



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

**Independent Assessment of the APEC
Emergency Preparedness Working Group**

**Report to the APEC SOM Steering Committee
on Economic and Technical Cooperation**

**Final Report
June 12, 2015**

General Principle of APEC

“Cooperation should involve a commitment to open dialogue and consensus, with equal respect for the views of all participants.”

[Chairman’s Summary Statement, First Ministerial Meeting, November 1989]

Acknowledgement

The contractor wishes to acknowledge his appreciation for the informal exchanges of views and information which took place with participants after the 7th meeting of the Working Group in January 2015; and for the continuing support throughout the project provided by the Program Directors in the APEC Secretariat assigned to the EPWG and SCE.

APEC Project: SCE/IA/2015

Produced by:

John Platts

19 Impala Crescent

Ottawa, Ontario

K1V 9B7, Canada

Phone: +1 613 737-3490

Email: platts-j@sympatico.ca

For:

Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Secretariat

35 Heng Mui Keng Terrace

Singapore 119616

Tel: (65) 68919 600

Fax: (65) 68919 690

Email: info@appec.org

Website: www.appec.org

(c) 2015 APEC Secretariat

APEC#215-EM-01.1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY..... | 3 |
| LIST OF RELEVANT ABBREVIATIONS USED BY APEC FORA..... | 6 |
| 1. METHODOLOGY..... | 7 |
| 1.1 Objective..... | 7 |
| 1.2 Scope of Work..... | 7 |
| 1.3 Approach..... | 7 |
| 1.4 Key Assumptions..... | 8 |
| 2. ALIGNMENT WITH APEC PRIORITIES | 8 |
| 2.1 High Level Direction | 8 |
| 2.2 APEC 2015 Priorities | 9 |
| 2.3 SCE Planning Framework | 9 |
| 2.4 APEC Project Initiation Framework | 11 |
| 2.5 EPWG Strategic Plan 2013-2016 | 11 |
| 2.6 EPWG 2015 Work Planning and Reporting Process .. | 12 |
| 2.7 EPWG 2015 Concept Notes | 14 |
| 3. ANALYSIS OF EPWG OPERATIONS | 14 |
| 3.1 Positioning the EPWG in APEC | 14 |
| 3.2 Terms of Reference | 14 |
| 3.3 Steering Committee..... | 15 |
| 3.4 Characteristics of Meeting Participants..... | 16 |
| 3.5 Characteristics of Meeting Procedures | 16 |
| 3.6 Reporting Mechanisms..... | 16 |
| 3.7 Websites..... | 17 |
| 3.8 Publications | 18 |
| 3.9 Projects | 18 |
| 3.10 Secretariat Support Services | 19 |
| 4. LINKAGES WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS..... | 20 |
| 4.1 APEC Groups..... | 20 |
| 4.2 Regional/International Organizations..... | 21 |
| 4.3 Business and Private Sectors..... | 21 |
| 5. SUPPORTING INPUT TO THE ASSESSMENT..... | 21 |
| 5.1 Feedback from Member Economies..... | 21 |
| 5.2 Recommendations in Recent Assessments of Other SCE Fora | 22 |
| 6. CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS | 23 |
| 6.1 Conclusions | 23 |
| 6.2 Summary of Recommendations..... | 24 |
| 6.3 Implementation Advice | 25 |
| Annex A Summary of EPWG's APEC Funded Projects, 2011-2014 | 26 |
| Annex B List of Program Director Support Services | 29 |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This independent assessment was commissioned with the aim of ensuring that the Emergency Preparedness Working Group (EPWG) is responsive to the current priorities of APEC and contributing to the achievement of APEC's overall vision and objectives. In order to identify opportunities for strengthening EPWG work processes, it was necessary to assess a wide range of topics including the extent to which the EPWG's:

- ❖ Capacity building activities are providing benefits according to Leaders' and Ministers' priorities;
- ❖ Collaboration and synergies with other APEC groups and non-APEC members could be increased, including its ability to tap resources for programs from non-APEC sources;
- ❖ Commitment to give gender greater consideration is in accordance with directions outlined by the Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy (PPWE);
- ❖ Operations are effective and efficient;
- ❖ Outputs and Outcomes are aligned with APEC priorities and supporting APEC's main objectives; and
- ❖ Strategic priorities and direction for future work need to be strengthened.

The approach is similar to the one used in the 2013 assessment of another forum in the human security sector - the Counter-Terrorism Task Force (as it was formerly called). It is based on the assumptions that (a) the EPWG Co-Chairs and meeting delegates would be the main beneficiaries of the report's findings and recommendations; and (b) the suggested changes should build on the responses to the recommendations made in the EPWG's previous assessment. The work stretched over an eight-week period (from mid-January to mid-March) and included attendance at the 7th meeting which took place on January 28-29, 2015.

Summary of EPWG Characteristics

Since it was elevated to working group status in 2010, the EPWG has met seven times. Its main features are:

- Meetings typically held once a year for up to two days on the margins of the first Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM), with representation from member economies in the 13-17 range;
- A lack of continuity in the attendance of delegates from member economies (e.g. only six of the delegates at the January 2015 meeting had attended a previous meeting);
- Two Co-Chairs, a practice which has continued since the forum was created as a task force in 2005;
- Assistance provided by a Program Director (who is shared with two other working groups in the human security sector) and a Steering Committee (which has not met since 2013); and
- A close linkage with the annual Senior Disaster Management Officials Forum which is generally held at separate times and locations from EPWG meetings.

Overall Findings:

Since it was established as a task force a decade ago, the EPWG's profile within APEC has gradually increased in response to the increasing number of major natural disasters in the Region and their economic consequences. In terms of its mandate, it was found that the EPWG:

- remains closely aligned with APEC's broadly-defined objectives and priorities in its work; and
- has been generally responsive to the role-related recommendations made in the previous assessment, especially in the area of building collaboration with other APEC fora and relevant external organizations through joint projects and conference participation.

However, recognizing that the insightfulness of this second assessment was limited by the relatively short assessment period, a snapshot into meeting dynamics gained over a 1.5 day period and informal feedback received from one-third of the member economies represented at the meeting, another main finding was that the forum has not successfully integrated a continuing improvement approach into its work processes. While the EPWG was clearly moving forward with its agenda and member economies appeared to be generally satisfied with its accomplishments, it was also evident that work processes needed to be upgraded in order for the forum to operate at a higher level of efficiency and effectiveness. Processes in need of examination include:

- Planning of meeting agendas so as to promote discussion and agreed actions;
- Reviewing completed projects so as to agree on next steps;
- Establishing EPWG-specific annual priorities as a basis for annual work planning and reporting;
- Quantifying expected outputs and outcomes in work plans and project proposals as a basis for progress monitoring and reporting;
- Updating information sharing protocols so as to facilitate inter-sessional work;
- Directly linking the 2013-2016 Strategic Plan and Annual Work Plans so as to measure progress in meeting strategic plan objectives;

- Providing inter-sessional support to the Co-Chairs so as to efficiently use Secretariat resources and the expertise of member economies wherever appropriate; and
- Maintaining a register of linkages with other APEC fora and relevant external organizations so as to be aware of upcoming events and opportunities for joint endeavours.

In a short-term assessment such as this, there is a risk that recommendations which are too prescriptive will be 'off-the-mark' and lead to a sense of unfair or unwarranted criticism by the group that it is trying to assist. For this reason, the recommendations in this assessment have focused on where there may be opportunities for improvement (and why) rather than specifying what those improvements ought to be. While the assessment has provided some hints about possible specific improvements, it is the forum membership that is best placed to determine what changes it wishes to make, taking into full account the consensual environment which underpins the forum's work processes.

Over-arching Recommendations

To address the main areas that were perceived to require attention, some 18 recommendations have been identified for consideration by the SOM Steering Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation (SCE) and EPWG. They are not overly-prescriptive so as to provide flexibility in devising detailed courses of action for their implementation. In order to summarize the nature of these recommendations, they have been consolidated into five overarching ones below, along with a brief justification:

1. Aligning the SCE work planning and reporting cycles

Justification: The current calendar year work planning cycle leads to fora work plans that vary considerably in format and content, and raise concerns by the SCE as to their quality. In the EPWG's case, due to time pressures, they tend to be minimal updates of the previous year's plan, activity-oriented and seldom used as a basis for progress reporting throughout the year. Their primary objective appears to be submission for endorsement at the first SCE meeting (SCE1) rather than the forum's primary work instrument. In contrast, the current reporting cycle for fora activities is generally August to July in support of the annual reports prepared for the APEC Ministers' and final SCE meetings. The result is a mis-alignment of the two cycles by five months and no opportunity for either the SCE or fora to compare planned and actual deliverables/outcomes at the end of a calendar year.

One possible option for pragmatically addressing this mis-alignment would be to require fora to present their planned deliverables/outcomes in two distinct 6-month blocks within their proposed work plans. If the 6-month time periods were February 1 to July 31 and August 1 to January 31, then the current mid-year reporting deadline would be unchanged while the planning period would essentially remain on its calendar year basis. However, this adjustment does not resolve the challenges faced by fora such as the EPWG which meet on the margins of SCE to finalize their proposed work plans at their meetings and submit them three weeks in advance of the SCE meeting (which is the deadline specified in the SCE Terms of Reference). A possible option for addressing this tight deadline would be for the SCE to consider reducing its submission deadline to a few days before the SCE meeting so that they would be available at the SCE-COW meeting for information purposes but could be reviewed/approved inter-sessionally if so required.

2. Taking steps to assist fora in developing efficient and effective work practices and procedures

Justification: The policies and procedures associated with projects, publications and websites are well-documented in APEC Guides and extremely useful aids to fora as they go about their work. However, there is no consolidated guidance available on other aspects of forum operations (although some of SCE's larger working groups have developed their own management handbooks). Guidance exists but typically as part of papers presented at SCE or earlier fora meetings. The *2012 Revised Guidelines for Lead Shepherd/Chair and Deputy Lead Shepherd/Chair of APEC Working Groups and SOM Task Forces* is one such example. However, while it documents their duties and the assistance that is obtainable from the Secretariat, there is little information on how to carry out those duties. Moreover, representatives of member economies who attend meetings or are inter-sessional contact points often have no information available to them on their forum's practices and procedures. The consolidation of SCE's existing guidance into a single document or webpage could assist the EPWG and other fora to develop efficient and effective administrative practices and procedures in such areas as:

- **Annual Work Planning and Reporting:** The annual work planning and reporting cycle; objectives of its two main products; the desired work plan format with guidance on the contents of each section; and how to align the annual report with work plan deliverables and strategies in the strategic plan.
- **Strategic Planning:** Objectives of the quadrennial fora plans; the desired strategic plan format with guidance on the contents of each section; and how to monitor implementation progress.
- **Conduct of Meetings:** Guidance on standing items; presenting information and action items; and how to make effective use of the APEC Collaboration System.
- **Assistance to Chairs/Lead Shepherds:** Guidance on how to make efficient use of Secretariat support; options for formalizing assistance from member economies; and establishing succession plans.
- **Expectations of Member Economy Representatives:** Listing the 'duties' of representatives, taking a similar approach to the above-noted guidelines established for Chairs/Lead Shepherds.

3. *Clarifying the EPWG's leadership role within APEC for advancing APEC's emergency preparedness agenda*

Justification: As its title implies, the EPWG has played a central role in advancing APEC's emergency preparedness agenda. It has done so through undertaking initiatives that it considers to be within its mandated area of responsibility or through joint projects and collaboration with other fora whose mandate encompasses emergency preparedness. At the same time, there are many regional and international organizations which are mandated to carry out emergency preparedness programs. The term "Emergency Preparedness" is problematic in that its scope is so wide that it becomes every organization's responsibility to varying degrees. Even when the forum was created ten years ago, the adopted terminology – emergency and natural disaster preparedness and response – suggested a broad scope of endeavor. To clarify the EPWG's leadership role in 2015 is timely for the following reasons:

- The Terms of Reference (with two mandate statements) and the 2013-2016 Strategic Plan (with four overlapping mission statements) are due to be reviewed; and
- The Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction took place in March 2015. It was attended by over 6500 delegates and consisted of five Ministerial Round Tables, three High-Level Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues and some 34 working sessions. The conference's size and scope should enable the EPWG to more sharply define its unique role in this important aspect of emergency preparedness.

4. *Scheduling full two-day meetings.*

Justification: Except for 2013 when two meetings were held, meetings have been once a year on the margins of the first SOM meeting. A characteristic of these meetings is that they have been planned to last for 1.5 days, leaving a half-day for members to undertake other activities. One outcome of the January 2015 meeting was to hold a second 1.5 day meeting on the margins of SOM2 in May 2015. As many economy representatives do not attend other fora meetings taking place on the margins of SOM, it is important that attendance at EPWG meetings is viewed as being cost-effective especially for those making trans-Pacific journeys. Opportunities for the second day could include:

- Policy dialogues on cross-sectoral issues which could help the EPWG to develop multi-year programs in response to new priorities;
- Presentations on specific issues by external specialists in external organizations, the private and business sector with which the EPWG would like to establish closer linkages through jointly-funded programs;
- Presentations by other APEC fora on issues of mutual interest (e.g. by the PPWE on women's entrepreneurship in local communities as part of disaster reconstruction).

5. *Cultivating a continuing improvement approach to EPWG operations.*

Justification: The EPWG responded to the previous Assessment by re-establishing a Steering Committee to assist the co-chairs in implementing its recommendations and report on inter-sessional progress at EPWG meetings. The committee has not met since 2013 and, except for the upgrading of the EPWG's satellite site, there appears to have been a loss of momentum in continuing improvements to EPWG's work processes including the full implementation of the recommendations. Its meeting in May 2015 provided a timely opportunity for the EPWG to determine the most appropriate form of assistance. While a Steering Committee is one option, there are others which may be considered such as establishing a Friends of the Chair group or ad hoc subcommittees on specific issues (one of the suggestions made by the EPWG Steering Committee in July 2012); or having designated 'champions' for specific files. As well, to maintain momentum, identifying ways to improve work processes should become a meeting agenda item at least once a year.

LIST OF RELEVANT ABBREVIATIONS USED BY APEC FORA

| | |
|----------|--|
| ABAC | APEC Business Advisory Council |
| ACS | APEC Collaboration System |
| ACTWG | Anti-Corruption and Transparency Working Group |
| AELM | APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting |
| AIMP | APEC Information Management Portal |
| AMM | APEC Ministers' Meeting |
| APEC | Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation |
| ASEAN | Association of South East Asia Nations |
| BCP | Business Continuity Planning |
| BMC | Budget and Management Committee |
| CPAU | Communications & Public Affairs Unit (in APEC Secretariat) |
| CTTF | Counter-Terrorism Task Force (now the CTWG) |
| CTWG | Counter-Terrorism Working Group |
| ECOTECH | Economic and Technical Cooperation |
| EPWG | Emergency Preparedness Working Group |
| EPWG-7 | 7 th EPWG meeting, January 28-29, 2015 |
| EPWG-8 | 8 th EPWG meeting, May 13-14, 2015 |
| ERTF | Emergency Response Travel Facilitation |
| FOTC | Friends of the Chair |
| ICT | Information and Communications Technology |
| KPI | Key Performance Indicator |
| PD | Program Director in APEC Secretariat |
| PD-EPWG | Program Director assigned to the EPWG |
| PMU | Project Management Unit (in APEC Secretariat) |
| PPWE | Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy |
| S&T | Science and Technology |
| SCE | SOM Steering Committee on ECOTECH |
| SCE1/2/3 | 1 st , 2 nd & 3 rd SCE meetings each year |
| SCE-COW | SCE Committee of the Whole |
| SDMOF | Senior Disaster Management Officials Forum |
| SDMOF-8 | 8 th SDMOF held in August 2014 |
| SDMOF-9 | 9 th SDMOF scheduled for September 2015 |
| SMEWG | Small and Medium Enterprises Working Group |
| SOM | Senior Officials' Meeting |
| TELWG | Telecommunications and Information Working Group |
| TFEP | Task Force for Emergency Preparedness (now the EPWG) |
| TOR | Terms of Reference |
| TPTWG | Transportation Working Group |
| TWG | Tourism Working Group |

1. METHODOLOGY

1.1 Objective

The provision of a set of recommendations designed to ensure that the EPWG is responsive to APEC's current priorities and contributing to the achievement of APEC's overall vision and objectives.

1.2 Scope of Work

The assessment is required to address a wide range of topics in order to identify opportunities for strengthening EPWG work processes. In particular, the assessor is required to:

- ❖ *Work cooperatively with the EPWG Chair and members, the SCE, and the APEC Secretariat to provide a robust analysis of the work and operations of the group and recommendations for ways to ensure the overall goals and objectives of APEC are met;*
- ❖ *Review key APEC policy documents, including Leaders' and Ministers' statements, EPWG records of meetings, key project documentation and activities to assess the outcomes and how EPWG supports the main objectives/goals of APEC and their impacts in APEC member economies;*
- ❖ *Evaluate whether EPWG is operating effectively and efficiently; and whether the group's Terms of Reference, strategic plan or operations could be modified to better respond to APEC ECOTECH priorities and contribute to the achievement of APEC goals;*
- ❖ *Identify ways to strengthen EPWG's strategic priorities and direction for future work;*
- ❖ *Provide recommendations on how the forum can better focus and more efficiently and effectively manage its tasks and assure that its capacity building activities are providing benefits according to Leaders' and Ministers' priorities;*
- ❖ *Identify ways to develop synergies among the work of the forum and other relevant APEC groups;*
- ❖ *Identify opportunities and provide recommendations for greater collaboration with non-APEC parties, including the private sector, civil society and other international organizations;*
- ❖ *Identify ways for EPWG to tap resources for programs; and*
- ❖ *Explore how EPWG can better take into account the APEC commitment to give gender greater consideration in accordance with directions outlined by the PPWE.*

1.3 Approach

The assessment, which began in mid-January 2015, was conducted in five phases:

- **Familiarization** which involved researching the APEC website and attending the EPWG-7 meeting to gain a sound understanding of:
 - APEC priorities;
 - SCE priorities, work program and relationship with the EPWG;
 - Evolving APEC Secretariat guidance on managing APEC-funded projects, strategic planning, communications and outreach;
 - Changes in the EPWG's structure, work processes and priorities since the previous independent assessment was approved by the SCE in 2011;
 - Linkages between the EPWG and other APEC fora; and non-APEC organizations, particularly private sector associations and multi-lateral agencies.
- **Analysis** which consisted of reviewing the EPWG structure, work processes and outputs in terms of their alignment with APEC priorities, efficiency, effectiveness and compliance with established guidelines and priorities.
- **Validation** which involved comparing findings with (a) relevant ones identified in other recent assessment reports; and (b) the feedback received from the EPWG co-chairs and the representatives of member economies and other APEC fora who attended EPWG-7.
- **Evaluation** which involved identifying a set of practical recommendations to assist the EPWG in its continuing improvement efforts while being mindful of APEC's principles of cooperation, voluntarism and consensus building.
- **Report Writing** which included a draft and final report as well as a sheet showing the disposition of any comments received on the draft report.

1.4 Key Assumptions

- (a) The conduct of a survey across member economies would be impractical as:
- Response rates tend to be low (e.g. only eight out of 21 member economies responded to the questionnaire distributed as part of the previous Assessment);
 - The short time period (no more than four weeks) in which to design and distribute a questionnaire, and receive and analyze feedback;
 - Questions that may be highly relevant to one member economy may be less significant to others;
 - Surveys may impose a significant response and/or coordination burden on member economies;
 - Some recommendations endorsed from the previous Assessment have not yet being fully implemented;
 - The majority of the representatives of member economies who attended EPWG-7 were attending an EPWG meeting for the first time.

For the above reasons, the approach adopted was to have informal, face-to-face discussions (rather than more formal interviews with set questions) with economy representatives who were available at the end of EPWG-7 as well as subsequent exchanges of e-mails or telephone conversations with others. Economy representatives were invited to provide any views that they wished to share on how EPWG operations could be improved, with the assurance that the source of such information would remain confidential.

- (b) An important role for an assessor is to informally offer advice and be willing to provide preliminary observations if requested by members of the EPWG management team during the course of the assessment so as to:
- Provide the management team with an opportunity to make adjustments to aspects of EPWG operations before receiving the assessment report (i.e. the assessment process can serve as a catalyst for change in advance of responding to formal SCE-endorsed recommendations in the report);
 - Identify minor adjustments that can be made without being referenced in the assessment report.
- (c) As this is the second assessment, it should place significant emphasis on the extent to which:
- The expected benefits of completed projects have been achieved including the involvement of women in developing disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness;
 - The recommendations in the previous assessment have been implemented.

2. ALIGNMENT WITH APEC PRIORITIES

2.1 High Level Direction

The following extracts from statements made by APEC Leaders and Ministers and the Host Economy in 2014 reflect the high level direction that should shape the development of EPWG's program of activities in 2015 and beyond. Although the wording is such that these statements do not explicitly identify priorities, they are sufficiently detailed to clearly indicate where the EPWG should be placing its emphasis in the in the short to medium term.

- (a) The 22nd APEC Economic Leaders' Declaration (November 2014):
- *We commit to jointly tacklenatural disasters, climate change and other global challenges (para.45).*
 - *We encourage further cooperation of member economies in disaster preparedness, risk reduction, response and post-disaster recovery, and cooperation in search and rescue, through more robust networking among disaster management departments; following the APEC Guidelines on Appropriate Donations; improving supply chain resiliency; operationalizing the Trade Recovery Programme; reducing barriers to the movement of emergency responders and humanitarian relief across borders; increased data sharing; and application of S&T (para.49).*
 - *We support women's leadership and recognize the importance of women's entrepreneurship support services and networks (para. 43).*
 - *We are committed to enhancing APEC synergy with other relevant international and regional cooperation organizations and fora through coordination and cooperation (para.65).*
- (b) The 26th APEC Ministerial Meeting, Joint Ministerial Statement, November 2014:
- *We welcome the recommendations from the 8th SDMOF. We encourage APEC member economies to place more emphasis on the application of S&T in disaster preparedness, risk reduction, response and*

post-disaster recovery and cooperation in search and rescue, and recognize them as effective approaches in responding to global climate change and promoting a balance between economic growth, inclusive social development, and sustainable use of the environment and resources (para. 68).

- We welcome the Work Plan on ERTF that will continue APEC's work in easing the mobility of emergency responders and business community to take part in post-disaster recovery. We commend the ongoing work to promote the use of business continuity plans to mitigate the impact of disasters on communities and economies (para.69).
- We welcome the **APEC Guidelines for Appropriate Donations in Times of Disaster** to support effective public donation practices, efficient supply chain and relief operations, and speedier economic recovery in disaster-affected areas. We commit to improving the resilience of supply chains in APEC economies. We support and recognize the importance of assessing the economic value of coastal ecosystems for disaster risk reduction and response and coastal resilience. We encourage additional emergency response mechanisms to increase resiliency of our energy infrastructure to natural disasters and climate change. We welcome work that might better utilize new technologies to improve how we work collectively across APEC in response to disasters and emergencies, such as the initial steps taken by the TELWG. We support the goal of increasing human safety by using ICT. We encourage the application of innovative S&T to better utilize big data and share value-added information that will enhance capacity-building on disaster resilience for SMEs and Global Value Chains. We acknowledge the progress being made by APEC towards establishing the Trade Recovery Programme..... (para.70).
- We welcome the outcomes of the APEC 2014 Women and the Economy Forum, and encourage sustained momentum from economies to provide policy support for women's economic empowerment and establish a gender-responsive enabling environment to advance women's access to jobs,... skills and capacity building, and innovation and technology.(para.64).
- We acknowledge ongoing endeavours to strengthen the coordination between APEC fora and to streamline the operation of the SCE and urge APEC fora to enhance communication so as to avoid duplication of work and maximize synergy (para.97).

(c) APEC 2014 Women and the Economy Forum, Ministerial Statement, May 2014:

- Encourage and promote women affected by natural disasters, particularly indigenous and rural women, to contribute to response and reconstruction through entrepreneurship and innovation.

This direction should be reflected in EPWG's 2015 Work Plan (refer to section 2.6) and any project initiation documents (refer to section 3.9).

2.2 APEC 2015 Priorities

One of the four priorities established in mid-December 2014 by The Philippines as the Host Economy for 2015 was **Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities** as substantiated by the following statement:

“The changing global environment, along with natural and man-made disasters, has brought tremendous Loss and Damage and disruptions to the inter-linked supply and demand sides of Asia-Pacific trade. Moreover, disasters and disaster-related events negatively impact the image of member economies as stable, worthwhile investment destinations.”

The following sub-priorities are relevant to the EPWG:

- *Creating and promoting risk reduction and management in APEC economies;*
- *Building resilient infrastructure;*
- *Fostering business continuity;*
- *Building SME's resilience to disaster.*

These sub-priorities should be clearly reflected in EPWG's 2015 Work Plan (refer to section 2.6) and any project initiation documents (refer to section 3.9).

2.3 SCE Planning Framework

As a means of assisting its fora to translate high level direction and priorities into a multi-year program that is consistent with broader APEC goals and objectives, the SCE has provided guidance on the development of the two main components of its present planning framework - the 2013-2016 Strategic Plan and an Annual Work Plan.

In 2014, the SCE endorsed the following general observations based on the results of a FOTC meeting on Strategic Planning:

- The fora strategic plans are a good foundation but many will require further improvement when they are revised at the end of their current term – generally around late 2015 or 2016;
- Fora will be asked to continue refining their strategic plans through 2015 with particular reference to strengthening their KPIs;
- Establish a review group to assist in the development of “highly polished” strategic plans by 2016;
- Continue to ask Program Directors to support fora in developing their strategic plans.

Also in 2014, the SCE made several observations on the 2014 work plans that had been submitted by fora for consideration by the SCE-COW. These included:

- All the work plans have largely followed the SCE template;
- Many work plans still make only quite general linkages to broader APEC goals;
- The best work plans identify a broad APEC goal and their specific plan for taking action (in contrast to plans which are vague and contain actions do not specifically identify the goal which they are seeking to give effect to);
- Some plans suffer from having long descriptive sections, they could be improved and shortened if they took a sharper focus to their activities;
- Too many plans provide no details about what topics they will collaborate on or how that collaboration will occur;
- Many expected deliverables are quite vague or too heavily dominated by routine planning;
- The best plans identify specific activities and the expected outcomes from them;
- It would be pleasing to see a greater number of specific and measurable targets included in future;
- Very few fora highlight their planned capacity building activities;
- Very few plans mention efforts to address gender-related issues, including specific measures planned for the current year;
- When preparing plans for 2015, the Secretariat will highlight the desirability of addressing gender-related issues, the host’s priorities, the inclusion of specific details of cross-fora collaboration and specific and measurable outcomes.

In the *2014 APEC Report on Economic and Technical Cooperation*, the SCE suggested that the EPWG should provide “a little more detail on each area of planned work in future plans”.

In February 2015, the Secretariat’s Executive Director tabled a report at the SCE meeting which made several observations based on a review of the 12 fora plans which had been submitted for approval:

- The level of detail varies substantially;
- Many work plans make only quite general linkages to broader APEC goals. The best identify a broad APEC goal, its source and their specific plan for taking action;
- Many plans either make no reference to host priorities or could be improved with a sharper focus;
- The best plans provide specific detail on which fora and projects they will be collaborating;
- The best plans identify specific activities and the expected outcomes from them;
- Very few plans make any mention of efforts to address gender-related issues, reflecting a relatively steady area of underperformance;
- Too many plans addressed capacity building only in a general way.

The SCE requires its fora to report annually on the progress and achievements in implementing Leaders’, Ministers’ and Sectoral Ministers’ mandates; medium-term ECOTECH priorities; collaboration with other APEC fora, private sector and international organizations; annual deliverables; and APEC funded and self-funded projects. The information is collated and summary information on all SCE fora is used to prepare the *SOM Report on ECOTECH* which is presented at the AMM and the *SCE Fora Report* to SCE3. In order to align with the AMM which occurs late in the year, the reporting period is from mid-year to mid-year. Although this does not align with the work planning cycle (which is calendar year-based), the fora reports are comprehensive and provide a means of monitoring fora compliance and responsiveness to high level direction and priorities. However, the timing is such that it is difficult to compare expected and actual deliverables in any given year.

The implications of the SCE’s planning framework and observations for the EPWG’s planning and reporting processes are examined in sections 2.5 and 2.6.

2.4 APEC Project Initiation Framework

BMC, working with the Secretariat's PMU, has continued to strengthen the project planning framework by requiring fora to comply with a 14-step project initiation phase. The starting point is the submission of a Concept Note to a forum (refer to section 2.7 for EPWG's process) seeking endorsement on the basis of the project's relevance which is assessed in terms of:

- The SOM-endorsed APEC-wide funding criteria;
- Leaders, Ministers and SOM priorities;
- Eligibility criteria for the nominated APEC funding account;
- Strong alignment with the forum's strategic plan or work plan;
- Potential for positive contribution to APEC's and SCE's priorities;
- APEC value-for-money principles and how the activity complements previous work undertaken by APEC;
- A sponsor and at least two co-sponsoring economies.

The application of the Concept Note endorsement process is briefly examined in section 2.7.

2.5 EPWG Strategic Plan 2013-2016

The EPWG *Strategic Plan 2013-2016* has been developed in compliance with the *APEC Strategic Planning Checklist* and contains a Vision Statement, Mission Statement, Critical Success Factors, Objectives, Prioritized Implementation Schedule and a guidance note on project proposals. It also indicates that:

- A report on implementation progress would be prepared before the end of 2014;
- A final review of the Plan and an updated version for the 2017-2020 period would be presented before the end of 2016.

A review of the plan gave rise to the following observations:

- Only three of the 16 actions/activities were scheduled to carry over into the second half of the four-year planning period;
- The mission statement consisted of four statements, the first two of which are identical to the mandate statements in the Terms of Reference;
- The plan appears to have been used as a limited reference source for the preparation of the 2014 and 2015 work plans as the latter do not explicitly group their planned activities by Priority Area (4) or Objective (9) although linkages are discernible;
- The plan's preparation and upkeep required considerable effort, with much of the workload for this non-core' activity being the responsibility of a small group of economy representatives (i.e. Co- Chairs and Steering Committee members);
- The listed actions and activities are understandably specific and replicate those in the annual work plans, suggesting that the strategic plan may have been more useful as a planning tool if the Actions/Activities column had been cast at a more aggregate level (e.g. by identifying types of recurring actions/activities) and inserted between the Objectives and KPI columns;
- There is presently no requirement to report on progress in meeting the nine objectives through the application of KPIs which are qualitative rather than specific and measurable, as stated in the APEC Strategic Planning Checklist.

Although, the review of the strategic plan was an agenda item at EPWG-7, time constraints did not permit the item to be addressed.

Recommendation EPWG1: Noting from section 2.3 that SCE would like fora to continue refining their plans through 2015, the EPWG to consider establishing a process for the timely review and updating of the 2013-2016 Strategic Plan to: (a) report on implementation progress; (b) provide useful guidance for the preparation of the 2016 Work Plan; and (c) lay the groundwork for its transformation into an effective plan for the 2017-2020 period.

Recommendation SCE1: Noting from section 2.3 the SCE's desire to see "highly polished" strategic plans by 2016, the SCE to consider if this could be facilitated by providing more specific guidance than is currently contained within the *Strategic Planning – Process Guide for Working Groups* which was presented at SCE-COW in February 2012 (e.g. a populated Prioritized Implementation Schedule and how it would link with a desired work plan template).

2.6 EPWG 2015 Work Planning and Reporting Process

The EPWG, along with the other SCE fora, is required to:

- Prepare an Annual Work Plan for endorsement by the SCE-COW at the first SOM in each year;
- Submit an Annual Report of its activities to the SCE at the end of July each year.

(a) The ***Proposed Work Plan for 2015***, which was tabled at EPWG-7, complies with the format established by the SCE. It is divided into five main sections, each of which is summarized below:

Section 1 - *Proposed Work Plan for 2015 in response to Leaders/Ministers/SOM/SCE Priorities and Decisions, and to ABAC recommendations.* In addition to taking note of the Leaders/Ministers statements and ABAC recommendations, EPWG indicated that the work plan would be responsive to:

- Relevant direction in the 2010 APEC Growth Strategy;
- Five main recommendations from the 2014 SDMOF;
- Six principles reached during the 2012 APEC High Level Policy Dialogue on Disaster Resiliency;
- Five priority areas reflecting the medium-term objectives set out in the 2013-2016 Strategic Plan; the high level directives in the above-noted Leaders/Ministers statements and ABAC recommendations; and the APEC 2009-2015 Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Preparedness and Response;
- Four 'possible goals' based on the one of the APEC 2015 Priorities - Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities.

The section also identified 28 planned activities grouped into 10 activity areas, as follows:

- Annual meeting for reviewing and reporting EPWG work plan (3 activities);
- Execute projects based on the statements and priorities identified above (5 activities);
- Participate in cross-fora projects (6 activities);
- Select EPWG Chairs;
- Receive the independent assessment;
- Subject to APEC funding, conduct or join activities (2 activities);
- Continue promoting the public private partnership to enhance disaster resilience (1 unfunded project);
- Continued and/or enhancement work (8 activities);
- Working Group meeting (1 activity);
- Steering Committee (2 activities).

Section 2 - *Anticipated Activities and/or Proposed Work Plan with relevant organizations in response to Ministers' call for greater engagement with the business sector and other organizations/stakeholders.* EPWG intends to:

- Invite 14 regional and international organizations to attend EPWG workshops or participate in joint projects;
- Seek greater private sector participation at EPWG events;
- Provide suggestions to the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Section 3 - *Cross-cutting issues and how they will be coordinated across fora.* EPWG intends to continue exploring opportunities to work with nine APEC/SCE fora.

Section 4 - *Progress on developing/implementing the strategic plan.* EPWG intends to actively participate with four APEC/SCE fora on seven activities/projects.

Section 5 - *Expected Outcomes / Deliverables for 2015.* Five expected outcomes/deliverables were identified:

- Carrying on outcomes and suggestions of Leaders/Ministers statements and the 2014 SDMOF;
- Implementing the ERTF work plan;
- Conducting five workshops;
- Strengthening collaboration and networking with other APEC fora and non-members through contributions to resilience initiatives and participation in regional activities to share EPWG's achievements from public and private sector to the communities;
- Collaboration with five SCE fora to carry out EPWG's mandate, 2015 APEC priorities and cross-fora statements.

A review of the contents outlined above gave rise to the following observations:

- It is a 'minimum change' update of the 2014 version, with several paragraphs either identical or very similar. This may reflect the challenge of distilling multiple broadly-stated principles, priorities and recommendations into a set of EPWG priorities that can be clearly linked to the objectives in the strategic plan;

- It identifies the same five priority areas for 2015 as were identified for EPWG in 2014 but does not further distil these down to specific annual priorities which can be precisely linked to planned activities and deliverables;
- It has not taken into account the relevant observations made by the SCE on the 2014 fora work plans (refer to section 2.3 above), perhaps because a period of six weeks (which includes the holiday period) is insufficient for a work plan to:
 - be crafted, based on a set of EPWG-specific priorities;
 - distributed for review by all member economies;
 - revised in light of any comments arising from the review;
 - tabled for final discussion and endorsement at an EPWG meeting held 4-5 days in advance of the SCE-COW meeting;
- It provides a partial source of input for the mid-year preparation of the EPWG component of the SCE fora report summarizing outcomes and deliverables over the previous 12 months;
- There is no year-end requirement for EPWG to report on its progress in achieving expected outcomes and deliverables.

A review of the drafting process gave rise to the following observations:

- While the first draft had been circulated by e-mail prior to the meeting, subsequent feedback from some member economies suggested that insufficient time had been allocated for comment;
- Insufficient time was allocated at EPWG-7 for member economies to fully discuss how the plan could be improved;
- Not all suggestions made by member economies were incorporated into the final version, possibly due to the amount of work required to adopt them;
- Post-meeting, some delegates offered textual changes to the drafting group;
- It was one of four fora plans that could not be submitted in time to be considered for approval at the SCE-COW meeting which took place six days later – it was held over for approval at SCE2 in mid-May;
- Its contents were in the mid-range of the 12 work plans approved by the SCE-COW which varied considerably in both length (from 2 to 23 pages) and expected outcomes/deliverables (from 2 to 23).

(b) The other main deliverable is the annex to the *SCE Fora Report* which is compiled inter-sessionally in August of each year as input to two reports that are issued later in the calendar year for consideration at the AMM and SCE3. As a result of the timing, it is mis-aligned by around five months with the work planning process, thereby preventing any comparison of expected and actual deliverables/outcomes to be undertaken at the end of each calendar year.

One possible option for pragmatically addressing this mis-alignment would be to require fora to present their planned deliverables/outcomes in two distinct 6-month blocks within their proposed work plans. If the 6-month time periods were February 1 to July 31 and August 1 to January 31, then the current mid-year reporting deadline would be unchanged while the planning period would essentially remain on its calendar year basis.

However, this adjustment does not resolve any of the current challenges for fora in developing their proposed work plans. Fora, such as the EPWG which meet on the margins of SCE, would still not have the opportunity to finalize their proposed work plans at their meetings and submit them three weeks in advance of the SCE meeting which is the deadline specified in the SCE Terms of Reference. Another possible option for addressing this tight deadline would be for the SCE to consider reducing its submission deadline to a few days before the SCE meeting so that they would be available at the SCE-COW meeting for information purposes but could be reviewed / approved inter-sessionally, if so required.

If adopted, the above adjustments could enhance the EPWG's work planning process by enabling progress in meeting its expected deliverables to be monitored on a half-yearly basis; and improving its ability to compare actual and expected deliverables/outcomes for the previous year as an input to planning for the upcoming year.

Recommendation SCE2: The SCE to consider if the efficiency and effectiveness of the EPWG and other fora would be enhanced by taking into account the challenges in meeting work plan deadlines and comparing planned and actual deliverables in its letter to Lead Shepherds/Chairs which initiates the annual work planning process.

Recommendation EPWG2: The EPWG to consider formally recognizing the annual work plan as its primary work instrument and, in doing so, establishing a process to ensure that its development and progress reporting meets the expectations of EPWG member economies and the SCE.

2.7 EPWG 2015 Concept Notes

Three Concept Notes were distributed to member economies in early March 2015 along with a Scoring Sheet. This enables each proposal to be rated on four criteria – **Forum Alignment**; Project Relates to My Economy's Priorities; Project Relates to Host Economy's Priorities; and Quality Appears Strong – as a way of enabling the EPWG to prioritize proposals. However, only the first one (in bold) corresponds to the relevance criteria listed in the *Guidebook on APEC Projects*; the second and third ones could be combined; and the last one would seem to be extremely subjective. Also, preliminary versions of two of the Concept Notes were tabled at EPWG-7 but no discussion took place on their merits.

Recommendation EPWG3: The EPWG to consider (a) reviewing the rating criteria for Concept Notes to ensure compliance with APEC requirements; and (b) encouraging the inter-sessional rating of Concept Notes so as to enable endorsement of a priority list at EPWG meetings.

3. ANALYSIS OF EPWG OPERATIONS

3.1 Positioning the EPWG in APEC

APEC is a hierarchical organization which is split into a Policy Level and a Working Level. The Policy Level consists of meetings of APEC Economic Leaders, Ministers, Sectoral Ministers, Senior Officials and ABAC. Collectively, these provide direction and guidance to the Working Level which is headed by four high level committees including the SCE. The SCE is the parent committee to 16 fora, one of which is the EPWG. As stated in its Terms of Reference, the SCE's work mandate relevant to the EPWG includes the requirement to:

- Develop APEC-wide medium-term ECOTECH priorities;
- Coordinate and supervise the EPWG;
- Provide policy guidance on the ECOTECH agenda;
- Assess and direct realignment of the EPWG work plan with the APEC-wide medium ECOTECH priorities and annual objectives. To this purpose, the EPWG should submit its strategic and annual work plans no later than three weeks prior to SOM1, for consideration at the SCE-COW meeting;
- Approve and rank all ECOTECH-related project proposals ahead of presentation to the BMC;
- Evaluate EPWG progress in implementing and achieving ECOTECH priorities;
- Compile progress and evaluation reports on the EPWG under the program of Independent Assessments for review and report to SOM;
- Review the role and operation of the EPWG, with a view to making recommendations to the SOM on establishing, merging, disbanding or re-orientating it.

3.2 Terms of Reference

The TOR, which were approved in 2010 when the former Task Force (TFEP) was elevated to permanent Working Group status, will be updated this year. The existing version is comprehensive and consists of the following components:

- Goals and Objectives - the two statements form part of the mission statement in the strategic plan;
- Current Priorities and Projected Outputs - these are to be outlined in the annual work plan and closely aligned with APEC medium-term ECOTECH priorities;
- Membership - includes Chairs and Lead Shepherds of relevant fora;
- Internal organization arrangements – these cover the selection process and terms of office for the Chair(s), in addition to identifying a Steering Committee as a source of assistance;
- Duties of the Chair(s) – these include overseeing the development of work plans and activities;
- Meeting arrangements – to be held at least once a year;
- Communications and administrative arrangements - these advocate the use of e-mail, the APEC website and the APEC Collaboration System;
- Modalities for cooperation – the seven statements define the EPWG's core role within the SCE by specifying the activities that it will or will not engage in.
- Review Clause – the TOR, achievements and outputs to be reviewed at least every two years to ensure alignment with APEC's core priorities;
- Steering Committee – describes its role and responsibilities (see section 3.3 below).

When it was established in 2006, the TFEP functioned with two Co-Chairs. This arrangement has continued to the present day with the TOR specifying that:

- The Chairs are to be selected for two-year terms on a rotation basis;
- A member economy should not serve more than one term as Chair unless otherwise agreed by EPWG members;
- No member economy should serve more than two consecutive two-year terms.

The previous Assessment made several recommendations regarding the co-chair selection process including:

- Stagger terms to enable an experienced economy to serve with an inexperienced one (both co-chairs will be stepping down in 2015 at the end of their two-year terms);
- Promote diversity in geography (5 economies have served as co-chairs over the six-year period), developmental levels and gender diversity (all co-chairs to date have been male).

This led to the drafting of a Discussion Paper in December 2011 by a subcommittee – *Guidelines for Co-Chairs and Steering Committee Chair of the EPWG*. Its main guidelines were that:

- The Steering Committee Chair will be selected from a different economy than the two co-chairs;
- The Steering Committee Chair's tenure will be staggered by one year from that of the co-chairs;
- Exceptions will be granted on a case-by-case basis and will require approval by the EPWG and the SCE;
- One of the above three positions is recommended to be selected from the developing economies;
- Selections will take place at the last EPWG meeting in a calendar year.

Recommendation EPWG4: The EPWG to consider including the staggering of co-chair terms and gender/geographical diversity in its updated TOR.

3.3 Steering Committee

The Steering Committee was established in 2008 with the aim of assisting the EPWG and its co-chairs to advance the Group's mandate and work plans; and assess EPWG projects. Membership is open to any volunteering economy that responds to invitations issued by the co-chairs – presently eight economies are Steering Committee members.

The Steering Committee was active during the 2011-2013 period, primarily in response to the recommendations made in the previous Assessment. Notable achievements included a March 2012 discussion paper on *Strengthening Collaboration between the EPW, other APEC fora and Non-Members*; and subsequently establishing a co-chair selection process for the 2014-2015 period.

The Committee has not reported to EPWG on its work since its third meeting in early 2013. The previous Assessment made several recommendations regarding the role of the Steering Committee including:

- Encouraging its greater engagement in the project assessment process;
- Standardizing the terms of its members;
- Capping the number of members.

Two other working groups in the human security sector – the ACTWG and CTWG – use a FOTC approach to assisting their Chair/Vice-Chair. FOTC groups typically provide recommendations, advice and input on specific issues, and develop work plans, as required. Although less formal than a steering committee (which, by its title, suggests the need for collaboration amongst all committee members), membership is generally by invitation of the chair and may be for a fixed term (e.g. one year).

Another approach, which was suggested at the Steering Committee's second meeting in July 2012, is to establish an ad hoc committee to address specific issues on an as-needed basis. This could allow economy representatives to undertake tasks on a voluntary basis in areas of interest that are compatible with their expertise (e.g. some members may wish to assist with the project assessment process whereas others may prefer to focus on drafting plans or identifying priorities).

Recommendation EPWG5: The EPWG to consider reviewing options for providing assistance to the co-chairs and including the chosen option in its updated TOR.

3.4 Characteristics of Meeting Participants

Over the last five meetings, representation from member economies ranged from 13 to 17 and the number of delegates from 36 to 46, both showing a gradual upward trend. Based on an analysis of the Participant Lists for these meetings, it was possible to observe the following characteristics:

- The proportion of female delegates averaged 25%;
- The average number of delegates/economy (discounting the host economy) was 2;
- In three of the meetings, 50% of attending economies were represented by a single delegate;
- The number of invited guests from non-APEC organizations ranged between 0 and 2;
- Participation by delegates was generally not continuous, with no more than six economies being represented by the same delegate in consecutive meetings.

While each delegate's home agency was listed and, in most cases, their designation, it was not possible to accurately classify their involvement in emergency preparedness (e.g. senior official in an EP organization, technical specialist, foreign affairs officer, diplomat etc.); determine their meeting status (e.g. head of delegation, associate or observer); or identify the nature of the organization in a large, multi-faceted Ministry. In its TOR, EPWG membership is defined as "all APEC economies" which is very open-ended. Another human security sector forum – the HWG – has been more definitive. As well as designating their members, economies:

- Are encouraged to have at least one member from the health sector;
- Ideally, would have at least two members – one from health and another from the trade, finance, economic or foreign affairs sector;
- May wish to "invite" observers.

Recommendation EPWG6: The EPWG to consider if it would be helpful in shaping meeting agendas and proceedings to be more specific about the type of representation from member economies and include in its updated TOR.

3.5 Characteristics of Meeting Proceedings

Observations arising from the EPWG-7 meeting are as follows:

- Although scheduled to last two days, its proceedings were completed in 1.5 days, reflecting a general desire by delegates to free up the second afternoon for other purposes;
- The proceedings followed the standard format for previous EPWG meetings using an annotated agenda;
- Most of the agenda items were verbal updates of continuing activities, completed deliverables or disaster events that had occurred inter-sessionally. Typically, they were presented with supporting Information papers distributed at the meeting and generated little or no discussion;
- Few agenda items were presented for endorsement or feedback;
- While discussion of agenda items may have taken place among delegates on the margins of the meeting, with two exceptions, relatively little discussion took place in the meeting itself;
- Two agenda items addressed aspects of the EPWG's management framework – the Proposed 2015 Work Plan and the Independent Assessment;
- No report was provided on the inter-sessional activities of the Steering Committee;
- The proposals to hold a Ministerial Conference in 2016 and a second EPWG meeting coincident with SCE2 in May 2015 were tabled verbally as new business at the end of the meeting but with insufficient time to satisfactorily discuss them.

Recommendation EPWG7: The EPWG to consider updating its agenda planning protocols so that (a) the purpose and desired outcomes are identified for each agenda item; (b) new items can only be introduced under exceptional circumstances after the agenda has been approved at the start of the meeting; and (c) the posting of purely informational items to the ACS before meetings is strongly encouraged.

3.6 Reporting Mechanisms

The two main reporting mechanisms are the EPWG annex to the *SCE Fora Report* and the reports on completed inter-sessional work provided at EPWG meetings. Each is reviewed below:

(a) The *SCE Fora Report* is prepared each August in order to provide information for the annual *SCE Fora Report* to SCE3 and *SOM Report on ECOTECH to the AMM*. The EPWG annex to the most recent report, dated July 29, 2014, was structured to document:

- Key outcomes of meetings that took place since the previous year's report was drafted;
- Main progress/achievements in responding to Leaders/Ministers/SOM/SCE priorities and decisions, and ABAC recommendations through completed, ongoing and planned projects and initiatives;
- Main progress/achievements in implementing APEC-wide ECOTECH medium-term priorities;
- Main progress/achievements in cooperating with other APEC fora and outside organizations;

- Expected deliverables for the current year.
- Summary of APEC-funded projects.

As the EPWG annex was not referenced in the ACS or on the EPWG satellite website, its function appears to be limited to servicing SOM/SCE reporting requirements. However, it has the potential to serve two useful purposes internal to the EPWG by providing (a) an efficient means of tracking the progress of Work Plan deliverables throughout the year; and (b) relevant background information on EPWG activities for EPWG meeting delegates. If aligned with the annual work planning process, efficiencies in reporting and information sharing could be achieved, particularly if protocols were developed for updating its contents prior to meetings.

(b) Reports on inter-sessional work are provided by the co-chairs as a standing agenda item at EPWG meetings and by individual member economies on activities and events involving them. At EPWG-7, reports of events attended and completed projects were provided by the co-chairs and five economies in the form of presentations accompanied by Information Notes. Accordingly, there was little discussion on these items. Given the desire to restrict EPWG meetings to 1.5 days, such reports could be posted directly to the EPWG satellite website without the need for presentation at meetings, thereby freeing time for discussion of ongoing and planned activities.

Recommendation EPWG8: The EPWG to consider aligning its annual and inter-sessional reporting mechanisms more closely with its work plan deliverables.

3.7 Websites

The following six APEC websites contain EPWG information which are publicly accessible from different sections of APEC's main web page:

- The EPWG page in the Group section which is maintained by the PD-EPWG according to a standard format (Background-Current-Achievements-Contacts-News-Events-Find Out More-Downloads);
- The EPWG page in the Publications section which is maintained by the CPAU (see section 3.8 below);
- The proceedings of all EPWG meetings and some events (e.g. SDMOFs) in the Meeting Documents section which are maintained by the PD-EPWG;
- The projects which have been completed or are underway in the Projects section which are maintained by the PD-EPWG (see section 3.9 below);
- The Emergency Preparedness topic page in the Press section which is maintained by the CPAU;
- The EPWG's satellite website which is owned and managed by a member economy and has eight elements (About EPWG-Contact Windows-Meeting Document Database-Newsletter-APEC Cross Fora Participation-Regional Institutes-Recent Updates-Events).

In addition there are two password-protected sites which are accessible from the main APEC web page by EPWG member economies:

- The EPWG page in the ACS which is maintained by the PD-EPWG and has 11 potential elements (Welcome Page-Message from the Chair-Secretariat Notes-Group Events-Draft Documents-Pre Meeting Documents-Contact List-PD's Email Site Administration-Useful Links-Other References-Group Events);
- The projects which have been submitted for funding consideration by the BMC which is maintained by the APEC Secretariat (see section 3.9 below).

The previous Assessment recommended several actions aimed at optimizing the EPWG satellite website, including:

- Harmonizing its contents with the information posted on APEC's EPWG web page;
- Installing a plan for its maintenance and periodic updates;
- Determining which and where downloadable internal and external documents and publications should be stored.

A review of the above sites led to the following observations:

- Although the 'look-and-feel' of the satellite site has been improved and its contents periodically updated, its contents are not fully aligned with the EPWG page on the APEC website;
- The EPWG page in the ACS appears to no longer be used as a document repository, with meeting information generally circulated by e-mail;
- Several of the web pages contain time-expired information;

- There is no formal maintenance plan to facilitate understanding of upkeep responsibilities and procedures for the various web pages;
- Keeping information current and avoiding duplication with other web pages imposes a significant and ongoing workload for the administrator of a satellite website;
- As the contents of the satellite site can be replicated among the EPWG pages of the APEC website, its purpose would seem to be one of providing 'one-stop shopping' for interested parties both internal and external to APEC. However, the *APEC Website Guidelines* indicate that it should be complementary, with its goal and target audience clearly identified (so as to be able to tailor the required information).

Recommendation EPWG9: The EPWG to consider (a) taking the necessary actions to complete the optimization of its satellite website as recommended in the previous Assessment and in accordance with the *APEC Website Guidelines (September 2013)*; and (b) determining the extent to which greater use of the ACS can be made as an efficient way of circulating inter-sessional work and pre-meeting materials, and being a repository for meeting information that is not released to the Meeting Document Database.

3.8 Publications

The 16 EPWG publications that are referenced in APEC's publicly-accessible Publications Database may be categorized as follows:

- Forum, seminar and workshop proceedings – 8
- Miscellaneous Emergency Preparedness topics - 5
- Guidance on Emergency Preparedness topics – 3

The low number of publications, two per year on average, indicates that the proceedings of most EPWG capacity-building events and projects do not become APEC publications, but are made available electronically on EPWG websites. Although most APEC publications are also available free of charge electronically, the CPAU is able to provide CD-ROM and printed versions for which there may be a charge.

As an important aim of APEC publications is to promote a better understanding of economic and technical cooperation issues, there would seem to be an opportunity to make the output of EPWG initiatives more readily available to external stakeholders, particularly those in multi-lateral organizations and the private sector. In this regard, the CPAU can play an important support role in assisting the EPWG with developing and implementing an outreach strategy.

Recommendation EPWG10: The EPWG to consider collaborating with the CPAU in developing an outreach strategy for its publications and determining which ones should be available as CD-ROMs or printed versions.

3.9 Projects

A review of the Projects Database indicates that during the 2011-2014 period, nine APEC-funded EPWG projects have been completed while two others are in the early stages of implementation; their characteristics are summarized (to the extent permitted by available data) in Annex A. Noting that the BMC has continued to strengthen APEC's project management procedures since the previous Assessment, it is evident that, with the possible exception of the timely submission of Project Completion Reports, procedures are being followed through the planning and conduct stages of the project life cycle. The main observations regarding the nine completed reports are that:

- All were single events with their outputs generally described in terms of participation characteristics and the issuance of proceedings as APEC Publications;
- While Key Findings and Next Steps were identified in the Completion Reports for each project and were generally included in the Information Notes tabled at subsequent EPWG meetings, neither the Summary Reports of meetings nor Inter-sessional Reports indicated that any discussion leading to agreed follow-up action had taken place. This continued to be the case at EPWG-7;
- Due to differing formats, it was difficult to identify with confidence any differences between the planned longer-term beneficiaries and outcomes stated in Project Proposals and what was actually achieved as stated in the Completion Reports;
- Despite the above challenge, it was possible to note the lack of topics to address the potential role of women in projects where it had been proposed. This may reflect a 2012 Secretariat observation based on a review of 80 Completion Reports that: *gender considerations are not fully integrated into overall project implementation.*

- There was no indication that Completion Reports were being formally reviewed and/or approved by EPWG members, as provided for in the *Guidebook on APEC Projects* (refer to paragraph 7.5);
- Comments made by the APEC Secretariat in the Completion Reports mainly addressed administrative requirements rather than the adequacy of qualitative and quantitative data;
- It was unclear that there was compliance with the recommendations made by the Secretariat as a result of its 2012 review of two EPWG projects, namely that proposals need to be more specific about their objectives (e.g. How will an event change policy or practices and how can this change be measured?), and intended audiences (e.g. What type of pre-existing knowledge is required?).

Although self-funded projects are exempt from most of the procedures specified in the *Guidebook on APEC Projects*, an APEC Self-Funded Project Proposal Coversheet signed by both the Project Overseer and EPWG Chair must be submitted to the Secretariat (refer to paragraph 3.18). Also, the submission of Completion Reports is strongly encouraged (refer to paragraph 3.19). This practice appears not to have been followed.

In terms of new project proposals, it is noted that multi-year projects are still in the pilot phase and new submissions were not being accepted in early 2015. However, as with the two EPWG projects which are in the process of being implemented, a practical approach is to seek funding for single year projects with multiple outputs/outcomes. Such an approach aligns with many of the six recommendations in the *Long-Term Evaluation of APEC Projects: Final Report: Phase II- Pilot Evaluation of APEC Projects*, which was prepared for BMC in 2013. However, it will be important for the benefits of adopting a more rigorous approach to evaluating APEC-funded projects to be weighed against the additional costs and effort, especially for smaller fora such as the EPWG.

Recommendation EPWG11: EPWG to consider developing a review and approval process for Completion Reports submitted for APEC-funded projects that achieve compliance with the requirements specified in the *Guidebook on APEC Projects*.

3.10 Secretariat Support Services

EPWG operations are highly dependent on the support services provided by the PD-EPWG and his Program Assistant. The PD-EPWG has a limited amount of time to support the EPWG as he is assigned to two other fora (ACTWG and CTWG). Moreover, his assistant supports the PDs for six other fora. The level of assistance that the EPWG co-chairs, representatives of member economies, project proponents, project overseers and independent assessors can expect from the PD-EPWG covers a wide range of some 50 services (refer to Annex B). Also, as PD secondments to the Secretariat are normally for three years, the PD-EPWG's assignment could normally be expected to cover four to six meetings (depending on their annual frequency).

This is a similar coverage to fora chairs who should not normally serve for more than two consecutive 2-year terms. The array of duties assigned to the EPWG co-chairs (refer to *Revised Guidelines for Lead Shepherd/Chair and Deputy Lead Shepherd/Chair of APEC Working Groups and SOM Task Forces*) requires both their offices and the PD-EPWG to provide a significant secretariat function. While the workload may peak in the month leading up to and immediately after a meeting, there is a residual workload throughout the inter-sessional periods.

Thus, the inter-relationships between the PD-EPWG, the co-chairs and their designated support providers are a key contributor to EPWG's efficient operation. If possible, the points of contact should remain the same during inter-sessional periods and the respective responsibilities documented, particularly those services which the co-chairs have discretion in requesting.

Continuity in the provision of services is also important due to the high turnover rate of delegates from member economies. The scope of the *Revised Guidelines* (which was presented at the 2012 SCE-COW meeting) does not cover the heads of delegation from member economies who, as pointed out earlier, frequently change from one meeting to the next. As a result, member economies may not be fully aware of their role at meetings or inter-sessionally, or the nature of the assistance that the PD-EPWG can provide.

Recommendation EPWG12: The EPWG to consider including the agreed roles and responsibilities of (a) the co-chairs and member economies; and the agreed services of the PD-EPWG in its updated TOR.

4. LINKAGES WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

4.1 APEC Groups

(a) SCE and SCE-COW - As indicated in Section 3.1, the SCE provides substantial oversight, guidance and coordination of fora operations. This role is complemented by the annual SCE-COW meeting to which fora heads are invited. Following EPWG-7, both the SCE and SCE-COW met with the following implications for the EPWG:

- Approval of EPWG's 2015 Work Plan would be done inter-sessionally;
- Formation of a review group to engage with fora in helping ensure that their strategic plans are sufficiently focused on outcomes and include measurable targets;;

(b) ABAC - Presentation made at EPWG-7 indicating that a strong framework is needed for APEC to develop an ICT infrastructure that operates effectively in times of natural disasters; and advocating the need to develop collective plans and actions for disaster resilient ICT infrastructure throughout the Asia-Pacific region. This links to EPWG's involvement with TELWG on ICT-related projects.

(c) BMC - In addition to being responsible for approving and monitoring projects, the BMC is also responsible for project management reforms. Two EPWG projects were sampled as part of the Long Term Evaluation of APEC projects (refer to section 3.9 above).

(d) CTI and SCE Fora - As noted in both the 2014 SCE Fora Report and Proposed 2015 Work Plan, the EPWG continues to be active in undertaking joint projects and dialogues with a growing number of CTI and SCE fora including the BMG, CTWG, HRDWG, OFWG, PPSTI, SCCP, SMEWG (which was also represented at EPWG-7), TELWG and TPTWG. This is due in large part to the collaboration that has taken place with respect to the ongoing implementation of major cross-cutting initiatives such as business continuity planning and supply chain resilience. However, it was noted that neither of the two documents referenced any planned or ongoing joint initiatives or collaboration with the PPWE, perhaps reflecting the 'underperformance' concern documented in section 2.3.

(e) SDMOF – The SDMOF was initiated in 2007 under the auspices of the TFEP as the APEC Emergency Management CEO Forum. Available documentation on its management framework was limited to the minutes of a Steering Committee meeting, which was held immediately following the 5th SDMOF in September 2011, referenced the need to update the 2010-2013 Business Plan. The Plan indicated that the SDMOF was:

- The only avenue by which the heads of disaster management agencies from member economies can come together to share experiences and address issues of common interest;
- Supported by a Steering Committee comprised of the EPWG co-chairs; the host economies for the immediate past, present and immediate future forums; and other economies upon consent of the Steering Committee;
- The EPWG's flagship activity;
- Required to operate in accordance with an 8-point TOR.

The plan also defined the relationship with the EPWG including the requirement for the EPWG. However, the presentation at EPWG-7 on the preparations for the 9th SDMOF gave no indication of the continuing existence of a steering committee, TOR or the need for the EPWG to approve the holding of each forum or the participation of non-APEC member participation. However, the EPWG continues to be part of the approval chain for the host economy's application for APEC funding.

Recommendation EPWG-13: The EPWG to consider reviewing its relationship with the SDMOF and including in (a) its updated TOR; and (b) relevant planning and priority setting activities.

4.2 Regional/International Organizations

Linkages with regional and international organizations are maintained through reports by EPWG member economies on their inter-sessional interactions; by the invited participation of these organizations as speakers and/or delegates at EPWG-sponsored events; and through linkages to their websites or reports available on the EPWG website. By way of example, the proposed 2015 Work Plan identifies links to seven UN agencies and five regional organizations including the Asian Disaster Preparedness and Reduction Centers and the Asian Disaster Reduction Network.

4.3 Business and Private Sectors

A continuing challenge is to encourage participation of the business and private sector at EPWG events either as speakers or delegates. The Proposed 2015 Work Plan states that the EPWG will:

- Continue to explore opportunities to undertake events that will foster collaboration with the private sector;
- Encourage the participation of the business sector in emergency management and build its resilience to disasters;
- Engage more participation of the private sector.

However, the Plan does not explicitly identify the specific actions needed to achieve these aims

Recommendation EPWG14: The EPWG to consider holding a policy dialogue aimed at identifying opportunities to engage with the business and private sectors as an integral component of its mission to identify gaps in disaster risk reduction and foster partnerships to protect business and communities from disruption.

5. SUPPORTING INPUT TO THE ASSESSMENT

5.1 Feedback from Member Economies

Some of the feedback received from member economies in the previous Assessment that may still be relevant include:

- Continuing to strengthen outreach to, and engagement with the business sector;
- Stocktaking to reconfirm previous or identify new gaps and priorities for EPWG activities and discussions;
- Placing more on policy-based discussions;
- Carefully identifying EPWG's niche market to deliver valuable activities;
- Collaborating to a greater extent with the PPWE;
- Encouraging discussion among member economies on project concepts;
- Maintaining the Work Plan on the website including responsible parties for implementing activities and periodic activity status updates.

In lieu of a formal survey as part of this assessment, member economies were invited to share suggestions with the assessor on a confidential basis. Feedback was received from eight participating economies and fora. Some of the feedback has already been incorporated into the report in the form of observations and/or recommendations. Other comments were more detailed and have only been indirectly addressed in the report but are no less valid even if raised only by a single economy. To facilitate discussion among EPWG member economies, suggestions have been collated under the following topics:

Those related to EPWG's role include considering whether more attention should be given to:

- Outreach and coordination within APEC fora and external organizations;
- Identifying where APEC has an advantage relative to external organizations and, within APEC, where the EPWG has an advantage relative to other fora;
- Developing project concepts and proposals in the context of multi-year programs;
- Framing experience-based presentations so as to facilitate the identification of commonalities among member economies;
- Identifying specific capacity-building requirements of individual economies in their emergency preparedness framework;
- Precisely identifying the EPWG's mandate so as to avoid overlap and mission creep;
- Clarifying the role of the SDMOF and its relationship to EPWG - should the former be aimed at the professional/technical community while the latter should act more like a steering committee and be aimed at the policy/senior official level?

Those related to the effectiveness of EPWG operations include considering whether:

- Proposals seeking EPWG endorsement should be in the form of written submissions (e.g. the concept of a Ministerial conference);
- Agenda items should have a stated purpose and lead to action-oriented dialogue;
- There should be 'champion' economies for specific themes or priorities;
- Workshops should be evaluated and the results reviewed by member economies;

- More emphasis should be placed on Train-the-Trainer workshops.

Those related to the efficiency of EPWG operations include:

- Establishing a Co-Chair succession plan (need overlap); form of assistance (steering committee or other model such as topic-specific ad hoc sub-committees); and role (main link with other fora?)
- Improved work processes for agenda planning, planning and reporting on inter-sessional work; pre-circulation of meeting papers (for feedback or information), maintaining a repository for papers not in the MDD;
- Meeting length (1.5 or 2.0 days?); frequency (1 or 2/year?); locations (always at SOM? with SDMOF?);
- Relationship with SCE – should a co-chair always attend SCE-COW and Work Plans be submitted for information rather than approval?

The above suggestions are all worthy of consideration. However, it is difficult for an independent assessor to make specific recommendations on how to improve a forum's operational efficiency and effectiveness. It is the members themselves, with their understanding of meeting and inter-sessional dynamics, who are best placed to determine what changes are appropriate. The assessor may identify a menu of practical suggestions but it is the forum which should select from it. To do so, however, there needs to be an effective process in place.

Recommendation EPWG15: The EPWG to consider establishing a process at its next meeting for identifying improvements to EPWG operations based on a pragmatic evaluation of the suggestions and recommendations identified throughout this report. To maintain momentum, such a process would require inter-sessional planning and a dedicated session at a subsequent meeting, possibly by a group established to assist the co-chairs on the margins of the next SDMOF in September 2015.

5.2 Recommendations in Recent Assessments of other SCE fora

There are now some 25 independent assessment reports on SCE fora that may be accessed on the SCE page in the APEC Publications Database. As shown in the sample below which has been extracted from three fora reports, they contain SCE-endorsed recommendations that may be relevant to the EPWG. In some cases, it may be possible to adopt them without change; in others, they may need to be adapted to meet the working group's management framework:

- Form a sub-group with representatives from the PPWE to ensure the interests of women are considered in all planned activities (ACTWG);
- Meet with economies that have not been active in proposing or participating in specific programs to identify ways in which they can sponsor or co-sponsor specific initiatives (ACTWG);
- Identify what specific activities will be carried over from the previous work plan into the current year work plan (ACTWG);
- Identify other organizations engaging in similar activities within the APEC Region (ACTWG);
- Identify unique activities in line with APEC ideals and consistent with the TOR (ACTWG);
- Identify an appropriate process to enable qualitative and quantitative measurement of all projects (ACTWG);
- Subject the website to regular review to ensure the links are updated and operative (ACTWG);
- Explore more of a program approach to projects so that the results of each project inform the next project (TWG);
- Restructure the meeting agenda so that there is a clear distinction between agenda items that are for discussion and decision and those that are for information only (TWG);
- The Program Director to take a more active approach in seeking input to key agenda items (TWG);
- Develop an agreed agenda of inter-sessional touch points between meetings to transact administrative business (TWG);
- Compile a preliminary list of priority issues in each year's annual work plan that could be addressed during or as an add-on to meetings in the form of policy dialogues, special presentations by experts in their field or at conferences (CTWG);
- Develop a standardized approach to inviting outside experts to meetings and other events, and exchanging information with external organizations (CTWG);
- Formalize ongoing commitment to improving the efficiency of work processes by identifying it as a standing item in annual work plans (CTWG).

It was evident from this cursory review that these assessments, especially the more recent ones, contain a substantial amount of highly relevant information on good management practices as well as lessons learnt. They also reveal variations in how fora conduct their operations (e.g. meetings and work planning) and even how these operations are assessed. It is reasonable to deduce that these variations are partly caused by a lack of a standardized approach on how to manage forum operations.

Recommendation SCE3: The SCE to consider if the consolidation of guidance that it has issued to fora, either at SCE meetings or inter-sessionally, into a single document or webpage could assist forum Chairs/Lead Shepherds and delegates from member economies in developing the practices and procedures needed to conduct their operations more efficiently and effectively.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

This assessment indicates that the management framework underwent considerable change in the 2011-2012 period. While this is partly due to the requirement to be responsive to the SCE-endorsed recommendations listed in the previous assessment, it reflects the leadership shown by the Co-Chairs working with the revived Steering Committee. However, the momentum and enthusiasm for continuing improvement that was achieved during this period appears not to have been sustained through the 2013-2014 period. If this subjective conclusion is deemed to be reasonably accurate by the member economies, causal factors could include the decreased activity of the Steering Committee and the Strategic Plan moving from its high profile development phase into implementation.

This assessment found that the EPWG's program of activities has generally been responsive to high level policies and priorities. Cross-fora participation has increased and linkages strengthened with regional and international organizations. Recent project proposals have become more specific in terms of identifying indicators and numerical targets by which to determine success in meeting objectives. Also, although multi-year projects have not yet been adopted by APEC, recent proposals are identifying multiple phases and outputs/outcomes and recognizing the need to evaluate success in one phase before initiating the next one.

However, the lack of discussion at EPWG-7 on Concept Notes for new projects and Next Steps for completed projects leads to the conclusion that the EPWG program is a series of projects and activities residing under a broadly-defined umbrella of objectives with no clear indication as to how they fit into a single, integrated program. This creates challenges for identifying gaps in consolidating its core areas of activity or overlap with regional and international organizations with similar core areas of activity

It is a healthy practice for any forum to periodically take stock of how it is performing and to identify adjustments that will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations. 2015 would seem to be timely for such an initiative as:

- EPWG will meet twice with the next meeting (EPWG-8) scheduled for the margins of SOM in May;
- The draft Independent Assessment Report should be available for review;
- There is an overdue requirement to update the 2010 Terms of Reference;
- A mid-period review of progress in implementing the 2013-2016 Strategic Plan is due;
- The outcomes of the UN's 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in March, which is likely to have implications for EPWG's future role and mandate will be available;
- EPWG has a new program director and a transitional period for both co-chairs will be underway later in the year.

6.2 Summary of Recommendations

The assessment resulted in three recommendations for consideration by the SCE and 15 by the EPWG. To the extent possible, the recommendations addressed the main areas that were perceived to require attention and were not overly-prescriptive so as to provide flexibility in devising detailed courses of action. Also, not all of the observations made in the assessment necessarily resulted in a formal recommendation.

Recommendations to assist EPWG operations for SCE Consideration:

SCE1 (refer to p.11): Provide more specific guidance than is currently contained within the *Strategic Planning – Process Guide for Working Groups* which was presented at SCE-COW in February 2012 (e.g. a populated Prioritized Implementation Schedule and how it would link with a desired work plan template).

SCE2 (refer to p.14): Take into account the challenges of meeting work plan deadlines and comparing planned and actual deliverables in the letter to Lead Shepherds/Chairs which initiates the annual work planning process.

SCE3 (refer to p.23): Consolidate the guidance that it has issued to fora, either at SCE meetings or inter-sessionally, into a single document or webpage to assist forum Chairs/Lead Shepherds and delegates from member economies in developing the practices and procedures needed to conduct their operations more efficiently and effectively.

Recommendations for EPWG Consideration

Note: Due to a decision taken at EPWG-7 to hold a second meeting on the margins of SOM-2 in May 2015, the feedback provided by EPWG member economies on the draft report (which was circulated in mid-April) was consolidated into a table identifying action either already taken or planned to be taken on each of the 15 recommendations. This table became an agenda item at EPWG-8. As the assessor was not in attendance, the observations in the draft report could not be updated to reflect the proceedings of this meeting or any inter-sessional activities that preceded it. However, in an attempt to ensure that the final report reflected the current situation to the extent practicable, these actions have been extracted from the table and summarized below in the form of Preliminary Responses.

EPWG1 (refer to p.11): Establish a process for the timely review and updating of the 2013-2016 Strategic Plan to: (a) report on implementation progress; (b) provide useful guidance for the preparation of the 2016 Work Plan; and (c) lay the groundwork for its transformation into an effective plan for the 2017-2020 period.

Preliminary Response: Agreement - EPWG will deliver output at end of 2015 to summarize the KPIs achieved in 2015 by all member economies.

EPWG2 (refer to p.14): Formally recognize the annual work plan as its primary work instrument and, in doing so, establish a process to ensure that its development and progress reporting meets the expectations of EPWG member economies and the SCE.

Preliminary Response: Agreement.

EPWG3 (refer to p.14): Review the rating criteria for Concept Notes to ensure compliance with APEC requirements and encourage the inter-sessional rating of Concept Notes so as to enable endorsement of a priority list at EPWG meetings.

Preliminary Response: Agreement - the recommendation has already been implemented.

EPWG4 (refer to p.15): Include the staggering of co-chair terms and gender/geographical diversity in its updated TOR.

Preliminary Response: Agreement – selection guidelines to be modified.

EPWG5 (refer to p.16): Review options for providing assistance to the co-chairs and include the chosen option in its updated TOR.

Preliminary Response: Agreement – EPWG-8 agenda item (outcome unknown).

EPWG6 (refer to p.16): Shape meeting agendas and proceedings to be more specific about the type of representation by member economies and include in its updated TOR.

Preliminary Response: Conditional agreement – future discussion item when updating TOR.

EPWG7 (refer to p.16): Update its agenda planning protocols so that (a) the purpose and desired outcomes are identified for each agenda item; (b) new items can only be introduced under exceptional circumstances after the agenda has been approved at the start of the meeting; and (c) the posting of purely informational items to the ACS before meetings is strongly encouraged.

Preliminary Response: Conditional agreement – “under the guidance of APEC practices”.

EPWG8 (refer to p.17): Align its annual and inter-sessional reporting mechanisms more closely with its work plan deliverables.

Preliminary Response: Agreement subject to “uncertainty exception” – accommodate in current work plan to the extent possible.

EPWG9 (refer to p.18): Take the necessary actions to complete the optimization of its satellite website as recommended in the previous Assessment and in accordance with the *APEC Website Guidelines (September 2013)*; and determine the extent to which greater use of the ACS can be made as an efficient way of circulating inter-sessional work and pre-meeting materials, and being a repository for meeting information that is not released to the Meeting Document Database.

Preliminary Response: Partial agreement – “review if necessary according to future capacity building purposes”.

EPWG10 (refer to p.18): Collaborate with the CPAU in developing an outreach strategy for its publications and determining which ones should be available as CD-ROMs or printed versions.

Preliminary Response: Conditional agreement – review on a case-by-case basis.

EPWG11 (refer to p.19): Develop a review and approval process for Completion Reports submitted for APEC-funded projects that achieves compliance with the requirements specified in the *Guidebook on APEC Projects*.

Preliminary Response: Conditional agreement – “website resources available”.

EPWG12 (refer to p.20): Include the main and agreed roles and responsibilities of the co-chairs, member economies and the PD-EPWG in its updated TOR.

Preliminary Response: Conditional agreement – EPWG-8 agenda item (outcome unknown).

EPWG-13 (refer to p.20): Review its relationship with the SDMOF and including in its updated TOR and relevant planning and priority setting activities.

Preliminary Response: Conditional agreement – fully incorporate into the existing EPWG management framework.

EPWG14 (refer to p.21): Hold a policy dialogue aimed at identifying opportunities to engage with the business and private sectors as an integral component of its mission to identify gaps in disaster risk reduction and foster partnerships to protect business and communities from disruption.

Preliminary Response: Partial agreement - diversify cross-fora collaboration and outreach through joint statements, workshops, multi-year projects posted to EPWG satellite website.

EPWG15 (refer to p.22): Establish a process at its next meeting for identifying improvements to EPWG operations based on a pragmatic evaluation of the suggestions and recommendations identified throughout this report.

Preliminary Response: Agreement – actions to be proposed after EPWG-8.

6.3 Implementation Advice

As this is the third assessment in five years for fora in the human security sector by the same assessor (the other two being for the CTTF in 2010 and 2013), it has been possible to examine the approaches taken in developing implementation plans in response to the recommendations in the CTTF’s and EPWG’s first assessments. Based on the insights gained, the following seven-step approach is suggested:

Step 1 - The Co-Chairs to establish a small “Assessment Review” team to work inter-sessionally with the sole aim of drafting a preliminary response to each of the 15 EPWG recommendations within a specified time period (e.g. two months).

Step 2 – For each recommendation, the team to determine if it should be accepted as is; accepted with modifications; or rejected (with reasons given).

Step 3 – For each accepted recommendation (with or without modifications), the team to transform it into a detailed course of action, possibly based on an analysis of several options.

Step 4 – The results of the Assessment Team’s work to be submitted to the Co-Chairs.

Step 5 – The Co-Chairs to review and, if no amendments are sought, forward to the PD-EPWG for posting on the EPWG page in the ACS and requesting input from all member economies within a specified review period (e.g. one month).

Step 6 – The Co-Chairs and Assessment review team to meet on the margins of SDMOF-9 to finalize the EPWG's response to the recommendations.

Step 7 – The final implementation plan in the form of Suggested Action and Proposed Timeline (as per the SCE template) to be submitted to the SCE for its consideration and endorsement at SOM1 in 2016.

Annex A - Summary of EPWG's APEC Funded Projects, 2011-2014

Completed Projects

1. Facing the abnormal flood disaster: New vision for APEC member economies, July 2011

Proposing Economy: Viet Nam.

Completion Report: Submitted January 2012

Evaluation – successful and highly appreciated by participants, the EPWG and other APEC members

Key findings – 13 recommendations; and post-workshop, the establishment of a network of focal points and experts on flood management

Next steps – Experts to develop an APEC Best Practice on Flood Management; Summary Report issued as APEC Publication

Beneficiaries – 49 delegates from 11 member economies (immediate) and member economies (longer term)

Gender – 21% female delegates from economies outside the host economy; 19% female speakers

Possible variation from Project Proposal: No topics explicitly focused on the potential role of women

Subsequent EPWG follow-up action: None reported in Summary Reports of subsequent EPWG meetings

2. Workshop on Private Sector Emergency Preparedness, August 2011

Proposing Economies: Japan, USA

Completion Report: Submitted January 2012

Evaluation – extremely successful by several identified measures

Key findings – summary in a reference guide on BCP resources available on APEC's Publication Database

Next steps – Follow-up project submitted to APEC Secretariat as a multi-year project; and Summary of Proceedings and Resource Guide distributed at 2011 SDMOF and issued as APEC Publication

Beneficiaries – 130 participants (19 funded delegates) from 17 member economies and private sector

Gender – 37% female delegates; female co-project proponent

Possible variation from Project Proposal: No participation by ABAC or SMEWG; no female speaker found

Subsequent EPWG follow-up action: None reported in Summary Reports of subsequent EPWG meetings

3. Study Course on Wildfire Management in APEC Region, November 2011

Proposing Economy: Russian Federation

Completion Report: Submitted August 2012

Evaluation – Relevant and useful

Key findings – 4 outputs including final report but no recommendations

Next steps – Delegates to develop joint forest fire suppression plans; conduct further training courses; and upload course materials to EPWG website

Beneficiaries – 35 delegates from 6 member economies and 1 non-APEC country

Gender – 14% female delegates; female project overseer

APEC Secretariat comments – only 6 economies participated; and the project was aligned with EPWG's medium-term work plan

Possible variation from Project Proposal: 21 member economies' representatives forecasted

Subsequent EPWG follow-up action: None reported in Summary Reports of subsequent EPWG meetings

4. A Training Course on Quantitative Precipitation Estimation/Forecasting, March 2012

Proposing Economy: The Philippines

Completion Report: Submitted May 2012

Evaluation – Excellent or Very Satisfactory

Key findings – Interest in other economies sharing their hydrological modelling experience; 4 Key decisions and recommendations including 11 topics for future capacity building activities

Next steps – Establish QPE/QPF webpage on EPWG site; and conduct workshop on verification techniques

Beneficiaries – 53 delegates & 2 observers from 10 member economies

Gender – 32% female delegates; 19% female speakers; female project overseer

Possible variation from Project Proposal: None identified

Subsequent EPWG follow-up action: None reported in Summary Reports of subsequent EPWG meetings

5. APEC Seminar on Capacity Building for Disaster Recovery and Rehabilitation, June 2012

Proposing Economy: P. R. China

Completion Report: Submitted February 2013

Evaluation – not part of report

Key findings – Revised Disaster Recovery Checklist

Next steps – Training course to review community recovery cases; workshops on design and application of disaster recovery policies; and checklist application training. Final Report and Disaster Recovery Checklist issued as APEC Publications

Beneficiaries – 49 delegates from 8 member economies and 6 external participants

Gender – 14% female delegates; female co-project overseer

Possible variation from Project Proposal: None identified as agenda was not posted

Subsequent EPWG follow-up action: None reported in Summary Reports of subsequent EPWG meetings

6. APEC Capacity Building Workshop on Search and Rescue at Sea, July 2013

Proposing Economy: Viet Nam

Completion Report: Submitted February 2014

Evaluation – highly appreciated by participants, the EPWG and other APEC members

Key findings – post workshop, the establishment of a network of focal points & experts on search and rescue; Summary Report issued as APEC Publication

Next steps – none identified

Beneficiaries – 25 delegates from 8 member economies and 6 external participants

Gender – 44% female delegates; 1 female speaker, 1 female moderator; female project overseer

APEC Secretariat comments – real impact of workshop appears difficult to assess

Possible variation from Project Proposal: no explicit links to wide range of direct beneficiaries; measures to ensure the safety of women; or exploring opportunities with TELWG & TPTWG

Subsequent EPWG follow-up action: None reported in Summary Reports of subsequent EPWG meetings

7. Application of Satellite Technologies for Emergency Preparedness, Management and Response in Asia-Pacific Region, October 2013

Proposing Economy: Russian Federation

Completion Report: Submitted January 2014

Evaluation – participant satisfaction rate of 90%

Key findings – 17 recommendations

Next steps – Report published on APEC website; consideration of a Phase 2

Beneficiaries – 30 delegates from 12 member economies and 2 external participants

Gender – 20% female delegates; 3 female speakers

APEC Secretariat comments – Noted that schedule shifted by 3 months due to low participation interest

Possible variation from Project Proposal: None identified

Subsequent EPWG follow-up action: None reported in Summary Reports of subsequent EPWG meetings

8. Seminar on Leveraging Information and Communications Systems for Enhancing Regional Supply Chain Resilience to Disasters in APEC, June 2014

Proposing Economy: Thailand

Completion Report: Not yet submitted - **Monitoring Report** submitted March 2014

Evaluation – Successful [as stated in 2014 SCE Fora Report]

Key findings – [awaiting Completion Report]

Next steps – Issue post-seminar handbook [as stated in 2014 SCE Fora Report]

Beneficiaries – [awaiting Completion Report]

Gender – female project overseer, otherwise awaiting Completion Report

Possible variation from Project Proposal: delay due to change in seminar theme and objectives; and continuing demonstrations near proposed venue

Subsequent EPWG follow-up action: No information report presented at EPWG-7

9. 8th Senior Disaster Management Officials Forum - Strengthening Science and Technology in Disaster Risk Reduction, August 2014

Proposing Economy: P. R. China

Completion Report: Not yet submitted - **Monitoring Report** submitted July 2014

Evaluation – [awaiting Completion Report]

Key findings – 6 recommendations

Next steps – [awaiting Completion Report]

Beneficiaries – 83 delegates from 17 member economies, 35 invited experts, guests & international orgs

Gender – 36% female delegates

APEC Secretariat comments – Noted that it will be held in the margins of SOM3

Possible variation from Project Proposal: [awaiting Completion Report]

Subsequent EPWG follow-up action: None reported in Summary Reports of subsequent EPWG meetings

Projects in Implementation

10. Application of Big Data and Open Data to Emergency Preparedness – Phase 1

Proposing Economy: Chinese Taipei

Quality Assessment: 4 co-sponsoring member economies and 2 involved fora

Expected completion date – October 2015

Other fora involved – SMEWG, TPTWG

Expected Outputs and Outcomes – 6 key outputs and 5 main outcomes

Expected Beneficiaries – 5 main categories of beneficiary identified

Gender – Target of 40% female participation rate

Monitoring & Evaluation – EPWG monitoring and mid-term effectiveness review

Indicators – 6 main ones including 80 surveys from 14 member economies & 80 workshop participants

Planned Linkages – involvement of at least 4 non-APEC organizations; builds on 2 previous APEC projects

11. APEC Workshop on Community-Based Disaster Risk Management

Proposing Economy: Viet Nam

Quality Assessment: 3 co-sponsoring member economies

Planned date for workshop – April 2015

Other fora involved – HWG

Expected Outputs and Outcomes – 5 main workshop outputs and 5 outcomes

Expected Beneficiaries – 100 participants and communities

Gender – Women to be prioritized as participants and speakers

Monitoring & Evaluation – EPWG meetings used as track points

Indicators – Workshop evaluations and level of participation

Possible Linkages – involvement of several relevant regional and global organizations

Annex B – List of Program Director Support Services

Extracted from *Revised Guidelines for Lead Shepherd/Chair and Deputy Lead Shepherd/Chair of APEC Working Groups and SOM Task Forces*, February 2012

- B1) Assistance available on request to a forum Chair, its members and project overseers by:
- Providing a link to the APEC Secretariat and other fora;
 - Conveying results of the discussions held at the SCE, SOM, AMM and AELM;
 - Providing advice on how to incorporate leaders' and ministerial directives into work plans;
 - Maintaining the relevant public website and ACS site;
 - Maintaining an up-to-date contact list of members;
 - Preparing the draft meeting agenda based on the outcomes of the previous meeting;
 - Circulating the approved draft to all members for comment, preferably at least four weeks before the meeting, and keeping it up to date;
 - Conveying messages from the Chair with regard to the meeting;
 - Providing information on the latest developments in APEC;
 - Liaising with the CPAU to arrange media outreach and coverage of meetings/events and projects;
 - Following-up on the agreed decisions during the inter-sessional period;
 - At each project approval session helping to prioritize/rank the concept notes and submitting these rankings to the overseeing Committee in advance of the specified deadline;
 - Supporting implementation and reporting on status and completion of APEC projects;
 - Ensuring final completion reports with outcomes of APEC-funded projects are completed within specified guidelines (2 months post-activity) and submitted to the BMC for review;
 - Advising the host economy and Chair on suitable meeting arrangements;
 - Coordinating the preparation and distribution of Administrative Circulars for meetings (if they are not held in conjunction with the SOM and related meetings);;
 - Preparing the Fora Report;
 - Publicizing events or meetings when information is available from the Chair;
 - Providing information on relevant cross-cutting or overlapping issues;
 - Liaising with other fora on behalf of the Chair for follow-up or joint activities;
 - Helping to disseminate information to all APEC contact points on meeting location and dates;
 - After the meeting, assisting the Chair to develop a list of inter-sessional work items and circulating it to members through the ACS site or e-mail or for follow-up;
 - Helping to regularly update and follow-up with the relevant economy to ensure completion of the work plan;
 - Reminding Project Overseers of the necessary requirements during implementation and collect the evaluation report after the project is completed;
 - Advising on the guidelines and procedures to complete the QAF for APEC-funded projects;
 - Advising on APEC publication and website guidelines if the project is going to produce a publication;
 - Preparing media releases for Project Overseers;
 - Arranging a briefing or interview with the media on the work done after a meeting.
- B2) Program Director Responsibilities:
- Maintaining and updating the contents of a forum's webpage on the APEC website and the ACS site;
 - Providing information on the latest developments in APEC;
 - Advising on procedural matters regarding participation in APEC meetings, participation of APEC officials in non-APEC meetings, submission of meeting documents and implementation of APEC projects;
 - Serving as a resource for questions or clarifying issues regarding procedures and practices in APEC relating to project implementation and applications for different sources of APEC funding;
 - Tabling a report on APEC developments at the first annual meeting of the forum;
 - Briefing on other issues of interest to the forum such as any important but yet unresolved issues;
 - Helping the host and Chair to prepare all documents according to the meeting Documents Guidelines;
 - After the meeting, collecting all meeting documents and submitting to the APEC Secretariat Library;
 - Advising the forum on the correct procedure for inviting non-members to its meeting;
 - Liaising with the Host Economy Representative if the meeting is held on the margins of SOM;
 - Supporting Project Proponents and Overseers through all stages of project approval and implementation;
 - Responding to requests from Project Overseers and APEC-funded travelers with regard to authorization for funding and reimbursement claims.