



**Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation**

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**2014/SOM1/HRDWG/EDNET/014**

Agenda item: 3.5

**Learning / Teaching English and Other Foreign  
Languages as a Mean of Ease of Doing Business:  
Comparative Analysis of Best Standards /  
Assessments / Practices in APEC**

Purpose: Information  
Submitted by: Russia



**Human Resources Development Working Group  
Education Network Meeting  
Ningbo, China  
19-20 February 2014**

# APEC Concept Note

**Please submit through APEC Secretariat Program Director. Concept notes of more than 3 pages (including title page) or incomplete submissions will not be considered.**

<b>Project Title:</b>	Learning / teaching English and other foreign languages as a mean of ease of doing business: comparative analysis of best standards / assessments / practices in APEC.
<b>Source of funds (Select one):</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Operational Account <input type="checkbox"/> TILF Special Account <input type="checkbox"/> APEC Support Fund
<b>Committee / WG / Sub-fora / Task-force:</b>	HRDWG/EDNET
<b>Proposing APEC economy:</b>	1) the Russian Federation
<b>Co-sponsoring economies:</b>	Thailand
<b>Expected start date:</b>	June, 2014
<b>Expected completion date:</b>	December, 2014
<b>Project summary:</b>  <b>Describe the project in under 150 words. Your summary should include the project topic, planned activities, timing and location:</b>  <i>(Summary must be no longer than the box provided. Cover sheet must fit on one page)</i>	<p>Foreign language skills are critical fostering collaboration, cultural sensitivity, regional economic integration, and better life standards. This project is designed to facilitate business opportunities and build stronger regional ties across the APEC member economies through developing a shared understanding of higher education standards and practices for learning and teaching English and other foreign languages as means of business communication.</p> <p>The main activities include setting up a working group; elaborating a plan of action; conducting a comparative analysis of higher education standards for learning / teaching English and other foreign languages across APEC member states; working out practical recommendations for developing a common understanding on educational standards / assessments / practices in this area; drafting a preliminary report for an APEC Workshop (November 2014, Thailand); holding a Workshop to discuss and update the research results preparing the final report with research findings and recommendations</p>
<b>Total cost of proposal: (APEC funding + self-funding)</b> <b>USD 142,363</b>  <b>self-funding:</b> <b>USD 40,670</b>	<b>Total amount being sought from APEC (USD): 101,693</b>  <b>By category:</b> <i>Travel:</i> 77,193 (per diem & airfare) <i>Labour costs:</i> 18,000 <i>Hosting:</i> 4,000 <i>Publication &amp; distribution:</i> 1,500 <i>Other:</i> 1,000

**Project Proponent Information and Declaration:**

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I declare that this submission has been prepared in line with the **Guidebook on APEC Projects**. If approved, I agree to develop the project in line with APEC project requirements.

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Name of Project Proponent

Date:

## Project Synopsis

1. **Relevance: Why should APEC undertake this project? What problem or opportunity will the project address and why is it important?**

**Ease of doing business** is one of the top priorities of APEC. Competences and skills acquired through the process of education, including English and other foreign languages, are the key factors defining not only the direction and scale of trade development across APEC economies, but also capacity building for the progress of APEC as an integrated community.

It is quite obvious that working knowledge of a foreign language promotes and strengthens **people-to-people connectivity**. This makes the project highly relevant and valuable for APEC which unites 21 economies. The knowledge of foreign languages as a mean of business communication acquired through the process of higher education will promote strengthening of ties among people at all levels of the everyday-life. Also, as it was pointed out at the APEC Education Ministerial Meeting in 2012 that, **learning foreign languages is one of APEC strategic priorities in the field of education**. Moreover, standards and assessments were recommended for research projects in coming years.

The proposed project is based on visible achievements made both by representatives of particular APEC economies and APEC as a whole, and is aimed at the harmonization of educational standards / assessments / practices related to learning / teaching English and other foreign languages, for business purposes. Harmonization in this context refers to openness, transparency, and comparative analysis of language standards / assessments / practices. The implementation of the project will allow to take a step forward towards a shared understanding of competences and skills in foreign languages required for freer trade and investment as well as regional integration in general.

2. **Objectives: Describe the 2-3 key objectives of the project. (e.g. to... create a framework...; ensure participants will be able to...; share experiences...; enhance understanding...; develop recommendations...; build interest...; revise strategies... etc.)**

The main objectives of the proposed project are:

- 1) to share information, experiences and best practices for the next generation higher educational standards / assessments / practices on English and other languages as a mean of ease of doing business for promotion freer trade and investment;
- 2) to share information on higher education standards / assessments / practices within APEC;
- 3) to facilitate free and open trade and investment through exchanging skills and knowledge of best standards / assessments / practices related to learning / teaching English and other foreign languages, for business purposes.
- 4) to build on the previous work done within APEC on the comparative analysis of higher educational standards / assessments / practices related to learning / teaching English and other foreign languages, for business purposes .

3. **Alignment: Describe how the project will help achieve APEC's key priorities and meet your forum's work-plan or medium-term plan.**

The proposed work project is directly based on the vision of 2012-2016 APEC priority development directions in the areas of mathematics and science, language and culture as it was formulated in the joint statement of APEC Ministers of Education in 2012. Moreover, the project is related to the Strategic Action Plan on English and other foreign languages. The Ministers stated " We recognize the significance of achieving a dynamic and harmonious Asia-Pacific community by championing free and open trade and investment and promoting regional economic integration, and the importance of providing all students with a quality education enabling them to engage in the globalized economy" and they emphasized that "foreign language is critical in this globalized world". According to the Ministers statement "Support foreign language education throughout students' academic careers and develop a system to nurture and train highly qualified language education teachers who also reflect cultural diversity"

Thus, APEC is the most appropriate forum to implement the project, because the project meets APEC priorities (ease of doing business, free trade and investment, harmonization of standards, people-to-people connectivity), is aligned with the findings and recommendations from APEC EDNET Symposium 2012 and will be useful for all APEC member economies.

