



**Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation**

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**2020/DESG/010**

Agenda Item: 4

## **COVID-19 and the Digital Economy**

Purpose: Information  
Submitted by: Japan



**Digital Economy Steering Group Special  
Virtual Meeting on COVID-19  
26 June 2020**

We invite member economies to share information on digital-economy related policy interventions, initiatives, lessons learned, and/or solutions in response to COVID-19 ahead of the 26 June 2020 APEC Digital Economy Steering Group Special Virtual Meeting using the template below. The descriptions of the issues below are **only suggested points** to help members with the exercise, and members need not regard them as mandatory points to follow in generating their information sharing in the template. Members are advised to submit the completed template below through the APEC Collaboration System (ACS) no later than 23 June. Members are able to view and download completed templates submitted by other members on ACS ahead of the Special Virtual Meeting, and this will help DESG optimize the limited meeting time on 26 June.

- a) **Business continuity and resilience** – As COVID-19 has caused significant disruptions to economic activities and business operations, members may wish to share how they support business continuity and resilience in terms of:
  - i. Ensure access to reliable connectivity and relevant digital technologies, in particular among MSMEs, women, and young entrepreneurs, to help overcome digital divides;
  - ii. Encourage businesses, including MSMEs, to leverage digital technologies and solutions in carrying out production, business activities, and international trade, so as to maintain the stability of global supply chains;
  - iii. Encourage the digital transformation, including through digitalized production systems, e-commerce, digital supply of services, e-invoicing, and e-payments, and other services, as well as smart working solutions, including remote working, and innovative new business models.
- b) **Exchange and use of data in a secure manner** – Members may wish to share how they:
  - i. Encourage collaboration to collect, pool, process, and share reliable and accurate non-personal information that can contribute to the monitoring, understanding, and prevention of the further spread of COVID-19 as well as other infectious diseases;
  - ii. Ensure the collection and processing of COVID-19-related data is being done in an ethical, transparent, safe, interoperable, and secure manner that protects the privacy and data security of individuals, in line with prevailing international measures and domestic laws and regulations.
- c) **Use of digital technologies and solutions including for tracing purpose** – Given the importance and urgency of slowing down the spread of COVID-19, members may wish to share how they:
  - i. Use digital technologies and solutions to enable individuals and firms to continue to participate in the economy;
  - ii. Use digital technologies to help contact tracing efforts;
  - iii. Promote digital work and the development of basic digital skills in companies, public institutions, schools, and universities;
  - iv. Encourage and collaborate with the research community, private sector, and business entities to promote the use of digital technologies and solutions for the development and manufacturing of critical medical equipment and supplies (including disinfectants, Personal Protective Equipment, and ventilators) to fight COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.
- d) **Secure and trusted online environment** – Given the increased digital vulnerability in the context of a pandemic, members may wish to share how they:

- i. Enable timely domestic and international responses to counteract malicious cyber activities that present risks to the security of the digital economy;
- ii. Work collaboratively with businesses and organizations to leverage online platforms to continue sharing trustworthy information and prevent disinformation, hoaxes, and online scams;
- iii. Ensure that reliable crisis communication over digital channels is available.

e) **Preparations for economic recovery post-COVID** – Members may wish to share other policy interventions and initiatives as part of the preparations for economic recovery, given the reinforced significance of the digital economy as a result of COVID-19.

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ISSUE	POLICY INTERVENTIONS, INITIATIVES, LESSONS LEARNED, AND SOLUTIONS IN RELATION TO THE ISSUE	ACTUAL/EXPECTED OUTCOME
<b>Business continuity and resilience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>supporting SMEs in introducing teleworking</b>            METI expand to support revolution of SMEs productivity in introducing teleworking office environment by raising subsidiary rate or maximum amount in order to overcome the management difficulty caused by the expansion of COVID-19. We also chose IT specialists including free-lance and side job and support their businesses by providing subsidies in order to expand professional support to SMEs.</li>   <li>● <b>sharing the status and issues on Internet traffic at the Council for Network Efficiency by Cross-layer Technical Members</b>            Internet traffic in Japan has been increasing at a rate of 20% to 40% annually before the COVID-19 pandemic and to continue maintaining or improving the quality of the Internet in the near future, it will be necessary to take measures by cooperating across industries with content providers and network operators. The Council for Network Efficiency by Cross-layer Technical Members (CONNECT) has established, where</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing, N/A</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

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	<p>Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) and private business involved in the distribution of Internet traffic will cooperate in sharing information on Internet traffic regularly and examining challenges for smooth distribution of Internet content.</p> <p><a href="https://www.soumu.go.jp/main_sosiki/joho_tsusin/eng/Releases/Telecommunications/2020_04_10_3.html">https://www.soumu.go.jp/main_sosiki/joho_tsusin/eng/Releases/Telecommunications/2020_04_10_3.html</a></p>	
<p><b>Exchange and use of data in a secure manner</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>requesting online platform and other businesses to provide statistical data and other information that would contribute to preventing the expansion of COVID-19</b></li> </ul> <p>On March 31, Japanese government including METI and MIC requested online platform, telecommunications carriers and other businesses to provide statistical data and other information that would contribute to preventing the expansion of COVID-19, particularly review effectiveness of social distancing policies so far and improve accuracy of future ones.</p> <p>We also launched the tech-team of preventing the expansion of COVID-19 in the cabinet secretariat with collaboration to other related ministries in order to quickly develop and deploy data utilization referring to foreign economies.</p> <p><a href="https://www.soumu.go.jp/main_sosiki/joho_tsusin/eng/Releases/Telecommunications/2020_03_31_11.html">https://www.soumu.go.jp/main_sosiki/joho_tsusin/eng/Releases/Telecommunications/2020_03_31_11.html</a></p>	<p>Ongoing, N/A</p>
<p><b>Use of digital technologies and solutions including for tracing purpose</b></p>		

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<p><b>Secure and trusted online environment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>raising awareness to business communities including MSMEs of cyber-attacks that are taking advantage of recent confusion and the importance of risk management taking into consideration of the entire supply chain</b></li> </ul> <p>METI held the fourth Study Group on Industrial Cyber Security on April 17 to raise awareness to business communities including MSMEs of cyber-attacks that are sophisticated, diversified, and taking advantage of recent confusion surrounding the COVID-19 and announced messages for the business communities to promote cyber security measures to respond to the current situation of cyber-attacks and the rapidly accelerated digitalization, taking into consideration of the entire supply chain.</p> <p><a href="https://www.meti.go.jp/shingikai/mono_info_service/sangyo_cyber/pdf/20200417.pdf">https://www.meti.go.jp/shingikai/mono_info_service/sangyo_cyber/pdf/20200417.pdf</a> (Japanese text only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>establishment of the remote working security guidance</b></li> </ul> <p>MIC established Telework Security Guidelines (4<sup>th</sup> edition) for companies planning to introduce teleworking in 2018. Considering current COVID-19 situation, MIC will develop a checklist of specific requirements that meet the guideline in order to make it easier for SMEs that have not yet introduced remote working to do so safely.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>Ongoing, N/A</p>
<p><b>Preparations for economic recovery post-COVID</b></p>		