

**Summary Conclusions of the  
APEC Budget and Management Committee Meeting  
Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel, Singapore  
25 July 2009**

**Introduction**

1. The APEC Budget and Management Committee (BMC) held its second meeting in 2009 at Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel in Singapore on 25 July 2009.
2. The Meeting was attended by representatives from Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Chile; China; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Korea; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Peru; the Philippines; the Russian Federation; Singapore; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; the United States of America (USA) and the APEC Secretariat. Viet Nam was not represented. The list of participants is in **Annex 1**.
3. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Alberto Gonzales, Minister Counselor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Peru.

**Agenda Item 1 : Chair's Opening Remarks**

4. The Chair welcomed Members to the BMC meeting. The Chair was particularly encouraged by the participation of Senior Official at this meeting, reflecting economies' keen interest in moving forward important reform agenda on budget and management matters.

**Agenda Item 2 : Adoption of Agenda**

5. The Chair proposed inclusion of two additional items under Any Other Business: Review of Terms of Reference of BMC as well as APEC contributions formula at the request of Australia and Canada respectively. The Meeting adopted the Revised Agenda.

**Agenda Item 3 : Business Arrangements and Program**

6. The Meeting agreed to the business arrangements and program proposed by the Chair. In view of the heavy agenda and tight schedule of the meeting, the Chair appealed to members to be succinct in their interventions.

**Agenda Item 4 : Financial Reports and Budgets**

7. Finance Director of APEC Secretariat briefed the BMC on the financial statements and budget reports.

**4.1 Review Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2008**

8. BMC received the audited financial statements for 2008 presented by the independent auditors from the Ernst and Young (2009/SOM2/BMC2/002), who were of the opinion that the financial reports prepared by the Secretariat were presented fairly and were drawn up in accordance with the required reporting standards of Singapore.

**4.2 Review Financial Statements for the quarter ended 30 June 2009**

9. The meeting noted the second quarterly report of 2009 (2009/SOM2/BMC2/003).

**4.3 Review of the Administrative Account budget forecast from 2010 and 2013  
(Discussed in conjunction with 5.1.i Annual update of fixed asset replacement plan)**

10. BMC expressed appreciation to the Secretariat for achieving a high degree of efficiency in its operation and creativity in exploring ways to defray costs incurred in the hosting of

consultants and meetings with the Secretariat. The meeting also noted that budget demands on the Secretariat are dependant on the tasking put on the Secretariat.

11. Japan encouraged the Secretariat to continue its efforts in achieving cost-savings and shared her experience in reducing costs: minimizing overtime transportation cost by issuing taxi-coupons, use of corporate air mileages for official trips, etc.
12. USA informed the meeting that based on the current indication there would be four Senior Officials Meetings in her host year 2011. The Secretariat would revise the AA travel budget forecasts in the next update.
13. USA reported that the US-APEC Technical Assistance and Training Facility (US-APEC TATF) would be undertaking activities to further enhance the IT system. As there would be IT upgrades and APEC has been redoubling efforts on communication and outreach, USA asked the Secretariat if it felt it could still afford to keep the IT director post unfilled. The Executive Director (ED) explained that the current fiscal position of the APEC Secretariat might not allow filling the Director (Information Technology) post at the moment.

