



**Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation**

**Advancing** Free Trade  
for Asia-Pacific **Prosperity**

# **Social Dialogue as a Tool to Address Labour Market Challenges**

**APEC Human Resource and Development Working Group  
July 2022**





**Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation**

# **Social Dialogue as a Tool to Address Labour Market Challenges**

**APEC Human Resource and Development Working Group**

**July 2022**

APEC Project: HRD 06 2020A – 2022 APEC Forum on Social Dialogue as a Tool to Address Labour Market Challenges

Produced by

Jane Godfrey  
Senior Consultant, MartinJenkins  
[jane.godfrey@martinjenkins.co.nz](mailto:jane.godfrey@martinjenkins.co.nz)

EeMun Chen  
Principal Consultant, MartinJenkins  
[eemun.chen@martinjenkins.co.nz](mailto:eemun.chen@martinjenkins.co.nz)

For

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Secretariat  
35 Heng Mui Keng Terrace  
Singapore 119616  
Tel: (65) 68919 600  
Fax: (65) 68919 690  
Email: [info@apec.org](mailto:info@apec.org)  
Website: [www.apec.org](http://www.apec.org)

Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment  
15 Stout Street, Wellington 6011  
PO Box 1473, Wellington 6140  
New Zealand  
Tel: (64) 4 472 0030 or (64) 4 917 0199  
Fax: (64) 4 473 4638 or (64) 4 917 0190  
Email: [info@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:info@mbie.govt.nz)  
Website: [www.mbie.govt.nz](http://www.mbie.govt.nz)

© 2022 APEC Secretariat

APEC#222-HR-01.2

# Contents

<b>Acronyms in this report</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>7</b>
Background	7
Social dialogue	7
Benefits of social dialogue	8
Social dialogue in times of crisis	8
The social dialogue landscape of APEC economies	9
What works well	9
Conclusions	10
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>11</b>
Project background	11
Methods	12
Report structure	14
<b>Social dialogue – scope of issue</b>	<b>15</b>
Definition	15
Modes of social dialogue	17
Measuring social dialogue	19
<b>Benefits of social dialogue</b>	<b>22</b>
It democratises policy making and legitimises the resulting policies	22
It supports economic growth while creating a more equitable work environment	24
It reduces social conflict and provides mechanisms for conflict resolution	25
<b>Social dialogue in times of crisis</b>	<b>26</b>
How social dialogue can help economies respond to economic and other crises	26
Lessons from previous economic shocks	27
Use of social dialogue during the COVID-19 pandemic	28
<b>The social dialogue landscape of APEC economies</b>	<b>31</b>
Most APEC economies have used social dialogue as part of their COVID-19 response	31
APEC economies use a range of social dialogue mechanisms	31
Tripartite social dialogue has been the most used form of social dialogue	32
Most APEC economies have a domestic social dialogue council or institution	33
There is a moderate correlation between advanced social dialogue and labour market resilience in APEC economies	35

<b>What works well</b>	<b>43</b>
The process needs to be well-designed, with adequate time and resourcing	43
A broad range of social partners need to be engaged and to feel they are being heard	47
Social partners need to have sufficient capability and capacity to engage	3
There needs to be an appropriate political climate and political willingness to engage	8
The necessary institutional structures and legal frameworks must be in place – and used correctly	12
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>67</b>

## Appendices

<b>Appendix 1 : The survey</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Appendix 2 : Data sources</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>About the authors</b>	<b>84</b>

## Tables

Table 1: Examples of existing social dialogue indicators and how they are measured	20
Table 2: Standing Councils as domestic social dialogue institutions in APEC economies	34
Table 3: Measures and data sources used to test the relationship between social dialogue and labour market resilience in APEC economies	36
Table 4: Correlations between social dialogue and labour market resilience, APEC economies	40

## Figures

Figure 1: Social dialogue modes by intensity and quality of dialogue	17
--	----

Figure 2: Share of APEC economies that rely on social dialogue as part of their pandemic response	31
Figure 3: Use of different types of social dialogue for labour market issues, the seven survey economies	32
Figure 4: Forms of social dialogue during COVID-19, the seven survey economies	32
Figure 5: Forms of social dialogue during COVID-19, all APEC economies	33
Figure 6: Share of APEC economies that have existing domestic social dialogue institutions	34
Figure 7: Labour market performance of APEC economies	38
Figure 8: Social dialogue indicators, APEC economies	39
Figure 9: Relationship between institutional capability and unemployment, and institutional capability and productivity	41
Figure 10: The relationship between collective bargaining and institutional capability, and collective bargaining and labour market resilience	41
Figure 11: Joint distribution of collective bargaining coverage and union density, latest year, APEC economies	42
Figure 12: Case study – Australia	45
Figure 13: Case study – Peru	50
Figure 14: Case study – Canada	5
Figure 15: Case study – Singapore	10
Figure 16: Case study – New Zealand	14
Figure 17: Enabling conditions for effective social dialogue	66

# Acronyms in this report

Acronym	Definition
<b>APEC</b>	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>ITUC</b>	International Trade Union Confederation
<b>MBIE</b>	New Zealand's Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
<b>DSDI</b>	Domestic social dialogue institution
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>HRDWG</b>	Human Resource and Development Working Group
<b>GFC</b>	Global Financial Crisis
<b>AFC</b>	Asian Financial Crisis
<b>GLRI</b>	Global Labour Resilience Index
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product



# Executive summary

## Background

This report was commissioned as part of an Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC)-sponsored project by New Zealand to identify effective social dialogue approaches to support labour market recovery across APEC economies. This report draws on academic and grey literature<sup>1</sup>, as well as a survey conducted in June 2021 of APEC economies' experiences with social dialogue before and during the COVID-19 pandemic response.

For the purposes of this report, "social dialogue" is defined as all types of joint decision-making, negotiation, consultation, or information-sharing among representatives of governments, employers and workers, civil society, and NGOs, on issues of mutual interest, particularly economic and social policy.

Historically, the use of social dialogue has increased in times of economic shock. As APEC economies seek to recover from the social and economic impacts of COVID-19, social dialogue mechanisms can play a role in promoting consensus and cohesion, building longer-term labour market recovery, and tackling broader labour-market challenges.

## Social dialogue

In the labour market context, social dialogue can take different forms. Typically, it is either:

- bipartite – between social partners (for example, employers and employee organisations), or
- tripartite – between social partners and government.

In addition to employers and employee organisations (for example, unions), it can also include a wider range of social partners, for example, the community or voluntary sector, cultural, ethnic, or religious groups. Social dialogue can be informal/ad hoc or formal/institutionalised, and occur at many different levels, from the worksite or enterprise level to the international level. Typically, at the lower levels social dialogue has a more practical focus than at the higher levels, which tend to focus on policy-development.

There are many different types of social dialogue, although they generally fit within four main categories:

- information exchange – sharing of information between social partners
- consultation – an exchange of views, can be consultative/informative only or produce binding agreements
- negotiation – debate to bring about consensus or agreement, includes collective bargaining which is one of the most common forms of social dialogue
- joint decision-making – decisions are made jointly between partners, tends to be formal and highly structured and can result in decisions that are subsequently ratified by the government.

<sup>1</sup> Including international policy and practice resources from organisations such as APEC, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and the United Nations (UN).

## Benefits of social dialogue

There are three main benefits of social dialogue. Firstly, it can lead to better policy-making by being informed by information from social partners. It democratises the policy-making process by inviting a wide range of voices to provide input, which can help legitimise the resulting policies. It can increase transparency around policy-making and build trust in, and commitment to, new policies which can make them easier to implement. It can help mitigate inequities and ensure representation of indigenous peoples, vulnerable workers, and diverse communities. Secondly, social dialogue can support economic growth while creating a more equitable work environment. It can support increased innovation and productivity and promote better working conditions for staff. It can also ease social tensions during economic hardship and protect the most vulnerable workers (including those in non-standard employment). It is one of the four pillars of Decent Work.<sup>2</sup> Finally, social dialogue can assist in reducing power imbalances in labour markets, reduce social conflicts, and provide a mechanism to resolve differences when they arise – which can reduce the risk of industrial dispute. It can help overcome long-standing adversarial relationships between social partners and support the establishment and growth of trusting relationships.

## Social dialogue in times of crisis

Social dialogue has been used across many previous economic crises, to help economies adjust to, and recover from, economic and labour market difficulties, for example, helping to absorb shocks and preserve employment. Economic crises may provide a motivator and opportunity to reactivate social dialogue processes that have become dormant, or to establish social dialogue processes that have not been in place previously. Social dialogue can also help economies re-build longer-term.

Previous economic shocks have shown that economies with well-established social dialogue institutions are likely to be better placed to develop and implement effective tripartite social dialogue responses in times of crisis. However, this may be a correlated rather than a causal relationship – economies that were doing poorly pre-crisis may be forced to quickly implement fiscal consolidation policies and, as a result, may have limited resources to engage in social dialogue processes.

