. But consultation is still a necessary and very important step of the process. (R)

- **(Project Overseer working closely with consultants)** In conducting survey/analysis, it is important that the Project Officer and Project Overseer work closely with the consultant to ensure the project proceed according to its objectives and timeframes. The Project Officer and Project Overseer need to spend considerable time to ensure that the project consultant’s final report is on the right track and of acceptable quality. (R)

- **(Consideration of each economy’s situation)** Depending on the nature of the projects, it is sometimes necessary to consider solutions that are particular to each economy (or as many as possible) rather than ‘one-size-fits-all’ solutions. Consideration of each particular economy’s situation is vital to ensuring such projects provide the greatest utility to the whole of APEC. (R)

- **(Suggestions on areas for improvement ; when the project involves discussion with and between contact groups not by face to face consultation but by remote means**
such as e-mails, faxes, letters and telephones) the following points are recommended to be put in place prior to the selection of a consultant. (R)

- The names of contact group officers in each economy should be published in APEC correspondence to give recognition to their roles and ensure legitimacy in the eyes of their senior management.
- APEC should ensure that each participant has allocated time to undertake the contact group discussions.
- Each participant should clearly understand his or her role as contact group member for their economy and recognise that this will involve extensive investigations, the preparation of material for the group and industry consultation in their economy.
- Each contact group member must be given a secure e-mail address and sufficient training in e-mail usage to be able to communicate effectively with the contact group by such means.
- APEC needs to focus efforts on contact members to motivate them – whether through a workshop in another economy or some type of newsletter or some other means to create the feeling that the project is worth their involvement – otherwise their domestic duties will prevent them from anything more than a cursory involvement. They need to engender some type of commitment from each economy’s department.

- (Early start to organise workshops) In future workshops, it is advised to Project Overseers that an earlier start be made on such organisational steps as identifying a suitable project organiser, obtaining formal approval from the host economy that they were able to host the workshop, and circulating an early general notice of the workshop, so as to lessen time pressure on POs at a later stage. (T)

Others

- (guidelines for fora website) At a broader level there is a need for an established policy on information classification and consistency in the application of that policy. To that end, guidelines was developed and approved by the forum for the classification and maintenance of the website. (D)

- (cooperation on fora website) The website must serve as an up-to-date information providing service center. And in this context, documents or any kind of information required necessary to be posted were important to be posted on time and immediately. This needs full cooperation between the information provider requesting for postings on the website, the webmaster and also the web programmers. (D)

- (On understanding the Guidebook) For smooth running of an APEC project, understanding on the Guidebook on APEC Projects among those involved is indispensable. In this connection, where language is an issue, it may be useful if APEC contact points could translate relevant sections of the Guidebook (Annex E would be a useful start) into the local language. (S)
Lessons Learnt in Evaluation Reports that may be of general applicability

Introduction

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The attachment to this paper sets out extracts of “lessons learnt” in evaluation reports which could be regarded as generally applicable.

Collation Lessons Learnt

The lessons learnt have been collated from the evaluation reports of both APEC-funded and solely self-financed projects that were submitted to the Secretariat from 1999 to 2001.

These are categorized according to the different stages where the problems arose, namely, proposing stage, implementation stage and others. The types of project are also indicated where appropriate. In this paper, the wording and language may not be identical with that in evaluation reports. They are sometimes edited, added or combined to try to make the points and circumstances clear.

Observations

The BMC may wish to note that the Secretariat encountered various kinds of problems in financial and accounting work for a number of APEC-funded projects in the past because some overseers were not familiar enough with the Guidebook on APEC Projects or omitted to contact/consult with the Secretariat, as indicated in the Secretariat’s comments in the evaluation reports in those cases. Although no evaluation reports of those recognized the problems specifically as lessons learnt, the Secretariat believes that overseers should make improvement in this respect. For its part the Secretariat is revising the Guidebook on APEC Projects to make it more user-friendly.

The BMC may wish to take note of this paper for their consideration.

APEC Secretariat
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Attachment

Type of projects, indicated in the bracket at the end of each item

(S) - seminar/symposium
(T) - short-term training course
(R) - survey or analysis and research
(D) - database/website

- The bracket is left out if the type of project is clear from the description, or if the lesson seems to be applicable regardless of the type of project.

