



**Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation**

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**2014/SOM1/007**  
Agenda Item: 8

## **Remote Participation in APEC**

Purpose: Information  
Submitted by: APEC Secretariat



**First Senior Officials' Meeting  
Ningbo, China  
27-28 February 2014**

## **Executive Summary**

The APEC Secretariat is looking to provide remote participation services at APEC meetings to enable participation or access in real-time either via remote video and audio or remote listening modes. As some delegates face limited forms of participation such as lack of opportunity to travel to APEC meetings given time and cost considerations, remote participation offers an alternative option for participants and experts to present their contributions, participate in discussions and provide interventions via this facility.

**Best Practice:** The APEC Secretariat has had discussions on remote participation with other international organisations. Many of them are already conducting meetings remotely in different forms. APEC groups generally use Skype which is suitable for a limited number of remote participants and experts to participate in meetings. The Secretariat is developing a detailed manual for the conduct of remote meetings as an alternative to the Skype medium that allows for a larger group of participants to join in meetings remotely.

**Possible problems:** Although offering remote participation services has its benefits, various issues that could arise with remote meetings include assuring adequate bandwidth for all remote participants, resolving the issues of different time zones and ensuring the confidentiality of discussions.

**Trial:** In efforts to reach out to APEC fora to consider the remote participation facility for their meetings, the APEC Secretariat anticipates that this will be a suitable tool for many groups such as the Anti-Corruption and Transparency Experts Working Group (ACTWG) which has requested support from the Secretariat to build up a virtual space to facilitate ACT-NET's work. In addition, there are discussions with the TEL Working Group to give further guidance on this process.

**Governance:** The purpose of this paper is to inform SOM of this progress and seek agreement in principle to APEC groups trialing remote participation using web conferencing software (Microsoft Lync).

### **Required Action/Decision Points**

- SOM to note this paper and to recognize the availability of the remote participation facility should APEC meetings need to utilize it.
- SOM to agree to specific remote participation and remote listening options for meetings as presented in the revised Guidelines for Hosting APEC Meetings.

## Remote Participation in APEC

### 1. Introduction

The APEC Secretariat is exploring the feasibility of providing remote participation services at APEC meetings. This service would allow members and experts who do not have the opportunity to travel to APEC meetings, to present their contributions, participate in the discussions and provide interventions via this facility. The potential benefits include reduced travel costs and travel downtime, and a reduction in carbon footprint.

There are many possible variants to remote participation which would include remote access via online and offline media, pc and smart device connectivity; remote presentations; remote listening and recorded videos or broadcasts.

By connecting to one of the remote facility options, remote delegates can participate in APEC meetings. For interactive participation, they will see a video feed of the meeting room, hear what is being discussed, see presentations as they occur, download documents, and interact by taking the floor. APEC has had past experience with presenters participating via Skype, with their audio connected to the public address system in the meeting and video displayed onscreen or just audio via a teleconference option with mixed results (depending on bandwidth speed and other connectivity issues). The Skype medium allows for only a small group of remote participants (less than ten).

Standardization of a remote facility service provides participants with advance notice of what they can expect as remote participants and allows hosts to announce remote participation for meetings earlier. Delegates who are interested in making use of the remote participation services would be required to register for the meeting through the host accreditation system as per normal. Remote participants would then each receive a user account which is needed to access the meeting in conjunction with an email invitation from the meeting organiser to participate. Remote delegates would notify the chair of his or her wish to participate remotely as early as possible and would be included in the official list of meeting participants. At the start of the meeting, the Chair introduces members who are participating remotely.

### 2. Remote Participation Types

Different forms of remote participation ranging from a webcast model to interactive remote participation in formal meetings are listed below:

<b>Remote Participation Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
Remote Listening	Used for simple remote participation or cases of limited internet access
Webcasting Centre	This could be appropriate for most APEC meetings with the exception of Ministerial and Leaders' Meetings. Webcasts are recorded by the host economy and uploaded to the Webcasting Centre to provide related stakeholders with a live or on-demand webcast of the meeting.
Moderated Remote Participation	This is suggested for combination meetings using both physical onsite participation and remote participation.
Online Conference	Primarily used for small group meetings such as Study Groups.
Webinar	Allows online Seminars to be shared with remote locations.