## **Agenda Item 5 : BMC Work Plan for 2009**

### **5.1 Project Management Reform**

- i. ***Review of 2009 'transitional' arrangements, including intersessional project approvals and three project approval sessions***
  - ii. ***Review of new quality criteria for assessing APEC Projects***
14. Head of Project Management Unit presented a brief review of arrangements applied to project approvals in 2009 to date, including the move to intersessional project approvals and the application of new quality assessment criteria and weightings.
  15. Members discussed the implications of the new quality criteria, particularly on the success rate of proposals. Concerns were raised that the new quality standards were leading to an inequitable distribution of projects, favoring developed economies' proposals over those submitted by developing economies. Members remained committed to funding high quality proposals, noting that developing member economies may require additional assistance to ensure the ownership of projects was more fairly distributed across member economies.
  16. Members noted that in an effort to assist all members in improving the quality of proposals, the US-APEC TATF would provide training on project quality matters, initially for APEC Secretariat staff, and hopefully extending to more stakeholders in the future. Members also advocated the role of the Secretariat in raising awareness in member economies about developing quality proposals. The USA also indicated that the US-APEC TATF can assist in improving the quality of projects considered of high priority by relevant committees/sub-fora.
  17. Members also discussed the logistics of project approval sessions, particularly the need to have them more evenly spaced throughout the year and coordinated closely with the remainder of the APEC calendar. Members also agreed that three project approval sessions were sufficient for the moment, and suggested that the transition period be extended.
  18. Following discussion, members agreed to:
    - Apply the quality criteria applied in session two to future approval rounds, including the requirement of a minimum score of "2" for each criterion.
    - Maintain the equal weightings between each of the criterion.
    - Recommend to Ministers that APEC maintains three project approval rounds per year.
    - Support implementation of the 'two-strike' rule.

iii. **Ranking and Categorisation of Projects**

19. Speaking on the “Results and Categorisation” report, independent consultant Graham Rady pointed the BMC to the following key issues and recommendations :
- limited current capacity to prioritize projects
  - significant time wasted on preparing ultimately unfunded proposals
  - the need for an overhaul of the Quality Assessment Monitoring and Evaluation framework
  - an inability to easily access reliable and timely project management information
20. Members agreed with the analysis of the data and the problems identified as a result. BMC agreed in principle to:
- De-link priority from quality: Members agreed that quality standards must be met regardless of the priority of a project. However, high priority projects should be identified so those designs can be appropriately developed for implementation. This could mitigate concerns about language being a barrier to successful proposals, and could also increase the impact of APEC projects overall as they focus more on achieving APEC’s core goals.
  - Introduce “Concept Notes” to determine high priority projects. This is linked to the separation of priority considerations from quality ones: Members agreed that the introduction of Concept Notes could significantly assist the workload of project proponents and the Secretariat through reducing the number of full project designs that are developed, but ultimately unfunded. They could also assist Committees’ priorities projects with greater strategic focus and facilitate cooperation with other fora. Members agreed to the draft Concept Note form circulated in the meeting documentation, and expressed a desire to introduce their use as soon as possible in 2010.
  - Encourage the introduction of universal medium term plans for all fora: Members would welcome projects being developed against medium term plans that are in turn linked to APEC’s long term goals. Members acknowledged that for some groups, the development of medium term plans will rely on the SCE’s new initiative to develop a medium term plan for all APEC ECOTECH activities.
- Finally, members noted that the introduction of these recommendations will have significant implications for all members. In particular, a move to medium term plans will mean that each member’s project will need to match the collective APEC agenda. Projects that are not closely-aligned with APEC’s stated agenda may need to seek funding from other sources.
- Reform the Quality Assessment Framework (QAF): Members agreed that the QAF questions need to more closely and consistently match the quality criteria used to assess proposals. Members endorsed the draft QAF form circulated in the meeting documents for implementation from 2010 (not for session 3 2009).
21. Members also expressed concern about the inconsistency of QAF scoring between groups, which can lead to incoherent funding decisions. To remove this risk, members agreed to remove the fora QAF score component from the overall project score in future funding rounds. However, BMC still require the QAF be completed, with a focus on providing constructive comments to the PO, which will also be used by the Secretariat in assessing project quality. BMC members also agreed to recommend to fora that for each round, the same group of members undertake the QAF for all proposals. This would bring greater consistency to the QAF comments for a group’s projects in any one session.

