



**Asia-Pacific
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Safe Passage Taskforce - Report and Recommendations to Senior Officials' Meeting

Purpose: Consideration
Submitted by: SPTF Chair



**Concluding Senior Officials' Meeting
Bangkok, Thailand
15-16 November 2022**

ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION SAFE PASSAGE TASKFORCE

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO SOM

Background

This report provides an overview of the work and initiatives of the APEC Safe Passage Taskforce (SPTF) since its establishment in January 2022. This report also sets out recommendations to SOM, including with respect to taking forward safe passage work within APEC, noting the SPTF is due to sunset in November 2022.

The SPTF was established to coordinate APEC work with its priority being to contribute to the safe resumption of cross-border travel (by land, air and/or sea) in the APEC region. The SPTF was chaired by Mr Cherdchai Chaivaivid, Thailand's SOM.

The SPTF met three times in 2022 and exchanged information regarding practices on the safe resumption of cross-border travel including at domestic, sub-regional and regional levels, as well as from other international organisations; worked towards greater alignment of approaches to the resumption of cross-border travel across APEC, leveraging and considering implementation of existing relevant international standards and recommended practices; worked towards enhancing interoperability of any vaccine certificates developed or implemented by APEC economies; and developed initiatives to facilitate the movement of people across borders, including air crews, seafarers, and transport workers to help boost the recovery of the tourism and travel sectors in the APEC region, while respecting the policies and measures adopted by member economies to combat COVID-19 and future public health emergencies.

The SPTF collaborated closely with the APEC Policy Support Unit (PSU), Chairs and Convenors of relevant APEC subfora (including the Health Working Group, Tourism Working Group, Transportation Working Group, and the Business Mobility Group), ABAC, and international organisations, including ASEAN, WHO, OECD and ICAO.

Key SPTF Initiatives

During its term, the SPTF coordinated the following initiatives, endorsed by SOM or APEC subfora, to contribute to the safe resumption of cross-border travel:

- Voluntary Principles for the Interoperability of Vaccination Certificates in the APEC Region, welcomed by APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade.

- APEC Policy Support Unit study ‘COVID-19 and Cross-Border Mobility in the APEC Region: Addressing Uncertainties at the Border’.
- Interoperability of Vaccination Certificates - Sharing of Technical Specifications initiative.
- APEC Information Portal for Safe Passage Across the Region initiative.
- Establishing a Safe and Sustainable Future for Travel in the Better Normal project.
- Policy Roundtable on the Safe Passage of APEC Maritime Crew.
- Development of a Study on the Maritime Transport Sector in the COVID-19 Era: Challenges, Opportunities, and the Way Forward.
- Policy Dialogue on Exploring Health Technologies to Restoring Cross-Border Travel in APEC Post-COVID-19.
- Inclusive APEC Business Travel Card initiative.

Recommendations to SOM

The SPTF recommends that SOM:

1. Encourages members to implement the recommendations in the APEC Policy Support Unit ‘COVID-19 and Cross-Border Mobility in the APEC Region: Addressing Uncertainties at the Border’ study, as each economy deems appropriate, in relation to: ensuring widespread and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines; implementing border COVID-19 requirements that are risk- and evidence-based; supporting the development of interoperable digital vaccination certificates; facilitating the dissemination of information on entry requirements relating to COVID-19; and proposing APEC initiatives that address regional risks and continue APEC coordination work, including through relevant sub-fora, to continue cross-sectoral work on regional mobility.
2. Decides to continue APEC coordination work on the safe resumption of cross-border travel (by land, air and/or sea) in the APEC region and to work on building resilience in terms of cross-border mobility in response to future crises through existing APEC sub-fora and the APEC FotC on Connectivity, as appropriate.