



**Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation**

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**2022/SOM2/CTI/009**

Agenda Item: VI I

**Self-Funded Project Proposal Coversheet - Free  
Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific Work Program: Multi-  
Stakeholder Engagement Approaches for Trade  
Agreement Development**

Purpose: Information  
Submitted by: United States



**Second Committee on Trade and Investment  
Meeting  
Bangkok, Thailand  
15-16 May 2022**

# APEC Self-Funded Project Proposal Coversheet

Submit through Secretariat Program Director. Please ensure the proposal is no longer than 4 pages.

<b>Project Title:</b>	FTAAP Work Program: Multistakeholder engagement approaches for trade agreement development
<b>Project Number:</b> (Assigned by Secretariat)	
<b>APEC Forum:</b>	Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI)
<b>Proposing APEC Economy:</b>	United States
<b>Co-sponsoring Economies (if any):</b>	Chinese Taipei, Peru, The Philippines
<b>Expected Start Date:</b>	April 2022
<b>Project Completion Date:</b>	March 2023
<b>Project Summary:</b> <i>In 150 words - what is the issue that you will address or examine in your project? outline the key things your project will do, in terms of what, where, when and with whom.</i> <i>(Summary <u>must be</u> no longer than the box provided. Cover Sheet must fit on one page)</i>	By utilizing multistakeholder engagement, APEC economies can bring a wide variety of voices to the table when developing trade agreements, thereby recognizing the unique needs, opinions, and interests of all trade stakeholders in an economy, allowing the benefits of trade to be felt by all, and advancing policies that are inclusive. <del>Inclusion</del> Multistakeholder engagement also serves a key role in supporting inclusion and contributing to the FTAAP agenda, which seeks to prepare APEC economies to participate in high quality and comprehensive trade agreements. This project aims to conduct a survey, implement a workshop, and produce an outcomes report to share experiences on regional approaches and procedures to undertake multistakeholder engagement and use stakeholder inputs to inform positions when designing and negotiating trade agreements. The project will share experience among APEC economies to support them to strengthen their approaches, procedures, and other consultative mechanisms in accordance with their laws and regulations to include stakeholder perspectives in the design of trade agreements.
<b>Total cost of project (USD):</b>	<b>\$160,000</b>
<b>List all project outputs:</b> <i>For example:</i> 1. Research and Background Paper 2. Workshop 3. Project Summary Report	<i>Project Overseers are encouraged to limit outputs to 3 or fewer</i>  1. Survey 2. Workshop 3. Outcomes Report

## Project Overseer Information and Declaration

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Activity Deputy  
Economic Growth in Asia (US-SEGA)  
**Tel:**

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As Project Overseer and on behalf of the above said Organization, I declare that this submission was prepared in accordance with the **Guidebook on APEC Projects** and any ensuing project will comply with said Guidebook. Failure to do so may result in the BMC denying or revoking funding and/or project approval. I understand that any funds approved are granted on the basis of the information in the document's budget table, in the case of any inconsistencies within the document. By submitting this APEC Project Proposal to the APEC Secretariat, I agree that the APEC Secretariat will collect, use, disclose, and transmit the data contained in the APEC Project Proposal, which I have provided to the APEC Secretariat in accordance with Singapore's Personal Data Protection Act 2012 and the APEC Secretariat's data protection policy (<https://www.apec.org/PrivacyPolicy>). The APEC Secretariat will transfer any data provided on this form, which may contain personal data of Project Overseer(s), to APEC member economies overseas via the APEC Secretariat.

Scott Pietan, Kanika Sahai

Name of Project Overseer

Blake van Velden

Name of Fora Chair/Lead Shepherd

**Date:** March 29, 2022

# Project Synopsis

## **Project Objective:**

**State the overarching objective of the project in 100 words or less.**

*The objective is the overarching goal of your project, for example, "Our objective is to build the capacity of project participants through workshop and research to better support the X Roadmap, and produce recommendations as a basis for further collaboration to address the APEC-wide issue of..."*

The objective of this project is to build the capacity of APEC economies to advance inclusive policies through domestic multistakeholder engagement approaches and procedures utilized in the design and negotiation of trade agreements by reflecting in a neutral manner on the full scope of existing practices, their usefulness in crafting trade agreements that include perspectives from a wide range of stakeholders, and the resulting benefits they provide stakeholder groups. Further, this initiative and the resulting outcomes seek to address an overarching goal to better position APEC economies to fully partake in high standard, comprehensive trade agreements that represent the interests of a wide range of stakeholders.