22. On developing guidance on possible APEC multi-year projects, Members agreed that a mechanism to manage multi-year projects was needed, particularly in relation to project financing, monitoring project progress and evaluating project results. Members also agreed that annual or mid-term monitoring of projects was needed to check if it ensure the project remained relevant and was continuing to address an APEC priority. In addition to the administrative issues, members identified the matter of how to select multi-year projects as an even more key concern. Members also suggested that multi-year projects could be put forward by a sub-fora or a committee as opposed to a particular member economy.
23. Members recognized that quasi-multi-year projects currently exist such as through self-funding or projects that are broken into rolling phases or stages. To this end, BMC encouraged projects that build on previous activities and present a medium-term vision of the project's success.
24. BMC members agreed that proponents can detail information for multi-year projects, but that for session 3, no funding will be committed for proposals beyond 31 December 2010. Projects that have components beyond this time frame will need to submit a new proposal to secure the funds required.
25. Members did not reach consensus on how to prioritise the proposals once the priority and quality assessments were de-linked. Australia offered to work on possible options and share ideas in the lead up to BMC 3. Members also did not reach consensus on whether to limit the number of proposals being submitted by each fora
26. To progress this work, members agreed to task the Secretariat to develop detailed procedures required to implement BMC's decision. Members instructed the Secretariat to draft process options in the form of revisions to the Guidebook on APEC projects, and requested the SWG to maintain close oversight of progress. This will include reviewing all relevant Terms of Reference for consultants, acting as a sounding board for ideas, receiving reports from time to time and providing clarification to the Secretariat if there are areas of uncertainty.
27. The Chair noted that significant work needs to be done prior to BMC3 to progress this agenda. The Chair undertook to communicate with other Committee Chairs to inform them of BMC's decisions in this area.

iv. ***Devolution, Delegation and Risk Management of Projects***

28. Speaking on the "Devolution, Delegation and Risk Management" report, independent consultant Keith Lingard presented a summation of the report. Key issues and recommendations presented to overcome them related to topics including:
  - The significant level of approved projects funding being returned unspent at the end of a project's life span.
  - The high number of projects requiring budget re-allocations and extensions.
  - The excessive amount of time Secretariat staff invest in organizing, approving and paying for project travel; and
  - An inability to easily access reliable and timely project management information.
29. Members agreed with the analysis of the data and the problems identified as a result. Following discussion of the recommendations presented in the report, members agreed in principle to implement most recommendations in the report. Members expressed particular support for recommendations that:
  - Allow project budget development to be "fit for purpose" by removing arbitrary budget ceilings and giving proponents more flexibility in developing accurate budgets; and

- Require more clarity in the roles and responsibilities of all parties in the project cycle, particularly project overseers, fora and the Secretariat.
30. The ED expressed significant support for the recommendations as practical solutions that can reduce the current workload of the Secretariat. This could lead to reallocation of work to more high value and more rewarding tasks.
31. However, members requested further consideration of the following issues prior to proceeding:
- Payment of per diems as a bulk payment to the Project Overseer or other third party: Members agreed that payments made to APEC subsidized travelers could be streamlined, but were concerned about the practicality of the recommendation based on legal and safety grounds.
  - Payment of air ticket using a corporate card: Members agreed that amongst almost all APEC member economies, there is increased acceptance of payment for flights and other smaller value items by corporate credit card. However, Members were mindful of the administrative burden which this might put onto the Secretariat and deferred to the Secretariat's decision whether to take it up for implementation. The BMC noted this measure would only be introduced in conjunction with the payment of per diems as a bulk payment to the Project Overseer.
  - An MOU between Project Overseers and the Secretariat, counter signed by the PO economy's BMC representative, setting out each party's roles and responsibilities: Members saw value in greater accountability of Project Overseers, but were keen that any accountability mechanism was easily managed and not a dissuasion to projects being submitted. Members were also unsure if the BMC members would have any authority over projects being managed from their economy, as project proponents and BMC members often come from different ministries / departments so have little direct involvement with each other. As a first step in improving accountability, members requested that the Secretariat ensure roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in projects are clearly set out in a revised Guidebook on APEC projects, and noted that there was a role in assessing project management as an element of overall project evaluations.
  - Classifying the Project Overseer as an institution rather than an individual: Members were unsure if this could be implemented in all economies, particularly as many current Project Overseers are government employees.
32. The Chair noted that more follow-up work is needed to implement all decisions, but particularly the four issues identified for further investigation. As part of this further work, members accepted the Secretariat's request for the change in payment for air tickets and payment of per diems to proceed as a package, otherwise the number of transactions required to facilitate travel eligible participants would increase rather than decrease.
33. Members tasked the Secretariat to develop the procedures needed to implement the decisions made, and requested the Small Working Group to closely monitor progress in this area.
34. The Chair also noted that the consultant will be working with the Secretariat to develop procedures to implement BMC's decisions, and to further investigate the outstanding issues. The results of this consultancy will be forwarded to the Small Working Group for their consideration.
35. Finally, on behalf of the two consulting teams, Mr Rady thanked the Secretariat and Committee and fora Chairs and Lead Shepherds who contributed the information used in both exercises. The cooperation of APEC project stakeholders and their willingness to suggest solutions was invaluable to the development of the reports.
36. The ED thanked all members of the Effectiveness Grant consulting team and warmly welcomed the benefits it has brought to the Secretariat. The ED also raised the hope that the