This paper provides suggestions for remote listening and moderated remote participation integrated with a Webcasting Centre for delegates to participate remotely at formal APEC meetings. The typical form of remote participation utilises a standard interactive web conferencing software (Microsoft Lync), a webcasting centre, standard terminal devices (PCs, smartphones, desk phones and so on). In the case of moderated remote participation and remote listening, the remote participation facility is connected to a physical conference venue through the Internet. Annex 1 provides a diagram for the remote participation system and a Webcasting Centre model can be seen in Annex 2.

The remote listening mode may be used during instances of poor internet access or internet traffic congestion. Because of low-streaming audio bandwidth, this mode is also useful when remote participants experience limited internet bandwidth or can only use a traditional desk phone. With MS Lync, the platform of the remote participation system and the webcasting center providing both video and audio signals, implementing the remote listening mode merely involves inactivating the video feature. An example of the remote listening facility can be found in Annex 3.

### 3. Governance

APEC meetings are generally restricted to accredited delegates from member economies and approved institutions. As such it is important that all remote participants or webcast viewers undergo similar accreditation process by host economies. This is subject to the initial approval of Chairs and Lead Shepherds to allow remote participation for a particular meeting and other governance issues such as the people responsible for authorizing remote access and in what form (visual or listening participatory modes), whether the proceedings are recorded and ownership of the recordings. Each forum or meeting should review confidentiality issues related to its respective anticipated discussions during a meeting, consider if the benefits of remote participation outweigh any envisaged difficulties and decide if remote access is suitable for implementation. The APEC Secretariat is able to assist in providing advice on policy and technical requirements in this regard.

### 4. Roles

The remote participation service requires the involvement of several people to deliver a successful outcome. Further guidance on process and contingency planning can be obtained from the APEC Secretariat which is developing a detailed manual on the remote participation facility.

The Chair	Responsible for managing the agenda in a timely manner and engaging both onsite and remote participants during the meeting.
The Program Director (PD)	Acts as the contact point for meeting arrangements, liaison with remote participants and assists the Chair to facilitate the meeting.
The host economy	Is responsible for providing physical and hardware resources: ensures sufficient internet bandwidth connectivity; technical in-room support staff to troubleshoot problems faced by remote participants; facilities to accommodate the remote service; uploads the meeting video file to the Webcasting Centre; and delivers video recordings to the PD of the meetings whenever possible.

Remote Participation Coordinator (from the APEC Secretariat)	Facilitates and supports the remote participation system and related documentation and creates a step-by-step instructional video manual for meeting organizers to utilize the remote facility.
Webcast Manager	Manages the virtual Webcasting Centre to provide related stakeholders with a live or on-demand webcast of the APEC meetings and related documentation of a Webcasting Centre operational manual.

## 5. Rules of Procedure

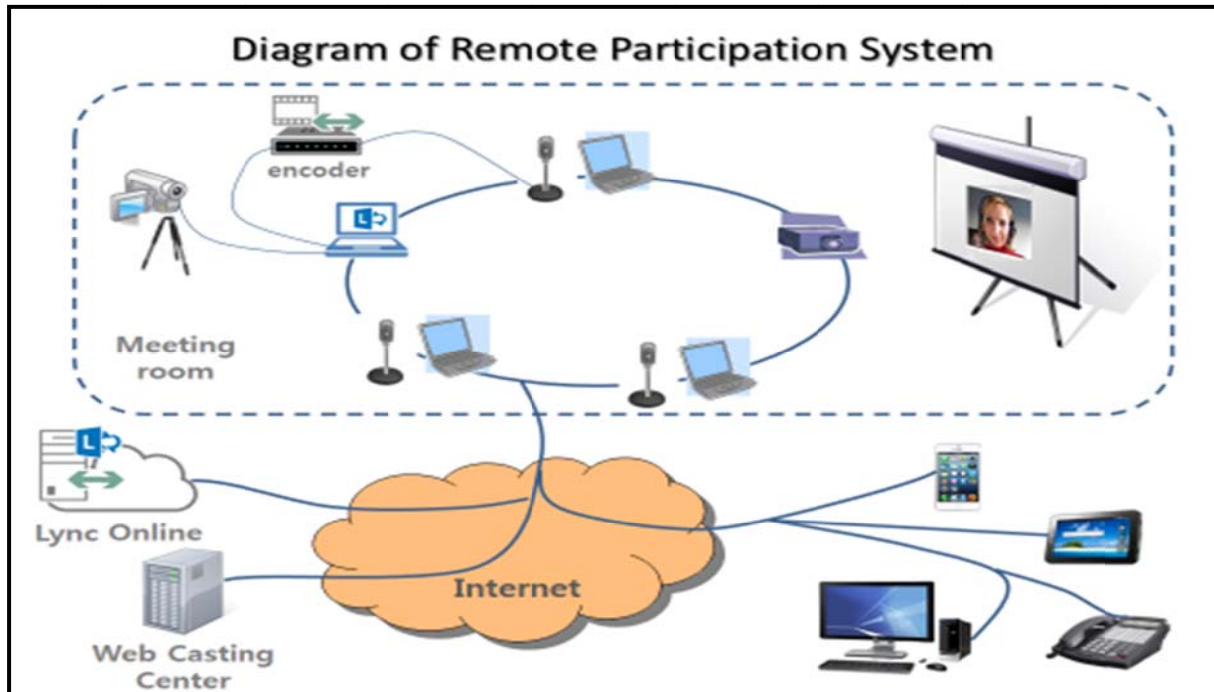
A meeting involving remote participation requires the key stakeholders to communicate in advance of a meeting to understand the objectives and the interaction between both onsite and remote delegates. The following are recommended steps when deploying the remote participation facility.

Steps	Description
Preliminary Step	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chair, meeting organizer and meeting moderator should have a preliminary online conference meeting to clarify the number of both onsite and remote participants, arrangements for remote interventions and other technical issues.</li> <li>• Meeting organizer opens virtual meeting room.</li> <li>• Remote participants submit completed request form to the meeting organizer.</li> <li>• Remote presenter should submit all documents s/he wishes to present at a meeting to the virtual meeting room.</li> </ul>
During the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remote participants will remain unmuted only for the duration of the planned intervention in the regular meeting.</li> <li>• The participants should request the meeting organizer for the floor in advance for the unplanned intervention.</li> <li>• In case it is a collaborative or highly interactive meeting, the remote participants will be unmuted for the duration of the whole session.</li> </ul>
After the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting organizer checks the meeting video file is uploaded to the Webcasting centre successfully.</li> <li>• Remote Participants who are unable to attend the meeting in time check the meeting video from the Webcasting Centre and submit their feedback within 12 hours after the meeting.</li> </ul>

## 6. Equipment

Deploying the remote participation service requires some minimum hardware, software and external service items on-site as noted below. The interactive web conference software and Webcasting Centre can be developed by the APEC Secretariat.

<b>System</b>	<b>Description</b>
Interactive Conferencing (MS Lync)      Web Software	Is required to connect remote participants to the physical meeting via a virtual meeting room which participants can access through the Internet or a PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network).
Cameras	To capture images of the speaker/s or the conference room. Where tracking cameras are not available, two camcorders are typically used, one to provide a fixed view of the room and the other of the podium.
Laptops	Are generally required (two), one to capture video from the camcorders or integrated room camera system and the other to run the web conference. A third laptop is beneficial to monitor the AV quality and to function as a backup in case of technical failures.
Audio Encoder for Microphone	Is required to connect the remote facility to the microphone system at the physical venue.
Webcasting Centre	An online facility that provides stakeholders with a live or on-demand webcast of the APEC meeting.



The Remote Participation system consists of a webcam connected to a notebook (or camcorder), MS Lync Online, Webcasting Center and terminal devices for remote participants as in the slides above.

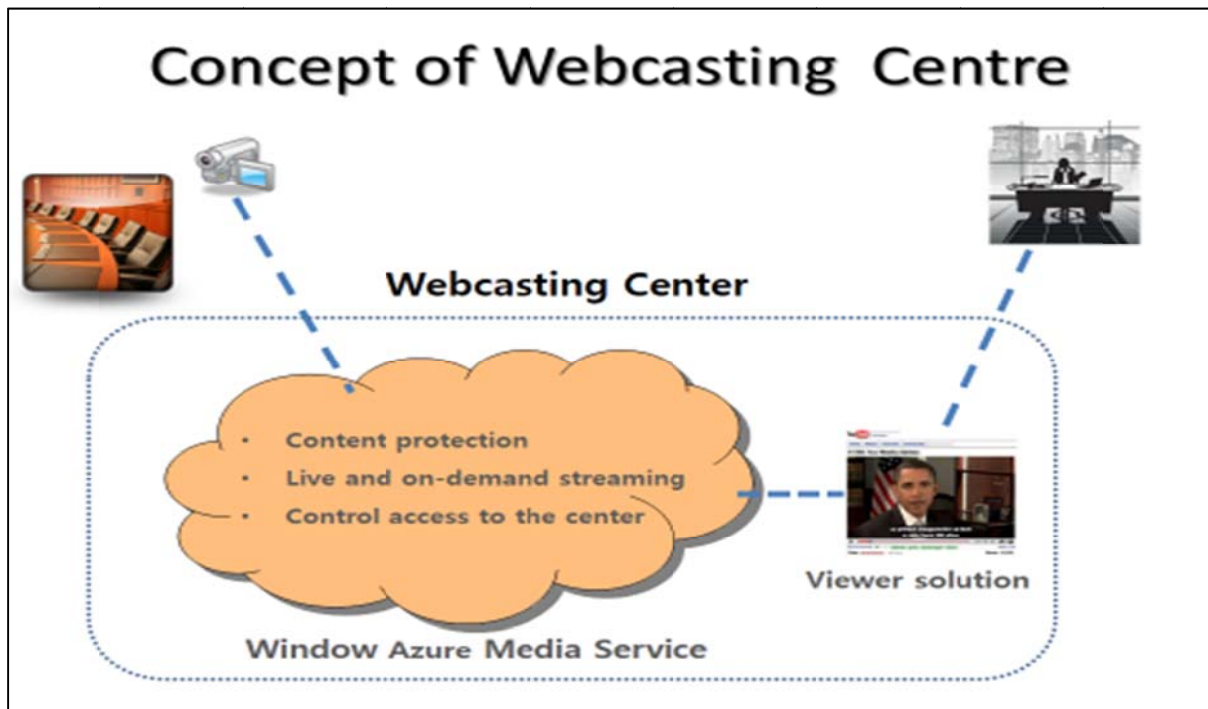
The meeting venue should provide presentation facilities and microphone systems.

The remote participation system provides a hybrid of online and offline participation. For instance, 3 participants out of 100 meeting members can join a meeting remotely via the remote participation system while the other 97 participants are attending the same meeting onsite.

For terminal devices, participants can utilize a PC with webcam, smart device (iPhone or galaxy pad for instance), telephone to join the meeting remotely. Attendees can use a smart phone to make a comment remotely to a meeting while watching the meeting through the smart phone.

MS Lync is the platform solution for Remote Participation with main features as follows:

- Get real-time presence information - including photos, availability status, and location - and enhanced instant messaging (IM) to connect efficiently and effectively.
- Make voice calls through your computer to other Lync or Skype users in your organization or in other organizations that use Lync or Skype.
- Create, moderate, and join pre-planned and on-the-fly audio, video, and web meetings with people inside and outside your organization.
- Enhance online presentations with screen-sharing and virtual whiteboards.



## Requirement of the Webcasting Center

- Video
  - Provide HD quality streaming as well as SD streaming, making it optional to users.
  - Should capture at least one video stream of the venue, another view if possible
  - Enable users to make a selection among the video signals if multi signals are available.
  - ※ *Meeting will be recorded through webcam connected to the MS Lync or high-end camera.*
  - Provide an automatic bandwidth adjustment system to optimize usage where internet bandwidth may be limited or restricted from the user to the webcasting center.
- Audio
  - Provide voice from a venue microphone or webcam microphone, which should be made optional to users.
  - Allow remote delegates to listen to the audio through computer speakers without having to join a Remote Participation solution based upon Lync.
- Authentication and Security
  - Authentication should be performed against details stored in the AIMP Directory.
  - Security should provide restricted access where only users with a valid login can enter, and usage management reporting on an event-by-event basis or over a specific period.



The Remote Listening mode may be necessary for instances when the internet access is very poor or internet traffic is highly congested. In addition, remote listening is useful when remote participants experience limited internet bandwidth or can only use a traditional desk phone. With MS Lync, the platform of the remote participation system and the webcasting center providing both video and audio signals, implementing the remote listening mode merely involves inactivating the video feature. The following examples below display the remote listening modes implemented at the webcasting center and MS Lync respectively.