Economic crisis can also put pressure on trade unions, with fiscal austerity and structural adjustment policies leading to a reduction in collective bargaining. On the other hand, economic crises can also provide opportunities for actions such as collective bargaining to make compromises or trade-offs that would not have been possible in periods of economic stability. As governments move from initial response to a longer-term focus (for example, debt reduction), social dialogue may come to be seen as an unaffordable luxury.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the loss of 495 million full-time jobs, with lower-middle-income economies hit the hardest (ILO, 2020a). However, these economic impacts did not affect everyone equally, with COVID-19 (like previous economic crises) exposing existing structural weaknesses and inequalities. Many economies have used social dialogue as part of their COVID-19 response, although even established social dialogue structures have been forced to adapt. Where social dialogue mechanisms were well-established, the literature suggests that the involvement of social partners generally continued as usual throughout COVID-19, although time pressures may have truncated the process. Conversely, in economies with less established mechanisms, social dialogue

<sup>2</sup> Decent Work was coined and defined by the ILO in 1999 as “opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity” (Somavia, 1999).

may have continued but been severely restricted. Many economies have committed to strengthening social dialogue as part of their COVID-19 recovery.

## The social dialogue landscape of APEC economies

The International Labour Organization (ILO) repository of responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, data from the June 2021 survey of APEC economies, and other pandemic policy trackers suggest that most APEC economies have used social dialogue as part of their COVID-19 response. Europe and Central Asia used social dialogue more than the APEC economies, while the Arab states had the lowest use.

We found that APEC economies use a range of social dialogue mechanisms, with consultation the most frequently used, followed closely by the exchange of information. Tripartite social dialogue has been the most used form of social dialogue by APEC economies during the COVID-19 response. Social dialogue can take many forms and involve many different institutional forms, including standing councils, advisory/working groups, standing institutional body, regular consultative body, or ad hoc approaches. Most APEC economies have a domestic social dialogue council or institution which are generally formal, established through law, and are government-resourced and funded.

There is a growing evidence base that social dialogue can support economic growth and stability and labour market resilience, by enabling productivity growth, wage moderation and pay equity. Based on the data available, there was a moderate association between APEC economies' social dialogue advancement and labour market resilience. However, simple correlations are only able to suggest associations between two variables, rather than causal effects and there are many different variables that will affect labour market resilience besides social dialogue.

## What works well

In this report we identified five enabling conditions for effective social dialogue:

- that the process is well-designed with adequate time and resourcing,
- a broad range of social partners are engaged and feel they are being heard,
- social partners have sufficient capability and capacity to engage,
- there is an appropriate political climate and willingness to engage, and
- the necessary institutional structures and legal frameworks are in place and used correctly.

We found that there is no one model for social dialogue. The literature suggests that while good project management is important, it cannot make up for a poorly designed project. Timeframes need to be realistic and provide sufficient time for adequate engagement – especially for complex issues which will take longer. There must be clear processes and procedures, including to deal with dispute resolution, and the chosen social dialogue approach must be adapted to fit the local context. The issue needs to be very clearly defined and the intended outcome of the dialogue made explicit.

Social dialogue should include a broad range of stakeholders to provide a wide range of voices. These social partners need sufficient strength to engage, for example, high trade union membership and strong employer organisations. Social partners should see each other as equal partners with each party's viewpoint given equal consideration. Social dialogue requires high levels of trust internally and between social dialogue partners. This can take time to develop – and can be difficult to rebuild if social dialogue stops. Social partners should be engaged early, and this can also help develop commitment to, and ownership of, the project as once stakeholders feel engaged and heard, they are

more likely to engage further. This makes the project more likely to achieve its objectives and more likely to be sustainable for the future.

Social partners need to have sufficient capability and capacity to fully engage in social dialogue processes. Otherwise, there is a risk that groups with greater resources will be prioritised rather than those who should have their voices heard. Social dialogue partners can be supported via capacity building activities to develop useful skills such as management negotiation, communication, cooperation, conflict-management, organising techniques, collective bargaining, grievance handling, and organisational development. Social partners must have access to the necessary information and knowledge and in Western Europe, many workers' and employers' organisations also have associated research institutions to support this.

The literature highlights the need for an appropriate political climate to support social dialogue. This includes basic aspects of democracy, since without freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, social dialogue processes lack legitimacy and cannot be sustainable. Social dialogue also requires strong, independent, and representative employers' and workers' organisations and civil society institutions. If workers cannot freely choose their representative organisation, then these organisations are not truly representative and free and frank negotiations are not possible. Successful social dialogue is dependent on political willingness on the part of all social partners to engage in good faith and recognise each other as equal partners. In some cases, this willingness to engage will depend on the government of the day.

Social partner organisations must be institutionally recognised by both business and political actors. However, the literature suggests that social dialogue is not dependent on a specific (or indeed, any) institutional structure and can also be conducted via informal and ad hoc means. In economies with a strong tradition of social dialogue, a formalised institution may not be necessary, particularly if an established range of bodies and processes already exist. If a domestic social dialogue institution is to be established, it generally includes representatives from workers' and employers' organisations (bipartite) and government (tripartite). It may also include wider membership, such as representatives from other cultural, ethnic, or religious groups. Social dialogue institutional and legal frameworks vary across regions, for example, social dialogue is much more embedded in Europe, including as part of the formal European Union (EU) policy process. Even when the necessary social dialogue institutions/mechanisms are in place, this does not guarantee they will be used correctly.

## Conclusions

While discussed separately in this report, the five enabling conditions outlined above are mutually reinforcing and work together to create an ideal scenario to support successful social dialogue.

# Introduction

## Project background

Social dialogue can be defined as all types of joint decision-making, negotiation, consultation, or information-sharing among representatives of governments, employers and workers, civil society, and NGOs, on issues of mutual interest, particularly economic and social policy. Historically, the use of social dialogue to develop, improve and implement labour market policy has increased in times of economic shock (Fashoyin, 2004; Ghellab, 2009; ILO, 2020a).

As APEC economies seek to recover from the social and economic impact of COVID-19, social dialogue mechanisms can play a key role in promoting consensus and cohesion, building longer term labour market recovery, and in tackling broader labour-market challenges. New Zealand, with the co-sponsorship of Australia; Canada; Chile; China; Malaysia; the Philippines; Singapore; and Chinese Taipei, obtained funding for the Human Resource and Development Working Group (HRDWG) project HRD 06 2020A 2022 APEC Forum on Social Dialogue as a Tool to Address Labour Market Challenges.

This project examines how different types and institutional forms of social dialogue can support resilience and responsiveness in times of crisis (such as COVID-19 – for example, displaced jobs, lost working-hours, and the impact on informal workers, young workers and women), as well as for more long-term issues such as challenges posed by the future of work (changing patterns of work arising from rapid globalisation, technological change, climate change, demographic change), by examining approaches across APEC member economies, in particular:

- different forms of social dialogue used, the benefits of social dialogue for various labour market situations and key factors associated with successful and sustained social dialogue,
- whether there is any correlation between economies that have advanced social dialogue functions and their labour market resilience, and
- whether social dialogue practices have continued as is during the COVID-19 situation or evolved in response to it.

To aid in this understanding, this report sets out:

- an overview of social dialogue mechanisms used internationally, including how different types and institutional forms of social dialogue can support resilience and responsiveness in times of crisis as well as for more long-term issues such as Future of Work opportunities.
- case studies of effective approaches to social dialogue and steps taken by governments to facilitate this, and the use of social dialogue mechanisms applied to in response to the labour market effects of COVID-19 on regional economies.

As part of the development of this report, a survey was developed which was distributed to all APEC member economies and focused on:

- economies' experience in social dialogue
- the effects of COVID-19
- level of cross border cooperation.

Seven responses were received – from Australia, Canada, Chile, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Chinese Taipei. Findings in this report also incorporate discussion from a two-day online APEC forum held in March 2022 and hosted by New Zealand.

This report aims to:

- increase understanding of approaches to social dialogue and how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected labour markets, including challenges for labour agencies to respond to
- explore case studies of effective social dialogue approaches to labour market recovery, with a focus on recovery from the impacts of COVID-19
- explore whether there is any correlation between advanced social dialogue functions and an economy's labour market resilience, and whether social dialogue practices have continued as is during the COVID-19 situation or evolved in response to it.

## Methods

### Literature review

This report draws on literature from academic databases, and grey literature including international policy and practice resources from organisations such as APEC, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and the United Nations (UN). This report focusses on APEC economies, as well as other international responses over the past 15 years, including through the global financial crisis (GFC).