Grant can be used for the implementation of the recommendations endorsed by BMC. Members joined the ED in thanking the Effectiveness Grant team members for their reports and the work undertaken to provide practical solutions to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of APEC's projects.

v. ***Multi-year project development and funding procedures***

37. As Chair of the SWG on Project Management, the USA outlined current restrictions on BMC's ability to approve multi-year commitments of APEC funds to projects. These included:
- Concern about how long term projects can be funded, particularly given TILF and ASF amounts are not guaranteed from year to year
  - The need for more work on monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure multi-year projects remain on track to achieve their goals
  - Preference for Committee Chairs and Senior Officials to be more engaged in the prioritisation of longer term projects and a keen interest in the outcomes of the SCE process to develop medium and longer term plans for all ECOTECH activities.
38. The SWG Chair noted that while BMC may not be in a position to commit APEC funding to multi-year projects, this in itself was not a bar to multi-year approaches to project planning and implementation. Members agreed that multi-year projects can still be facilitated through self-funded projects, and proposals put forward in "phases" or "stages" for funding approval.
39. The BMC requested the SWG to keep working on arrangements required for the timely, but effective, implementation of multi-year projects.
40. The BMC Chair noted that the SWG has a significant agenda ahead. Given the scope and significance of the work, the Chair welcomed any more members to join the group, currently made up of USA (Chair), Australia, Hong Kong, China, Japan and New Zealand.
41. Following the BMC Chair's invitation, the following four members expressed interest in joining the SWG:
- Korea
  - Chinese Taipei
  - Indonesia
  - China
42. BMC members welcomed the expansion of the SWG.

vi. ***Amendments to Guidebook for APEC Projects***

43. The Secretariat provided an update on the development of the Guidebook on APEC Projects. Members noted the Secretariat's plan to review the document and present it to BMC members in the near future for approval.
44. Members noted that the Publication Guidelines are intended for future inclusion in the Guidebook on APEC Projects. To date, they have been under the Secretariat's purview to update. However, given their application to appropriate project management, they will be incorporated into the next version of the Guidebook and changes on substantive issues will then come under the authority of the BMC.

vii. ***PMU update on identification of cross-cutting management issues for cross-fora collaboration and planning session between Committee chairs***

45. The Secretariat informed members that it will continue to work on bringing Committee Chairs together to identify cross-Committee project priorities and develop incentives to facilitate cross-fora projects.

46. The Secretariat will work intersessionally to identify areas of possible cooperation between the Committees, based on projects submitted to date and on the articulated priorities of Leaders and Ministers.
- viii. ***PMU update on Evaluation and Lessons learned activities including upgrade to Project Database***
47. Members noted that the US-APEC TATF will be undertaking a consultancy to review APEC's monitoring and evaluation processes and forms. This will commence in September. BMC members will be kept up to date on the progress and results of the consultancy.
48. Members also noted the progress to the update of the APEC Information Management Portal (AIMP), and welcomed the addition of model proposals and lessons learnt on the Project Database. Members looked forward to further updates as the upgrading process progresses.
- ix. ***Process to hold back new funding of sub-fora for lack of timely and comprehensive evaluations***
49. USA raised the importance of meaningful evaluation reports following the implementation of projects and noted the return rate for evaluation reports remains relatively low.
50. The BMC SWG on project management flagged monitoring and evaluation as an area that will require further attention.
- x. ***Project management reform implementation plan, including agreed but yet-to-be implemented BMC3 reforms***
51. Members thanked the consultant for preparing the Implementation Plan. In light of the decisions made regarding the consultancy reports, members instructed the Secretariat to update the Implementation Plan, expanding its scope to include other aspects of the project management reform agenda including monitoring and evaluation and upgrades to the project database.
52. Australia noted that it is important to include all the reforms agreed to at BMC 3, but that have not yet been fully implemented.

## **5.2 Budget Management**

- ii. ***Development of a Strategic Plan for the APEC Secretariat***
53. The ED provided an overview of the development of a Strategic Plan for the Secretariat and stressed that it is a work-in-progress document to be fine-tuned by the Fixed Term ED (FTED) Ambassador Noor according to his vision for APEC. He has also highlighted the areas in which the Secretariat would focus in 2009 to strengthen the capability and position of the organization.
54. The Chair thanked the ED for the initiative to start the planning exercise as well as the efforts to ensure a smooth transition in 2010.
55. Hong Kong, China suggested that the Executive Office should consult with future host economies when finalizing the three-year strategic plan. Japan noted the approved strategic plan might have financial implications and would appreciate an early indication of the split in contributions in Singaporean dollars and US dollars by mid-2010.
56. BMC noted the draft three-year plan as a work-in-progress.
- iii. ***Review of sub-fund guidelines – presentation by Australia***

57. On behalf of the BMC, the Chair thanked Japan for a contribution of JPY 120,000,000 to the ASF Sub-Fund to support capacity building activities in the promotion of energy efficiency related activities in the APEC region. In light of the contributor's request, a new sub-fund has been approved by the BMC intersessionally before this meeting. The BMC was also much encouraged that the USA announced its intention to make a financial contribution towards APEC projects at the SOM II Plenary meeting. USA announced it would contribute to the newly established energy efficiency sub-fund within the APEC Support Fund (ASF) in an amount of US\$392,000 and US\$400,000 to the Trade and Investment Liberalisation and Facilitation Fund (TILF). The Chair expressed its appreciation to the USA on behalf of the BMC.
58. Australia presented a proposal (2009/SOM2/BMC2/014) for further guidelines on the establishment of sub-funds within the APEC Support Fund (ASF) to minimize the Secretariat's workload and maximize the flexibility of APEC project funding.
59. Hong Kong, China supported the proposal in principle and further work in the development of a set of principles and procedures. In working out the details, BMC should be mindful that the procedures not be made to discourage potential future contributions.
60. USA expressed no objection to the return of a management fee associated with the setting up of a new sub-fund, noting that management fees are common in the development world.
61. BMC agreed in principle to readdress the guidelines for setting up new sub-funds. Australia as well as interested economies would further develop the guidelines into more detailed procedures for BMC consideration. The new procedures would only be applicable to new MOUs of contributions not yet announced.

### **5.3 Maximizing Sponsorship – presentation by Australia**

62. Australia presented 2009/SOM2/BMC2/015. ED added that the Secretariat has been looking for suitable sponsorship from the business sector and would welcome simplified procedures to encourage more sponsorship.
63. The Chair noted a wide consensus on the paper and encouraged members to forward views to Australia by end of August for further development of detailed proposals.

## **Agenda Item 6: APEC Management Issues**

### **6.1 Secretariat update on key staffing issues, including the appointment of the Fixed-Term Executive Director and the recruitment process for Chief Operating Officer**

64. On behalf of the BMC, the Chair expressed appreciation to Mr Tan Ee Khoon for taking up the difficult task of the first Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the APEC Secretariat since April 2007. The Chair wished Ee Khoon every success in his future endeavors.
65. The Chair referred the BMC to 2009/SOM2/BMC2/016 and 2009/SOM2/BMC2/017 on the timeline provided by the Secretariat on the recruitment process for the next COO. The meeting welcomed that ED has set out an open and transparent process for the recruitment process of the COO, which is a professional staff position within the Secretariat. The ED has approached economies to help advertise the position. The response has been very good – there are a total of 139 applications.
66. Noting that the ED is responsible for staff management matters within the Secretariat while BMC has an oversight on Secretariat management issues, Chair suggested the recruitment interview be conducted by the ED and the BMC Chair on behalf of the BMC. In the process, ED would also consult Amb Noor, the incoming FTED.
67. The meeting agreed with the recruitment arrangement for the COO position and noted updates to other staffing issues.



