**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

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**2022/SOM3/CTI/021**
Agenda Item: XIV

# Business Mobility Group Convenor's Report

Purpose: Information
Submitted by: BMG Convenor



**APEC 2022
THAILAND**

**Third Committee on Trade and Investment
Meeting
Chiang Mai, Thailand
26-27 August 2022**

**CONVENOR'S REPORT TO
COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INVESTMENT (CTI3)**

**Specific to CTI**

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| Was quorum reached at the most recent plenary meeting? Please advise how many economies participated in the most recent plenary meeting.<br><br>    •     **Quorum was reached with 20 members present (all except Mexico)** |
| Key outcomes from BMG2, SOM3 / 2022 meeting:<br><br>    •     The Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI) Chair, Mr Blake Van Velden, provided an overview of the broader work undertaken within APEC. The CTI Chair encouraged members to consider how the BMG can achieve the objectives of the Putrajaya Vision and Aotearoa Plan of Action (APA). In particular, to consider other work that could be undertaken in addition to long-established APEC Business Travel Card (ABTC) scheme management. He also reinforced BMG discussions raising approaches to showcasing individual economies initiatives to implement the APA in 2023.<br>    •     Members were provided with progress report on the Safe Passage Taskforce, including the endorsement of the proposal: *Voluntary Principles for the Interoperability of Vaccination Certificates in the APEC Region.*<br>    •     The ABTC System User Guide provides a standardized process for users of the ABTC System. Following initial review by Australia, Japan, New Zealand and Thailand, the ABTC System User Guide was reviewed by all members intersessionally. A final version (version 28) incorporating feedback was circulated to members for consideration at SOM3. Consensus was reached on this version of the Guide and endorsed by BMG members, however, the meeting noted the Guide is a living document, for example Australia advised some outstanding edits subject to technical advice was still underway in response to system enhancements.<br>    •     Economies reported that they experienced delays in ABTC pre-clearance processing times during COVID-19 pandemic. There were also reports from cardholders that their virtual ABTC was not been accepted for travel to some economies. The BMG discussed ways to deal with backlogs, temporary measures and mitigating future delays.<br>    •     Economies reported on their cyber security systems and policies. All economies indicated that cyber security existed in their economy with the majority referring to a respective central body which oversees cyber security, supported by legislation and policy which regulates the collection, use, and management of data and the steps taken in the event of a breach.<br>    •     Australia presented their Concept Note: *Performance Review Study of the ABTC Scheme* which has received in-principle approval for funding by the APEC Budget and Management Committee. The study will conduct a systemic review from the past three to five years, measuring the performance of the ABTC Scheme. A |

Project Proposal, due 12 September 2022, will submit that a qualified expert should undertake research and report on the Scheme's performance. The report recommendations should include ways to enhance the operation of the Scheme as well as outline metrics for on-going collection of data by BMG members and reporting at BMG meetings. Thailand agreed to co-sponsor the proposal during BMG2, joining Japan and New Zealand as co-sponsors.

- BMG2 of 2022 included a panel discussion. Panellists comprised non-member participants from non-government bodies and suggested ways to further innovate the ABTC scheme as contactless transactions continue to be the new normal. Panel members suggested ways for the BMG to move forward, including continued roll-out of the virtual-ABTC and conducting a pilot project that consolidates selected border arrival documentation on a digital platform.

- Among SOM1 outcomes was to explore alternative ways to display the work of the BMG. A Work Program Tracker was transitioned to a Work Plan that directly links with the Terms of Reference (ToR), Putrajaya Vision 2040 and the Aotearoa Plan of Action. The BMG Work Plan 2022-2025 was considered by BMG members and a number of suggestions were made. The Work Plan will be edited and recirculated intersessionally.

- The United States led a discussion, in consultation with the BMG Convenor, to update the BMG Terms of Reference to include a shared leadership model as directed by the CTI. As consensus was not reached after consideration of the first proposal intersessionally, a further proposal was circulated to members to consider two new options. The BMG discussed the two new models at the BMG2 meeting. Preference for each option was divided or economies either abstained or indicated they required additional time to consider these options. One BMG member was absent. The proposed ToR governance options will be recirculated to economies seeking confirmation of their preferred option by 5 September 2022. Members are aware the report to the CTI is due 31 December 2022.

- During 2021 and 2022, Thailand proposed several approaches to expanding access to the ABTC. These proposals did not reach consensus. At this meeting, Thailand presented paper in order to explain their concept of "inclusivity" and to promote discussion. This led to a proposed adjustment to the definition in Attachment 1 of the ABTC Operating Framework. As economies had limited time to consider this new proposal and follow respective economy consultation and approval processes, the paper will be circulated as a new proposal for endorsement.

Decision points needed from CTI

- **Seek CTI's endorsement of the BMG Convenor's Report.**