



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

2025/SOM1/013anxb
Session 2.1

Annex B - Sub-Fora Convenors' Reports

Purpose: Information
Submitted by: CTI Chair



**First Senior Officials' Meeting
Gyeongju, Korea
8-9 March 2025**

Annex B

CTI sub-fora convenors reports

- i. Business Mobility Group (BMG)
- ii. Chemical Dialogue (CD)
- iii. Digital Economy Steering Group (DESG)
- iv. Group on Services (GOS)
- v. Intellectual Property Rights Experts Group (IPEG)
- vi. Investment Experts' Group (IEG)
- vii. Market Access Group (MAG)
- viii. Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance (SCSC)
- ix. Sub-Committee on Customs Procedures (SCCP)

Business Mobility Group

Convenor's report to Committee on Trade and
Investment for CTI1/2025

1 Forum Main Objectives/Deliverables expected for 2025

Please provide a brief list of the forum's 2025 objectives and expected outcomes/deliverables.

- The main objective for BMG 2025 is to actively engage in the fora review process. This process provides the opportunity for a timely reconsideration of the core governance documents to ensure the BMG continues to deliver on its core mission to facilitate business travel in the Asia-Pacific region.
- BMG Member economies will pursue proposed recommendation from the Performance Report on the ABTC Scheme under the following themes:
 - Card application and renewal, including ways to improve processing time for cardholders, streamline the card renewal process and capacity-building for ABTC Processing Staff.
 - Technology, including improved data collection, expansion and improvement of the virtual ABTC, updates to the ABTC Core System and presentation of fraud and cyber-attacks.
 - Card benefits, including efforts to set shared rules for ABTC usage at the border, training for border officials and ongoing efforts toward full adoption of the ABTC by transitional economies.
 - Expanding Awareness, including the promotion of the ABTC Scheme and outreach to underrepresented populations.
 - Increased engagement from economies, including assigning roles for achieving the proposed recommendations and topics for future studies.
- Noting the proposed outcomes from the performance review, the BMG Convenor is particularly interested in increasing the amount of projects the BMG proposes over 2025 and beyond.
- Discuss issues and best practices associated with, and identify shared actions to support, the uptake of the APEC Business Travel Card by areas of the economy with potential for future growth.
- With digitalization and sustainability at the fore, support and encourage APEC members to transition to the virtual ABTC and discontinue issuing physical ABTCs.

2 How the forum's work contribute to APEC and CTI's objectives

Please provide a brief list of the forum's work under each sub-heading.

a. Implementing the [Putrajaya Vision](#), including through the [Aotearoa Plan of Action](#)

The BMG contributes to all three APA economic drivers through:

- enhancement and digitalization of the ABTC Scheme, including through seeking to improve transparency, simplicity, and reliability.
- sharing innovations and best practices associated with safe and seamless cross-border travel facilitation and people-to-people connectivity, in consideration of economic participation, resilience and recovery
- advancing inclusivity in the ABTC Scheme, including MSMEs and women in business.
- advancing diverse participation, especially women and people with disabilities, in immigration and border professions, including in relation to the development of immigration/border technologies and policies, and programs.

b. Implementing Leaders or Ministerial mandates from previous years, including the most recent 2024 [Ichma Statement on A New Look at the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific agenda](#)

The BMG contributes to the implementation of mandates through:

- focusing on advancing inclusivity in the business travel environment, including to promote and engage MSMEs, and women and persons with disabilities, etc. within the immigration and border management, business environments
- advancing resource efficiency and sustainability through sharing best practices on, and implementing, streamlined and digital practices
- engaging in ways to improve the sharing of information across economies

c. Support for the Multilateral Trading System

- *“...Growth of international trade flows in the region become more stable and predictable including with increased coverage of WTO rules, through APEC members' effective and transparent implementation of existing and future commitments...”*

The BMG supports the Multilateral Trading System by:

- enhancing and monitoring the integrity of the ABTC Scheme
- promoting digitalization of cross-border systems.

d. Economic Integration in the Region

- *“...APEC’s trade and investment environment is free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable...”*
- *“...further advance the Bogor Goals and economic integration in the region in a manner that is market-driven, including through the work on the Free Trade Area of the Asia- Pacific (FTAAP) agenda which contributes to high standard and comprehensive regional undertakings...”*

The BMG supports regional economic cooperation by:

- contributing to collaborative, frank and open discussions about cross-border travel facilitation and the ABTC Scheme
- committing to collaborative, open and transparent practices associated with the ABTC and business travel facilitation in the APEC region
- identifying needs and opportunities to engage and advance the engagement with areas of the economy with potential for economic growth.

e. Trade Facilitation and Connectivity

- *“...promote seamless connectivity, resilient supply chains and responsible business conduct, APEC economies will improve physical, institutional and people-to-people connectivity”*

The BMG supports the Multilateral Trading System by:

- enhancing and monitoring the integrity of the ABTC Scheme
- promoting digitalization of cross-border systems
- supporting and facilitating business travel, with a focus on areas of the economy with potential for growth.

f. Innovation and Digitalisation

- *“...To empower all our people and businesses to participate and grow in an interconnected global economy, we will foster an enabling environment that is, among others, market driven and supported by digital economy and innovation.”*
- *“...strengthen digital infrastructure, accelerate digital transformation, narrow the digital divide, as well as cooperate on facilitating the flow of data and strengthening consumer and business trust in digital transactions.”*

The BMG supports innovation and digitalization by:

- enhancement and digitalization of the ABTC Scheme, including through seeking to improve transparency, simplicity, and reliability of the Scheme.
- sharing innovations and best practices associated with safe and seamless cross-border travel facilitation and people-to-people connectivity, in consideration of economic resilience and recovery.

g. Inclusivity and Sustainability

- *“Advancing inclusive policies, including under the economic drivers of trade & investment, and innovation and digitalisation, to promote sustainable economic growth opportunities and improve quality of life...”*
- *“...develop, encourage and exchange best practice policies, and promote capacity building programmes, that address all environmental challenges - including climate change - and support sustainable growth, such as through trade, including APEC’s work on facilitation of trade in environmental goods and services”*

- The BMG supports sustainable and inclusive growth by advancing inclusivity in the ABTC Scheme, in particular promoting the value of areas of the economy with potential for economic growth, and through the digitization of the ABTC and immigration and border technologies.

3. Planned private sector / stakeholder engagement in 2025

Please provide a list of planned private sector engagement this year

- International Air Transportation Association
- International Civil Aviation Organization

4. Planned cross-fora collaboration in 2025

Please provide a list of planned cross-fora collaboration in 2025

- APEC Business Advisory Group
- APEC Communications and Public Affairs Unit
- APEC Policy Support Unit
- APEC Project Management Unit
- Friends of the Chair on Connectivity
- Policy Partnership on Science, Technology and Innovation

- Small and Medium Enterprise Working Group
- Sub-Committee on Customs Procedures

5. **Main outcomes from most recent plenary meeting**

Please provide in list format

- The BMG committed to continue intersessional review of the Terms of Reference and ABTC Operating Framework.
- The BMG will seek to endorse the final draft Report on the ABTC Scheme
- As economies noted the need for increased awareness of the ABTC, the Convenor will work with economies intersessionally to identify projects to ensure awareness of ABTC in the wider APEC community as well as identifying ways to significantly engage with areas of the economy with potential for growth (including MSMEs, women and those with disabilities).
- Economies agreed to consider increasing the information shared regarding ABTC applicant professional information.

6. **Was quorum reached at the most recent plenary meeting?**

Please advise how many economies participated in the most recent plenary meeting

- Quorum was reached with 19 economies present (Mexico and New Zealand were not present)

7. **What is your Forum doing to increase participation from its members?**

Please provide a brief list of planned efforts to increase participation from members

- The BMG's agenda is informed by all economies, ensuring meetings are owned by members and address their needs.
- The Convenor and team, including the APEC Secretariat, seek to engage BMG members' interest in the BMG through engaging broadly with industry and economy stakeholders, and undertake contemporary research to identify and deliver discussions on emerging opportunities and threats to the ABTC and business travel facilitation, to develop meeting agendas.
- The Convenor and team, including the APEC Secretariat, maintain transparent communication in the delivery of actions identified at each

BMG, indicating commitment to the BMG advance their ABTC Scheme and travel facilitation goals.

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8. Decision points needed from CTI

Please add any additional decision points needed from CTI

- Seek CTI's endorsement of Convenor's Report.

Chemical Dialogue

Convenor's report to Committee on Trade and Investment for CTI1/2025

1 Forum Main Objectives/Deliverables expected for 2025

Please provide a brief list of the forum's 2025 objectives and expected outcomes/deliverables.

Objectives:

- Prevent barriers to trade by implementing two APEC-funded workshops: one focused on minimizing unnecessary confidential business information at the border and the other on building resilient supply chains for the chemical sector.
- Reduce divergence in GHS implementation by updating the GHS Reference Exchange and Tool ("G.R.E.A.T.") website and developing the 2025 GHS survey and report.
- Combating marine debris by implementing a workshop on innovative technologies for waste management.
- Build capacity for emergency preparedness by creating an APEC concept note on chemical emergency response for high-tech industries (e.g., semiconductors, photovoltaics).

2 How the forum's work contribute to APEC and CTI's objectives

Please provide a brief list of the forum's work under each sub-heading.

a. Implementing the [Putrajaya Vision](#), including through the [Aotearoa Plan of Action](#)

Through the Aotearoa Plan of Action:

- Supports implementing the APEC Roadmap on Marine Debris and advances APEC's circular economy work.
- Aims to reduce unnecessary barriers to trade and foster regulatory convergence.
- Deepen engagement with ABAC and the private sector.

Putrajaya + Aotearoa Plan of Action

- Promotes seamless connectivity, resilient supply chains and responsible business conduct.

b. Implementing Leaders or Ministerial mandates from previous years, including the most recent 2024 *Ichma Statement on A New Look at the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific agenda*

Facilitating Trade and Regulatory Alignment

- The CD emphasizes the facilitation of trade and the enhancement of sound chemical management through regulatory cooperation and alignment. This approach reduces trade barriers and supports the creation of a seamless regional market, aligning with the Ichma Statement's goal of fostering a cooperative and evolving FTAAP agenda.

Promoting Sustainable Economic Development

- The CD actively promotes understanding of its contributions to sustainable economic, environmental, and social development. Initiatives such as the "Risk Assessment Workshop" held in August 2024 and "CBI Workshop" during February 2025 aim to build capacity among APEC member economies, particularly developing ones, by enhancing proficiency in chemical risk management and customs clearance. These efforts align with the Ichma Statement's emphasis on adaptability and responsiveness to emerging global challenges and the evolving needs of economies.

Enhancing Public-Private Collaboration

- The CD serves as a unique platform for trade/environment officials and industry representatives to collaboratively address challenges in the chemical industry. By facilitating effective cooperation between industry and governments, the CD improves chemical product stewardship and safety. This collaborative approach supports the Ichma Statement's vision of a regional trade and investment environment that is both adaptable and responsive to global challenges.

c. Support for the Multilateral Trading System

- *"...Growth of international trade flows in the region become more stable and predictable including with increased coverage of WTO rules, through APEC members' effective and transparent implementation of existing and future commitments..."*

- As regulatory barriers are lowered or eliminated, trade is able to flow more

freely between economies. The CD promotes regulatory transparency among economies.

d. Economic Integration in the Region

- *“...APEC’s trade and investment environment is free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable...”*
- *“...further advance the Bogor Goals and economic integration in the region in a manner that is market-driven, including through the work on the Free Trade Area of the Asia- Pacific (FTAAP) agenda which contributes to high standard and comprehensive regional undertakings...”*

- The CD continues its efforts to address combating marine debris including work to examine and overcome barriers to investment in waste management infrastructure that would support a more circular economy, as identified in the APEC Roadmap on Marine Debris, and the APEC Non-Binding Guidelines on Services that Support the Clean-up of Marine Debris.
- The CD continues to explore supporting CTI efforts on resilient supply chains, and sustainable materials management policy and help APEC economies identify and frame domestic policies that promote waste management and recycling (WMR) infrastructure, addressing barriers to trade and increasing markets for sustainable materials.

e. Trade Facilitation and Connectivity

- *“...promote seamless connectivity, resilient supply chains and responsible business conduct, APEC economies will improve physical, institutional and people-to-people connectivity”*

- The CD continues work to promote regulatory cooperation and convergence, including through continuing to encourage cross-fora collaboration with SCCP on customs clearance and confidential business information (CBI), to encourage more APEC economies to participate in such a program, and to identify resources needed by APEC economies to adhere.
- The CD will continue work to promote more consistent international implementation of the Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (“GHS”). The GHS is an UN-developed system that was designed to promote a globally harmonized approach for all

chemical labelling. The CD has revised the GHS comparison report and convergence recommendations to consider recent developments and will develop additional capacity building efforts to help APEC economies address GHS divergences.

- The CD will continue work to support the implementation of Good Regulatory Practices in the chemical sector.

f. Innovation and Digitalisation

- *“...To empower all our people and businesses to participate and grow in an interconnected global economy, we will foster an enabling environment that is, among others, market driven and supported by digital economy and innovation.”*
- *“...strengthen digital infrastructure, accelerate digital transformation, narrow the digital divide, as well as cooperate on facilitating the flow of data and strengthening consumer and business trust in digital transactions.”*

- The CD continues to explore interest in data exchange, particularly for regulatory cooperation and convergence by focusing on data communication within the supply chain through the digitalization of hazardous information.

g. Inclusivity and Sustainability

- *“Advancing inclusive policies, including under the economic drivers of trade & investment, and innovation and digitalisation, to promote sustainable economic growth opportunities and improve quality of life...”*
- *“...develop, encourage and exchange best practice policies, and promote capacity building programmes, that address all environmental challenges - including climate change - and support sustainable growth, such as through trade, including APEC’s work on facilitation of trade in environmental goods and services”*

- The CD continues to support the work of the Virtual Working Group on Marine Debris, created to tackle the challenge of marine debris in the Asia-Pacific and encourage cross fora collaboration among different APEC workstreams.

- The CD supports Korea’s project related to innovative waste management technologies, including the anticipated workshop taking place during SOM3.
- The CD continues to support and submit APEC-funded concept notes related to sustainability and capacity building programs, including projects that build off Peru’s Ichma Statement, Thailand’s Bio-Circular Green Economy Goals, and projects that support CTI objectives, including building resilient supply chains.

