



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

2020/DESG/018

Agenda Item: 4

COVID-19 and the Digital Economy

Purpose: Information
Submitted by: New Zealand



**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.

[New Zealand]

[Robyn Henderson, Policy Director Digital Economy; robyn.henderson@mbie.govt.nz]

ISSUE	POLICY INTERVENTIONS, INITIATIVES, LESSONS LEARNED, AND SOLUTIONS IN RELATION TO THE ISSUE	ACTUAL/EXPECTED OUTCOME
Business continuity and resilience	<p>Nil COVID related in ICT but wage subsidies for many firms including ICT firms have assisted in staff retention and business continuity – post lock down.</p> <p>The Government implemented a Wage Subsidy Scheme that was available for all employers that are significantly impacted by COVID-19 and are struggling to retain employees as a result. Employers must have suffered, or be projected to suffer at least a 30% decline in revenue compared to last year for any month between January 2020 and the end of the scheme in June 2020.</p>	Staff retention and business resilience post lockdown
Exchange and use of data in a secure manner	Nil COVID related in NZ.	

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<p>Use of digital technologies and solutions including for tracing purpose</p>	<p>New Zealand has established a new Ministry of Health supported contact tracing app for those in New Zealand <i>NZ COVID Tracer</i> similar to other contact traceability apps, but with greater security and anonymity than other proprietary apps. See:</p> <p>https://www.health.govt.nz/news-media/media-releases/nz-covid-tracer-app-released-support-contact-tracing</p>	<p>Better community and personal contract tracing in New Zealand, with privacy protections</p>
<p>Secure and trusted online environment</p>	<p><i>NZ CERT</i> has developed extra guidance on cybersecurity in the COVID 19 environment.</p> <p><i>COVID related cyber crime.</i></p> <p>Internationally New Zealand’s CERT partners are seeing an increase in reports of cyber criminals using the COVID-19 pandemic to carry out opportunities online scams and malicious cyber activity. Including state sponsored activity.</p> <p>This includes attempts to use the COVID-19 pandemic to trick people into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • paying a bitcoin ransom to avert family infection with COVID-19 • donating to a fake World Health Organisation COVID-19 Response Fund • download malware from COVID-19 maps, or • enter their details into phishing websites. <p>Our CERT has provided extra guidance on these risk, and has developed further technical defenses against this opportunistic cybercrime.</p> <p><i>InternetNZ</i> (our multi stakeholder internet governance entity) has developed a new free cyber security product. <i>Defenz</i> – a Domain Name System (DNS) Firewall, offered to: Internet Service Providers and Managed Service</p>	<p>Better understanding of and defense against opportunistic COVID-19 related cyber crime</p> <p>Better DNZ firewall protection for non for profits.</p>

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	<p>Providers, tertiary education, healthcare, nonprofit and government organisations.</p> <p>Defenz DNS Firewall protects Internet users from phishing attacks, malware, ransomware and botnets. It also stops malware already on the network from accessing the Internet.</p> <p>InternetNZ is supporting new Zealand companies and organisations as the pivoting their services to embrace digital commerce get online and stay safe as they respond to COVID-19.</p> <p>https://internetnz.nz/news/internetnz-offers-its-new-cyber-security-product-extended-free-trial</p>	
<p>Preparations for economic recovery post-COVID</p>	<p>The New Zealand Government recognises the extra pressure that COVID-19 has placed on broadband networks in new Zealand and the effect that this having on rural and less well served households' and businesses' ability to successfully work and learn.</p> <p>New Zealand has recently announced a \$15 million investment to upgrade rural network capacity. Cell towers that service a large number of rural households that have been affected by infrastructure capacity constraints will be prioritized. Additionally, upgrades of mobile towers in rural areas where we have identified a large number of school-aged children live will also be a priority, in order to facilitate online learning. More information about this announcement can be found at: www.beehive.govt.nz/release/rural-broadband-upgrade-boost-covid-19-recovery-remote-communities.</p> <p>Small business support</p> <p>The constraints on business operation under Alert Levels 4 and 3 had a</p>	

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	<p>significant impact on small businesses across a range of industries. Lockdown restrictions meant that many could not trade, or deliver their online orders.</p> <p>The New Zealand Government is designing initiatives that will increase the uptake of digital commerce, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support to identify if digital commerce is appropriate and understand the longer term implications on business models; • ongoing support and advice to successfully implement and maintain digital commerce and adapt to the new business environment; • improving access to advice; • improving the availability of information on digital commerce service offerings; • upskilling the ability of business advisors to provide advice on digital commerce strategies; and • incentives/grants to encourage adoption <p>Digital Technologies ITP</p> <p>The New Zealand Government has adopted a refreshed approach to its Industry Strategy, with a key initiative being the development of Industry Transformation Plans. The Government is working in partnership with NZTech on a Digital Technologies ITP. The ambition of this ITP is “The world looks to Aotearoa New Zealand as a leader in ethical, innovative, inclusive and sustainable digital technologies. These technologies enable our economy to prosper, help our businesses to grow stronger and compete internationally, and contribute to the wellbeing of all New Zealanders.” A joint work programme is currently being finalised that will be focused on the realisation</p>	

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	<p>of this vision.</p> <p>Digital Council for Aotearoa New Zealand</p> <p>The Government appointed the Digital Council late 2019, with the purpose to advise on how to maximise the societal benefits of digital and data-driven technologies to increase equality and inclusivity, wellbeing and community resilience. The Council has a 3 year work programme that focuses on technological issues facing New Zealand relating to trust, inclusion and innovation. It has provided advice to the Government on New Zealand's digital landscape beyond the Covid-19 response, with emphasis on social and digital inclusion, leveraging technology to empower business, enhanced tech sector employment, and privacy and trust.</p>	