Proposing Stage

- (Flexibility of the project design)
  Project timelines in this project were dependent on a prior project finishing on time. Since that did not happen, it resulted in a late start for this project. In the future, when it is known that a project start date depends on another project finishing, this condition should be identified in the project proposal, and taken under advisement by the Budget and Management Committee.

Implementation Stage

- (Ideas in organizing a training course)
  It is important to ensure that the content of courses is not overly stretched so that participants can achieve learning outcomes in all subjects presented.

- (Burden of travel expenses)
  It was sometimes difficult to decide when to support an expert’s travel expenses. As a general principle, the organizer did not immediately offer to cover experts’ expenses, hoping that there would be an ‘in-kind’ contribution. However, by the time this possibility had been fully investigated, it could then be a bit awkward and late for the organizer to offer to cover expenses. Sometimes, experts did not mention any problem about expenses but then dropped out at the very last minute when it was too late to offer. The organizer does not know that this was a reason, but it would be shame if it was, since there was money left over. It also appears that judgments such as that ‘experts from advanced economies do not need support’ are too simplistic. (R)

- (Ensuring appropriate experts)
  The subject matter of the projects was sometimes beyond the scope of focal points of the Group– they do not have the networks in their economies to locate suitable experts to assist the project, nor to identify suitable opportunities to promote its projects. (R)
- **(Communication problem)**
  Several economies did not have practical access to email or the world wide web. The organizer had to use fax and post as well as email. (R)

- **(Need of strong commitment of members)**
  a) Focal points of the Group were not effective at providing assistance with the task of the project, presumably because the Group has many other projects to support. (R)
  
b) APEC members could be more active in APEC projects. It has not been an easy task to get some members to complete the surveys.

- **(Handling of questionnaires for survey)**
  a) The Project Steering Committee’s direct and flexible approach resulted in a number of timely and quality responses by relevant agencies to the survey questionnaire. Persistent reminders also contributed to additional responses which were otherwise unavailable.
  
b) The response to the assessment survey for the workshop was extremely low. Perhaps the project team needs to be more vigilant in reminding delegates, speakers and participants about the survey.

- **(Difficulty in initial stage of the project)**
  The added complexity of working at international level meant that planning time was considerably greater than anticipated. For example, it could take several weeks for a project partner to answer a question that was essential to the progress of the project. The organizer had to firmly drive the whole process forward, but to obtain meaningful participation from member economies, it also sometimes had to be flexible about deadlines. (R)

- **(Distribution of course materials)**
  Pre-course material was provided in electronic format but the course handbook was not. Participants noted that provision of all course material in electronic format would allow for more extensive distribution of course material among staff at their home organisations. (T)

- **(Finalising a report)**
  Processes of reform are dynamic and often move at different rates in different economies. The Asia Pacific is in the process of significant reform processes and particularly in energy markets. It is very important when taking “snapshots” of these process to wind them up quickly and get agreement to their findings. If this is not done quickly events and arrangements may change within one or more economy. This makes the process of finalising a report of this nature quite difficult.

- **(a project with more than one overseer)**
  When more than one economy is accepted as project overseer, all overseeing economies must participate fully or the full benefits of the project being delivered may not be realised. In the case of this project, it was the kind assistance of one economy in hosting the workshop, that ensured that the project did not stop completely.

- **(character of courses)**
A number of participants indicated that lack of certification and lack of time were serious barriers to a sustained study effort. Some users felt that it was easy to abandon the learning course in mid-stream because the courses were free and there were no penalties for not completing it. Future courses should address the issues of certification or credit, fees, and course structure. (T)

Others

- **Assessing the impact of projects**
  Assessing the impact of research projects takes time. Even the process benefits are only partly reflected in the participants’ evaluation forms. One–year follow up reports could be extremely valuable but of course, there may be a problem of compliance as organisations move on to other work.

- **Difficulty in multi-phase project**
  Due to the great success of this project, participating economies were keen to proceed with appropriate follow–on action. However, due to the latest developments in the field it does not seem appropriate to proceed with Phases 2 and 3 as envisaged in the project proposal that was drafted three years ago. The proposal for Phases 2 and 3 was based on the assumption that traditional systems in this field would be implemented. This has been overtaken by developments. (T)