## **6.2 Update on the US-APEC Technical Assistance and Training Facility (TATF) progress and work plans – presentation by TATF team**

68. David Katz, coordinator of the US-APEC TATF team, provided a briefing to the BMC on its work plan as well as progress made so far. The BMC welcomed the assistance as well as training opportunities provided by the team. The Committee looks forward to training for member economies on improving the quality of APEC projects as well as further enhancement to the project management process.

## **Agenda Item 7. Other Business**

### **7.1 Review of BMC Terms of Reference**

69. The Chair briefed the meeting that the BMC Terms of Reference (ToR) was last reviewed in 2006 under the APEC Reform initiative to define the project management roles and responsibilities in conjunction with the SCE. The Chair welcomed initiative to update the ToR from time to time to reflect the updated roles and responsibilities of the BMC.
70. Australia concurred with the Chair and noted that a review would be useful in bringing to the attention of SOMs the BMC's work and responsibilities. BMC should also be given a clearer mandate to enable the Committee's work.
71. New Zealand and Hong Kong, China added that it would be timely to commence the review in line with that of the SCE so that there will be a clear understanding and mandate from Senior Officials on the roles and responsibilities of the respective Committees.
72. The BMC welcomed the opportunity for review and Australia undertook to provide a draft for BMC's consideration reflecting current realities in line with the SCE's review schedule.

### **7.2 APEC Contributions – a note by Canada**

73. The Chair thanked Canada for the initiative in continuous reform in the budgetary matters and hard work done in preparing a note on the idea to review the membership contribution formula. The Chair recognized the sensitive nature of the issue and suggested members might need more time to consider the various options.
74. Canada briefly presented the ideas in the note and suggested economies consider the issue in a thorough manner intersessionally. Canada understood that the issue was sensitive and members might have divided concerns but avoiding the issue is not in APEC's longer-term interest. Canada looked forward to written comments from economies and to a productive discussion on the subject in the future.
75. The meeting thanked Canada for following up the work at the request of BMC I.
76. Noting that BMC members were not ready to discuss the issue at this meeting, the BMC agreed to consider the proposal once there was greater consensus on the subject. The Chair asked member to forward comments to Canada intersessionally.

### **7.3 Other issues**

77. Thailand proposed to the BMC to consider clear guidelines and procedures in relation to dispute resolution and project termination. Unfortunate circumstances beyond the PO's control might lead to a dispute between parties leading to possible project termination. Clarity is needed on what such a process would ensure so that every party concerned understands his/her proper rights and responsibilities; that transparency, fairness, and professionalism are upheld as the foremost principles of APEC process; and that abuse by any party is not allowed. Continued ambiguity in this issue might only lead to suspicion and unnecessary resentment.

78. Singapore referred the Meeting to one of the earlier agenda items on PMU reforms, which has called for the delegation of more responsibilities to POs to manage projects. He noted that while Singapore fully supported the proposal of delegating more responsibilities to the POs, all members should at the same time ensure that the POs discharged their core responsibilities - which include checking and ensuring that projects are carried out in a rigorous and professional manner. The PO should also ensure that projects stick to the mandate that had been approved by the respective Committees/subfora which had commissioned the projects, and that projects should not politicise APEC.
79. Indonesia suggested the project approval sessions in 2010 should be more evenly distributed in the year to facilitate economies and fora's planning process.
80. The meeting noted the above suggestions.
- 8. Date of Next Meeting**
81. The meeting agreed that the BMC would next meet on 2-3 October 2009 at the Secretariat in Singapore.
- 9. Classification of Documents**
82. The meeting approved the Classification of Documents as set out in 2009/SOM2/BMC2/000.
83. The meeting adjourned at 4:00pm on 25 July 2009.

**2nd Budget & Management Committee Meeting  
25 July 2009, Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel, Singapore**

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28	Philippines	Balocating	Generosa	Delegate	Department of Foreign Affairs		F

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