



**Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation**

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**2019/MRT/006**  
Agenda Item: 3

**Chemical Dialogue: Report MRT on Implementation  
Convergence of the GHS in APEC Economies -  
Executive Summary**

Purpose: Information  
Submitted by: SOM Chair  
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## **Chemical Dialogue: Report to MRT on Implementation Convergence of the GHS in APEC Economies Executive Summary**

Implementation of an internationally agreed system for the labelling and classification of chemicals would significantly facilitate trade in a sector that touches over 96% of all manufactured goods, represents \$3.6 trillion in shipments, and directly employs 11.7 million people in the APEC region. The APEC Chemical Dialogue (CD) has been promoting the consistent implementation of the Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals ("GHS") since 2002 when the MRT endorsed the CD's efforts to promote the widest possible GHS implementation by APEC member economies. Having identified implementation barriers arising out of information sharing challenges and divergent implementation, the CD developed a GHS Implementation Convergence Questionnaire (Questionnaire) for economies to identify impediments to convergent GHS implementation. The CD has historically submitted a summary of similar reports to the MRT on an annual basis and used the findings as the basis for its GHS workplan during the APEC year. The following represents the Chemical Dialogue's 2018/19 GHS Convergence report.

CD Efforts in 2018/19: In response to the 2018 MRT Statement (2018/MRT/JMS) welcoming CD efforts to address issues in relation to reducing divergence in the classification and labelling of chemicals, the CD agreed to a new reporting mechanism focused on identifying strategies to improve GHS convergence by member economies. The CD noted that the template developed in 2008 did not enable an analysis of the reasons why divergences in GHS implementation remain and so the new Questionnaire attempts to support the development of strategies to overcome identified divergences. The Questionnaire has now been trialled and adopted by the CD and the resulting information may assist convergent implementation of GHS by member economies.

2019 Report: APEC Economies are working towards some aspects of convergent implementation of GHS. However, collaboration across the APEC region is required to achieve better alignment.

All economies that are planning to adopt a later revision of GHS have identified the 7<sup>th</sup> revision as the revision to adopt. The implementation timings also appear closely aligned with the economies identifying 2020 or 2021 as the planned implementation years. However, the mechanism for adopting later revisions of GHS do not appear to be present in some economies. Further those economies that have mechanisms in place differ in the timing of the review process.

The technical decisions relating to building blocks (i.e. the GHS hazard classes and categories) that are required by each Competent Authority before adoption of GHS contributes significantly to the divergent implementation of GHS. As the decisions are technical and detailed in nature, further collaborative work within the APEC CD through the Regulator's Forum may prove useful.

Next Steps and Requested Actions: The CD seeks a request from MRT that officials promote consistency of GHS implementation by encouraging economies to:

- Adopt the 7<sup>th</sup> revision of GHS by 2021,
- Implement automatic or legislated review processes to continually update to the newer revisions of GHS,
- Allow flexibility for classification where sub-categorisation options exist in GHS building blocks, and
- Convene workshops within the CD Regulator's Forum where detailed risk assessment and risk management specific to individual hazard categories and concentration cut-offs could be considered.