3. Planned private sector / stakeholder engagement in 2024

Please provide a list of planned private sector engagement this year

- The Chemical Dialogue consists of both a government and industry co-chair, giving private sector equal opportunity to participate in each Chemical Dialogue plenary.
- Chemical Dialogue industry representatives host an “Industry Pre-Meeting” before each Plenary, and industry holds co-chair positions for all CD virtual working groups, including the virtual working on regulatory cooperation and convergence, GHS, data exchange, and marine debris.
- Chemical Dialogue industry members are welcome to participate in all Chemical Dialogue workshops (as deemed appropriate by the project overseer). This includes the CBI workshop that took place in February 2025 and the resilient supply chain workshop that will take place in August 2025.

4. Planned cross-fora collaboration in 2025

Please provide a list of planned cross-fora collaboration in 2025

- The CBI Workshop, which was implemented in February 2025, was a cross-fora collaboration between the CD and the SCCP.
- The Virtual Working Group on Marine Debris is an ongoing partnership between the CD and the Oceans and Fisheries Working Group (OFWG) and continues to highlight and support all marine debris/circular economy activities in APEC.

5. **Main outcomes from most recent plenary meeting**

Please provide in list format

- The CD welcomed ongoing work in all four virtual working groups on marine debris, including updates on two APEC-funded workshops to be implemented this year related to trade facilitation (CBI Workshop and Resilient Supply Chain Workshop), and one self-funded workshop to be implemented related to innovative waste management.
- The CD welcomed an update on 2024 projects, like the emergency preparedness workshop, and looks forward to continued implementation of related projects that build upon the work completed.
- The CD continued its discussion on the Future of the CD, including one economy reaffirming its position to sunset the CD, additional economy and industry members supporting its continuation, and brainstormed exploring new ways to continue CD's work in APEC. **It was determined the CD will work intersessionally to review and potentially revise the CD Terms of Reference to reflect current priorities of all APEC economies.**

6. **Was quorum reached at the most recent plenary meeting?**

Please advise how many economies participated in the most recent plenary meeting

- Quorum was reached with 15 economies present.

7. **What is your Forum doing to increase participation from its members?**

Please provide a brief list of planned efforts to increase participation from members

- Reviewing the CD's Terms of Reference and Strategic Framework to include additional issues that might be of broader interest to economies and additional industry stakeholders.

- Continuing to implement capacity building projects in the Virtual Working Groups, encouraging all APEC economies, including travel-eligible economies, to attend.

8. Decision points needed from CTI

Please add any additional decision points needed from CTI

- Seek CTI's endorsement of Convenor's Report.
- The CD's terms of reference expire at the end of 2025. One economy does not support an extension of the terms of reference because it believes that the work of the CD is also covered by other non-APEC bodies. The CD discussed ways to address that economy's concerns, but no agreement was reached. The CD will work intersessionally to try to identify a solution acceptable to all parties.

Digital Economy Steering Group (DESG)

Vice Chair's report to Committee on Trade and Investment for CTI1/2025

1 Forum Main Objectives/Deliverables expected for 2025

- Encouragement for all APEC economies to further cooperate on issues within DESG, especially on new and emerging technologies.
- Update the DESG Work Programme for the Implementation of the AIDER (2026-2030). DESG has formed a drafting group consisting of 11 economies.
- Update the Terms of Reference – subject to CTI and SOM recommendations. DESG formed a drafting group consisting of 10 economies.
- Seek stronger cross fora collaboration, especially with TELWG ahead of the Digital and AI Ministerial Meeting.
- Upcoming DESG workshops for 2025:
 - Study on Factors that Limit and Promote the Digital Inclusion of Women Living in Poverty in Urban, Peri-Urban, and Remote Areas of the APEC Region (DESG 204 2024A, Peru)
 - Technology Innovation Workshop for Environmental Monitoring, Using Technologies Such as Artificial Intelligence and Big Data in Productive Activities (DESG 102 2024A, Peru) (Pending endorsement)
 - Workshop: Bridging the Gap – Capacity Building for Formalizing Businesses for Environmental Compliance in the Digital Age (DESG 201 2024A, Peru)
 - Research on Potential Applications of Artificial Intelligence to Improve Product Recall Procedures in the Region (DESG 202 2023A, Peru)
 - Policy Dialogue on AI in Trade Context for Enhanced Cooperation within APEC (DESG 203 2024A, Korea)
 - Knowledge Sharing and Policy Recommendation to Minimize Violating the Privacy of Children and Adolescents on Digital Platforms (DESG 202 2024A, Korea)
 - Exchanges and Dialogue on Approaches to Artificial Intelligence (DESG 03 2024S, China)
 - Workshop on Privacy Enhancing Technologies – Opportunities and Challenges (DESG 103 2024A, Chinese Taipei)
 - Information Sharing on Legal and Regulatory Interoperability for Privacy Protections in APEC (DESG 01 2023A, USA)

2 How the forum's work contributes to APEC and CTI's objectives

a. Implementing the [Putrajaya Vision](#), including through the [Aotearoa Plan of Action](#)

- DESG's work programme on e-commerce and trade-related digital economy issues broadly contributes to the APA Collective Actions. During SOM1, DESG held four policy dialogue topics based on the APA Collective Actions, and in line with the APEC Internet and Digital Economy Roadmap (AIDER).

- Promote e-commerce / digital trade, including by supporting the development and implementation of international and regional norms and standards in the digital economy, compatibility of standards, regulations and systems, and supporting discussion and sharing best practice on rules and regulations in e-commerce / digital trade. During SOM1, DESG expressed interest in engaging more with CTI on the ongoing work on paperless trade.

b. Implementing Leaders or Ministerial mandates from previous years, including the most recent 2024 [Ichma Statement on A New Look at the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific agenda](#)

- Cooperate on facilitating the flow of information and data, and strengthening business and consumer trust in digital transactions
- In the Ichma Statement, ministers called for more work on digital trade under the FTAAP Agenda Work Plan, as well as advancing work on emerging sectors such as digitalisation. At SOM1, DESG discussed paperless trade and opportunities for future work in this area. Economies discussed how digital identity systems can help facilitate efficient and transparent trade.
- Furthermore, the [2024 APEC Ministerial Meeting Statement](#) encouraged further discussion in areas related to the DESG, including innovation and digitalisation to promote transition to the formal and global economy; data flows and protection; the benefits and challenges of AI and opportunities for dialogue within APEC; digital identity systems; the establishment of the Sub-Fund on Promoting Digitalisation for Green Transitions. At SOM1, DESG discussed a number of these issues, including:
 - Options for digital identity interoperability, including possible future joint initiatives in APEC;
 - Risk and manageable AI;
 - The Project Management Unit shared details of funding sources for future DESG projects;
 - And in the Data Privacy Sub Group, the forum discussed domestic and regional work on data protection and cross border data flows.

c. Support for the Multilateral Trading System

- *“...Growth of international trade flows in the region become more stable and predictable including with increased coverage of WTO rules, through APEC members’ effective and transparent implementation of existing and future commitments...”*

- Korea presented on their MRT deliverables papers. Session 1 of the deliverables is on growing challenges to the WTO’s rule-making function and how WTO Joint Statement Initiatives (JSIs) can serve as a pragmatic solution.
- Sharing discussions in DESG aligned with on-going work in the WTO, such as digital upskilling, ICT infrastructure, trade in new digital technologies, online

platforms, market access and cross-border data transfer, data privacy and cybersecurity, online consumer protection, and paperless trading administration.

d. Economic Integration in the Region

- *“...APEC’s trade and investment environment is free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable...”*
- *“...further advance the Bogor Goals and economic integration in the region in a manner that is market-driven, including through the work on the Free Trade Area of the Asia- Pacific (FTAAP) agenda which contributes to high standard and comprehensive regional undertakings...”*

- Ongoing work on the APEC Cross-Border Privacy Rules (CBPR) and Privacy Recognition for Processors (PRP) Systems which promote interoperability between different data privacy regulations to facilitate trade and build trust in e-commerce. Since SOM3 2024, two Accountability Agents have been endorsed for continued recognition in the APEC CBPR and PRP System – IMDA and Schellman.
- Submitting and updating Data Privacy Individual Action Plans (IAP) which improve the transparency of data protection frameworks of member economies. No new IAPs have been submitted since SOM3, 2024.

e. Trade Facilitation and Connectivity

- *“...promote seamless connectivity, resilient supply chains and responsible business conduct, APEC economies will improve physical, institutional and people-to-people connectivity”*

- In addition to other programs and discussion topics mentioned above.
- Promoting regulatory cooperation through the APEC Cross Border Privacy Enforcement Arrangement (CPEA) and the CBPR System.
- Encouraging more collaboration between CTI and DESG on projects about paperless trade and digital trade facilitation.
- Exploring future work for APEC on how AI can support trade flows.

f. Innovation and Digitalisation

- *“...To empower all our people and businesses to participate and grow in an interconnected global economy, we will foster an enabling environment that is, among others, market driven and supported by digital economy and innovation.”*
- *“...strengthen digital infrastructure, accelerate digital*

transformation, narrow the digital divide, as well as cooperate on facilitating the flow of data and strengthening consumer and business trust in digital transactions.”

- Two DESG plenary policy dialogues focused on Responsible AI and Emerging Technologies for Trade.
- Economies shared their experiences with regulating and understanding AI risks. Some members discussed how AI can be used to create more efficient public services. Some economies discussed cultural bias and large language models within AI systems, the need to develop methodologies as well as testing systems to ensure the technology is inclusive.
- Economies further discussed how AI is increasingly integrated into trade and governance, requiring standardisation and capacity-building efforts. Common themes included safety, trust, consent, inclusivity, as well as increasing productivity, innovation and economic growth.
- Beyond Korea’s AI for Trade MRT deliverable, economies discussed future work on paperless trade. Presentations focused on the issues of paper based trade (such as human error, lack of transparency and fraud issues). Paperless trade could improve productivity and strengthen cross border connections (regional single window, trade info portals). DESG guest Pan Asian E-Commerce Alliance (PAA) recommended the need for harmonised systems within APEC and encouraged DESG to support e-trade facilitation.

g. Inclusivity and Sustainability

- *“Advancing inclusive policies, including under the economic drivers of trade & investment, and innovation and digitalisation, to promote sustainable economic growth opportunities and improve quality of life...”*
- *“...develop, encourage and exchange best practice policies, and promote capacity building programmes, that address all environmental challenges - including climate change - and support sustainable growth, such as through trade, including APEC’s work on facilitation of trade in environmental goods and services”*

- The two other DESG plenary policy dialogues were on Digital Literacy and Upskilling, and Digital Identity Interoperability.
- Digital Literacy and Upskilling is a consistent theme within DESG plenary and projects. Economies shared their approaches to community campaigns, education materials and training programmes to upskill all facets of society (such as elderly, youth, farmers, public servants).
- Following active discussions at SOM3 2024 on digital identity systems, two economies presented on digital identity interoperability. The push for digital identity interoperability highlights the need for trust frameworks and common

standards. Economies discussed possible future equivalency work within APEC to map out next steps for interoperability systems across the region.

- ABAC shared their recommendations and [2022 Digital Identity Report](#) which included actionable suggestions for design systems. ABAC also mentioned that interoperable digital identity would promote inclusivity as communities could access government services and other initiatives.

3. Planned private sector / stakeholder engagement in 2025

- Google attended the DESG plenary and we hope to welcome more private sector and stakeholder participation at SOM3, with the many digital events alongside the Digital and AI Ministerial Meeting.
- DESG has 7 three year guests:
 - Centre for Information Policy Leadership (CIPL)
 - Internet Society (ISOC)
 - World Trustmark Alliance (WTA)
 - U.S. Council for International Business (USCIB)
 - BSA | The Software Alliance (BSA)
 - Pan Asian E-Commerce Alliance (PAA)
 - World Economic Forum (WEF)
- The Internet Society and PAA attended DESG SOM1 2025 plenary.

4. Planned cross-fora collaboration in 2025

- DESG actively engages with other fora through workshops and projects, most recently with CTI, PPSTI, TELWG and PPWE.
- TELWG: Joint meeting planned at SOM3 and desired collaboration on the Digital and AI Ministerial Meeting.

5. Main outcomes from most recent plenary meeting

In addition to section 1:

- Following SOM1, renominations for the DESG and DPS leadership positions (2025-2026) will be sought for unanimous endorsement among economies. Endorsement of the selection process from DESG is required before seeking nominations. Indonesia is endorsed as the DESG Vice Chair.
- Two drafting groups established:
 - DESG Work Program for Implementation of the AIDER: Australia, Chile, China (lead), Japan, Korea, Peru, Russia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, United States.
 - DESG Terms of Reference: Australia, Chile, China, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, United States.

6. Was quorum reached at the most recent plenary meeting?

- Quorum was reached with 17 economies present (inclusive of virtual attendance from one economy).

7. What is your Forum doing to increase participation from its members?

- Policy dialogues and panel discussions as part of the DPS and DESG agendas. The policy dialogues encourage active participation from all members, with questions and discussion on issues related to the digital economy. The panel discussions bring in private sector experts and APEC economies. These formats allow for more substantive discussion and will hopefully help increase participation of members, observers and guests.
- Inviting other organisations and the private sector with leading work on digital issues, as well as chairs and delegates from other APEC fora.
- DPS held a thematic discussion on a current hot topic (at DPS 50: Addressing emerging technologies including AI chatbots). Each economy was asked to speak one by one in APEC order. This encouraged all economies to share their approaches and promoted active discussion.

8. Decision points needed from CTI

- Seek CTI's endorsement of Convenor's Report on E-Commerce and Trade-Related Digital Economy Issues.

Group on Services

Convenor's report to Committee on Trade and Investment for CTI1/2025

1 Forum Main Objectives/Deliverables expected for 2025

Please provide a brief list of the forum's 2025 objectives and expected outcomes/deliverables.

