

Summary Report - SOM Steering Committee on ECOTECH

17 August 2014
Beijing, China

The third meeting of the SOM Steering Committee on ECOTECH (SCE) was held in Beijing, China on 17 August 2014. It was attended by representatives of 20 APEC economies, including Senior Officials from 15 economies

The meeting was chaired by Ms Laura Del Rosario, Senior Official of The Philippines for APEC.

Agenda Items 1 and 2: Welcome by SCE Chair and Adoption of the Agenda

The SCE Chair welcomed new Senior Officials from Canada, Japan (MFA) and New Zealand. The agenda (2014/SOM3/SCE/001) was amended to include an intervention from Chile in other business and was adopted.

Agenda Item 3: Economic and Technical Cooperation Planning

3.1 SCE to consider revised ECOTECH Medium Term Priorities.

THE SCE Chair noted that a review of the ECOTECH Medium-term Priorities was undertaken every five years, with the current priorities having been set in 2009 for use from 2010 to 2014. A survey of developing economies had been undertaken seeking views on their priority areas were for the years 2015 to 2019, with eight out of eleven economies providing responses. The Chair noted the proposed list of ECOTECH Medium-term Priorities set out on page 1 of document 2014/SOM3/SCE/002. She noted that as developing human capital through capacity building was the highest priority it would also be important to define capacity building. She noted that in document 2014/SOM3/SCE/003, in addition to capacity building guidelines for consideration, there was a proposal to develop a capacity building policy for APEC that would include defining capacity building in the APEC context.

Economies noted the improved response rate to survey of developing economies priorities and expressed general support for the proposed ECOTECH Medium-term Priorities. Economies expressed interest in supporting work that would help deliver on the priorities. Chinese Taipei commented that project funding had not always been directed to areas that were being identified as the highest priority which suggested that the funding criteria should be amended to better reflect the ECOTECH priorities.

Japan expressed support for the proposed priorities but noted that not all topics included in the survey appeared to be represented among the proposed priorities and requested that some further explanation about the choice of priorities be provided. Indonesia suggested that inclusive growth would be better placed in the cross-cutting section of the priorities and supported the implementation of the priorities being monitored through the Fora Report each year. Thailand suggested that senior officials should discuss the revised priorities with chairs and lead shepherds at next year's SCE-COW.

The United States noted that three economies had not responded to the survey and suggested that some more time be made available for them to do so. The proposed priorities could be considered again intersessionally in light of a complete response rate.

SCE decided:

- That the three economies who had not so far responded to the survey will be invited to do so;
- The proposed priorities would be considered again in light of responses from all developing economies and decided intersessionally before CSOM; and
- That inclusive growth would move to the cross-cutting section of the priority list.

The SCE Chair concluded the agenda item by noting that the current highest proposed priority of developing human capital through capacity building did not simply mean human capacity in the sense of the HRDWG's work, which primarily focused on labour and education, but applied in a broader sense to the whole economy. The Chair indicated that when the Philippines prepared a draft set of 2015 funding criteria later this year they would seek to properly recognise the ECOTECH priorities and capacity building in particular.

3.2 SCE to consider capacity building guidelines, prepared in accordance with point 8 of the SCE Report on Improving ECOTECH in APEC agreed at SOM3 2013.

Economies expressed support for the proposed capacity building guidelines contained in document 2014/SOM3/SCE/003.

During discussion Indonesia noted the importance of for a understanding expectations regarding capacity building and meeting the requirements of the funding criteria when planning capacity building activities. The Philippines and Brunei expressed an expectation that capacity building should not just focus on individuals but instead lead to institution building and that APEC's work had room to improve in that respect. Japan commented that in future successful capacity building activities could be identified and establish the factors that had made them successful in order to provide lessons for future activities.

The SCE Chair noted that the proposed next steps included considering whether APEC should develop a capacity building policy, which could potentially include defining effective capacity building activities in the APEC context, establish linkages between the ECOTECH medium-term priorities and the various capacity building initiatives underway in APEC, encourage longer-term programs, establish ways to make better use of technology to support capacity building and developing a system to evaluate APEC's capacity building effectiveness. Canada expressed support for seeking to make better use of technology to facilitate capacity building planning and implementation and for evaluating the effectiveness of activities.

SCE agreed:

- To adopt the APEC Guidelines on Conducting Capacity Building; and
- To develop an APEC capacity building policy.

Agenda Item 4: Cross-cutting Issues

4.1 SCE to consider the APEC Mainstreaming Ocean Related Issues (MOI) Coordination Proposal.

Indonesia made a presentation explaining the Mainstreaming Ocean Related Issues (MOI) Coordination Initiative proposal contained in document 2014/SOM3/SCE/004 and the proposed timeframe for establishing it. Approval of the proposal was being sought at SCE and SOM3 following which nominations would be sought for a Coordinator who would be in place in time to report at CSOM.