1. **a) Relevance – Issues: What problems does the project seek to address? Does it have sustained benefits for more than one economy in the APEC region?**

Under the Aotearoa Plan of Action, APEC established that “economies will build on APEC’s Agenda on Advancing Financial and Social Inclusion to enhance economic inclusion for all, including by advancing inclusive policies, including under the economic drivers of trade and investment.” Establishing a process for multistakeholder engagement as part of FTAs/RTAs planning and negotiations is critical to advancing inclusiveness in trade agreements.

Stakeholders in an economy including the private sector, underrepresented communities including women from diverse backgrounds, civil society and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), among others have unique interests, perspectives, and needs regarding cross-border trade and participation in the global economy. Without strong mechanisms to engage a broad diversity of stakeholders, these interests may be underemphasized in trade agreement development. Multistakeholder engagement, the process of undertaking domestic consultations to extensively listen to a wide-range of opinions, is critical to ensure that efforts to design, negotiate, conclude, ratify, implement, assess, and upgrade trade agreements allow for the benefits of trade to be felt by all, making trade a force for good that facilitates a “race to the top.” Understanding the significant benefits trade and investment liberalization offers to communities within the APEC region, APEC economies remain committed to policy actions that support an open, inclusive, and cooperative trade and investment environment. These priorities play a key role in the Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP) agenda, which seeks to prepare APEC economies for participation in high quality and comprehensive trade agreements, thereby advancing economic integration in the region under a “win-win” spirit. This project will share information on approaches, procedures, and tools that used by APEC economies to increase public comment and acquire input from a wide range of stakeholders and ensure their interests and concerns are reflected appropriately in the design and negotiation of trade agreements.

**b) Relevance – Alignment to APEC: Describe specific APEC priorities, goals, strategies and/ or statements that the project supports, and explain how the project will contribute to their achievement.**

The Lima Declaration on FTAAP Recommendations encourages strengthened consultation with stakeholders throughout APEC economies’ efforts to advance economic integration in the region. Further, the Aotearoa Plan of Action, the implementation plan for the Putrajaya Vision 2040, sets forth a call-to-action to effectively progress the FTAAP agenda consistent with the Lima Declaration, including by advancing capacity building programs and cooperating on best practices to promote APEC economies’ development of and participation in high standard regional undertakings.

**c) Relevance – Alignment to Forum: How does the project align with your forum’s work plan/ strategic plan?**

CTI’s current priorities and key activities include engaging with the business sector and industry dialogues, promoting innovative development and inclusive approaches, and advancing economic integration in the region through the FTAAP agenda. Through the Lima Declaration, APEC Leaders have instructed APEC officials to focus economic integration efforts through CTI and its sub-fora, leveraging CTI to encourage participation of a wide set of stakeholders in related discussions.

2. **Capacity Building: How will the project build the capacity of APEC member economies.**

Through its contributions to the FTAAP agenda and efforts to support the development of high standard, comprehensive trade agreements, this project builds towards APEC’s capacity building objective to “help Members to participate more fully in the regional economy as well as in the trade and investment liberalization and facilitation process”. It also contributes to APEC’s capacity building goal of “improving the economic and social well-being of the people” by enhancing practices to recognize the unique interests, opinions, and needs across a wide range of stakeholders in an economy. This will thereby strengthen APEC economies’ abilities to design and negotiate trade agreements that allow for the benefits of trade to be felt by all.

This project will begin with a voluntary survey to stock-take current APEC economy approaches and procedures to undertake multistakeholder engagement and how stakeholder inputs resulting from these approaches are integrated into the development of trade agreements that include a wide range of interests, opinions, and needs. ~~APEC economy will participate in the survey on a voluntary basis.~~ This survey, which will be disseminated to CTI members for completion, will provide targeted questions to allow APEC economies to assess existing domestic consultation procedures. Economies will be encouraged to circulate the survey to the relevant government bodies and other stakeholders within each economy’s domestic context, .

Project Overseers (POs) will also implement a regional workshop to explore the importance of multistakeholder engagement in trade agreement development; identify key stakeholders to engage for different components of trade agreements; highlight APEC economy approaches and procedures uncovered in the survey; promote information sharing on experiences, outcomes, and lessons learned from these approaches and procedures; and facilitate dialogue on initial steps for APEC economies that are interested in those approaches and procedures.

Finally, POs will produce an outcomes report on the findings of the survey and workshop to highlight the landscape of multistakeholder engagement approaches and procedures, along with their resulting outcomes and lessons learned. This report will also suggest initial steps APEC economies could take as reference.. The report will submit to CTI for endorsement.

3. **Methodology: How do you plan to implement the project? Briefly address the following:**

**Workplan:** In a simple table, outline the project from start to end. Show key project outputs and activities and associated dates or timelines. Indicate if you intend to record any project event. Refer to the *APEC Project Event Recording Policy* at Annex N of the Guidebook.

