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Proposal to Create an APEC Support Fund Sub-fund for Marine Debris Management and Innovation

Purpose: Information
Submitted by: United States



**14th Ocean and Fisheries Working Group Meeting
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Endorsed by BMC on 25 September 2019

**Proposal to Create an APEC Support Fund Sub-fund
for Marine Debris Management and Innovation (MDMI)**

Submitted by the United States

The United States seeks endorsement of a proposal to create a new APEC Support Fund Sub-fund to support APEC economies' initiatives to address the social and economic impacts of marine debris through improved waste management and technical and financial innovation. If endorsed, the United States will make an initial contribution of \$800,000 USD to the Sub-fund.

Purpose

The proposed MDMI Sub-fund would supplement APEC's limited resources to undertake a range of activities to help economies prevent marine debris by reducing the amount of mismanaged plastic waste that enters the marine environment through improved waste management practices and infrastructure and technical and financial innovation.

The specific objectives of the proposed MDMI Sub-fund would be to fund:

- a) Initiatives which inform the development of infrastructure and practices to improve integrated solid waste management systems and marine debris management technologies;
- b) promotion of technical innovations that create value from plastic waste;
- c) promotion of innovative financing mechanisms to fund waste management systems and infrastructure;
- d) stakeholder dialogues on policy and regulatory issues that impact private investment in marine debris and waste management infrastructure; and
- e) projects and activities that address the drivers of marine debris in support of sustainable management of the marine environment.

Context

Marine debris, mostly composed of mismanaged plastic waste, is near ubiquitous in the ocean, where it degrades the marine ecosystem and imposes billions of dollars in social and economic costs to APEC economies every year. Experts estimate that about 80 percent of plastic waste in the ocean comes from land-based sources, with the majority coming from the APEC region, in part due to rapid economic development that outpaced the development and implementation of environmentally sound waste management systems. Sea-based sources of marine debris, such as waste from ships and abandoned, lost and otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG), adversely affect the coastal and open marine environment and threatens vital tourism, fisheries and aquaculture industries.

Improving waste collection on land and management of ALDFG are the most effective near term solutions to reducing marine debris. Effective waste management also supports sustainable economic growth, and improves public health, and human well-being. Prevention and management of ALDFG safeguards food security by mitigating impacts of fish habitat degradation and ALDFG that continue to capture and kill after they leave human control. However, addressing marine debris and waste management is a highly complex issue with many public and private stakeholders. Building technical capacity and access to financial resources at the municipal level, where waste is managed, is key to developing necessary waste management

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systems. Governments must work in close concert with industry and civil society to prevent and manage ALDFG and other sea-based sources of marine debris. Innovative financing solutions involving private equity are also key to support integrated and sustainable waste management systems and infrastructure, and a lasting solution to marine debris will require technical innovations to close the loop on the plastics lifecycle and minimize plastic waste from entering the ocean.

Alignment with APEC strategic objectives

APEC's primary goal is sustainable economic growth and prosperity, with sustainable economic development through protection of the environment and responsible use of resources a key mandate. The Sub-fund will facilitate free and open trade and investment by enabling public-private partnerships for infrastructure investment. It will promote sustainable economic development and protection of the marine environment by supporting projects to holistically manage waste and drive innovative solutions.

The MDMI Sub-fund is in alignment with Chile's 2019 initiative on preventing and reducing marine debris under its Sustainable Growth priority and responds to the encouragement by the Ministers Responsible for Trade in 2019 to work to address the increasingly adverse impact of marine debris on the economy. The Sub-fund also responds to directions provided by APEC Leaders in 2016 to address the lack of effective solid waste management in order to reduce marine debris in APEC and directly supports the 2014 Xiamen Ministerial Declaration encouraging increased cooperation on marine debris in APEC.

Proposed APEC Support Fund Sub-fund

The MDMI Sub-fund will be open to all APEC forums. The Oceans and Fisheries Working Group will be the APEC forum responsible for MDMI Sub-fund concept note eligibility assessment and scoring. The APEC Secretariat will be responsible for the administration of the MDMI sub-fund, consistent with the Guidebook on APEC Projects. The eligibility criteria for the MDMI Sub-fund will be stated in a Terms of Reference (TOR) to ensure that any proposed MDMI activities align fully with core APEC objectives and priorities.

Process

If this proposal is endorsed, the United States will circulate the MDMI Sub-Fund TOR for endorsement. Upon endorsement of the TOR, the United States will then request the Secretariat progress the proposal and TOR to the Budget and Management Committee for approval to establish the MDMI Sub-fund./.