4. **Methodology: How do you plan to implement the project? In this section, address:**

- **Timeline: Project timelines and dates for key activities and deliverables**

The project will include the following stages:

1. Forming a working group, elaborating detailed working plan for the whole project (June, 2014).

2. Comparative analysis of higher education standards / assessments / practices of APEC economies related to English and other foreign languages: collecting data, identifying similarities and differences (June 2014 to September 2014).

This project is focused on finding commonalities to develop practical recommendations for common understandings of English and other foreign languages standards / assessments / practices in higher education. Researchers from APEC economies are invited to take part and share their visions. Communication will be conducted mainly via Internet.

3. Preparation of a draft comprehensive research report with recommendations upon findings made at the previous stage; discussions with project participants and experts; preparation of the key report for an APEC Workshop; announcement and information letter on the Workshop will be issued (August – October, 2014).

At this stage work will be organized with broad consultations with all participants and experts.

4. An APEC Workshop on the shared vision of learning / teaching English and other foreign languages standards / assessments / practices in higher education for business purposes (November 2014).

Place – Bangkok, Thailand.

Participants – researchers, professors, governmental officials, business sector.

5. Amendments to the key report, preparation of the final report based on the recommendations of the Workshop participants (November-December 2014).

- **Stakeholders: Beneficiaries and stakeholders (APEC & non-APEC) and how they will be engaged**

Intended beneficiaries of this project are:

1) Policy-makers in education across APEC economies will acquire a clear vision of the opportunities that the common understanding of education standards / assessments / practices could provide.

2) The business sector, will be better informed of the current trends in higher education English and other foreign language standards / assessments / practises, and will be able to publicise their vision on this issue.

3) Universities and academic community in APEC region may benefit from better academic and professional mobility and diploma recognition, and more secured job application.

4) The population of APEC member economies at large will benefit as improved English and other foreign languages skills will promote and facilitate business ties among and between APEC economies.

As for APEC as a whole, the project will contribute to the capacity building in moving through transparency and openness of education standards / assessments / practises of closer educational cooperation, and, thus, to closer regional economic integration.

- **Previous projects/activities: If and how this proposal builds on the findings or lessons learned from previous projects/activities, while avoiding duplication**

The project will be circulated to other working groups concerned. The Project team will actively use the outcomes of the previous APEC activities and take into consideration the experience of their executors. Lessons from the previous projects, including Mapping of Qualifications Frameworks across APEC Economies (HRD04/2008), Higher Education Diploma Supplement (HRD12/2009), 2008 APEC Education Reform Symposium, APEC Learning Standards for English and Other Languages (HRD 01-06), etc. will be consulted first.

- **Communication: How you plan to communicate the results or benefits of this project to others**

Electronic communication and media, including APEC web-site, will be used as the primary source of dissemination. Preliminary findings will be reported at APEC Workshop, which also will be used as communication channel.

The Final report will be available on the APEC website and will be circulated to the Ministries and Agencies concerned.



## Concept Note

### **Learning / teaching English and other foreign languages as a mean of ease of doing business: comparative analysis of best standards / assessments / practices in APEC**

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Presented by,  
Zhelezov Boris, Deputy director, International Department,  
Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation

for APEC HRDWG/EDNET Meeting,  
China, Ningbo, February 2014



## Outline

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- Setting the problem
- Relevance to APEC
- Objectives of the proposed project
- Planned activities
- Project outcomes



## Setting the Problem

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- Higher education standards / assessments / practices (general standards, i.e., Level of requirements and conditions regarding different stages of the educational process and the relationship between those stages, such as inputs, processes, and outputs) within APEC differ substantially
- This is true for virtually every part of higher education standards, e.g., for foreign languages



## Setting the Problem (cont'd)

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- In essence, this may mean different sets of competences and skills in foreign languages
- In practical sense, this may mean uneven conditions for academic mobility and for job seeking



## Relevance to APEC Activities

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- Competences and skills acquired through the process of education, including foreign languages, are all key factors defining not only the direction and scale of trade development between economies of APEC, but also capacity building for the progress of APEC as a community



## Relevance to APEC Activities (cont'd)

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- joint statement of APEC Ministers of Education in 2012
- Strategic Action Plan on English and other foreign languages



## Objectives of the Proposed Project

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- business facilitation through learning/teaching English and other foreign languages
- information sharing on higher educational standards / assessments / practices within APEC
- exchanging skills and knowledge of best standards / assessments / practices related to learning / teaching English and other foreign languages, for business purposes
- comparative analysis of higher educational standards / assessments / practices related to learning / teaching English and other foreign languages, for business purposes



## Planned Activities

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- Collecting data on higher educational standards / assessments / practices , identifying similarities and differences (June -September 2014)
- Draft comprehensive research report preparation (August – October, 2014)
- An APEC Workshop (November 2014)
- Final report preparation (November-December 2014)





## Project Outcomes

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**APEC:**

- Implementation of APEC Ministers of Education statements
- HRDWG goals achievement
- Ease of doing business (trade facilitation)
- People-to-people connectivity in APEC region
- Capacity building

**Beneficiaries:**

- Universities and academic community in APEC region
- Business sector in APR
- Policy-makers in APEC economies
- The population of APEC member economies



## Co-sponsorship

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We invite APEC economies to co-sponsor our project.  
Your active participation in the project is welcome and highly appreciated



## Contacts

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Thank you for your attention!