Economies supported the proposal. Thailand suggested that the MOI Coordinator should report to SCE-COW in 2015 and intersessionally throughout the year to keep SOM informed of progress. Chinese Taipei noted the working groups that would be coordinated under the proposal and emphasised the importance of coordinating with the Emergency Preparedness Working Group. They also commented on the many cross-cutting mechanisms being introduced within APEC at present and the need to stay mindful of the impact they would have.

SCE agreed to the proposal.

Agenda Item 5: SCE Fora

5.1 SCE to consider the 2014 Fora Report

The SCE Chair noted the 2014 Fora Report to SCE was in document 2014/SOM3/SCE/005 for SCE's consideration. The Fora Report captured a range of activity undertaken by the 16 SCE fora each year and the information provided would also be used to prepare parts of the ECOTECH annual report presented to the APEC Ministers' Meeting.

SCE agreed to the 2014 Fora Report.

5.2 SCE to consider the mandate of the Mining Task Force (MTF), including the MTF independent assessment.

The SCE Chair noted a request had been received from the chair of the Mining Task Force seeking an extension of the MTF mandate for two years, to the end of 2016 (2014/SOM3/SCE/007). Further an independent assessment of the Mining Task Force had been undertaken with the report at document 2014/SOM3/SCE/006 for consideration.

The United States noted the increasing importance of the mining agenda in APEC making it desirable that the MTF become stronger and more effective, perhaps by undertaking joint work, with groups like the Energy Working Group and the Chemical Dialogue. Japan noted that the importance of the MTF's work lay in the fact that all APEC economies had interest, either as producers or consumers of mining products. Papua New Guinea expressed particular support for recommendation number 7 in the independent assessment report that the MTF consider forming an advisory committee to assist the chair.

Russia recalled that in 2012 the option of MTF's merger with another fora had not gained consensus and suggested that in 2016 the MTF should consider whether it seeks working group status or instead a mandate renewal of a longer time, such as four years. Indonesia recalled the MTF's interest in 2012 in being upgraded to a working group and suggested that the two main options for the MTF's future were either merge with another group or transform into a working group. They suggested that these options should be discussed with the MTF before the end of 2016. Economies agreed that the MTF should consider its future status during 2016 and discuss with SCE a longer term arrangement for the future.

SCE agreed:

- To extend the mandate of the Mining Task Force until the end of 2016; and
- To the independent assessment report of the MTF.

5.3 SCE to consider any matters arising from the independent assessments of HWG, HRDWG and TWG

- in particular recommendation HWG Recommendation to SCE1 suggesting that SCE consider and provide clarity about the health related priorities of APEC

The SCE Chair reported that the main item arising from the independent assessments of the Health, Human Resources Development and Tourism Working Groups that required follow up by SCE was recommendation to SCE number 1 in the Health Working Group report (2014/SOM3/SCE/008). That recommendation suggested that SCE consider and provide clarity about the health related priorities of APEC before the HWG update their terms of reference, which they plan to do at the second HWG meeting in 2015. The recommendation also noted that consideration of the "Healthy Asia-Pacific 2020" proposal (2014/SOM3/SCE/015) could be the vehicle for providing such advice to HWG.

The SCE Chair noted that the Healthy Asia-Pacific 2020 proposal was scheduled to be considered at SOM3. SCE agreed with the chair's suggestion that the HWG independent assessment recommendation could be dealt with intersessionally after SOM3.

5.4 SCE to consider which fora should undergo independent assessment in 2015.

SCE agreed to the recommendation contained in document 2014/SOM3/SCE/014 that independent assessments in 2015 be undertaken on the Policy Partnership on Science, Technology and Innovation, Emergency Preparedness Working Group, Small and Medium Enterprises Working Group and the Ocean and Fisheries Working Group.

Agenda Item 6: Other Business

Chile made a statement regarding the concept note on “Promoting connectivity through enhancing physical infrastructure resilience by considering risk reduction of public project evaluation”.

The document classification list (2014/SOM3/SCE/000) was adopted.

In closing the meeting the SCE Chair stated that this year SCE had realised there was a need to define and improve work on capacity building which would need to continue into 2015, with a focus on encouraging capacity building that supported building institutions not just individuals. The Philippines will reflect that in its 2015 funding criteria proposal.

As incoming SCE Chair, Peru expressed gratitude to the SCE Chair for the efficient manner in which she had conducted discussions during the year. Peru committed to making progress on the fora strategic plans, to provide oversight and enhance participation. They would support the Philippines as APEC host in 2015, especially work to enhance capacity building.