POs will firstly craft a survey to understand the current multistakeholder engagement approaches and procedures undertaken by APEC economies and how stakeholder inputs resulting from these approaches are integrated into the development of trade agreements that include the interests, opinions, and needs of a wide range of stakeholders. POs plan to disseminate one survey to CTI members in Quarter 2/3 of 2022. This survey is currently envisioned to contain one set of questions that could be answered by volunteer respondents representing a variety of stakeholder groups ~~CTI members on voluntary basis~~ and that capture the unique perspectives and experiences of all responding stakeholders. POs plan to request that CTI members both provide their own responses to the survey and circulate the survey to the relevant government bodies and other stakeholders within each economy’s domestic context for completion. POs will look to receive responses from APEC economies through CTI in Quarter 3 of 2022, and will leverage survey findings to develop an agenda for the regional workshop. Approximately one month prior to the workshop, POs will identify relevant speakers for the session topics, distribute an invitation to CTI members to collect APEC economy participant nominations, and undertake procedures to identify and seek approval for Non-Member Participation (NMP) speakers and attendees in accordance with APEC NMP procedures. POs will conduct the workshop in Quarter 3 of 2022. After the workshop, POs will collate findings from the survey and the workshop. POs will communicate these findings in a outcomes report, tentatively scheduled to be circulated to CTI members in Quarter 1 of 2023. This outcomes report will include a summary of the survey results amongst other findings.

Activity	Output	Timeline
Survey to stock-take current APEC economy approaches and procedures to undertake multistakeholder engagement in developing trade agreements	1 survey	Q2/3 2022
Assess input from survey. Host regional workshop building on input received from survey	Workshop	Q3 2022

Finalize report reflecting both the survey responses and lessons learned from the workshop and submitted to CTI for endorsement.	Report	Q1 2023
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**Beneficiaries: Selection criteria for participants, beneficiary profiles (e.g. participants, end users, policy makers, researchers/ analysts, gender) and how they will be engaged.**

The primary audience consists of APEC economy trade negotiators and policymakers with the authority to drive the formation and reform of consultation practices and procedures undertaken for the development of trade agreements. To achieve capacity building objectives of the project, the POs will work with economies to ensure economies nominate participants that possess relevant skills and can engage effectively in discussions at the workshop. In accordance with APEC Non-Member Participation (NMP) procedures, POs will seek approval for workshop speakers and attendees from the private sector, workers' associations, academia, and/or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that will augment the workshops by sharing perspectives and experiences in multistakeholder engagement for trade agreements.

Outcomes of this project will more broadly support APEC economies to design and participate in high quality comprehensive trade agreements that represent the interests of a broad range of stakeholders. Women stand to benefit greatly from this project, as they face disproportionate barriers to trade, and have been seen to experience significant benefits from inclusive trade, such as higher formal labor force participation when they work in sectors that engage in trade.

**Evaluation: Outline the indicators which will be used to measure progress towards the project outcomes. Where possible, provide indicators which could assess impacts on women.**

The extent to which APEC economies utilize and leverage the key findings and recommendations from the survey within the domestic and APEC context, begin to adopt and implement practices and procedures to consult a wide range of interested stakeholders in the design and negotiation of trade agreements, and request follow-on capacity building assistance will be indicators to measure the progress and outcome of this project. The outcomes report will provide a summary of the survey results to enable APEC economies to utilize and leverage the survey's key findings and recommendations.

The principal mechanism through which the POs will seek to evaluate the outputs and outcomes of the workshops will be through a participant questionnaire. The questionnaire will not only seek the views of participants on the usefulness of the workshop, but also elicit information that can inform the design of follow-up capacity building activities. Responses to the workshop participant questionnaire will be compiled and summarized by the POs and the results reflected in the final APEC project report which will be presented to members for information. Members will be requested to ensure that a gender balance is maintained when submitting nominations for the workshop. Data from the participant questionnaire will be disaggregated by gender, allowing POs to assess how the workshop benefitted women, as well as the specific requests by female participants for further capacity building.

**Linkages: Information on other APEC and non-APEC stakeholders and how they will be engaged. If and how this proposal builds on (but does not duplicate) the work of other projects. How will this activity promote cross fora collaboration?**

Stakeholders including women; micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs); and the business community can experience greater benefits from trade when their unique interests, perspectives, and needs are communicated through multistakeholder engagement. Therefore, the outcomes of this project can contribute to the policy directions of the APEC Policy Partnership on Women in the Economy (PPWE) and the APEC Small and Medium Enterprises Working Group (SMEWG), as well as the Regional Economic Integration Working Group and the MSMEs and Inclusiveness Working Group under the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC).