



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

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Agenda Item: -

**Anti-Corruption and Transparency Experts' Working
Group Strategic Plan 2023-2026
(Endorsed Intersessionally, 25 January 2023)**

Purpose: Information
Submitted by: ACTWG Chair

**First SOM Steering Committee on Economic and
Technical Cooperation Meeting
Palm Springs, United States
26 February 2023**

Anti-Corruption and Transparency Experts' Working Group (ACTWG)
Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026

BACKGROUND

1. Since 2002, APEC Leaders have acknowledged the serious threats posed by corruption to the Asia-Pacific community and have agreed that APEC economies should nurture and sustain good governance, economic development, and prosperity by working together to prevent and fight corruption and ensure transparency. The ACT Task Force was established in 2005 following Leaders' endorsement of the "Santiago Commitment to Fight Corruption and Ensure Transparency" and the APEC Course of Action on Fighting Corruption and Ensuring Transparency. In 2010, the Anti-Corruption and Transparency Experts' Working Group (ACTWG) was established by Senior Officials with the mandate to formulate its work programme by developing a long-term strategy. The ACTWG is open to representatives from APEC member economies' governmental organisations and/or agencies dealing with anti-corruption, APEC Observers (namely ASEAN, the Pacific Islands Forum, and the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council), and representatives from the APEC Secretariat and the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC). Other interested organisations or parties may attend ACTWG meetings with the prior approval of ACTWG members.
2. The ACTWG is chaired on a rotational basis by the APEC host economy. Drawing the Working Group's Chair from the host economy provides a mechanism for anti-corruption specialists from each host economy to take active leadership within the ACTWG. Rotating leadership also provides an opportunity to frame strong, practical anti-corruption outcomes for APEC and the host economy.
3. The ACTWG will contribute to the achievement of the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040, including through the implementation of the Aotearoa Plan of Action.

APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040:

“Our vision is an open, dynamic, resilient and peaceful Asia-Pacific community by 2040, for the prosperity of all our people and future generations.”

“To maintain APEC’s unique position as the premier forum for regional economic cooperation as well as a modern, efficient and effective incubator of ideas, we will embrace continuous improvement of APEC as an institution through good governance and stakeholder engagements. We will advance the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 with a spirit of equal partnership, shared responsibility, mutual respect, common interest, and common benefit.”

4. APEC Senior Leaders’ commitment to tackling corruption was re-stated in the Aotearoa Plan of Action in 2021.

Aotearoa Plan of Action:

“Enhance cooperation to foster secure growth, including by implementing the APEC Beijing Declaration on Fighting Corruption, Santiago Commitment to Fight Corruption and Ensure Transparency, and the APEC Consolidated Counter-Terrorism and Secure Trade Strategy.”

STRATEGIC VISION

5. ACTWG members envisage a more inclusive APEC community that shares a commitment to preventing and combating corruption, with transparency and accountability, so that our economies can reach their full potential; and where corruption’s detrimental impact on economies is eradicated to the greatest extent; and where all member economies are well-prepared for all current and emerging anti-corruption challenges, and cooperate to foster secure growth in the APEC region with strong anti-corruption laws and systems.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

6. The ACTWG's strategic direction is to:
- Coordinate and implement APEC's anti-corruption and transparency commitments – including the *Santiago Commitment to Fight Corruption and Ensure Transparency*, the *APEC Course of Action on Fighting Corruption and Ensuring Transparency*, the *APEC Transparency Standards*, the *APEC Conduct Principles for Public Officials*, the *APEC Code of Conduct for Business*, the *APEC Beijing Declaration on Fighting Corruption*, the *La Serena Roadmap for Women and Inclusive Growth* and the *APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040*, including through *Aotearoa Plan of Action*, as appropriate.
 - Exchange information between anti-corruption experts on the implementation of domestic anti-corruption commitments and promotion of successful practices to fight corruption, and enhance the transparency of public and private sectors.
 - Promote cooperation between APEC members in the fight against corruption, including technical assistance, extraditions, mutual legal assistance, and judicial and law enforcement, especially asset forfeiture and recovery.
 - Build public-private partnerships, and partnerships with civil society, as well as empower communities to prevent and fight corruption.
 - Facilitate the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) by relevant member economies.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS¹

7. For the ACTWG's implementation of its strategic plan to be successful, the ACTWG will meet objectives comprising three areas:
- The ACTWG Terms of Reference 2022 – 2025;
 - The Putrajaya Vision 2040, including through the Aotearoa Plan of Action;
 - Continuing Priorities.
8. The key activities to support the objectives are set out in the **Appendix**.

¹ The listing of Objectives and Key Activities below in Sections A, B, and C are not in any particular order, nor does the ordering imply any prioritisation between the various Objectives or Key Activities.

A. The ACTWG Terms of Reference 2022 - 2025

- (1) Improve cooperation between members in such areas as denial of safe haven, asset recovery, mutual legal assistance, and joint or parallel investigations and prosecutions.
- (2) Develop training, targeted capacity building, and results-oriented technical assistance to fight corruption and ensure transparency.
- (3) Cooperate with other multi-lateral and regional inter-governmental institutions, and international organisations, to facilitate improvements in anti-corruption and transparency activities.
- (4) Engage in cross-fora collaboration in anti-corruption and transparency activities across APEC.
- (5) Increase the participation of the private sector and civil society in the development of anti-corruption policies, initiatives, or programmes within APEC economies.
- (6) Address new and emerging anti-corruption issues such as technology, crises or emergencies, or changing environments.

B. The Putrajaya Vision 2040, including through the Aotearoa Plan of Action

- (1) Contribute to the implementation of the Putrajaya Vision 2040, including through the Aotearoa Plan of Action.

C. Continuing Priorities

- (1) Implement APEC commitments to fight corruption and promote transparency, including those related with the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), as appropriate.
- (2) Gain understanding of economies' implementation of the ACTWG's commitments and actions.
- (3) Give full play to the role of ACT-NET.
- (4) Identify and pursue opportunities for the ACTWG and ACT-NET activities to contribute to the implementation of the La Serena Roadmap for Women and Inclusive Growth (2019 – 2030), including through promoting and enabling an environment that actively supports gender equality and women's empowerment.
- (5) Make use of the Friends of the Chair forum to provide an advisory role to the Chair (as determined by the Chair) in delivering year to year consistency of ACTWG and ACT-NET activities.

APPENDIX**The ACTWG Objectives 2023 - 2026²**

The key activities to support the ACTWG's objectives for 2023 – 2026 comprise of three areas.

A. The ACTWG Terms of Reference 2022 - 2025

Objective	Key Activity
<p>1. Improve cooperation between members in such areas as denial of safe haven, asset recovery, mutual legal assistance, and joint or parallel investigations and prosecutions.</p>	<p>(1.1) Deny safe haven to corruption offenders and their assets, including through encouraging effective and timely cooperation among APEC economies, including through informal channels between competent authorities.</p> <p>(1.2) Utilise the available tools for asset recovery and return, in accordance with domestic law, and continue to develop innovative ways to clarify and improve mutual legal assistance processes, in order to advance asset recovery proceedings and render them more successful.</p> <p>(1.3) Encourage bilateral or multi-lateral coordination between ACTWG members, and other multi-lateral and regional anti-corruption and law enforcement platforms.</p> <p>(1.4) Consistent with and subject to domestic legal frameworks, encourage the sharing of knowledge, practices and experience between members, in particular</p>

² The listing of Objectives and Key Activities below in Sections A, B, and C are not in any particular order, nor does the ordering imply any prioritisation between the various Objectives or Key Activities.

Objective	Key Activity
	<p>regarding mechanisms for more efficiently detecting, preventing, and prosecuting the cross-border activities of corrupt individuals, officials, and entities, and cross-border movement of their illicitly acquired assets.</p> <p>(1.5) Empower member economies' participation in anti-corruption and law enforcement networks for informal cross-border cooperation against corruption, subject to each economy's respective laws, and existing protocols and mechanisms.</p> <p>(1.6) Encourage multi-lateral and regional inter-governmental institutions to participate in and contribute to ACTWG or ACT-NET activities, as required.</p> <p>(1.7) Provide technical assistance and capacity building to member economies, including by holding workshops/seminars/symposiums.</p>
<p>2. Develop training, targeted capacity building, and results-oriented technical assistance to fight corruption and ensure transparency.</p>	<p>(2.1) Develop projects for training, capacity building, and technical assistance, including by holding workshops/seminars/symposiums.</p> <p>(2.2) Engage proactively and inter-sessionally to support each other with technical assistance, as required.</p> <p>(2.3) Organise workshops/seminars to provide platforms for experts, including representatives from the private sector and civil society organisations, to share their expertise, and explore opportunities for partnership and collaboration.</p>

Objective	Key Activity
<p>3. Cooperate with other multi-lateral and regional inter-governmental institutions, and international organisations, to facilitate improvements in anti-corruption and transparency activities.</p>	<p>(3.1) Encourage relevant multi-lateral and regional inter-governmental and international organisations to participate in and contribute to ACTWG meetings.</p> <p>(3.2) Encourage developing projects, jointly with relevant multi-lateral and regional inter-governmental institutions, and international organisations, and incorporate their involvement in ACTWG projects.</p>
<p>4. Engage in cross-fora collaboration in anti-corruption and transparency activities across APEC.</p>	<p>(4.1) Promote the integration of the ACTWG's work with other APEC fora.</p> <p>(4.2) Engage with other APEC fora in the ACTWG or ACT-NET activities.</p> <p>(4.3) Encourage members to develop projects that provide opportunities for cross-fora involvement and cooperation.</p>

Objective	Key Activity
<p>5. Increase the participation of the private sector and civil society in the development of anti-corruption policies, initiatives, or programmes within APEC economies.</p>	<p>(5.1) Improve awareness among APEC economies of the detrimental impact and risks of corruption across the APEC region, including through engagement with the private sector and civil society.</p> <p>(5.2) Organise projects/workshops/seminars to provide platforms to share expertise and explore opportunities for partnership and collaboration.</p> <p>(5.3) Equip member economies with information to develop and enhance public-private partnerships, as well as to encourage civil society engagement in efforts to prevent and combat corruption.</p> <p>(5.4) Invite international organisations, the private sector, academia, and civil society to ACTWG activities to present their views, practices, or expertise, as approved by ACTWG members.</p> <p>(5.5) Encourage reporting by member economies on the outreach to and collaboration with the private sector and/or civil society.</p> <p>(5.6) Encourage member economies to engage with civil society and the private sector, which are complementary to the efforts of the ACTWG or ACT-NET.</p> <p>(5.7) Encourage the sharing of member economies' good practices in promoting social engagement in anti-corruption.</p> <p>(5.8) Promote public-private partnerships, and partnerships with civil society.</p>

Objective	Key Activity
6. Address new and emerging anti-corruption issues such as technology, crises or emergencies, or changing environments.	(6.1) Discuss emerging anti-corruption issues, and consider incorporating them in agendas and developing projects to address them. (6.2) Share expertise and experiences addressing emerging anti-corruption issues.

B. The Putrajaya Vision 2040, including through the Aotearoa Plan of Action

Objective	Key Activity
<p>1. Contribute to the implementation of the Putrajaya Vision 2040, including through the Aotearoa Plan of Action.</p>	<p>(1.1) Support the collective efforts to deliver a free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent, and predictable trade and investment environment among member economies.</p> <p>(1.2) Apply innovative and digital approaches in the anti-corruption domain as a tool to prevent and combat corruption.</p> <p>(1.3) Cultivate a culture of transparency, accountability, integrity, and fairness to foster an enabling environment for businesses and international trade and investment.</p> <p>(1.4) Promote engagement with a broader range of economic stakeholders, such as NGOs and civil society, to reflect the breadth of the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040.</p>

C. Continuing Priorities

Objective	Key Activity
<p>1. Implement APEC commitments to fight corruption and promote transparency, including those related with the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), as appropriate.</p>	<p>(1.1) Report on progress in implementing APEC commitments to fight corruption and promote transparency, including the Beijing Declaration on Fighting Corruption, Santiago Commitment to Fight Corruption and Ensure Transparency, and APEC Principles on the Prevention of Bribery and Enforcement of Anti-Bribery Laws.</p> <p>(1.2) Report on progress in implementing international anti-corruption obligations, included in the UNCAC and other relevant international anti-corruption commitments, by relevant economies.</p> <p>(1.3) Collaborate with the private sector and civil society organisations to advance and implement APEC commitments to prevent and combat corruption and promote transparency.</p> <p>(1.4) Encourage representatives from relevant multi-lateral and regional inter-governmental institutions, and international organisations, to present on new development progress updates, and to share ideas for collaboration, at ACTWG and/or ACT-NET meetings.</p>
<p>2. Gain understanding of economies' implementation of the ACTWG's commitments and actions.</p>	<p>(2.1) Provide information on the implementation of the Strategic Plan's objectives to members at ACTWG meetings.</p>

Objective	Key Activity
	<p>(2.2) Regularly report and exchange best practices on the implementation of the ACTWG's commitments and actions during the ACTWG plenary meetings.</p> <p>(2.3) Encourage the host economy to identify its priorities and possible activities for their year as ACTWG Chair as early as possible, and to communicate those priorities to member economies in a timely manner.</p> <p>(2.4) Take stock of the delivery of key activities supporting the Strategic Plan's objectives, and identify ways to ensure delivery or suggest areas for improvement.</p> <p>(2.5) Develop the Strategic Plan 2027 – 2030.</p>
3. Give full play to the role of the ACT-NET.	<p>(3.1) Support the ACT-NET to enable it to meet its objectives.</p> <p>(3.2) Improve informal cross-border cooperation between agencies responsible for investigations and prosecutions of corruption, bribery, money laundering, and asset recovery, with a view to facilitate cooperation among anti-corruption authorities and law enforcement agencies.</p> <p>(3.3) Enhance capacity building of anti-corruption authorities and law enforcement agencies, including holding seminars and workshops at appropriate times.</p> <p>(3.4) Promote cross-border cooperation between ACT-NET economies, and other multi-lateral and regional anti-corruption and law enforcement platforms and networks.</p>

Objective	Key Activity
<p>4. Identify and pursue opportunities for the ACTWG and ACT-NET activities to contribute to the implementation of the La Serena Roadmap for Women and Inclusive Growth (2019 – 2030), including through promoting and enabling an environment that actively supports gender equality and women’s empowerment.</p>	<p>(4.1) Promote the full and equal participation of women in all ACTWG and ACT-NET activities, including in leadership roles.</p> <p>(4.2) Engage with other APEC sub-fora, including the Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy (PPWE); relevant multi-lateral and regional inter-governmental institutions; representatives of international organisations; public and private sectors; civil society; and academia, regarding transparency and anti-corruption as it relates to gender mainstreaming, women’s empowerment and gender equality.</p> <p>(4.3) Enhance understanding within APEC economies and their law enforcement agencies by developing knowledge on the relationship between gender and corruption, including the ways in which corruption can affect women and men differently, and continue to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.</p> <p>(4.4) Promote policies that advance women’s empowerment and gender equality in anti-corruption programmes and initiatives, including by mainstreaming it in relevant legislation, policy development, research, projects and programmes.</p>
<p>5. Make use of the Friends of the Chair forum to provide an advisory role to the Chair (as determined by the Chair) in delivering year to year consistency of ACTWG and ACT-NET activities.</p>	<p>(5.1) Encourage the use of the FotC forum to assist the ACTWG in delivering year to year consistency of ACTWG and ACT-NET activities.</p> <p>(5.2) Actively collaborate as member participants in providing advice to the Chair (as required).</p>