- APEC Services Competitiveness Roadmap (ASCR): As the ASCR reaches its target year this year, 2025, GOS will proceed with the final review process of the ASCR and develop a new roadmap for APEC's post-2025 services agenda with a goal of delivering the outcome by the end of the year.
- GOS Core Services Issues
 1. Domestic Regulations on Services – championed by the United States.
 2. Developing an APEC Index to Measure the Regulatory Environment of Services Trade – championed by the United States
 3. Mutual Recognition of Qualification and Licensing – championed by Australia.
 4. Environmental Services – championed by New Zealand.
 5. Manufacturing-related services (MRS) – championed by Malaysia.
- CTI Tasking; Environmental related services-championed by New Zealand
- CTI tasking to take forward discussions on how to increase trade in environmental and environmentally related services, including by supporting liberalization, facilitation, and cooperation, as agreed in the 2021 APEC Ministerial Statement. GOS has endorsed a Model Schedule of Environmental and Environmentally-Related Services. GOS completed the first review of the 2021 Reference List on Environmental and Environmentally-Related Services. The GOS will undertake the next review of the Reference List this year with the goal of providing updates, if agreed, by the end of the year.

2 How the forum's work contribute to APEC and CTI's objectives

Please provide a brief list of the forum's work under each sub-heading.

a. Implementing the [Putrajaya Vision](#), including through the [Aotearoa Plan of Action](#)

- "GOS Core Services Issues (formerly Final Push on Services)": GOS continues to implement "GOS Core Services Issues" to address unfinished business of the Bogor Goals, focusing on five priority areas: domestic regulations, development of an APEC Index to Measure the Regulatory Environment in Services Trade, mutual recognition of qualifications and licensing, environmental services and manufacturing-related services. Work on each priority area is led by a champion economy GOS members focusing on ways GOS can contribute to the effective implementation of the Aotearoa Plan of Action or "APA".

b. Implementing Leaders or Ministerial mandates from previous years,

including the most recent 2024 *Ichma Statement on A New Look at the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific agenda*

- GOS discussed implementation of the 2024 Ichma Statement, A New Look at the FTAA, including a Peru initiative in CTI to explore the convergences and divergences of RTAs and FTAs through dialogues.
- GOS discussed their work program for 2025 to support implementation of APEC mandates. Economies noted the importance of ASCR implementation, environmental services, structural reform, digitalization, inclusion and sustainability, professional services, improving services trade statistics, FTAAP, and cross-fora collaboration.
- ASCR: GOS is responsible for monitoring progress under the APEC Services Competitiveness Roadmap endorsed by APEC Leaders in 2015 and is tasked to provide updates to Senior Officials regarding the 19 APEC-wide targets. The PSU provided an update on the Final Review of the ASCR. The GOS also discussed priorities for a post-2025 APEC agenda.
- Environmental related services: In 2021, GOS developed a non-binding and non-exhaustive Reference List of Environmental and Environmentally Related Services, and the Reference List was subsequently endorsed by Ministers at AMM 2021. CTI has tasked GOS to take forward discussions on how to increase trade in environmental and environmentally-related services. In 2022 GOS endorsed a Model Schedule of Environmental and Environmentally-Related Services, and has completed the first review of the 2021 Reference List. In 2025, GOS will conduct a review of the Reference List, and is considering opportunities to further raise awareness and use of the Reference List, as well as further work to support the facilitation of environmental services.
- Environmental Services: In 2023, APEC Minister's endorsed the Non-Binding Guidelines on Services that Support the Clean-up of Marine Debris. To support further awareness of the Guidelines, Australia provided a presentation to the Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Discussions (TESSD) discussions at the WTO.
- Services and Structural Reform: GOS and the EC held a joint workshop on Digital Services and Structural Reform. The workshop explored the link between competitiveness and structural reform in the context of growing trade in digitally-deliverable services.

c. Support for the Multilateral Trading System

- *“...Growth of international trade flows in the region become more stable and predictable including with increased coverage of WTO rules, through APEC members’ effective and transparent implementation of existing and future commitments...”*

- The GOS actively engages in activities to support the multilateral trading system. For example, to support further awareness of the Non-Binding Guidelines on Services that Support the Clean-up of Marine Debris, Australia provided a presentation to the Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Discussions (TESSD) discussions at the WTO.
- Korea also shared an overview of the plans for a proposal to hold a workshop on services domestic regulation, including implementation by APEC economies participating in the WTO Joint Initiative on Services Domestic Regulation.

d. Economic Integration in the Region

- *“...APEC’s trade and investment environment is free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable...”*
- *“...further advance the Bogor Goals and economic integration in the region in a manner that is market-driven, including through the work on the Free Trade Area of the Asia- Pacific (FTAAP) agenda which contributes to high standard and comprehensive regional undertakings...”*

- GOS is undertaking work on “GOS Core Services Issues (Formerly Final Push on Services)” to address issues in support of ASCR, focusing on five priority areas (further detailed below).
- GOS is accountable for the implementation and monitoring of APEC-wide actions under the ASCR to develop services sectors in the APEC region as enablers of economic growth and inclusion.
- GOS continues to implement activities to support the following task, as requested by the CTI on environmental related services.

e. Trade Facilitation and Connectivity

- *“...promote seamless connectivity, resilient supply chains and responsible business conduct, APEC economies will improve physical, institutional and people-to-people connectivity”*

- The United States, as the Chair of the Technical Group and champion economy for the issue, updated GOS on the developments of APEC Index on Measure the Regulatory Environment of Services Trade of APEC, with a view to expanding the coverage to all APEC economies and all 22 services sectors covered in APEC Index.
- GOS continues to implement activities to support the mutual recognition of qualifications and skills under the leadership of Australia, contributing to people-to-people connectivity, as indicated in the APEC Connectivity Blueprint 2015-2025.
- GOS has endorsed a Model Schedule of Environmental and Environmentally-Related Services that economies may draw from in negotiating trade agreements pertaining to this sector.

f. Innovation and Digitalisation

- *“...To empower all our people and businesses to participate and grow in an interconnected global economy, we will foster an enabling environment that is, among others, market driven and supported by digital economy and innovation.”*
- *“...strengthen digital infrastructure, accelerate digital transformation, narrow the digital divide, as well as cooperate on*

facilitating the flow of data and strengthening consumer and business trust in digital transactions.”

- The APEC Index to Measure the Regulatory Environment of Services Trade provides a helpful tool for policymakers in the region to support decision making processes on services trade policy, including by enabling policymakers to review and address barriers to digitally enabled services.
- In 2025, the GOS will proceed with development of APEC’s next services agenda, where many economies and the APEC Business Advisory Council have emphasized the importance of including digitally-deliverable services as a key focus.

g. Inclusivity and Sustainability

- *“Advancing inclusive policies, including under the economic drivers of trade & investment, and innovation and digitalisation, to promote sustainable economic growth opportunities and improve quality of life...”*
- *“...develop, encourage and exchange best practice policies, and promote capacity building programmes, that address all environmental challenges - including climate change - and support sustainable growth, such as through trade, including APEC’s work on facilitation of trade in environmental goods and services”*

- New Zealand, a champion economy for the work stream on Environmental Services, updated economies on plans to undertake a review this year of the APEC Reference List of Environmental and Environmentally Related Services, which was first developed in 2021. GOS members are invited to share their views on potential new services sectors and how to promote uptake of the Reference List.
- Australia updated economies on the implementation of the guidelines for Services that support the clean-up of marine debris. Australia noted that these guidelines will help inform important work in other international fora, including the WTO. To support further awareness of the Guidelines, Australia provided a presentation to the Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Discussions (TESSD) discussions at the WTO.
- Australia updated economies on the joint GOS – PPWE project on enhancing women’s participation in the services sector. Australia shared results from a study on gaps in economic gender equality in APEC and women’s employment in digitally-enabled services, as well as perspectives on a skills mismatch in this area.
- Chile provided an overview of their recently concluded project “Knowledge Intensive Business Services (KIBS) and barriers faced by women in international trade in services”. Chile recommended that the GOS share the study with the Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy.

3. **Planned private sector / stakeholder engagement in 2025**

Please provide a list of planned private sector engagement this year

The GOS Plenary Meeting at SOM1 included the following presentations by stakeholders.

- A representative from the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) providing inputs to the GOS discussion on the future of the APEC services agenda, including the proposal for “A New Services Agenda”.
- Representatives from PECC actively participated in the plenary meeting.

4. **Planned cross-fora collaboration in 2025**

Please provide a list of planned cross-fora collaboration in 2025

- GOS-ASCR cross-fora event: The GOS is accountable for the implementation and monitoring of APEC-wide actions under the APEC Services Competitiveness Roadmap (ASCR) in 17 APEC sub-fora. A cross-fora collaborative event to be organized in the margin of every SOM2 until 2025 to support efforts in monitoring its implementation.
- At SOM 1, the GOS and EC held a joint workshop on Digital Services and Structural Reform.
- At the GOS Plenary meeting during SOM1, the CTI Chair and SCSC Chair participated in a discussion on the future of APEC’s services agenda, where they shared their perspectives.

5. **Main outcomes from most recent plenary meeting**

Please provide in list format

GOS initiated discussions on a successor to the APEC Services Competitiveness Roadmap. GOS members shared initial views on their priorities in response to the non-paper circulated by the GOS Convenor to solicit input on the structure and content of a future roadmap and timeline for development. GOS members were invited to provide written comments intersessionally. The GOS Convenor plans to host a virtual discussion intersessionally and will continue discussions, including with stakeholders, at the ASCR Dialogue at SOM 2.

The APEC Policy Support Unit provided an update on the ASCR Final Review. They recommended the GOS update the ASCR Matrix

GOS noted updates from champion economies on their respective workstreams under the “GOS Core Services Issues”:

- Domestic Regulation of Services (United States): The United States shared next steps following the workshop at SOM 3 2024 “Services Domestic Regulation: Envisioning Next Generation Technical Standards Principles”. The United States will circulate a non-paper on the practical application of technical standards for services.
- Developing an APEC Index to Measure the Regulatory Environment of Services Trade of APEC (United States): The United States provided updates on the developments of APEC Index.
- Mutual Recognition of Qualifications and Licensing (Australia): Australia briefed on developments relating to the project “APEC Professional Services and Mutual Recognition Agreement Project (Multi-Year).” Australia shared a handout on the APEC MRA website, which includes a variety of resources.

- Manufacturing–related services (Malaysia): Malaysia, the champion economy for Manufacturing-related Services, shared an update on its survey. They noted manufacturing related services remains important for APEC’s future services agenda, and the need for capacity building.
- Services and Structural Reform (Australia): At SOM1, GOS and the EC held a joint workshop on Digital Services and Structural Reform. The workshop explored the link between competitiveness and structural reform in the context of growing trade in digitally-deliverable services.

CTI Tasking:

- New Zealand, a champion economy for the work stream on Environmental Services, updated economies on plans to undertake a review this year of the APEC Reference List of Environmental and Environmentally Related Services, which was first developed in 2021. GOS members are invited to share their views on potential new services sectors and how to promote uptake of the Reference List.

Inclusive Services Trade

- Australia updated economies on the joint GOS – PPWE project on enhancing women’s participation in the services sector. Australia shared results from a study on gaps in economic gender equality in APEC and women’s employment in digitally-enabled services, as well as perspectives on a skills mismatch in this area.
- Chile provided an overview of their recently concluded project “Knowledge Intensive Business Services (KIBS) and barriers faced by women in international trade in services”. Chile recommended that the GOS share the study with the Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy.

6. Was quorum reached at the most recent plenary meeting?

Please advise how many economies participated in the most recent plenary meeting

- Quorum was reached with 19 economies present.

7. What is your Forum doing to increase participation from its members?

Please provide a brief list of planned efforts to increase participation from members

- In 2024, the GOS Convenor initiated informal dialogues to address interests of GOS members that may not be reflected in the GOS agenda. The GOS Convenor will consider an informal dialogue at SOM 3

8. Decision points needed from CTI

Please add any additional decision points needed from CTI

- Seek CTI's endorsement of Convenor's Report.

INVESTMENT EXPERTS' GROUP

Convenor's report to Committee on Trade and
Investment for CTI1/2025

1 Forum Main Objectives/Deliverables expected for 2025

Please provide a brief list of the forum's 2025 objectives and expected outcomes/deliverables.

The IEG continues is guided by the overarching goal of fostering economic development and shared prosperity across the APEC region. In 2025, IEG's work is centred on **strengthening investment facilitation, improving policy dialogue, and promoting sustainable and inclusive investment** to enhance economic resilience and long-term growth. To achieve these objectives, the IEG's key priorities and deliverables for 2025 include:

- **Enhancing Investment Facilitation and Transparency:** Advancing the upgrade of the Investment Facilitation Action Plan (IFAP) as a collective deliverable of the IEG to pursue endorsement by Ministers Responsible for Trade (MRT) in May 2025, integrating elements of digitalisation, inclusivity, and sustainability;
- **Strengthening Investment Policy Dialogue:** Driving discussions on responsible business conduct, long-term FDI sustainability, and dispute prevention mechanisms;
- **Promoting Sustainable and Inclusive Investment:** Supporting quality FDI initiatives, including climate-resilient infrastructure, green technologies, and ESG-aligned investments;
- **Improving Investor Confidence and Protection:** Addressing investment dispute prevention through the PSU's research on dispute mitigation systems and the next phase of the APEC Investment Commitment Handbook Project; *and*
- **Supporting Capacity Building for Investment Agencies:** Engaging with stakeholders to promote knowledge sharing and best practices on investment promotion and retention.

Building on these objectives, the **IEG** reaffirms its commitment on **two core pillars**:

- **International Investment Regime – Principles and Best Practices:** This pillar addresses **emerging investment challenges** and **evolving global standards**, particularly within the framework of **International Investment Agreements (IIAs)** and other relevant international instruments. It facilitates **dialogue on investment governance, dispute resolution mechanisms, and regulatory coherence** to enhance investment certainty across APEC economies.
- **Investment Promotion, Facilitation, and Retention:** This pillar encompasses ongoing initiatives such as the upgrade of **Investment Facilitation Action Plan (IFAP); Investment Policy Dialogue (IPD); Investment Promotion Agency (IPA) engagement; the WTO's Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD)**

Agreement; and the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP) agenda. Additionally, it focuses on **best practices in attracting and retaining high-quality foreign direct investment (FDI)**, while addressing **cross-cutting issues** such as **global value chains (GVCs), public-private partnerships (PPPs), sustainable infrastructure development, and digital investment facilitation.**

Through these strategic priorities, the IEG remains committed to fostering a **transparent, predictable, and resilient investment environment**, ensuring that APEC economies can effectively navigate the evolving global investment landscape.

2 How the forum's work contribute to APEC and CTI's objectives

Please provide a brief list of the forum's work under each sub-heading.

a. Implementing the [Putrajaya Vision](#), including through the [Aotearoa Plan of Action](#)

IEG actively contributes to the **Putrajaya Vision 2040** by promoting **investment liberalization, facilitation, and sustainability**, in line with the **Aotearoa Plan of Action (APA)**. Key initiatives include:

- **Investment Facilitation Action Plan (IFAP) Upgrade** – Aligning investment facilitation measures with **digitalisation, inclusivity, and sustainability**, reinforcing transparency and reducing investment barriers to promote the flow of quality investment.
- **Investment Policy Dialogue (IPD)** – Advancing discussions on **responsible business conduct (RBC), climate-aligned investments, and long-term FDI sustainability**, ensuring investments contribute to **socioeconomic development**.
- **Best Practices on Long-Term FDI** – Showcasing **successful investment strategies** from **Ajinomoto Malaysia, Kaneka Malaysia, Toyota Motor Thailand, and Intel Malaysia & Vietnam**, focusing on **resilient and sustainable investment models**.
- **Dispute Prevention and Mitigation Systems** – Strengthening investment governance through **PSU research on investment dispute prevention**, improving investor confidence.
- **Sustainable and Inclusive Investment** – Supporting **climate-resilient infrastructure, green technologies, and ESG-aligned investments**, ensuring FDI contributes to **sustainable economic growth**

b. Implementing Leaders or Ministerial mandates from previous years, including the most recent 2024 [Ichma Statement on A New Look at the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific agenda](#)

IEG's work supports the **Ichma Statement on a New Look at FTAAP** through:

- **New Investment Issues under FTAAP** – Engaging in discussions on **investment for ESG, climate resilience, inclusivity, and digitalization**, ensuring investment policies align with **regional integration efforts**.
- **Peru's CTI Initiative on Implementing the Ichma Statement** – Supporting Peru's **strategy to advance the FTAAP agenda**, reinforcing **regional investment cooperation and best practices**.
- **International Investment Regimes and IIAs** – Strengthening **investment treaty development**, including updates from **Australia on ISDS policies** and **U.S. on Decision No. 9 of the Free Trade Commission under the U.S.-Colombia TPA**.
- **OECD Consultation on FDI Policy Framework** – Engaging with the **OECD on FDI qualities for digital transition**, ensuring APEC economies adopt **modern and future-ready investment policies**.

c. Support for the Multilateral Trading System

- *“...Growth of international trade flows in the region become more stable and predictable including with increased coverage of WTO rules, through APEC members' effective and transparent implementation of existing and future commitments...”*

IEG's work aligns with APEC's commitment to **supporting the multilateral trading system**, ensuring **stable, transparent, and predictable international trade flows**, particularly through:

- **WTO Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) Agreement** – Supporting **Chile's update on WTO IFD negotiations** and **Korea's draft statement on APEC's commitment to the WTO's Joint Statement Initiative on Investment Facilitation**.
- **Investment Policy Reforms** – Engaging with **UNCITRAL on ISDS reform discussions**, contributing to ongoing international efforts to **streamline investment dispute resolution**.
- **Investment Facilitation and Trade Connectivity** – Aligning **APEC's investment facilitation work with WTO's trade facilitation agenda**, ensuring **investment-friendly trade regulations**.

d. Economic Integration in the Region

- *“...APEC's trade and investment environment is free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable...”*
- *“...further advance the Bogor Goals and economic integration in the region in a manner that is market-driven, including through the work*

on the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP) agenda which contributes to high standard and comprehensive regional undertakings...”

IEG plays a pivotal role in **advancing APEC’s economic integration agenda**, ensuring that the region’s investment environment remains **free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent, and predictable**.

- **Advancing the Bogor Goals and FTAAP Agenda** – Strengthening the **APEC investment environment through the IFAP upgrade, investment policy dialogues, and FDI best practices**.
- **APEC Quality Infrastructure Development Initiative** – Supporting **Japan and PSU’s efforts in infrastructure investment, ensuring sustainable and resilient economic growth**.
- **Investment Promotion and Retention** – Engaging with **Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) to enhance cross-border investment linkages and improve investment retention strategies**.
- **Cross-Fora Collaboration** – Strengthening engagement with **CTI, WTO, OECD, UNCTAD, and WEF, ensuring APEC investment policies align with global investment governance trends**.

e. Trade Facilitation and Connectivity

- *“...promote seamless connectivity, resilient supply chains and responsible business conduct, APEC economies will improve physical, institutional and people-to-people connectivity”*

IEG’s work supports **seamless connectivity, resilient supply chains, and responsible business conduct** through:

- **Investment Facilitation Action Plan (IFAP) Upgrade** – Streamlining **investment procedures and regulatory frameworks** to improve **institutional connectivity** across APEC economies.
- **APEC Quality Infrastructure Development and Investment Initiative** – Supporting **sustainable infrastructure investment** to strengthen **physical connectivity and economic resilience**.
- **Best Practices on Long-Term FDI** – Encouraging **stable and long-term investments** that integrate local industries into **global value chains (GVCs)**, reinforcing **supply chain resilience**.
- **Dispute Prevention and Mitigation Systems** – Reducing **investment-related disputes** to ensure a **stable and predictable investment environment**, which is essential for **supply chain continuity**.

f. Innovation and Digitalisation

- *“...To empower all our people and businesses to participate and grow in an interconnected global economy, we will foster an enabling environment that is, among others, market driven and supported by digital economy and innovation.”*
- *“...strengthen digital infrastructure, accelerate digital transformation, narrow the digital divide, as well as cooperate on facilitating the flow of data and strengthening consumer and business trust in digital transactions.”*

IEG fosters an **enabling environment for digital investment, technology-driven growth, and digital trade facilitation** through:

- **IFAP Upgrade: Foster digital-friendly investment climates** – enhancing connectivity through digital infrastructure development; and promoting the use of digital technologies in investment-related procedures to improve **investment transparency and efficiency**.
- **WEF’s Digital FDI Initiative** – Exploring **policies to attract FDI in the digital economy**, supporting **startups, fintech, and AI-driven businesses**.
- **OECD’s FDI Qualities Framework for the Digital Economy** – Ensuring **investment policies align with emerging digital transformation trends**, including **cross-border data flows and cybersecurity frameworks**.
- **Korea’s AI for Trade Initiative** – Promoting **AI integration in trade facilitation**, ensuring **APEC’s investment policies are aligned with digital transformation efforts**.

g. Inclusivity and Sustainability

- *“Advancing inclusive policies, including under the economic drivers of trade & investment, and innovation and digitalisation, to promote sustainable economic growth opportunities and improve quality of life...”*
- *“...develop, encourage and exchange best practice policies, and promote capacity building programmes, that address all environmental challenges - including climate change - and support sustainable growth, such as through trade, including APEC’s work on facilitation of trade in environmental goods and services”*

IEG advances **inclusive policies and sustainable investment strategies** that contribute to **environmental resilience and economic empowerment**:

- **IFAP Upgrade:** Promote investments that help address environmental challenges, including climate change, help enable just energy transition, and foster sustainable growth.
- **Quality FDI for Sustainable Development** – Encouraging **investments in climate-resilient infrastructure, renewable energy, and green technologies**, aligned with **APEC’s sustainability agenda**.
- **Climate FDI Coalition (WEF Initiative)** – Supporting **investment de-risking mechanisms for climate-related projects**, facilitating greater private sector participation in **sustainable investments**.
- **Investment Promotion and Retention Strategies for SMEs and Women-Led Businesses** – Strengthening **investment linkages** that create **opportunities for underrepresented groups** in trade and investment.
- **Cross-Fora Collaboration on ESG Standards** – Engaging with **OECD, UNCTAD, and WEF** to **align investment policies with responsible business conduct (RBC) and sustainability reporting frameworks**.

3. **Planned private sector / stakeholder engagement in 2024**

Please provide a list of planned private sector engagement this year

- On 24 February 2025, Japan hosted a workshop on the PMU research project titled “APEC Companies’ Best Practices on Long-Term Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) within APEC Economies.” The workshop featured presentations from four selected companies, i.e., Ajinomoto Malaysia Berhad, Kaneka Malaysia, Toyota Thailand, and Intel Malaysia & Intel Viet Nam, whom shared insights based on the survey findings and their long-term investment experiences in the APEC region.
- Japan, in collaboration with the APEC Policy Support Unit (PSU), has led discussions on the ongoing IFAP Upgrade, to be referred to as the “APEC Quality Investment Facilitation Framework.” This engagement aimed to refine the framework by integrating feedback from stakeholders, ensuring that the upgraded IFAP aligns with APEC’s guiding policies and evolving investment trends, particularly in digitalization, inclusivity, and sustainability. Member economies were encouraged to review the fourth draft of the IFAP Upgrade and submit feedback before its endorsement at CT11.
- Korea proposed an “Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement (IFDA) Joint Statement Initiative,” reinforcing APEC’s commitment to strengthening investment facilitation measures. This initiative builds upon WTO’s recent Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) Agreement and seeks to enhance transparency, streamline investment procedures, and improve regulatory coherence among APEC economies. Korea encouraged member economies to engage in further discussions to ensure a coordinated and inclusive approach toward investment facilitation.
- Korea’s Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Energy (MOTIE) presented the key

deliverables for the APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade (MRT) Meeting 2025, scheduled for 15-16 May 2025 in Jeju, Korea. The deliverables focus on three primary areas: (1) Strengthening the multilateral trading system, (2) Advancing trade facilitation and digital economy policies, and (3) Enhancing supply chain resilience. Korea emphasised the importance of aligning APEC's trade and investment work with evolving global economic trends, particularly in AI-driven trade, sustainable supply chains, and WTO reforms. Korea will have separate individual engagement with all member economies to participate in shaping these priorities ahead of MRT 2025.

4. Planned cross-fora collaboration in 2025

Please provide a list of planned cross-fora collaboration in 2025

- IEG members were encouraged to identify potential areas for collaboration with relevant APEC fora and propose initiatives that align with shared priorities. Members are also invited to explore opportunities to advance cross-fora engagement through joint projects, policy dialogues, and capacity-building activities in 2025.

5. Main outcomes from most recent plenary meeting

Please provide in list format

The First IEG plenary meeting was held on 24 – 25 Feb 2025, covering a wide range of topics, including:

- implementing the Putrajaya Vision 2040 including through Aotearoa Plan Action (APA) by showcasing individual actions such as investment policy development;
- new investment issues on FTAAP Agenda, such as discussion related to investment for ESG, climate investment, sustainability, inclusivity, digitalisation, new look for the FTAAP, IRBI, sustainable partnerships, data centres;
- international investment regime principles and practices, such as the next phase of the APEC Investment Commitment Handbook Project (handbook tailored for Indonesia), FDI Qualities Review, Climate Change, key elements and issues in international instruments such as International Investment Agreements, WTO joint initiative on Investment Facilitation for Development;
- investment promotion, facilitation and retention issues, e.g. best practices aimed at attracting quality FDI, APEC quality infrastructure development and investment initiative, sustainable investment, IFAP implementation report on progress and recommendations, and the recent progress in the negotiation of; *and*
- IEG fora assessment and renewal process, the APEC Secretariat confirmed strong support for IEG's renewal (2026-2029), with a formal review at CTI1 (5-6 March 2025) and final approval at SOM1 (8-9 March 2025). Pending approval, IEG will

update its Terms of Reference (ToR) to reflect APEC's evolving investment priorities.

6. Was quorum reached at the most recent plenary meeting?

Please advise how many economies participated in the most recent plenary meeting

Quorum was reached with 15 economies present, namely: Australia; Chile; People's Republic of China; Japan; Republic of Korea; Malaysia; Papua New Guinea; Peru; the Philippines; the Russian Federation; Singapore; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; the United States of America; and Viet Nam

Additionally, two guests attended the meeting physically: Costa Rica, participating as an observer with a view to becoming a permanent member, and UNCITRAL, contributing expertise on investment dispute resolution and governance.

Other international institutions, including OECD and WEF, also shared their insights through pre-recorded presentations.

7. What is your Forum doing to increase participation from its members?

Please provide a brief list of planned efforts to increase participation from members

- Organising workshops in the margins of the IEG plenary meeting to encourage attendance from investment experts.
- Encouraging information sharing by member economies and international organisations on relevant workstreams shaping investment.

8. Decision points needed from CTI

Please add any additional decision points needed from CTI

- Seek CTI's endorsement of Convenor's Report.

Intellectual Property Rights Experts Group (IPEG)

Convenor's report to Committee on Trade and
Investment for CTI1/2025

1 Forum Main Objectives/Deliverables expected for 2025

- Implement the IPEG Work Plan 2025-2026.
- Deepen the engagement of economies in IPEG to significantly contribute to the vision for an open, dynamic, resilient and peaceful Asia-Pacific community by 2040.
- Sustain the active stakeholder engagement in IPEG and discuss how the group can address private sector issues.
- Conduct activities for the implementation of the Aotearoa Plan of Action (APA) in line with the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040.
- Provide the necessary support to the work and the priorities of the Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI) as well as to the work of relevant APEC bodies.
- Projects:
 - The APEC funded project 'Guidebook on Digital Enforcement to Improve Fight Trademark Counterfeiting' (Peru) is in the final stage.
 - Two self-funded projects, 'IP Policy and Invention Education Workshop' (Korea) and 'Enhancing Innovation with More Efficient Patent Systems: Tools, Resources, and Work-sharing' (United States) were successfully held on 27 and 28 Mar.
 - The APEC funded project 'A Practical Guide to Safeguarding Trade Secrets for (M)SMEs (Korea) is in progress.
 - A self-funding project IPEG 04 2024S - Using Emerging Technologies in IP Offices' Workflows (Russia) was successfully completed and results were presented. The report will be circulated to IPEG in due course.
 - Several projects including 'IP Finance Workshops' (ABAC and Korea), 'Workshop on IP Strategies to Promote Women-Led Innovative SMEs within APEC Economies' (Chile), and workshops on the importance of copyright protection, challenges in enforcement, and recent developments (United States) were proposed.

2 How the forum's work contribute to APEC and CTI's objectives

a. Implementing the [Putrajaya Vision](#), including through the [Aotearoa Plan of Action](#)

- IPEG-60 discussed and identified IPEG's contributions to the Putrajaya Vision, particularly through the Aotearoa Plan of Action (APA). The forum examined various activities that align with APA's objectives, emphasizing the role of IP in economic development, innovation, and capacity building.
- Canada presented its efforts to implement the Aotearoa Plan of Action and the Putrajaya Vision, highlighting the Canadian IP office (CIPO)'s 2024-2025 strategy. This includes fostering innovation, supporting sustainability, and enhancing client service through initiatives such as IT modernization and trademark productivity improvements. A key

update is the Next Generation Patents (NGP) system, designed to enhance digital services and user experience. Canada also promotes inclusive growth and global collaboration through events like the Annual IP Data and Research Conference.

- Chile provided an update on the WIPO Green-Latin American Acceleration Project, emphasizing how this initiative serves as a crucial bridge between innovative technological solutions and the region's local agricultural needs.
- Japan presented about (1) WIPO Green-Latin American Acceleration Project in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Peru, providing case examples in Chile and Peru, and (2) GXTI, which was an inventory published by the JPO, Japanese patent office, in June 2022 that gave a bird's-eye view of technologies related to Green Transformation (GX) and provided the patent search formula for analyzing patent trends that corresponded to individual technology categories.

b. Implementing Leaders or Ministerial mandates from previous years, including the most recent 2024 *Ichma Statement on A New Look at the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific agenda*

- CTI Chair presented on CTI's workplan for 2025, the Ichma Statement and other outcomes of the AMM and AELM meetings in 2024. The CTI Chair emphasized supporting MC14, the FTAAP agenda, and multilateral trade through economic integration, digitalization, and sustainable growth. He stated that its approach to the Ichma Statement includes updating the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP) Agenda Work Plan, active involvement in the user group, and reporting through the CTI Annual Report. Additionally, the CTI Chair outlined its plans for Fora Assessment and Renewal.
- Peru presented on their proposal to implement the Ichma Statement. The objectives are to begin work on the new workstream, continue the Information Sharing Mechanism (ISM) and Capacity Building Needs Initiative (CBNI) with renewed dynamism, and explore links between trade and other areas. Examples to be considered in IPEG include the PSU report on convergences and divergences (the IP chapter), transparency exercises on the implementation of the IP chapter of specific FTAs/RTAs, capacity building regarding IP, and IP linkages to trade.

c. Support for the Multilateral Trading System

- *"...Growth of international trade flows in the region become more stable and predictable including with increased coverage of WTO rules, through APEC members' effective and transparent implementation of existing and future commitments..."*

- IPEG-60 discussed members' experience on IP chapters of Free Trade Agreements and highlighted how trade agreements and trade policies can foster a mutually beneficial and constructive link between IP and trade, ensuring that IP frameworks support economic growth, innovation, and market access
- Canada emphasized the importance of incorporating a balanced, principle-based approach to IP in FTA negotiations, aiming for comprehensive, predictable, and transparent IP standards while promoting inclusivity for underrepresented groups.
- Chile presented on the inclusion of intellectual property (IP) chapters in its trade agreements, aiming to connect local innovation needs with existing opportunities in international economic relations.

- China provided an overview of the signing of the free trade agreement, its implementation outcomes, and its role in protecting corporate intellectual property rights and fostering innovation.
- Hong Kong, China shared its experience in IP chapters of FTAs. HKC has been actively expanding its FTA network to secure favourable conditions for HKC's goods and services to enter the Mainland and international markets, the latest FTA being the one with Peru.
- Russia highlighted that free trade agreements (FTAs) are a key trade policy tool administered by the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), and that the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) has been expanding its network of FTAs to boost trade and investments with various partners.

d. Economic Integration in the Region

- *“...APEC’s trade and investment environment is free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable...”*
- *“...further advance the Bogor Goals and economic integration in the region in a manner that is market-driven, including through the work on the Free Trade Area of the Asia- Pacific (FTAAP) agenda which contributes to high standard and comprehensive regional undertakings...”*

- IPEG-60 discussed IP Financing and Commercialization, how to enhance IP utilization as a financial and strategic asset, particularly for SMEs, through tools such as IP-backed financing and strategic IP commercialization:
- Canada presented its experience with IP-backed financing, highlighting trends in using patents and trademarks as security and the role of financial institutions in supporting IP-backed financing. The discussion addressed challenges such as IP valuation complexity, regulatory issues, and market transparency, along with plans to enhance IP awareness and support mechanisms for SMEs.
- China shared experiences on advancing special actions for the transformation and application of patents, improving the market-oriented operation mechanism for intellectual property, and developing intellectual property finance.
- Korea shared its IP Finance Initiative and a success case, highlighting the IP finance market's key areas: investment, collateral, and guarantees. The 2023 launch of the IP Valuation and Management Center marked a major milestone, enhancing IP valuation quality, expert training, and patent analysis systems.
- Russia stated the initiatives of Rospatent in the field of IP commercialization: IP secured lending, the activities of the FIPS Commercialization Support Centre, and joint projects, including those with the WIPO Office.
- ABAC presented an update on its IP Finance initiatives. It addressed barriers like legal and regulatory inconsistencies that hinder IP-backed financing. The approach involves pilot projects with financial institutions to identify challenges and align legal frameworks such as Secure Transactions Law and IP Law. In 2024, ABAC’s recommendations were acknowledged by APEC Finance Ministers and shared with the APEC IPEG and Economic Committee. Looking ahead, additional presentations and workshops are scheduled for 2025 to further strengthen economic and legal infrastructure across the region.

e. Trade Facilitation and Connectivity

- *“...promote seamless connectivity, resilient supply chains and responsible business conduct, APEC economies will improve physical, institutional and people-to-people connectivity”*

- IP is crucial for trade facilitation as it encourages innovation, promoting a free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent, inclusive and predictable trade and investment environment, as well as fostering economic growth and international collaboration.
- Korea presented the MRT (Ministers Responsible for Trade) Key Deliverables for 2025, focusing on WTO and Joint Statement Initiatives (JSIs), FTAAP, AI for Trade, Supply Chain Resilience, and Sustainable Supply Chains.

f. Innovation and Digitalisation

- *“...To empower all our people and businesses to participate and grow in an interconnected global economy, we will foster an enabling environment that is, among others, market driven and supported by digital economy and innovation.”*
- *“...strengthen digital infrastructure, accelerate digital transformation, narrow the digital divide, as well as cooperate on facilitating the flow of data and strengthening consumer and business trust in digital transactions.”*

- Leveraging IP to empower both the public and private sectors of member economies in a dynamic global economy is crucial for fostering an environment that supports innovation and digitalization. IPEG-60 explored key topics such as IP management for businesses, work-sharing among IP offices, and the role of IP in emerging technologies, emphasizing its significance in driving digital innovation.

IP Management for Businesses

- Canada presented its IP Management Resources for Businesses, highlighting efforts to enhance IP awareness, education, and strategic use among entrepreneurs. Key initiatives include digital tools, tailored webinars, and the Canadian IP Voices podcast. Through the IP Village initiative, Canada fosters collaboration among Federal organizations that are leading in the IP ecosystem, ensuring businesses have comprehensive support in acquiring and managing IP asset
- China introduced its experience in providing intellectual property services to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and helping them enhance their competitiveness.
- Hong Kong, China reported that a WIPO Technology and Innovation Support Center (TISC) is being established in HKC by the Hong Kong Productivity Council, aimed at providing high-quality IP-related technology information and related services, and facilitating creation, protection and management of IP rights of R&D outcomes for trading.
- Hong Kong, China presented that as an effort to help businesses, especially SMEs, enhance their IP capability, the Intellectual Property Department of HKC has published a series of booklets on IP. These publications have been written by leading IP professionals, and provide succinct and practical guidance on various aspects of IP, such as IP management, auditing and licensing.
- Korea introduced copyright education for architects in Korea, emphasizing statutory training requirements and new educational programs to enhance copyright awareness and prevent legal disputes in the architecture industry.

- The Philippines shared that in ASEAN, the region also has a similar initiative. The Philippines was selected to be the Chair of the newly created group called the ASEAN Technology and Innovation Support Centre (TISC) Network. The ASEAN TISC Network was created with the support of WIPO to contribute to the ASEAN Intellectual Property Rights Action Plan 2016-2025 (Action Plan), specifically on initiative #8 which aims to “*Develop new networks of integrated IP services for the region, including technology transfer offices and innovation technology support offices.*”
- Russia stated the initiatives of Rospatent, the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, and the Russian Export Center (REC) as well as the support measures for the business community, particularly SMEs, including the SME support project implemented in cooperation with the WIPO Office in 2023-2024.

Work-Sharing for IP Offices

- Member economies discussed enhancing work-sharing among IP offices to streamline cross-border patent processing, reduce redundancy, and increase efficiency. This aims to optimize MSMEs’ intangible asset protection and internationalization strategies, reducing time and costs.
- Hong Kong, China delivered a presentation on the reform of the patent system of HKC since December 2019 and its Original Grant Patent (OGP) system which provides a direct filing route for seeking standard patent protection in HKC. Advantages of the OGP system include eligibility for the “patent box” tax incentive, as well as flexibility in prosecution time through its fast-track route or the option of filing as a provisional patent application.
- Chile highlighted the benefits of the Patent Prosecution Highway agreements as vital tools to reduce costs for applicants seeking patent protection abroad while promoting efficiency among patent offices worldwide.

IP and Emerging Technologies

- Canada delivered a presentation on their ongoing response to emerging technologies, AI adoption policies and legislative developments related to responsible AI use, focusing on patentability of AI-related inventions, AI-generated content and copyright issues, and amendments to the Copyright Act.
- Chile presented on the use of AI by Chile’s Industrial Property Institute (INAPI) to optimize its intellectual property management processes and enhance operational efficiency.
- China elaborated on IP management policies related to emerging technologies, such as the "Patent Examination Guidelines" and the "Guidelines for Patent Applications Related to Artificial Intelligence (Trial)."
- Japan presented about JPO’s recent development on (1) AI utilization to improve quality and efficiency in patent classification, concept search, advanced search, application of LLM, prior graphic trademark search, designated goods/services search, prior character trademark search, and similar image retrieval system, and (2) examination on AI-related inventions in JPO’s search and examination, including the AI examination support team and examination case examples on AI/IoT-related technologies.
- Chinese Taipei presented “Enhancing Examination Efficiency: Development of the Design Patent Image Search System.” TIPO, IP office in Chinese Taipei, has leveraged AI technology to assist applicants in assessing patentability and improve examiners' search efficiency. Since its launch in 2019, the system has enhanced accuracy and addressed irregular edge issues in search results.
- The APEC Secretariat’s PSU presented [Policy Brief No. 61](#) to support the creative economy in the digital era, expanding creative exports, and the influence of AI, drones, and extended realities. Key challenges include the digital divide, IP uncertainties, and regulatory gaps. The brief recommends fostering collaboration, improving digital access, enhancing skills training, clarifying IP rights, and promoting innovation-friendly policies. APEC aims to build a dynamic and inclusive creative economy.

g. Inclusivity and Sustainability

- *“Advancing inclusive policies, including under the economic drivers of trade & investment, and innovation and digitalisation, to promote sustainable economic growth opportunities and improve quality of life...”*
- *“...develop, encourage and exchange best practice policies, and promote capacity building programmes, that address all environmental challenges - including climate change - and support sustainable growth, such as through trade, including APEC’s work on facilitation of trade in environmental goods and services”*

- IPEG-60 had three discussion items under Fostering Prosperity through IP, including IP protection and enforcement; IP access for youth, women, and vulnerable groups; and exploring mechanisms to promote cultural assets:

IP Protection and Enforcement

- China provided a detailed account of the measures, achievements, and related experiences in intellectual property enforcement and judicial practices.
- Hong Kong, China referred to the Business of IP Asia Forum in HKC, an annual event which brings IP users, owners, investors, professionals and business leaders from all over the world to discuss the latest developments in the IP world, and to explore business collaboration opportunities. The latest Forum was held in-person in December 2024 with great success, featuring over 100 prominent speakers worldwide and attracting more than 3,000 participants.
- Korea introduced Korea's anti-piracy efforts against illegal streaming platforms, highlighting the successful crackdown on NuNu TV through a multi-agency initiative, international cooperation, and advanced investigative techniques to combat copyright infringement and associated cybercrimes.
- Korea also outlined Korea’s collaboration with INTERPOL in the I-SOP Project to combat digital piracy through cross-border law enforcement, intelligence sharing, and awareness campaigns, with Phase 2 (2025–2029) focusing on enhanced global cooperation and forensic investigations.
- Malaysia presented its IP Enforcement Framework, highlighting the role of the Enforcement Division under the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Cost of Living (KPDN) in protecting IP rights. Key legislation supporting this framework includes the Copyright Act (amended in 2022) and the Trade Marks Act. Malaysia introduced enforcement measures such as site blocking, content removal, and syndicate dismantling.
- Russia shared the general practice of IP rights enforcement in the Russian Federation.
- The United States presented current challenges and approaches to counterfeit food, beverage, and agricultural products, which cause harm to human and animal health, the economy, and international trade.
- Papua New Guinea also shared their experience with counterfeit goods in their economy. They highlighted the harm for consumers and the harm to the local economy. Papua New Guinea has developed capacity building tools to educate consumers and hopes to use emerging technologies to crack down on counterfeit goods in the future.
- The United States provided an intervention on recent developments relating to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, including recent enforcement and regulatory efforts.

IP Access for Youth, Women, and Vulnerable Groups

- Canada presented its initiatives to enhance IP access for Women, Black, and Indigenous entrepreneurs through awareness programs, specialized online tools, partnerships, and targeted events. The efforts included one-on-one meetings, presentations, webpages, funding opportunities, and collaborations with key organizations such as the Canadian Council of Aboriginal Business and the Ulnooweg Education Center.
- Chile highlighted initiatives aimed at promoting women's participation in IP, including awareness campaigns, training programs, and mentorship opportunities for women entrepreneurs. Chile also referred to its active engagement with WIPO to expand opportunities for young girls and boys, and teenagers in the field of innovation.
- Japan presented its initiatives on IP access for youth, women, and vulnerable groups, including updates on the JPO's DE&I Team, as well as the JPO's exhibition and international forum at EXPO 2025.
- Korea shared its Women Inventors' Support Initiatives, highlighting its efforts to empower women through IP education, networking, and exhibitions. It also introduced the Advisory Council for IP Support and the WIPO-UNESCO-KIPO Leadership Course, fostering global women innovators' leadership and engagement in IP.
- Russia highlighted the importance of youth engagement in IP to foster innovation, creativity, and economic growth, emphasizing that understanding IP rights helps them protect and commercialize their ideas. Through various educational programs, competitions, and collaborations, Rospatent aims to equip youth with the knowledge and tools necessary for this purpose.
- Chinese Taipei presented "Pilot Program for the Accelerated Examination Process (AEP) for Invention Patents Filed by Women." This year, TIPO launched a one-year pilot program for the accelerated examination process of invention patents filed by female applicants.

Exploring Mechanisms to Promote Cultural Assets

- Canada provided an intervention confirming their commitment to reconciliation. Canada legislated the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act in 2021 and released a comprehensive Action Plan in 2023, identifying over 180 measures to implement the UN Declaration. As part of this Action Plan, Canada has committed to consulting and cooperating with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples to ensure that appropriate measures are in place for Indigenous Peoples to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, and to review intellectual property laws to ensure consistency with the UN Declaration.
- China discussed domestic legislation and international cooperation concerning the protection of genetic resources.
- Peru introduced its first geographical indication, "Sal de Maras." Under the legal framework for GI protection, the application was submitted in July 2024, and INDECOPI confirmed its protection in October 2024. Next steps include drafting usage regulations, forming a Regulatory Council, seeking international protection, and evaluating the use of promotional seals.

Workshops at SOM1:

- Korea hosted the "IP Policy and Invention Education Workshop" on February 27. Speakers from the APEC Mentoring Center for the Gifted in Science (AMGS) and KIPO, Korean IP office, introduced collaborative talent development initiatives within the APEC framework and Korea's Invention Education Initiative. The participants highlighted the importance of early IP/Invention Education and the need for strong collaboration between IP offices and education departments to implement the program effectively. Additionally, they recognized the value of cross-fora collaboration, particularly with PPSTI, to expand outreach and strengthen innovation networks.

- The United States hosted the second part of its workshop on ““Enhancing Innovation with More Efficient Patent Systems: Tools, Resources, and Worksharing” on February 28. Speakers from the United States, Korea, Canada, and the Philippines described different types of worksharing initiatives implemented among different IP offices. They highlighted the benefits of worksharing, such as to reduce patent application backlogs, increase patent quality, reduce costs, and reduce time to obtaining patents. The speakers also presented different worksharing case studies, using actual and hypothetical example patent applications to illustrate how a patent examiner would examine an application filed in multiple economies, the use of resources such as IP5 Global Dossier and WIPO CASE, and the use of search tools involving both proprietary and free databases. Participants in the workshop expressed appreciation for how the workshop will foster greater collaboration among IP offices and enhance efficiency in patent systems.

3. Planned private sector / stakeholder engagement in 2024

- ABAC (APEC Business Advisory Council): promoting ABAC IP finance initiative for SMEs to secure finance through IP as a collateral
- WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization): inviting WIPO experts to deliver presentations, enabling member economies to stay informed about WIPO’s latest developments in IP
- OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development): inviting OECD experts to deliver presentations on emerging IP topics
- ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations): inviting ASEAN Secretariat to explore collaborative opportunities to make IP friendly environment

4. Planned cross-fora collaboration in 2025

- Collaborate with the SME Working Group to exchange insights and showcase successful models of IP commercialization, as well as to connect with SMEs, identify challenges, and share resources.
- Collaborate with the Digital Economy Steering Group (DESG), and the Policy Partnership for Science, Technology and Innovation (PPSTI), to exchange insights and foster cross fora dialogues on emerging technologies.
- Collaborate with PPSTI to engage youth in innovation activities.
- Collaborate with PPWE to promote inclusive IP policies and share best practices.

5. Main outcomes from most recent plenary meeting

- Plenary sessions covered APEC 2025 priorities, IP financing, commercialization, and enforcement, with updates on ongoing and new projects.
- Discussions addressed IP’s role in trade, emerging technologies, and work-sharing among IP offices to streamline processes.
- Inclusive IP was emphasized, with presentations on supporting women entrepreneurs and women inventors, indigenous knowledge, and youth engagement.
- Sharing sessions on on-going, upcoming and completed workshops, including on the two workshops hosted in the SOM1 cluster:
 - ‘Enhancing Innovation with More Efficient Patent Systems: Tools, Resources, and Worksharing’ (United States)
 - ‘IP Policy and Invention Education Workshop’ (Korea)

6. Was quorum reached at the most recent plenary meeting?

- Quorum was reached with 16 economies present (inclusive of virtual participation from two economies).

7. What is your Forum doing to increase participation from its members?

- Establishing the IPEG 2025-2026 Workplan with activities directly relevant to member economies' work scope and interests, encouraging their participation and experience-sharing.
- Reorganizing agenda items in alignment with the IPEG 2025-2026 Workplan and the three pillars of the Putrajaya 2040 Vision, leading to fruitful and effective discussions.
- Encouraging Chair and Vice Chair outreach to other APEC fora to enhance engagement and create synergies.
- Initiating new projects and workshops on topics of relevance.
- Drawing on the comments from the qualitative assessment for IPEG's renewal to improve IPEG meetings, including external guests to invite and topics to discuss.

8. Decision points needed from CTI

- Seek CTI's endorsement of Convenor's Report.

Market Access Group

Convenor's report to Committee on Trade and Investment for CTI1/2025

1 Forum Main Objectives/Deliverables expected for 2025

Please provide a brief list of the forum's 2025 objectives and expected outcomes/deliverables.

- **Advancing Environmental Goods Work:**
While MAG completed the technical transposition of the APEC Environmental Goods List from HS 2017 to HS 2022 in 2024, in response to the Ministers' mandate from AMM 2021, MAG must continue working on finalizing the Framework for Producing an APEC Reference List of Environmental Goods. Additionally, discussions on the impact of non-tariff measures and other regulatory barriers on trade in environmental goods should be further advanced.
- **Expand Initiatives on Remanufactured Goods:**
Work on the APEC Pathfinder on Facilitating Trade in Remanufactured Goods and develop best practice guidelines to clearly differentiate remanufactured products from used goods, thereby enhancing both environmental sustainability and market access for these products.
- **Streamline and Harmonize Rules of Origin:**
Advance the work on preferential rules of origin by conducting sector-specific analyses and developing practical guidelines to simplify compliance, especially for MSMEs, ensuring that updated rules support easier access to tariff preferences within the FTAAP framework.
- **Enhance the Utilization of the APEC Trade Repository:**
Increase awareness and use of the APEC Trade Repository by coordinating targeted promotional campaigns and technical support to ensure that member economies keep their trade data up-to-date and leverage the repository to improve transparency and market access.

2 How the forum's work contribute to APEC and CTI's objectives

Please provide a brief list of the forum's work under each sub-heading.

- a. Implementing the [Putrajaya Vision](#), including through the [Aotearoa Plan](#)

"APEC's trade and investment environment is free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable"

- Initiative on rules of origin, such as the project "Advancing the FTAAP: Issues Related to Rules of Origin," aim to enhance market access of trade in goods.
- The continued work on APEC Trade Repository provides transparency essential for the trade environment.

"We will further advance the Bogor Goals and economic integration in the region in a manner that is market-driven, including through the work on the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP) agenda which contributes to high standard and comprehensive regional undertakings."

- Discussions concerning the initiative; **"A Way Forward to Implement the Ichma Statement on A New Look at the FTAAP"** which focuses on translating the Ichma Statement into concrete actions and establishing an information-sharing mechanism, as well as proposing capacity-building workshops, and the Study **"Convergences and Divergences of Free Trade Agreements in the APEC Region"**, identify areas of convergence and divergence in existing FTAs areas, as well as emerging issues to inform future policy actions and support the FTAAP agenda.

"We will promote economic policies, cooperation and growth, which will support global efforts to comprehensively address all environmental challenges, including climate change, extreme weather, and natural disasters, for a sustainable planet."

- MAG's environmental goods, as the **technical transposition of the APEC Environmental Goods List from HS 2017 to HS 2022** which was **successfully completed** and endorsed in September 2024 and the **draft of the Framework for Producing an APEC Reference List of Environmental Goods**, as well as the **Trade Policy Dialogue on Approaches and Methodologies for Verifying Environmental Contributions of Certain Goods**", along with the efforts vested on remanufacturing goods, such as the **APEC Pathfinder for Facilitating Trade in Remanufactured Goods** and the project **"Trade of Remanufactured Consumer Electronic Products in APEC"** encourages green growth and resource efficiency, aligning with APEC's commitment to sustainable economic development.

b. Implementing Leaders or Ministerial mandates from previous years, including the most recent 2024 *Ichma Statement on A New Look at the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific agenda*

Through targeted technical conversations referring to the initiative “**A Way Forward to Implement the Ichma Statement on A New Look at the FTAAP**”, the MAG can assist on translating the Ichma Statement into concrete actions, holding constructive discussions on establishing an information-sharing mechanism, and proposing capacity-building workshops to support the FTAAP Agenda.

- **Peru** presented its CTI initiative; “A Way Forward to Implement the Ichma Statement on A New Look at the FTAAP”, co-sponsored by Australia, China, and Korea, which focuses on translating the Ichma Statement into concrete actions by identifying areas of convergence and divergence in existing FTAs, establishing an information-sharing mechanism, and proposing capacity-building workshops to support the FTAAP agenda.
- **The PSU** provided a concise overview of the Study “Convergences and Divergences of Free Trade Agreements in the APEC Region”, this comprehensive study compared key chapters of five FTAs, noting a high level of convergence between the chapters (32 out of 34 chapters show medium to high convergence); the study also identified emerging issues in digital trade and supply chain disruptions to inform future policy actions.

c. Support for the Multilateral Trading System

- *“...Growth of international trade flows in the region become more stable and predictable including with increased coverage of WTO rules, through APEC members’ effective and transparent implementation of existing and future commitments...”*

By supporting key projects related to WTO agreements, such as the WTO Information Technology Agreement (ITA) and fostering cross-fora collaboration with the WTO, the MAG can enhance technical support and innovative policy measures to strengthen ICT trade while also promoting the transparent implementation of WTO rules.

- **Japan** provided an update on its presentation at the WTO ITA Committee regarding its study, 'Impact of the ITA and the Future of ICT Trade,' highlighting the key benefits of the WTO Information Technology Agreement (ITA) and proposing pathways for the further expansion of the ITA. Japan also noted the favorable reception of the report at the WTO

ITA Committee.

- **The Chair of the WTO ITA Committee**, Mr. Ta-Lin (Peter) SHIH, summarized current discussions on implementation issues, product coverage, non-tariff measures, HS classification challenges, and membership expansion; this was followed by a brief discussion on enhancing technical support and innovative policy measures to further strengthen ICT trade.

d. Economic Integration in the Region

- *“...APEC’s trade and investment environment is free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable...”*
- *“...further advance the Bogor Goals and economic integration in the region in a manner that is market-driven, including through the work on the Free Trade Area of the Asia- Pacific (FTAAP) agenda which contributes to high standard and comprehensive regional undertakings...”*

MAG promotes liberalization and interregional cooperation by facilitating market access, exchanging information, and supporting capacity-building initiatives that help achieve the Bogor Goals and further advance the FTAAP agenda through market-driven integration.

- The **Philippines provided an update on the usage of the APEC Trade Repository**, presenting key statistics (e.g., number of users and sessions), highlighting referral trends, and emphasizing the importance of maintaining up-to-date information to enhance transparency and facilitate trade.
- The **United States presented its project “Advancing the FTAAP: Issues Related to Rules of Origin,”** discussing current challenges in aligning rules of origin across FTAs and proposing ways to update and harmonize these rules to facilitate preferential trade for businesses, particularly MSMEs.
- **Hong Kong, China and the PSU** presented the preliminary findings of the study on **“Rules of Origin in Modern Trade Agreements – Trends and Challenges”**, which aims to examine how preferential Rules of Origin provisions have evolved, look into their convergences and divergences, and analyse their impacts on businesses in utilising the trade agreements.
- **The PSU** presented a preliminary draft on the study on **promoting the utilization of paperless trade platforms in the post-COVID-19 era.**

e. Trade Facilitation and Connectivity

- *“...promote seamless connectivity, resilient supply chains and responsible business conduct, APEC economies will improve physical, institutional and people-to-people connectivity”*

MAG works to streamline trade processes and build resilient supply chains, thereby enhancing physical, institutional, and people-to-people connectivity across the Asia-Pacific region.

- **Singapore** updated on the **Supply Chain Framework Action Plan Phase III (SCFAP III)**.
- **The United States** updated delegates on the APEC Pathfinder for Facilitating Trade in Remanufactured Goods, noting increased participation and an update on the project **“Trade of Remanufactured Consumer Electronic Products in APEC”**.

f. Innovation and Digitalisation

- *“...To empower all our people and businesses to participate and grow in an interconnected global economy, we will foster an enabling environment that is, among others, market driven and supported by digital economy and innovation.”*
- *“...strengthen digital infrastructure, accelerate digital transformation, narrow the digital divide, as well as cooperate on facilitating the flow of data and strengthening consumer and business trust in digital transactions.”*

N/A

g. Inclusivity and Sustainability

- *“Advancing inclusive policies, including under the economic drivers of trade & investment, and innovation and digitalisation, to promote sustainable economic growth opportunities and improve quality of life...”*
- *“...develop, encourage and exchange best practice policies, and promote capacity building programmes, that address all environmental challenges - including climate change - and support*

sustainable growth, such as through trade, including APEC's work on facilitation of trade in environmental goods and services”

Environmental Goods Work:

- **The Convenor** reported that the technical transposition of the APEC Environmental Goods List from HS 2017 to HS 2022 was successfully completed and endorsed (September 2024) and requested that member economies update their implementation plans accordingly.
- **Australia** provided an update on the discussions centered on the last **draft of the Framework for Producing an APEC Reference List of Environmental Goods**. The framework is intended to support the development of a new, voluntary, non-binding APEC Reference List of Environmental Goods. Australia discussed proposed refinements, including adjustments to the treatment of recycled/remanufactured goods, and outlining next steps toward a third draft for further endorsement which shows certain flexibility on recycled/remanufactured goods, as per the categorization concerns of other members.
- **New Zealand**, as the lead economy for the non-tariff measures pillar, shared its plan to develop best practice guidelines for reducing NTMs that hinder trade in environmental goods.
- **The United States** updated on its self-funded “**Trade Policy Dialogue on Approaches and Methodologies for Verifying Environmental Contributions of Certain Goods**” project, which held a virtual workshop in January 2025.

3. Planned private sector / stakeholder engagement in 2025

Please provide a list of planned private sector engagement this year

- MAG invited the ABAC representative to share their priorities with MAG members during MAG1. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, ABAC was unable to attend. Collaboration with the private sector remains a key priority, and MAG plans to invite the ABAC to participate in MAG2 during SOM3.

4. Planned cross-fora collaboration in 2025

Please provide a list of planned cross-fora collaboration in 2025

- The United States project, 'Advancing the FTAAP: Issues Related to Rules of Origin' (MAG_201_2024A), will be implemented in

collaboration with the SCCP Korea team and is scheduled to hold its workshop at SOM3 2025.

5. Main outcomes from most recent plenary meeting

Please provide in list format

- Adoption of 67th MAG Meeting Summary Report.
- Report on the successful HS transposition of the APEC Environmental Goods List from HS 2017 to HS 2022 (during September 2024).
- Recognition of the need to update the domestic implementation plans for the Environmental Goods List in HS 2022. Members are encouraged to proceed with updating the APEC website page “APEC Economies’ Implementation Plans for Tariff Reductions on Environmental Goods” intersessionally.
- Discussions on the work for the Draft Framework of Discussions for Producing an APEC Reference List of Environmental Goods, Australia will circulate a third draft to continue intersessional work.
- Reports on the ongoing work under Pillar 3 of the Environmental Goods Workplan addressing non-tariff measures and regulatory issues.
- Report on the Trade Policy Dialogue “Approaches and Methodologies for Verifying Environmental Contributions on Certain Goods”.
- Updates on the WTO Information Technology Agreement (ITA) and ITA-2.
- Presentation of the initiative “A Way Forward to Implement the Ichma Statement on a New Look at the FTAAP”.
- Updates in the project “Trade of Remanufactured Consumer Electronic Products in APEC”.
- Status report on “Advancing the FTAAP: Issues Related to Rules of Origin”.
- Report on progress on the Supply Chain Framework Action Plan Phase III (SCFAP III).
- Presentation of the study “Promoting the Utilization of Paperless Trade Platforms in the Post-COVID-19 Era;”
- Report on the usage of the APEC Trade Repository.

6. Was quorum reached at the most recent plenary meeting?

Please advise how many economies participated in the most recent plenary meeting

- Quorum was reached with 19 economies present.

7. What is your Forum doing to increase participation from its members?

Please provide a brief list of planned efforts to increase participation from members

- MAG incorporated in the agenda the discussion on the results of the Fora Assessment Process Survey and the started discussions on how to improve the engagement of the economies in the MAG.

8. Decision points needed from CTI

Please add any additional decision points needed from CTI

- Seek CTI's endorsement of Convenor's Report.

APEC Sub-Committee on Customs Procedures (SCCP)

Convenor's report to Committee on Trade and Investment for CTI1/2025

1 Forum Main Objectives/Deliverables expected for 2025

Please provide a brief list of the forum's 2025 objectives and expected outcomes/deliverables.

- Based on the APEC 2025 priorities, the objectives are: (connect, innovate, prosper)
 - To strengthen regional economic ties and connectivity through stable trade, resilient supply chains, and people-to-people exchanges
 - To drive innovation by leveraging technology for sustainable and inclusive growth through fostering digital innovation
 - To focus on inclusive and sustainable growth by addressing demographic shifts, promoting clean energy, empowering women, and supporting MSMEs
- For this year, apart from two plenary meetings and the APEC Customs Business Dialogue (ACBD) at the APEC as one of the initiatives of this year, the SCCP will implement several initiatives and projects in important areas of the SCCP's Strategic Plan.
- APEC Funded Projects: Three (03) projects will be carried out in 2025. One will be focused on best practices for using new technologies and innovative solutions in cross-border e-commerce, with an emphasis on customs risk management and customs-business cooperation. Another will explore measures to support MSME exporters in complying with trade-related environmental regulations, ensuring sustainable growth. The third will be a project centered on developing an AEO (Authorized Economic Operator) cooperation scheme, which also measures the economic impact of AEO programs across member economies.
- APEC Self-Funded Projects: Two (02) projects are scheduled. During the two APEC Plenary meetings, a Customs Technology Exhibition, which will showcase cutting-edge scientific tools and methods for enhancing customs operations, will be held. Another project is the International Origin Seminar, designed to bring together stakeholders from governments, businesses, and academia to discuss challenges and best practices related to free trade agreements.
- Two(02) workshops on Green Customs and the AEO program were conducted as SCCP side events to support these projects, setting the stage for robust discussions.
- Member's Initiatives: Korea has proposed the adoption of Non-Binding

Guidelines on E-Commerce, aimed at fostering global customs cooperation in the rapidly evolving trade landscape of e-commerce and low-value shipments. China has also proposed one initiative for this year, titled “Further Strengthen Smart Customs Cooperation”, which was already endorsed prior to the SCCP1 Meeting.

2 How the forum’s work contributes to APEC and CTI’s objectives

Please provide a brief list of the forum’s work under each sub-heading.

a. Implementing the [Putrajaya Vision](#), including through the [Aotearoa Plan of Action](#)

- All the SCCP’s current and planned projects and initiatives support the Putrajaya Vision 2040, Aotearoa Plan of Action and Bangkok Goals. Through projects and initiatives listed above, some of the main collective actions of the APA that the SCCP is contributing towards include:
 - Progress liberalization of trade in goods by reducing unnecessary barriers, strengthening trade facilitation, and fostering regulatory reform
 - Increase trade predictability and openness by improving economies’ transparency through trade measures and policies
 - Advance capacity-building programs and collaborate on best practices to support the development and participation in high-standard regional initiatives
 - Implement APEC's Connectivity Blueprint, including by strengthening connectivity and resilient supply chains within APEC
 - Collaborate to develop an innovative digital business environment
 - Promote ecosystems that support MSMEs to take advantage of the digital economy
 - Promote e-commerce/digital trade and sharing best practice on rules and regulations in e-commerce/digital trade
 - Advancing gender equality, inclusivity and economic empowerment of women
 - Cooperate in relevant APEC fora to develop, encourage and exchange best practice policies, and promote capacity building programmes, that address all environmental challenges - including climate change - and support sustainable growth
- The updated SCCP’s Work Plan Template reflects the addition of the Putrajaya Vision 2040, Aotearoa Plan of Action and a column for other APEC commitments.

b. Implementing Leaders or Ministerial mandates from previous years, including the most recent 2024 [Ichma Statement on A New Look at the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific agenda](#)

The SCCP contributes to the implementation of the 2024 Ichma Statement and the other mandates from previous years through:

- Engaging in discussions within the CTI workstream to provide practical insights
- Enhancing the information sharing mechanism
- Advancing digitalization by implementing and promoting digital customs solutions such as electronic documents, paperless trade systems, and electronic origin data exchange systems
- Integrating sustainability into customs procedures, such as promoting the use of green technologies

c. Support for the Multilateral Trading System

- *“...Growth of international trade flows in the region become more stable and predictable including with increased coverage of WTO rules, through APEC members’ effective and transparent implementation of existing and future commitments...”*

The SCCP supports the Multilateral Trading System by:

- Enhancing WTO-TFA implementation to accelerate and streamline cross-border trade procedures, improving efficiency while reducing costs
- Exploring the shared commitment to develop non-binding guidelines on e-commerce

At SCCP 1, a panel discussion titled “Study on Best Practices for Using New Technologies and Innovative Solutions in Cross-Border E-commerce: Focus on Customs Risk Management System and Customs-Business Cooperation” was conducted.

d. Economic Integration in the Region

- *“...APEC’s trade and investment environment is free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable...”*
- *“...further advance the Bogor Goals and economic integration in the region in a manner that is market-driven, including through the work on the Free Trade Area of the Asia- Pacific (FTAAP) agenda which contributes to high standard and comprehensive regional undertakings...”*

The SCCP supports Economic Integration in the Region by:

- Promoting economic integration and explore new initiatives that contribute to the region’s economic growth and development.

- Developing a strategic approach to the expanding capacity-building activities

e. Trade Facilitation and Connectivity

- *“...promote seamless connectivity, resilient supply chains and responsible business conduct, APEC economies will improve physical, institutional and people-to-people connectivity”*

The SCCP supports trade facilitation and connectivity by:

- Integrating various streams of APEC work on trade logistics and enhancing the appropriate infrastructure development in the region
- Exploring the use of innovative technologies to simplify customs procedures and promote trade facilitation
- Strengthening multi-stakeholder cooperation to promote business conduct with the private sector

f. Innovation and Digitalisation

- *“...To empower all our people and businesses to participate and grow in an interconnected global economy, we will foster an enabling environment that is, among others, market driven and supported by digital economy and innovation.”*
- *“...strengthen digital infrastructure, accelerate digital transformation, narrow the digital divide, as well as cooperate on facilitating the flow of data and strengthening consumer and business trust in digital transactions.”*

The SCCP supports innovation and digitalization by:

- Cooperating on facilitating the data flow and enhancing consumer and business trust in digital transactions
- Stimulating practical application of digital technologies including AI and Big data for inclusive and sustainable growth in APEC-region
- Hosting an exhibition of customs technologies to showcase innovative and effective technologies developed by customs
- Presenting the APEC Smart Customs Case Repository, which collects cases of technological application, as well as best practices in process innovation by the APEC Customs community.

g. Inclusivity and Sustainability

- *“Advancing inclusive policies, including under the economic drivers of*

trade & investment, and innovation and digitalisation, to promote sustainable economic growth opportunities and improve quality of life...”

- *“...develop, encourage and exchange best practice policies, and promote capacity building programmes, that address all environmental challenges - including climate change - and support sustainable growth, such as through trade, including APEC’s work on facilitation of trade in environmental goods and services”*

The SCCP supports inclusive growth by:

- Promoting economic and technical cooperation to enhance capacity building and inclusive economic participation
- Sharing experiences and best practice to promote inclusiveness and quality of life

At SCCP 1, a panel discussion focused on exploring the way forward on how to support MSMEs in trade for inclusive growth in the region was conducted.

The SCCP supports sustainable growth by encouraging:

- Building on APEC’s efforts to empower MSMEs economically by enhancing their capacity to effectively integrate into the broader economy.

3. Planned private sector/stakeholder engagement in 2025

Please provide a list of planned private sector engagement this year

- The World Customs Organization (WCO), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Global Express Association (GEA), and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) joined the meeting as guests.
- The WCO provided an update on the WCO Secretariat’s priorities, including the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan, and requested SCCP members’ support for its projects.
- The WTO presented its key priorities, focusing on supply chain resilience, HS digitalization for sustainability ("greening the HS"), and trade facilitation through digitalization) and moderated a panel discussion on e-commerce.
- The UNESCAP shared progress on the Framework Agreement on Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia-Pacific (CPTA) and moderated a panel discussion on inclusive growth.
- The APEC Customs-Business Dialogue, scheduled during SOM3, will provide an opportunity for SCCP to engage with the business sector. The discussion will focus on next steps to drive innovation as a means to improve trade facilitation and achieve sustainable growth.

4. Planned cross-fora collaboration in 2025

Please provide a list of planned cross-fora collaboration in 2025

- During SCCP1, the CTI Chair was invited to discuss CTI's priorities for 2025 and emphasized the significance of the Ichma Statement.
- At SOM3, an International Origin Seminar is planned to be co-hosted with the Market Access Group of CTI, an event organized by Korea and the United States.
- The SCCP participated in a capacity-building workshop organized as part of the Chemical Dialogue Group's events, a sub-forum under the CTI.

5. Main outcomes from most recent plenary meeting

Please provide in list format

Overview:

The SCCP Plenary meeting was held from Feb 26 to 28, 2025

The agenda focused on five key areas:

- Sustainable Growth Through Streamlining Customs Procedures
- Innovation of Supply Chain Management and Digitalization of Customs
- Inclusive Global Trade
- Updates of the SCCP Strategic Plan and TOR
- WTO-TFA Implementation

Main Outcomes from the SCCP1 Plenary Meeting:

Day 1:

- As host economy, Korea shared the theme and priorities for APEC 2025, which are connect, innovate, and prosper.
- The Chair and the APEC Secretariat shared updates on APEC projects and the need for a new Work Plan and Terms of Reference revisions. SCCP must finalize its revision by December 2025.
- Engagement with Stakeholders:
 - WCO, WTO introduced efforts to facilitate global standards in Customs settings
 - UNESCAP shared activities on paperless trade
- Sustainable Growth Through Streamlining Customs Procedures:
 - Japan introduced the Customs bonded system.
 - China presented cases on Fight Against Solid Waste and presented on China's Single Window Innovation Driven by Digitalization & New

Technologies.

- Korea reported on the APEC-funded project on the economic effects of AEO (SCCP 203 2024A), and shared updates on MSME support by Customs
- Peru reported on the outcome of the SCCP 201 2013T project on Green Customs
- UNEP introduced the Green Customs Initiative and Green Customs Guide
- Innovation of Supply Chain Management and Digitalization of Customs:
 - China introduced the initiative of “Further Strengthen Smart Customs Cooperation-Sharing and Utilizing APEC Smart Customs Case Repository”.
 - Korea shared the cross-border exchange of electronic Certificates of Origin and reported on the E-commerce project(SCCP 201 2014A) funded by APEC.
 - Members highlighted newest innovations at respective Customs and the PSU promoted the use of paperless trade platforms.
 - Non-binding Guidelines on E-commerce were introduced and the timeline for its revision was shared.

Day 2:

- Inclusive Global Trade:
 - Australia, Canada, Korea, New Zealand and Peru emphasized the importance of equality, inclusivity and diversity in customs and shared best practices and innovative policies.
 - Members were invited to participate in a panel discussion focusing on support for MSMEs and the APEC-funded project on research of the subject (SCCP 202 2024A)
- SCCP Strategic Plan 2026-2029 & TOR:
 - Members provided their views on the SCCP Strategic Plan 2026-2029 and discussed the timeline and roadmap for its timely development with member contributions.
 - Members shared consensus on that the TOR of the SCCP needs to be endorsed at the earliest convenience.

Day 3:

- WTO-TFA Implementations
 - Members shared updates on how they implemented the WTO-TFA, and the way forward.

6. Was quorum reached at the most recent plenary meeting?

Please advise how many economies participated in the most recent plenary meeting

Quorum was reached with 21 APEC economies participating in the meeting. The World Customs Organization (WCO), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Global Express Association(GEA), and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)joined the meeting as observers. Director General of the International Affairs Bureau of Korea Customs Service, Mr. PARK, Heon served as the Chair of the SCCP.

7. What is your Forum doing to increase participation from its members?

Please provide a brief list of planned efforts to increase participation from members

- The meeting agenda was distributed in advance to allow all members to provide input beforehand.
- The draft of the non-binding guidelines was circulated and revised multiple times to incorporate comments and feedback from interested members.
- Throughout the meeting, economies were actively encouraged to engage with one another through questions, ensuring productive discussions.
- During the workshop, members were welcomed to lead discussions or present on specific topics to provide diversified perspectives.
- Casual gatherings where members can interact in a relaxed setting were facilitated during the SCCP meetings

8. Decision points needed from CTI

Please add any additional decision points needed from CTI

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

Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance

Convenor's report to Committee on Trade and Investment for CTI1/2025

1 Forum Main Objectives/Deliverables expected for 2025

Please provide a brief list of the forum's 2025 objectives and expected outcomes/deliverables.

- The SCSC's main objectives are to:
 - Reduce technical barriers to trade and enhance market access through standards and conformance
 - Align each economy's standards with international standards
 - Promote good regulatory practices in the preparation, adoption and application of standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures.
 - Progress mutual recognition arrangements for conformity assessment within the region.
 - Pursue regional cooperation in accordance with international agreements
 - Ensure greater transparency.
 - Encourage participation in standards education and awareness programs to build capacity and capability to enhance the competitiveness of businesses, including micro, small and medium enterprises.
- To achieve these goals, the SCSC is conducting regular works and implementing several projects by holding following workshops and events
 - Dissemination of good regulatory practices (GRP) and application of digital technology
 - Planning to host the APEC AI Standards Forum Conference
 - Discussing how to train the next generation of standards experts through training in standards and conformity
 - Promoting MSMEs' participation in international standards development
 - Harmonization of international standards for sustainable growth

2 How the forum's work contribute to APEC and CTI's objectives

Please provide a brief list of the forum's work under each sub-heading.

- a. Implementing the [Putrajaya Vision](#), including through the [Aotearoa Plan](#)

of Action

- SCSC is contributing to the achievement of the Putrajaya Vision carrying through the following Collective Actions of the Aotearoa Plan of Action (APA):
 - Progress liberalization of trade in goods by reducing unnecessary barriers, strengthening trade facilitation, and fostering regulatory reform.
 - Increase trade predictability and openness by improving economies' transparency through trade measures and policies.
 - the adoption and improvement of effective standards and conformance systems, encompassing standardization, accreditation, metrology, conformity assessment and market surveillance.
 - Adopt new and emerging technologies to stimulate growth, connectivity and digital transformation.
 - Cooperate in relevant APEC fora to develop, encourage and exchange best practice policies, and promote capacity building programmes, that address all environmental challenges - including climate change - and support sustainable growth.

b. Implementing Leaders or Ministerial mandates from previous years, including the most recent 2024 *Ichma Statement on A New Look at the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific agenda*

- Through Ichma Statement, the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP) has been concurred in a comprehensive and systematic manner, reaffirming the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 and the Aotearoa Plan of Action (APA). The study led by the APEC Policy Support Unit (PSU) developed key agreements upon convergence and divergence on the FTAAP.
- Bridging the gap between economies with different capacity levels through peer learning and fostering collaboration is a key initiative. Digitalization, sustainability, inclusivity, supply chain resilience and other emerging topics should be continually explored in a market-driven manner between trade and other sectors by each economy.
- In this regard, the SCSC is taking the following actions.
 - Harmonization of standards in connection with the FTAAP: Aligning standards to reduce trade barriers and promote economic integration.
 - Strengthening cooperation on standards related to digital and AI: Responding to changes in the trade environment through the standardization of AI and digital technologies.
 - Modernization of regulations and expansion of the GRP: Seeking ways to reduce and harmonize regulatory differences among member economies by expanding the application of the GRP.

c. Support for the Multilateral Trading System

- *“...Growth of international trade flows in the region become more stable and predictable including with increased coverage of WTO rules, through APEC members’ effective and transparent implementation of existing and future commitments...”*

- To support the multilateral trading system of APEC, the SCSC is contributing to the facilitation of trade through international standard alignment. Promoting alignment with the WTO TBT and SPS agreements is a representative activity.
- At SCSC 1, Japan reported on developments at the WTO TBT Committee.
 - The WTO TBT Committee meets three times a year, with discussions often focused on Specific Trade Concerns (STCs) The 10th Triennial Review was in November 2024, which was the 30th anniversary of the TBT Agreement.
 - Updates were provided on the WTO Transparency Initiative, improvements to the ePing platform, and capacity-building efforts through technical assistance programs. A decline in the number of STCs was observed and some members reported progress in resolving previously raised concerns.
- China reported on developments at the WTO SPS Committee.
 - The 90th regular meeting was held from November 13 to 15, 2024.
 - Thematic sessions were held on November 11 and 12, covering emerging risks and new agricultural technologies, as well as Codex guidelines for Voluntary Third-Party Assurance programs.

d. Economic Integration in the Region

- *“...APEC’s trade and investment environment is free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable...”*
- *“...further advance the Bogor Goals and economic integration in the region in a manner that is market-driven, including through the work on the Free Trade Area of the Asia- Pacific (FTAAP) agenda which contributes to high standard and comprehensive regional undertakings...”*

- Economic integration is one of the main goals of APEC, and the SCSC is supporting this through international alignment of standards and conformity assessment procedures. The following activities are being

carried out.

- Support for the reduction of technical barriers to trade (TBT) in the FTAAP discussions: Promoting trade through harmonization.
- Expanding mutual recognition of technical standards and certifications among APEC member economies: Facilitating trade procedures through standard alignment.
- Promoting economic integration through enhanced international regulatory cooperation: Trade facilitation through regulatory harmonization in APEC.
- In particular, updates on GRP and active discussions were shared.
 - The 18th GRP Conference will be held by ROK under the title of “GRP for Emerging Technologies” and it will focus on emerging technologies and sustainable regulation.
 - The US provided an update on the project “Advancing Good Regulatory Practices to Reduce Barriers to Trade” (SCSC 07 2022S), which focuses on capacity-building initiatives in Peru and Indonesia. The project aims to enhance stakeholder engagement in regulatory processes, standardize consultation practices, and support the development of Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) frameworks.

e. Trade Facilitation and Connectivity

- *“...promote seamless connectivity, resilient supply chains and responsible business conduct, APEC economies will improve physical, institutional and people-to-people connectivity”*

- The results of the first and second survey of the 13th Voluntary Action Plan (VAP) Alignment Work on Assistive Technology were reported by Japan. This VAP specifically focuses on Assistive Technology, which supports individuals with reduced abilities. Two more surveys are scheduled in this year, and the overall objective remains to harmonize domestic standards with international ones to facilitate trade.
- Peru provided an update on 15th Conference on Standards and Conformance – Leveraging Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) to Strengthen APEC Member Economies’ Trade Partnerships and Economic Cooperation. The conference exceeded key targets and continued work on VSS within APEC, enhanced experience-sharing, addressing concerns about VSS proliferation, promoting recognition of international standards, and strengthening capacity-building efforts were included in the key recommendations.

f. Innovation and Digitalisation

- *“...To empower all our people and businesses to participate and grow in an interconnected global economy, we will foster an enabling environment that is, among others, market driven and supported by digital economy and innovation.”*
- *“...strengthen digital infrastructure, accelerate digital transformation, narrow the digital divide, as well as cooperate on facilitating the flow of data and strengthening consumer and business trust in digital transactions.”*

- Through the “APEC AI Standards Forum Conference: Building a Sustainable AI Ecosystem Tomorrow” project, the Republic of Korea proposed a platform for economies to cooperate on AI standardization, conformity assessment, and ethical AI governance. The conference, scheduled to be held in Incheon in August 2025, aims to foster regulatory coordination and best practices for AI across APEC economies.
- The US “Digital Standards: Shaping the Future of Standardization” project aims to promote machine-readable standards to modernize certification and regulatory systems.

g. Inclusivity and Sustainability

- *“Advancing inclusive policies, including under the economic drivers of trade & investment, and innovation and digitalisation, to promote sustainable economic growth opportunities and improve quality of life...”*
- *“...develop, encourage and exchange best practice policies, and promote capacity building programmes, that address all environmental challenges - including climate change - and support sustainable growth, such as through trade, including APEC’s work on facilitation of trade in environmental goods and services”*

- SCSC conducts implementations to promote sustainability on quality infrastructure, Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS), valuable usage of hydrogen as a fuel source, among others.
- Inclusivity and sustainability in various areas are being emphasized.
 - During SOM1, Canada held a workshop titled “Engaging Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in International Standards Development.” This project aims to explore MSME participation in international standards development through a survey, policy dialogue, and summary report.
 - In addition, during the SOM1 period, the Republic of Korea held a

project workshop on “The APEC Workshop on Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Standardization, Certification, Law, and System-building” to discuss sustainable energy with a focus on hydrogen fuel cell technology and standardization.

3. Planned private sector / stakeholder engagement in 2025

Please provide a list of planned private sector engagement this year

- SCSC Meetings include representatives from international standards organizations (ISO, IEC, ASTM), as well as groups of bodies involved in standards development and conformity assessment. ISO, IEC, and ASTM shared their works related to issues of interest of the group, including on quality infrastructure, domestic and international standardization, and fosterage of young professionals in standardization.
- SCSC is strengthening its standardization activities in cooperation with the private sector, including industry and academia. In 2025, It is expected that the private sector will actively participate in the following projects.
 - MSME Standards Development Engagement Policy Dialogue
 - APEC AI Standards Forum Conference
 - GRP 18th Conference
 - International Standards Cooperation on Sustainable Energy and Climate Technology

4. Planned cross-fora collaboration in 2025

Please provide a list of planned cross-fora collaboration in 2025

- SCSC collaborates with various APEC forums to achieve international harmonization in various fields through standards and conformity assessment.
 - SCSC Chair participated in GOS plenary which was held on March, during SOM1, and shared views on the role of standards in the service sector.
 - The GRP Conference will be jointly participated and cooperated by SCSC and EC.

5. Main outcomes from most recent plenary meeting

Please provide in list format

- The meeting shared updates on various SCSC work areas, including trade

facilitation, GRP, technical infrastructure development, food safety, regulatory harmonization etc.

- SCSC updated the status of ongoing SCSC projects and shared information on new project proposals.
- SCSC took note of relevant updates by ISO, IEC and ASTM.
- SCSC held policy discussion to share best practices and ideas for future cooperation on 2 topics - “Standards and Conformance in AI,” and “Training the next generation of expert in standards and conformance.”
 - In the Policy Discussion on “Standards and Conformance in AI”, the necessity of the AI Standards Forum Conference and trends in AI standardization were discussed.
 - ✓ The Republic of Korea (ROK) introduced key efforts to ensure safe, reliable, and responsible AI development. In particular, it emphasized the importance of AI regulation and ethical guidelines through its experience participating in the “AI Governance for Humanity” of the UN AI Advisory Board (UN AIAB). Based on this, it proposed the need for an AI Standards Forum conference.
 - ✓ Australia announced that AI standards ensure reliability, ethics, and security, and help to ease trade barriers. It also announced that it is conducting various programs to advance the field of AI and is leading ISO/IEC 42007. In addition, it expressed support for the AI Standards Forum proposed by ROK.
 - ✓ Canada announced that AI standardization helps to align with legal and ethical frameworks. It also introduced the AI and Data Governance (AIDG) program and noted that it contributed to the ISO/IEC 42001 work on AI management systems.
 - Policy Discussion on “Training the next generation of expert in ‘standards and conformance’ was actively conducted by several economies and stakeholders.
 - ✓ China has adopted a “standardization & talent cultivation” model, integrating standardization education with various academic fields, and holds an annual college student standard Olympiad.
 - ✓ The Korea Young Professionals(KYP) Program offers training for early career professionals in standardization and the International Standards Olympiad hosted by the Republic of Korea is highlighted as a key initiative internationally.
 - ✓ Singapore operates the Young Professionals (YP) Bootcamp, which provides a one-day training program to learn about the standards and conformance principles and standards development process. Afterwards, they have the opportunity to observe actual working groups and participate as official members.
- The workshop “Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Standardization, Certification, Law, and System-building” and “Engaging Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

in International Standards Development” was held during SOM1.

- The meeting took note of Canada’s presentation on “Engaging Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in International Standards Development” During the meeting, the United States and Malaysia expressed their appreciation for organizing the initiative.

6. Was quorum reached at the most recent plenary meeting?

Please advise how many economies participated in the most recent plenary meeting

- Quorum was reached with 18 economies present.

7. What is your Forum doing to increase participation from its members?

Please provide a brief list of planned efforts to increase participation from members

- SCSC Chair initiated policy discussions on issues of interest of the group, including “Standards and Conformance in AI,” and “Training the next generation of expert in ‘standards and conformance.’”
- SCSC Chair attended and gave speeches at the GOS and RHSC plenary to share SCSC’s initiative with them. It will continue to promote active cooperation between the forums.

8. Decision points needed from CTI

Please add any additional decision points needed from CTI

- Seek CTI’s endorsement of Convenor’s Report.