The following search terms were used in identifying relevant literature:

- |                               |                  |                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| • Active labour market policy | • Dialogue       | • Labour market policy |
| • APEC                        | • Economic shock | • Migration            |
| • America(s)                  | • Employers      | • NGOs                 |
| • COVID-19                    | • Labour market  | • Pandemic             |
| • Asia Pacific                | • Workers        | • Religion             |
| • Civil society               | • GFC            | • Social dialogue      |
| • Collective bargaining       | • Governance     | • Trade union          |
| • Costs                       | • Indigenous     | • Vulnerable           |

### Limitations of the literature review

The literature search was limited to reports and other literature that:

- are publicly available, or available through academic databases,
- are in English, and
- were published since 2006 (although some earlier seminal works are included).

Social dialogue tends to be more established in Europe because of its embedded role within EU policy processes (Gold et al., 2007; ILO, 2013b; Voss et al., 2011). As a result, much of the literature, including literature cited in this report, is Europe-centric.

Section 2 focusses specifically on the benefits of social dialogue. Literature searches on negative aspects of social dialogue, and the costs of social dialogue, were also undertaken. There was limited literature that attempts to value or describe the costs of social dialogue at the economy-wide level.

## Analysis of survey data

New Zealand, in association with co-sponsoring economies Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Chinese Taipei, developed a survey to collect information on APEC economies' experiences with social dialogue. Specifically, it collected information on:

- different forms of social dialogue used
- the benefits of social dialogue for various labour market situations and key factors associated with successful and sustained social dialogue
- whether there is any correlation between economies that have advanced social dialogue functions and their labour market resilience
- whether social dialogue practices have continued during the COVID-19 pandemic, or evolved in response to it
- examples of how social dialogue is used in the economy, and challenges and benefits experienced.

The survey questions and item scales were developed from the literature, and iterations of the survey were reviewed by the New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), as well as the co-sponsoring economies. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix 1.

The survey was sent to all APEC economies<sup>3</sup> at the end of June 2021, and member economies were given eight weeks to respond. Seven responses were received, from Australia, Canada, Chile, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Chinese Taipei.

## Limitations of the survey data

There was a low response rate to the survey. All survey respondents confirmed they use social dialogue. However, due to the low response rate, this cannot be generalised to assume that all APEC economies use social dialogue since it is likely that economies that do not use social dialogue would be less likely to respond.

## Data analysis

Summary statistics were undertaken on the survey data.

Social dialogue, labour market performance and economic performance data from [OECD.Stat](#), [ILOSTAT](#) and ILO's COVID-19 [responses](#) database were collated and analysed.

<sup>3</sup> APEC has 21 members. The word 'economies' is used to describe APEC members because the APEC cooperative process is predominantly concerned with trade and economic issues, with members engaging with one another as economic entities. The APEC members are:

- |                              |                     |                     |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| • Australia                  | • Japan             | • The Philippines   |
| • Brunei Darussalam          | • Republic of Korea | • Russia            |
| • Canada                     | • Malaysia          | • Singapore         |
| • Chile                      | • Mexico            | • Chinese Taipei    |
| • People's Republic of China | • New Zealand       | • Thailand          |
| • Hong Kong, China           | • Papua New Guinea  | • The United States |
| • Indonesia                  | • Peru              | • Viet Nam          |

## Report structure

This report is divided into six sections.

**Social dialogue:** Social dialogue is defined, and different types of social dialogue mechanisms are outlined. How social dialogue can be measured is also discussed.

**Benefits of social dialogue:** The various benefits of social dialogue, that is, it can improve policy making, support economic growth (while creating a more equitable work environment), and reduce social conflict.

**Social dialogue in times of crisis:** How social dialogue can be used in times of crisis.

**The social dialogue landscape of APEC economies:** How social dialogue is currently being used across APEC economies – including to respond to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

**What works well:** We propose five characteristics of successful social dialogue, as based on the literature:

- the process should be well-designed with enough time and resourcing,
- a broad range of social partners should be engaged,
- partners should have sufficient capacity and capability to engage,
- there is an appropriate political climate and political willingness to engage, and
- the necessary institutional structure and legal frameworks are in place and being used.

**Conclusions:** A framework of enabling conditions that support effective social dialogue.



# Social dialogue – scope of issue

## Definition

For the purposes of this report, “social dialogue” is defined as all types of joint decision-making, negotiation, consultation, or information-sharing among representatives of governments, employers and workers, civil society, and NGOs, on issues of mutual interest, particularly economic and social policy.<sup>4</sup>

Efforts to establish or increase social dialogue are based on the idea that “people affected by decisions should have a voice in the decision-making process” (International Labour Conference 2013 as cited in ILO & OECD, 2017, p. 1). It can encompass a broad range of issues that directly or indirectly affect the labour market (for example, health and safety at work (ILO, 2022)) and can also be expanded to civil society more generally (Fashoyin, 2004). The focus is often on producing a tangible output, for example a collective bargaining agreement or agreement on a new policy (Hermans et al., 2017).

## Engaging social partners

Social dialogue in the labour market context can take different forms. Typically, it is either:

- bipartite – between social partners (for example, employers and employee organisations), or
- tripartite – between social partners and government (ILO, 2013b; Ishikawa, 2003).

Traditionally, social dialogue was viewed as a formal relationship, for example in the form of tripartite institutions, such as labour advisory councils (Fashoyin, 2004; Ishikawa, 2003), but the term is now applied more broadly to a wider range of tripartite activities (Fashoyin, 2004).

## A broader range of social partners

The OECD recognises that with more non-standard and new forms of work, and reductions in trade union membership, non-union labour movements are emerging to engage in social dialogue on workers’ interests (OECD, 2019b). Technology and social media also help workers organise by facilitating and building communities and engage in protests, boycotts, and petitions. Direct forms of voice, such as regular meetings, team briefings, and problem-solving groups also stand in for more traditional union, employers’ and employees’ organisations.

Social dialogue can draw on a wide range of social partners – for example, representatives of the community and voluntary sector (Ishikawa, 2003), or cultural, ethnic, or religious groups.

- Spain – Catholic organisations and worker groups supported Decent Work including guaranteeing workers’ rights, extending social protections, and promoting social dialogue (González-González et al., 2021).

<sup>4</sup> This definition is informed by the International Labour Organization’s (ILO, 2003, p. 2, 2013b, 2017) definition: “All types of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between, or among representatives of governments, employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy”.

- Thailand – there is a political dimension to social partners – depending on their alliance to the divergent red-shirts and yellow-shirts<sup>5</sup> (Suttawet & Bamber, 2018).
- Fiji – social movements and community groups like the YWCA, femLINK Pacific and the Fiji Women’s Rights Movement have been active civil society partners (Parker & Arrowsmith, 2014).
- Indonesia – civil society organisations have been actively involved in social dialogue and labour law reform processes, for example, legal aid foundations, women’s groups, and migrant workers’ associations (Labor Institute Indonesia & ITUC/TUDCN, 2016).
- Republic of Korea – the domestic social dialogue institution, Economic & Social Labour Committee, includes a Committee for Minority [sic], with several sub-committees: Youth Committee, Women’s Committee, Non-standard worker Committee and Small Business Committee (Jung, 2021).
- Philippines – trade union organisations created alliances with civil society and women’s organisations, including organising non-wage workers in the informal economy such as youth, women’s, and farmers’ groups (Fashoyin, 2003).
- Canada – there were over 60 participants from various parts of civil society at multi-stakeholder meetings as part of the Migrant Worker Support Network (see Case study on page 5). Officials recognised the importance of engaging with “people on the ground” to gain insights, including migrant workers themselves and community organisations, in spaces specifically for migrant workers (such as a Migrant Workers’ Forum).

## Level of formality and institutionalisation

Social dialogue can be informal/ad hoc, or formal/institutionalised, and the two approaches are often used together and can be mutually reinforcing (Fashoyin, 2004; Ishikawa, 2003). The social dialogue process itself may be a formal affair (for example, a meeting with the President) but may still have no formal legal standing (Guardiancich & Molina, 2017).

## Engaging at different levels

Social dialogue mechanisms and tools can be categorised by geography, sector, or both (Araújo & Meneses, 2018). Social dialogue can occur at many different levels (European Commission, 2016; Fashoyin, 2004; Gold et al., 2007; ILO, 2020a; OECD & ILO, 2018; van Empel & Werna, 2010):

- international – for example, the ILO (Milman-Sivan, 2009), G20 (Louis, 2016), and transnational agreements between multinational companies and global trade union federations (Lévesque et al., 2018)
- continental – for example, the EU (Bechter et al., 2021; Milman-Sivan, 2009)
- regional – for example, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- economy-wide or federal
- sector or industry or occupational group

<sup>5</sup> The red-shirts support a mixture of progressive and populist policies. Members are mainly rural and suburban workers, and other people from outside Bangkok, especially from the north and the north-east. They also include certain students, academics, activists and business people who oppose the military and military control. The yellow-shirts are a network of royalists, ultra-nationalists and urban middle-class people known as the People’s Alliance for Democracy that was later replaced by the People’s Democratic Reform Committee. They are committed to a conservative ideology and the king, and less concerned with the principles of democracy and elected governments (Suttawet & Bamber, 2018).

- municipal
- enterprise – usually bipartite
- plant – a sub-part of an enterprise.

Social dialogue may take a different focus at different levels – for example, more policy-focussed at an international or domestic level, and more pragmatic at the enterprise or plant levels (van Empel & Werna, 2010). This is outlined in an example from the Republic of Korea, which describes how social dialogue may focus on economic crises and working hours at a domestic level, on sector-level industrial issues at an industry level, and on job creation in the region at a regional level (Jung, 2021).

Sometimes social dialogue at one level can have flow-on effects to other levels – for example, “investing in tripartism at national level can be a gateway to healthier social dialogue as it can stimulate autonomous dialogue between social partners at lower – sectoral and enterprise – levels” (ILO, 2020a, p. 24, see also 2020d).

## Modes of social dialogue

There are many types of social dialogue that can be used to address labour market challenges. However, they largely fit into four modal categories (Fashoyin, 2004; ILO, 2013a; Ishikawa, 2003; OECD & ILO, 2018; Ratnam & Tomoda, 2005):

- sharing or exchanging information
- consultation
- negotiation
- joint decision-making.

Figure 1 shows how the intensity of dialogue changes across the four modes.

**Figure 1: Social dialogue modes by intensity and quality of dialogue**



## Information sharing

Often one of the main purposes of social dialogue is to share or exchange information between parties (ILO, 2020d; Ratnam & Tomoda, 2005). While this may not include any real discussion or action on the issues, it is an essential part of the process and can influence decisions and promote trust and understanding (Fashoyin, 2004; ILO, 2003). As the ILO (2013a, p. 26) notes, “organized exchange of information in a relaxed atmosphere may help the parties begin to see the rationale of other groups, which may lead to informal consultations.” Information sharing can include public hearings (Ratnam & Tomoda, 2005).

## Consultation

Consultation refers to “engagement... through an exchange of views which in turn can lead to more in-depth dialogue” (ILO, 2003, p. 3). It can be used to improve policy, particularly when it allows policy makers to better understand the on-the-ground experiences (Fashoyin, 2004). Direct consultation may occur before decisions are made, afterwards during implementation, or both (Ratnam & Tomoda, 2005). The process can be consultative and informative only, or be empowered to reach binding agreements (ILO, 2003, 2013a). In some economies, governments are obliged to react to the opinions of social partners and/or provide information to parliament on the views expressed during social dialogue (ILO, 2013a).

## Negotiation

Negotiation is one of the most widespread forms of social dialogue (ILO, 2003) and refers to debate to reach agreement or understanding (Fashoyin, 2004). The focus is on reaching a decision by consensus, consultation and negotiations continue until a decision is reached that is acceptable to all parties. As a result, voting is likely able to be avoided (ILO, 2013a). According to the ILO (2013a, p. 24), “negotiation is the most formal and binding form of social dialogue, and is mostly institutionalized”. It can occur at enterprise, sectoral, or inter-sectoral level (OECD & ILO, 2018).

One of the most common forms of negotiation is collective bargaining, which can help increase incomes, improve employment conditions, manage conflicts, and drive innovation in the workplace (OECD & ILO, 2018). To be effective, collective bargaining requires:

*A legal and regulatory framework that allows for the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; independent, strong and representative social partners and the willingness of the parties to engage in collective bargaining in good faith. (OECD & ILO, 2018, pp. 31–32)*

## Joint decision-making

Joint decision-making is increasingly being seen as a key social dialogue mechanism. It tends to be formal and highly structured and can result in decisions that are subsequently ratified by the government (Fashoyin, 2004).

Evaluations of social dialogue interventions show that involving parties and stakeholders early in the design phase, and continuing to involve and engage them throughout the process – including having them participate in consultative or decision-making processes and structures – were all key to sustainable success (ILO, 2017).

In our survey of APEC economies:

- most of the seven economies reported using information exchange across all levels of the economy, and consultation from the sector/industry-level upwards
- all economies reported using consultation at an economy-wide level
- joint decision-making is primarily used at a sector/industry level
- negotiation is mostly used at a workplace or organisational level.

## Measuring social dialogue

Discussion of how to measure social dialogue has been driven by uncertainty related to:

- when, and how, to use social dialogue,
- the causes and consequences of institutions related to social dialogue,
- understanding to what extent social dialogue occurs in a particular economy, and
- the case for social dialogue.

Approaches to developing indicators for social dialogue have evolved over time (Castillo, 2013; Hayter & Stoevska, 2011; Kenworthy & Kittel, 2003; Lawrence & Ishikawa, 2005). Historically, a single measure of the “extent of unionisation” was used for social dialogue (Kenworthy & Kittel, 2003). As discussed above, social dialogue is seen as a key mechanism to bring about better employment conditions for workers. To understand the extent to which social dialogue contributed to improved employment conditions, a series of indicators were proposed in a conceptual framework for measurement of Decent Work, including social dialogue.

In that framework, two indicators related to social dialogue (Lawrence & Ishikawa, 2005):

- union density rate, and
- collective bargaining coverage rate.

These two indicators do not provide for a comprehensive assessment of the social dialogue concept. But they were relied on because of the lack of high-quality, relevant data for many economies.<sup>6</sup> Kenworthy and Kittel (2003) extend this traditional approach by classifying social dialogue into four categories:

- 1 associational structure
- 2 wage setting arrangements
- 3 participation in public policy
- 4 firm-level employee representation.

Table 1 outlines some existing social dialogue indicators and how they have been measured. The table is not exhaustive but shows how different researchers have conceptualised and measured social dialogue.

<sup>6</sup> See Lawrence and Ishikawa (2005) and Hayter and Stoevska (2011) for details on the methodological differences between these two indicators and the challenges associated with how they are measured and collected across different economies.

**Table 1: Examples of existing social dialogue indicators and how they are measured**

<p><b>Associational structure</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Union density</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ebbinghaus-Visser union density. Non-retired union members as a percentage of the labour force.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Union concentration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Golden-Lange-Wallerstein inter-associational union concentration. Herfindahl index of concentration across the eight largest union confederations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Employer concentration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Traxler-Blaschke-Kittel inter-associational employer concentration. Number of economy-wide, inter-industry (that is, covering at least two one-digit ISIC<sup>7</sup> sectors) employer peak organisations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Union centralisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Kenworthy union centralization. Index ranging from 0 to 4. Calculated as the number of the following powers/capacities that the main union confederation has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ power of appointment of affiliates</li> <li>▪ veto over wage agreements by affiliates</li> <li>▪ veto over strikes</li> <li>▪ confederation has its own strike funds.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Employer centralisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Kenworthy employer centralization. Index with 3 categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1 = no peak employer confederation</li> <li>▪ 2 = peak employer confederation exists but has none of the powers/resources listed under 3 below</li> <li>▪ 3 = peak employer confederation exists and has one or more of the following: power of appointment of affiliates, veto over wage agreements, veto over lockouts, confederation has its own conflict funds.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Wage setting arrangements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Wage centralisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Calmfors-Driffill wage centralisation. Rank ordering based on the degree of coordination within central organisations of labour and business and the degree of cooperation between such organisations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Wage coordination</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– OECD wage coordination. Index ranging from 1 to 3.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Participation in public policy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Hicks and Kenworthy cooperation between government and interest groups. 3-point scale: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ (0) relatively cooperative interaction between cohesive government agencies and coordinated business and labour organisations</li> <li>▪ (0.5) moderate cooperation</li> <li>▪ (1) relatively combative, conflictual relationship[s] between fragmented domestic agencies and interest group organisations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Boreham-Compston labour participation in public policy making. 10-point scale ranging from systems in which union confederations formally participate in policy formulation across three or more policy areas on a regular basis (highest scores) to systems in which some unions are involved in policy consultations, but no input is sought from the major confederations.</li> </ul>

<sup>7</sup> The International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) is the international reference classification of productive activities. Most economies around the world have used ISIC as their domestic activity classification or have developed domestic classifications derived from ISIC. ISIC has become an important tool for comparing statistical data on economic activities at the international level.

<b>Firm-level employee representation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kittel institutionalized firm-level worker representation. 10-point scale derived from three elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ (1) legal foundation (law = 4 points; collective agreement = 2 points; firm-level agreement = 0 points)</li> <li>▪ (2) information right and cooperation duty of works councils (each 1 point)</li> <li>▪ (3) veto rights of works councils (for each of 8 areas 0.5 points).</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Kittel firm-level collective agreements. Dichotomous measure. 0 if firm-level agreements do not have a legal basis and 1 if firm-level agreements are based on a legal provision.</li> </ul>
---	--

Source: Indicators of social dialogue: Concepts and measurements (Kenworthy & Kittel, 2003)

Over the years, approaches to measurement of social dialogue have expanded this list of indicators to include:

- measures of the legal framework (freedom of association and the right to organise, collective bargaining right and tripartite consultations) (for example, Castillo, 2013)
- days not worked due to strikes and lockouts (for example, Castillo, 2013; OECD & ILO, 2018).

Standardised, international approaches to measuring social dialogue have not yet been implemented across economies, but the ILO has developed databases that provide data on the two main indicators, **union density rate** and **collective bargaining rate**, and this enables international comparisons.

The indicators largely rely on one of two approaches to data collection:

- An expert creating scores based on available quantitative and qualitative data taken from the secondary literature and primary data collected from associations and organisations
  - The ILO have adopted this approach to data collection to enable a more comprehensive and rounded picture of social dialogue (for example, ILO, 2020a, 2021a)
- A detailed standardised questionnaire filled out by domestic experts
  - Kenworthy and Kittel (2003) conclude that this approach is the most valid and reliable, as long as responses are validated by comparing them with existing literature and any concerns are discussed with specialists or experts so that data can be compared between economies.

The survey issued to APEC economies attempted the second approach to data collection. As the response rate was low, no conclusive or generalised findings were possible, but the survey responses do add to the overall field of social dialogue measurement, and to the understanding of the types of outcomes social dialogue can bring about. Where relevant, responses to the survey will be referred to throughout this report.

# Benefits of social dialogue

## It democratises policy making and legitimises the resulting policies

Social dialogue is typically applied to a number of social and economic policy areas (ILO, 2017, 2020c), including:

- **Employment:** Create greater opportunities to secure decent employment and income. Employment promotion, skills development, sustainable enterprises, and public employment services.
- **Social protection:** Enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection. Social security, working conditions, occupational safety and health, labour migration, and HIV/AIDS.
- **Future of work and just transitions:** How to respond to the megatrends driving the future of work, including technological advancement, demographic change, climate change, and globalisation.
- **Labour protection:** Promote labour rights, working conditions, decent work, transitioning from informal to more formal forms of employment. Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, forced labour, child labour, discrimination at work, international labour standards, mainstreaming decent work, and the informal economy.
- **Social dialogue as an outcome:** Strengthen tripartism and social dialogue. Strengthening employers' organisations, workers' organisations, labour administration and labour law, social dialogue and industrial relations, capacity, and ability to respond to social and labour market issues.
- **Response to economic shocks or economic/social events.** As a response to global or domestic pandemics, global financial crisis, or natural hazards.

Sound industrial relations, including social dialogue, are important to economic and employment policy (ILO, 2013b). Social dialogue is a structure of interest representation but can also be framed as a system of policy-making (Guardiancich & Molina, 2020, 2021). Social dialogue can democratise economic and social policy and support inclusiveness by incorporating representatives from employers, employees, and governments (ITUC, 2012) as well as other stakeholders such as cultural, ethnic, or religious groups. It can give “voice to key stakeholders” by providing opportunities for them to participate in decision-making processes (Hermans et al., 2017, p. 9), which can help to “reconcile competing interests and to build trust in, commitment to and ownership of policies” (ILO, 2020a, p. 1). For example, in Viet Nam, a union representative sits in the drafting committee for any labour-related laws and:

*The Legal Department of the Ministry for Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs always sends a first draft to the General Confederation of Labour for written consultation, and that the National Assembly always checks that unions have been consulted before passing a law. (ILO, 2017, p. 47)*

Sharing information between social partners can make for better policy (ILO, 2020a, 2020d) and incorporating a wide range of voices into policy-making is assumed to result in policy that better reflects needs (Fashoyin, 2004; Ishikawa, 2003).



Social dialogue can increase transparency and accountability around policy-making, for example, in some economies there is a legal requirement via the institutionalised tripartite structure for government to provide feedback on follow-up actions taken following social dialogue activities (Hermans et al., 2017). On the other hand, “over-institutionalised and rigid social dialogue can be viewed as undemocratic as the decision-making processes become opaque, and are seen as taking place “behind closed doors”” (Ishikawa, 2003, p. 13).

Social dialogue can help build support for difficult policies (Ishikawa, 2003) and ease the way for new policies to be implemented (ILO, 2013a, 2020d). It does this by increasing ownership of, and commitment to, new policies.

*Unilateral action by the state can be met by resistance including strikes, protests, boycotts or quests for judicial review of the constitutionality of the measures imposed... Having dialogue with representatives of workers and employers demonstrate the government's willingness to take into account the needs of those concerned by its decisions. Thereafter, workers and employers feel more empowered in the political process.* (ILO, 2013a, p. 62)

Social dialogue is seen as a bottom-up approach and so resulting policies are viewed as more legitimate since stakeholders have been involved in their development (Ishikawa, 2003). However, social dialogue should be truly bottom-up and should not be used to legitimise something being imposed top-down (Araújo & Meneses, 2018).

Social dialogue has been recommended as a tool to mitigate inequality and ensure representation of indigenous peoples, vulnerable workers, and diverse communities (Tørres, 2021; UN IASG, 2014). It can be used to “promote alternative policy choices which are equitable for all and more sustainable”, compared to standard “one-size-fits all policy decisions, which are often presented as inevitable by financial markets” (Papadakis & Ghellab, 2014, p. 9).

APEC economies who responded to the survey confirmed when they used social dialogue it led to:

- better consultation and information exchange
- a better coordinated response to a specific issue
- more sustainable solutions able to be implemented
- more trust and consensus.

All economies who responded agreed that social dialogue leads to:

- more informed policy at least occasionally (and over half agreed it leads to more informed policy “a great deal”)
- more community involvement in policy development at least occasionally (and over half agreed it leads to more informed policy “a great deal”).

# It supports economic growth while creating a more equitable work environment

## Economic growth and business performance

There is a growing evidence base that social dialogue can support economic growth, stability, and poverty reduction, by enabling productivity growth, wage moderation and pay equity (Fashoyin, 2004; Grimshaw et al., 2017; ITUC, 2012). As outlined in the literature, social dialogue can:

- support increased innovation and business growth through involving workers in strategic decisions (ILO & OECD, 2017)
- increase productivity (for example, by identifying underused capacity) and use labour more cost-effectively (for example, via working-time arrangements that benefit both employers and workers) (ILO & OECD, 2017)
- promote better working conditions which can “reduce staff turnover, foster the retention of skills, and strengthen the incentives of workers and enterprises for investing in human capital.” (ILO & OECD, 2017, p. 6)
- make labour markets more adaptable, secure, and inclusive (OECD, 2019a).

## A more equitable work environment

Social dialogue can ease social tensions during economic hardship and transition periods (ILO & OECD, 2017; Ishikawa, 2003) and create “strong, trusting relations and a cooperative environment at work” (ILO & OECD, 2017, p. 5). The benefits of social dialogue are two-fold, being both “a means to achieve social and economic goals and an objective in itself” (ILO, 2013a, p. 12) by giving “the weaker more voice, tempering the voice of the stronger” (Stavis, Krause & Morena 2021, p. 57).

Social dialogue protects the most vulnerable by maintaining balance thereby mitigating adverse policy effects (ILO, 2013a). Traditional social dialogue mechanisms may be less applicable to increasingly common non-standard employment, such as the gig economy (OECD & ILO, 2018, 2020), where workers may fall in a “grey zone” between employee and self-employed (OECD, 2019b). Nonetheless, social dialogue (for example, collective agreements) can be used to lift wages and conditions of low and middle-wage workers, including atypical and precarious workers, for example, cleaners (ILO, 2020e; Larsen & Mailand, 2018; OECD & ILO, 2020).

*Power imbalances exist in the employment relationship so that when workers negotiate pay and working conditions individually, employers’ buyer power is usually not compensated by sufficient bargaining power on the side of workers. By correcting this, social dialogue helps to increase earnings accruing to low- and middle wage workers. (OECD & ILO, 2020, p. 41)*

This is particularly applicable during times of crisis such as in response to COVID-19 (ILO, 2020e).

Social dialogue is one of the main pillars of Decent Work. It is seen by the ILO and others as not only helping to establish decent working conditions (for example, ILO & OECD, 2017), but also as contributing to socio-economic progress and poverty reduction (Kenworthy & Kittel, 2003).

## It reduces social conflict and provides mechanisms for conflict resolution

Social dialogue can help overcome long-standing adversarial relationships between social partners (Fashoyin, 2004) by providing space for social partners to build long-term trusting relationships (Grimshaw et al., 2017). It can reduce power imbalances in the labour market, support consensus-building (Grimshaw et al., 2017), and reduce social conflicts by facilitating partnership and a problem-solving attitude (Ishikawa, 2003).

Social dialogue needs to take a problem-solving approach to be successful, that is, a pragmatic focus on solving issues together, not on taking an adversarial or ideological stance that can block change (Ishikawa, 2003). In some situations, achieving consensus amongst partners (even if it is no more than a declaration of intent, such as a social pact) can be considered an achievement (Ishikawa, 2003).

Social dialogue provides a process or mechanism to resolve differing interests and reduces the risk of industrial dispute and/or social upheaval (Fashoyin, 2004; ILO & OECD, 2017). It is a negotiating tool to address potential issues (Grimshaw et al., 2017; ILO & OECD, 2017).

This is also supported by the findings from our survey of APEC economies where:

- all economies agreed social dialogue leads to a reduction in social conflicts by facilitating partnership and a problem-solving attitude at least occasionally
- nearly half of respondents agreed it leads to a reduction in social conflicts “a great deal”.

# Social dialogue in times of crisis

Social dialogue has been used across many previous economic crises, including “the aftermath of the First World War and the Spanish flu pandemic; the great depression and the Second World War; the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall” (ILO, 2020a, p. 1). As noted by the OECD (2022), social dialogue will play a key role in many economies’ post-COVID-19 recovery.

## How social dialogue can help economies respond to economic and other crises

Social dialogue can help economies adjust to and recover from economic crises (ILO & OECD, 2017). “[T]he role of social dialogue and tripartism in helping countries to overcome serious economic and labour market difficulties and accelerate recovery” has been well documented, and experiences have shown that governments “can neither tackle the causes and consequences of the crisis nor ensure social stability and recovery through unilateral action” (Ghellab, 2009, p. 2).

This is also supported by the findings from our survey of APEC economies:

- all the economies who responded agreed that social dialogue reduces social tensions during periods of economic hardship and transition, at least occasionally
- over half of respondents chose the response “a great deal” when asked to what extent social dialogue had reduced social tension during periods of economic hardship and transition.

During crises, social dialogue can be used to help resolve difficult economic and social policy issues, including achieving “broad consensus on key issues, such as wage restraint, stable labour relations, labour-management cooperation and a commitment to improved productivity” (Fashoyin, 2004, p. 342). It can help absorb shocks and preserve employment, for example, by facilitating adjustments to wages and/or hours to avoid layoffs (ILO, 2013c; ILO & OECD, 2017, OECD, 2022; Otieno, Wandeda & Mwamadzingo, 2021) and support workers to move from jobs that are shrinking to those that are expanding (OECD, 2022). Nonetheless, while social dialogue “provides a policy tool for addressing divergences and disagreements”, it is not a “cure-all” (Ghellab, 2009, p. 3) and “sound public policies and regulations and appropriate fiscal space are especially crucial in the crisis context” (ILO, 2020d, p. 2).

Economic crises may provide an opportunity to reactivate social dialogue processes that have become dormant, and “overcome past obstacles to social dialogue, as the partners are willing to put aside their differences and focus on fundamentals, in view of the gravity of the situation” (ILO, 2020d, pp. 3–4). One example is the Republic of Korea where social dialogue has been operating in various forms since the late 1980s. They were able to draw on this experience “to execute policy reform with social cohesion” in the wake of the Asian Financial Crisis (AFC) of the late 1990s, including the first Korean tripartite social pact in February 1998 followed by the institutionalisation of social dialogue on a permanent basis with the establishment of the Tripartite Commission in May 1999 (Choi, 2000, p. 1) (see also Tørres, 2021; Woo, 2009).

Likewise, where social dialogue processes aren't already established, such crises may be a powerful motivator for social partners to accept and embrace social dialogue (Kim & Ahn, 2018). For example, social dialogue institutions were established in many east Asian economies to respond to the AFC – before this there was little effort made to establish tripartite consultation in the region (Fashoyin, 2004).

Social dialogue can be used to “facilitate social stability during political transition” (ILO & OECD, 2017, p. 5) and help rebuild trust to “enhance social cohesion and resilience” as economies rebuild in the longer term (ILO, 2020d, p. 1). It can promote collective learning, for example, through information sharing (Grimshaw et al., 2017; Ishikawa, 2003). It is also versatile and adaptive, which creates new spaces for the bringing together of new ideas (Grimshaw et al., 2017).

As well as economic crises (discussed below), social dialogue could also be used to respond to larger crises currently being faced, for example, the need for more sustainable development (Hermans et al., 2017). For this to be effective, more work is needed on conducting social dialogue across borders (ILO, 2020a).

However, none of this is to say that social dialogue is exclusive to times of crisis (Fashoyin, 2004; Ghellab, 2009; ILO, 2020a). As Fashoyin (2004, pp. 342–343) notes, “it would be misleading, indeed erroneous, to suggest that consultative mechanisms are useful only in times of economic crisis. or are born only out of such crisis”.

## Lessons from previous economic shocks

Previous economic shocks have shown that economies with well-established social dialogue institutions are likely to be better placed to develop and implement effective tripartite social dialogue responses (ILO, 2020d).

*With political will, the tripartite partners can achieve consensus on targeted measures to help workers and enterprises particularly hard hit by the crisis; the crisis context can even provide an opportunity to overcome previously adversarial industrial relations. (ILO, 2020d, p. 2)*

There is suggestion that workers in Japan and the Republic of Korea have fared better during financial crises because of strong collective bargaining that was already in place (Daga & Ritchotte, 2016).

Based on analysis of European economies, following the GFC of 2008-2010, economies with strong social dialogue systems tended to do better than those without (Papadakis & Ghellab, 2014). However, this may be correlation rather than a causal relationship – for example, economies that were doing poorly may have been forced to quickly implement fiscal consolidation policies (for example, reductions in social expenditure and/or public sector employment), while also having limited resources to do so – both of which would make social dialogue processes less feasible and likely to be used (Guardiancich & Molina, 2017).

Economic crisis can also put pressure on trade unions and therefore on social dialogue, with fiscal austerity and structural adjustment policies leading to a reduction in tripartite social dialogue and collective bargaining (ILO, 2013b; Canalda Criado, 2022). On the other hand, collective bargaining can be used during recessions or economic shocks to make “compromises, trade-offs and win-win agreements that would be difficult to imagine in the period of economic stability and growth” (Rychly, 2009, p. 25). During such periods, workers may be more “willing to forgo income for guarantees of employment security” (Guyet, Tarren & Triomphe, 2012, p. 2) and this may lead unions to seek more consensual relationships with both management and the government (Rychly, 2009).

During the period 2000-2013, trade union density followed a downward trend in Asia (except for Singapore) and this trend did not vary “between the pre-crisis, crisis and post crisis periods except in Australia and New Zealand, where there is an increase in the trade union density during the crisis”

(Daga & Ritchotte, 2016, p. 3). East Asian economies had an increase in collective bargaining rate during the crisis period (Daga & Ritchotte, 2016).

Crises can accelerate pre-existing challenges but can also create opportunities for new uses of social dialogue (Guyet, Tarren & Triomphe, 2012). Economies' use of social dialogue tends to follow one of two contrasting trends:

*In some countries, crisis response policies have been based on a greater role for social partners at various levels. In other countries, exactly the opposite has occurred and labour law reforms and crisis policies have been carried out without consultation or negotiation with the social partners. (ILO, 2013b, p. 8)*

Social dialogue may become less of a focus if governments move from economic stimulus towards fiscal consolidation and debt reduction (Guardiancich & Molina, 2017; ILO, 2020a; Papadakis & Ghellab, 2014) where social dialogue may become seen as a “luxury” that cannot be afforded (Papadakis & Ghellab, 2014, p. 2).

## Use of social dialogue during the COVID-19 pandemic

### The effect of COVID-19

COVID-19 had a significant effect on labour markets and economies around the world (Eurofound, 2021a). As at 2020, COVID-19 had resulted in the loss of 495 million full-time jobs, with lower-middle-income economies hardest hit (ILO, 2020a). These economic impacts do not affect everyone equally and COVID-19 (and other previous economic crises) have exposed pre-existing weaknesses and inequalities (OECD & ILO, 2020; ILO, 2021c).

The ILO (2021c) found that those most affected by the COVID-19 crisis are:

- informal economy workers, the self-employed and casual workers
- women, young people, migrant workers, refugees, and people with disabilities
- tourism, road and maritime transportation, aviation, construction, commerce, hospitality, entertainment, and manufacturing sectors.

### The use of social dialogue in response to COVID-19

As for other crises, governments were required to act quickly to respond to COVID-19 and social dialogue was seen as one option to support economies (Eurofound, 2021a, 2021b; ILO, 2020d, 2020e, 2021a, 2021c; OECD & ILO, 2020; OECD, 2022). Many economies used social dialogue as part of their COVID-19 response (ILO, 2020d; OECD, 2022). According to an ILO (2021c) survey:

- 81% used social dialogue “to achieve a consensus on targeted measures to protect workers and enterprises”
- 62% used bipartite dialogue between employers and trade unions
- 59% used tripartite dialogue between governments, trade unions and employers’ organisations
- 34% used bilateral interactions between governments and trade unions

Peru established the Acuerdo Nacional consultative forum to promote social dialogue to support the implementation of its new COVID-19-related healthcare and economic policies (Tørres, 2021).

*From the outset of the financial crisis, social dialogue proved an important tool of effective crisis management in many countries, at both macro and micro levels. At the macro level, it helped governments to adopt important stimulus packages in consultation with the social partners that helped to protect workers' jobs and income, promote enterprise sustainability and accelerate recovery. At the meso level, it could help tailor responses to particular conditions facing a sector. At the micro level, it allowed employers and workers and their respective organizations to negotiate innovative solutions adapted to specific situations and challenges existing at the sector and enterprise levels, also facilitating acceptance of and support for sometimes painful enterprise restructuring measures. At the international level, an ILO Global Jobs Pact was adopted to promote a productive recovery centred on investment, employment and social protection. (ILO, 2020d, pp. 1–2)*

Similarly, the Asia Garment Hub highlights positive stories from Cambodia, Indonesia, and Bangladesh to show how “information exchange, consultation and negotiation have helped firms navigate an unprecedented crisis without leaving their workers behind” (ILO, 2021d).

Social dialogue can play a stabilising role (Eurofound, 2021a) and in the COVID-19 response it was used to help prevent further job losses and ensure the necessary skilled workforce remains in place to support the eventual post-COVID-19 upturn (OECD, 2022). As the ILO (2021c, p. 2) states:

*Effective social dialogue and cooperation between governments, employers' organizations and workers' organizations have proven indispensable to designing and implementing appropriate strategies and policies to address the negative impact of the COVID-19 crisis and to building inclusive societies.*

Trade unions have played an important role in many economies' response to COVID-19 (ILO, 2021c; Otieno, Wandeda & Mwamazingo, 2021). For example, a factory in Indonesia intended to dismiss 800 workers as a result of COVID-19 disruption to the supply chain, but after engaging with the factory union representatives, it was instead able to switch to mask production and only 80 workers lost their jobs (ILO, 2021d). Trade union density of around 35% in the Asia-Pacific has meant that trade unions have been instrumental in reporting violations of workers and trade unions' rights during COVID-19 (ILO, 2021c).

## **Challenges of using social dialogue in times of crisis**

Where social dialogue mechanisms were well-established, the involvement of social partners generally continued as usual throughout COVID-19, and in some cases, consultation may have even been quicker than usual.

However, there is a risk that during times of crises, the emergency situation is leveraged to bypass the usual social dialogue processes or to “sideline social partners, for example, through the adoption of state-of-emergency legislation” (Eurofound, 2021a, 2021b; see also Allinger & Adam, 2022). In economies with less established social dialogue mechanisms, social dialogue may have continued throughout the COVID-19 response but been severely restricted (Eurofound, 2021a, 2021b; ILO, 2020e). Eurofound (2021a) provide several examples of this, primarily from central and eastern Europe. For example, the government in Portugal suspended the right to strike, and new measures were introduced in Slovakia without going through the usual social dialogue processes “arguing that there was no time due to the increased urgency”. Collective bargaining was often postponed, and existing collective agreements extended (Eurofound 2021a). Even established social dialogue structures were forced to adapt to the different circumstances of COVID-19, for example, moving negotiations online (Eurofound, 2021a).

The ILO (2021a, p. 6) notes that “national tripartite social dialogue structures are often seen as bodies with a ‘strategic’ long-term rather than an ‘operational’ short-term orientation” and they were therefore

seen as somewhat unprepared for an unprecedented emergency such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Canalda Criado (2022) examined the use of tripartite social dialogue in the management of the COVID-19 crisis in Italy, Portugal and Spain and found COVID-19 had prompted a revitalisation of tripartite social dialogue across the three economies. Allinger and Adam (2022) recommend further development of social dialogue at all levels to improve preparedness for the next crisis and many economies have committed to strengthening social dialogue as part of their COVID-19 recovery (ILO, 2021a).

Eurofound (2021b, p. 2) conclude that during the COVID-19 response:

*Unlike the global financial crisis, social partners, governments and European institutions have mostly shared their understanding of the policy responses needed to mitigate the effects of the pandemic and promote economic recovery. This common approach must continue, and governments should encourage cooperation with and trust in social partners to take part in implementing policy responses at the appropriate level.*

However, Eurofound (2021a) also question “whether the crisis-led adaptations of social dialogue and collective bargaining will be maintained – or whether there will be a return to the pre-crisis status quo”.



# The social dialogue landscape of APEC economies

## Most APEC economies have used social dialogue as part of their COVID-19 response

Historically, APEC economies have lagged behind European economies in the use of social dialogue. However, several Asian and Pacific economies used social dialogue in their COVID-19 policy response (ILO, 2020a; OECD & ILO, 2020).

For this report, information on the COVID-19 policy responses of APEC economies was drawn from:

- the ILO repository of responses to the COVID-19 pandemic
- the survey of APEC economies on social dialogue
- other pandemic policy trackers.

Of the 21 APEC economies, 16 (76%) report having used social dialogue as part of their pandemic response (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Share of APEC economies that rely on social dialogue as part of their pandemic response**



Source: COVID-19 and the world of work: Country policy responses (ILO, 2021b), Hong Kong (SAR), China: Government and institution measures in response to COVID-19 (KPMG, 2020) and MartinJenkins and MBIE survey, 2021

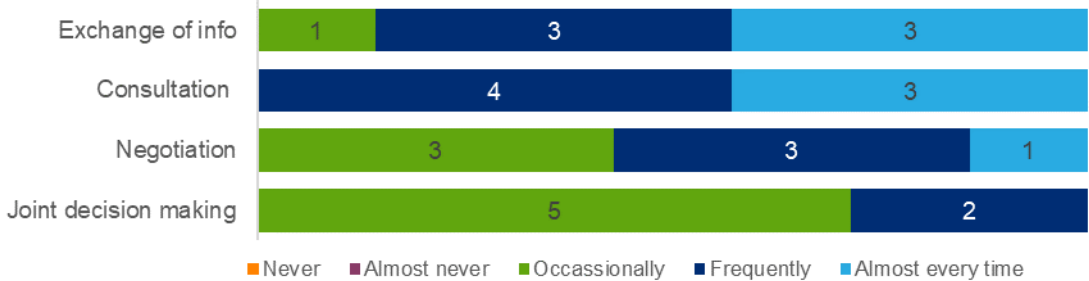
As of mid-June 2020, Europe and Central Asia used social dialogue more than APEC economies, at 80% of economies. However, the figure for APEC economies was much higher than Arab states, who had the lowest use at 42% (ILO, 2020a).

## APEC economies use a range of social dialogue mechanisms

All seven APEC economies who responded to the survey reported using all four of the types of social dialogue asked about, at least occasionally (Figure 3).

Consultation was the most frequently used, followed closely by the exchange of information. This was followed by negotiation and joint decision-making.

**Figure 3: Use of different types of social dialogue for labour market issues, the seven survey economies**

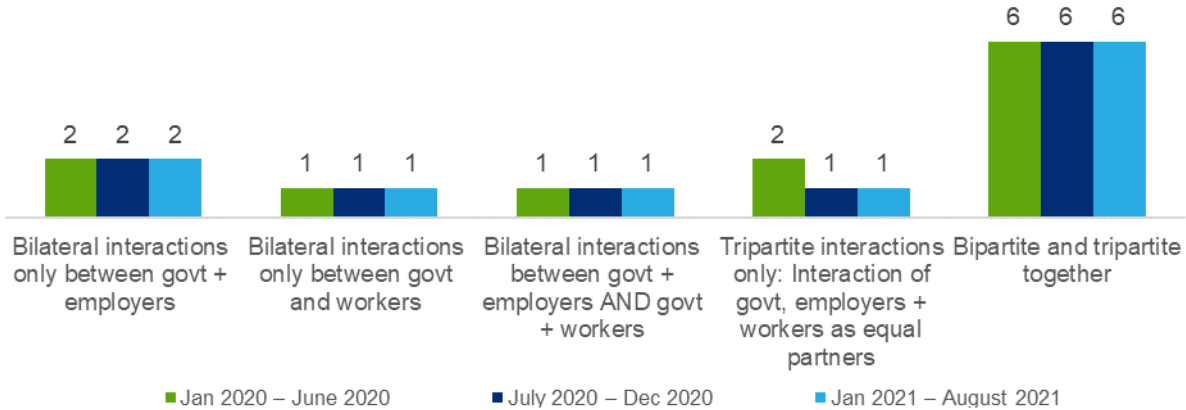


Source: MartinJenkins and MBIE survey, 2021

### Tripartite social dialogue has been the most used form of social dialogue

Social dialogue has been used across APEC economies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our survey found that the forms of social dialogue being used have changed little throughout the pandemic (that is, from January 2020 until mid-2021, when the survey was carried out) (Figure 4).

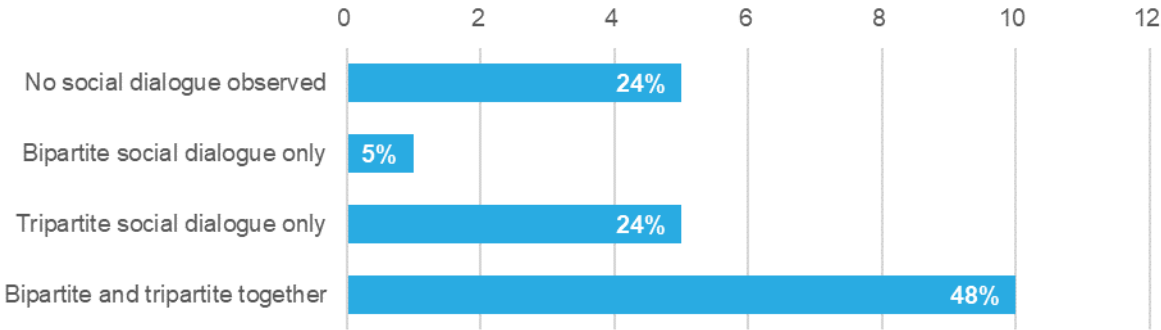
**Figure 4: Forms of social dialogue during COVID-19, the seven survey economies**



Source: MartinJenkins and MBIE survey, 2021. Note: Respondents could choose more than one response.

Across APEC economies, the most common form of social dialogue was tripartite – 10 economies used bipartite and tripartite social dialogue together and 5 used tripartite social dialogue only (Figure 5). The ILO (2020a) found that 71% of economies/territories used tripartite or bipartite social dialogue, or both, as part of the response to COVID-19. The ILO (2020a) expects that social dialogue may be more challenging as the pandemic continues, particularly if economies’ policy priorities shift to fiscal consolidation and debt reduction.

**Figure 5: Forms of social dialogue during COVID-19, all APEC economies**



Source: COVID-19 and the world of work: Country policy responses (ILO, 2021b), Hong Kong (SAR), China: Government and institution measures in response to COVID-19 (KPMG, 2020) and MartinJenkins and MBIE survey, 2021.

## Most APEC economies have a domestic social dialogue council or institution

Social dialogue can take many forms and involve many different institutional forms. They can be categorised as:

- standing councils
- advisory or working groups
- standing institutional bodies
- regular consultative bodies
- ad hoc forms.

The survey identified that APEC economies tended to use a mixture of these forms. The majority of APEC economies (15, or 71% – see Figure 6) have a domestic institution or council that provides a forum for economy-wide social dialogue. These are generally formal, established through law, and resourced and funded by government. Table 2 lists existing standing councils by APEC economy.

**Figure 6: Share of APEC economies that have existing domestic social dialogue institutions**



Source: COVID-19 and the world of work: Country policy responses (ILO, 2021b), AICESIS-ILO Joint Database (AICESIS & ILO, 2014) and MartinJenkins and MBIE survey, 2021.

**Table 2: Standing Councils as domestic social dialogue institutions in APEC economies**

APEC economy	Standing Council	APEC economy	Standing Council
<b>Australia</b>	National Workplace Relations Consultative Council	<b>Papua New Guinea</b>	National Tripartite Consultative Council
<b>Chile</b>	Superior Labour Council	<b>Peru</b>	Consejo Nacional de Trabajo y Promoción del Empleo
<b>China</b>	Economic and Social Council	<b>Philippines</b>	National Economic and Development Authority
<b>Japan</b>	Labour Policy Council	<b>Russian Federation</b>	Civic Chamber
<b>Republic of Korea</b>	Economic and Social Development Commission	<b>Singapore</b>	National Wage Council
<b>Malaysia</b>	National Labour Advisory Council	<b>Thailand</b>	National Economic and Social Advisory Council
<b>Mexico</b>	Economic and Social Council of Mexico City	<b>Viet Nam</b>	Fatherland Front
<b>New Zealand</b>	Regional Skills Leadership Groups		

Source: COVID-19 and the world of work: Country policy responses (ILO, 2021b), AICESIS-ILO Joint Database (AICESIS & ILO, 2014) and MartinJenkins and MBIE survey, 2021

## There is a moderate correlation between advanced social dialogue and labour market resilience in APEC economies

As previously discussed, there is a growing evidence base that social dialogue can support economic growth and stability and labour market resilience, by enabling productivity growth, wage moderation and pay equity (Grimshaw et al., 2017). This report applies ILOSTAT data, OECD.Stat data, survey responses and available indices of labour market resilience to test this relationship for APEC economies.

### Measuring social dialogue

As well as using the traditional measures of social dialogue, trade union density rate and collective bargaining coverage rate, this report also uses the Institutional Capabilities sub-pillar of the Global Labour Resilience Index (GLRI) (Whiteshield Partners, 2021).

The GLRI presents a capability-based framework for understanding and assessing labour market resilience. It has two main pillars:

- **Structural capability** – This measures the inherent risk exposure of an economy by focusing on factors prone to increase (or mitigate) an external disruption. These include capabilities that are harder to adjust in the short term, such as demographics, level of economic development and macroeconomic stability, trade vulnerability, and inequality.
- **Cyclical capability** – This measures the strength of a labour market's response to disruption by accounting for key resilience drivers, which depend on the stage and the type of disruption. There are four capabilities (or sub-pillars) within this pillar:
  - **Absorptive capability** – the ability to contain the shock and minimise the damage on jobs and workers
  - **Adaptive capability** – the power to recover quickly and rapidly create new jobs to replace the destroyed ones
  - **Transformative capability** – the capacity to align with major future trends and turn long-term stresses into opportunities
  - **Institutional capability** – a cross-cutting enabler of a resilient institutional response throughout all phases of the crisis and all types of disruptions.

The GLRI is scored based on nine dimensions and 102 indicators from a wide range of international sources. The Institutional Capabilities sub-pillar draws on four metrics:

1. **Governance: The World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators** – Reports on six broad dimensions of governance: voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption.
2. **Social capital: Pillar of the Legatum Prosperity Index** – The social capital pillar measures the strength of personal and social relationships, social norms, and civic participation in an economy.
3. **Statistical capacity: World Bank statistical capacity index** – Statistical capacity is an economy's ability to collect, analyse, and disseminate high-quality data about its population and economy.

4. **Statistical fullness: GLRI statistical fullness indicator** – Availability of indicators for each economy. It relates to the reliability of the GLRI rank and overall score.

**Table 3: Measures and data sources used to test the relationship between social dialogue and labour market resilience in APEC economies**

Concept	Measures	Source	Year data relates to
<b>Labour market resilience</b>	Unemployment rate	ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates	2020
	Labour force participation rate	ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates	2020
	Annual growth/change in gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, constant prices	OECD.Stat	2020
	Annual growth rate of output per worker (GDP constant 2010 US \$) (%)	ILOSTAT	2019
	Global Labour Resilience Index	Whiteshield Partners (2021)	2021. Underlying data is from 2018, 2019 and 2020
<b>Social dialogue</b>	Trade union density rate	ILOSTAT and OECD.Stat	Most recent year available (Appendix 2)
	Collective bargaining coverage rate	ILOSTAT	Most recent year available (Appendix 2)
	Days not worked due to strikes and lockouts	ILOSTAT	Most recent year available (Appendix 2)
	Days not worked per 1000 workers due to strikes and lockouts	ILOSTAT	Most recent year available (Appendix 2)
	Institutional Capabilities Index score	Whiteshield Partners (2021)	2021. Underlying data is from 2018, 2019 and 2020

At face value, the Institutional Capabilities score appears to be a useful proxy for quality of social dialogue and to what extent social dialogue is practised at an advanced level. It measures social trust and governance, aspects of social dialogue that are not well covered by trade union density and collective bargaining coverage rate. Further, Whiteshield Partners (2021) have found that strong institutions and institutional capabilities are associated with higher levels of labour market resilience. Through development of the index and further analysis, they find that economies with strong institutional capabilities are more likely to have a balanced resilience profile, tend to adopt whole-of-government approaches, and convene rapid-action task forces to make decisions. In the longer term, it is expected that these economies would have greater capacity to address cross-cutting challenges like technological disruption and green transition (Whiteshield Partners, 2021).

Figure 7 shows APEC economies' performance on a number of labour market resilience indicators, including the GLRI. Figure 8 shows how APEC economies perform on three indicators of social dialogue.

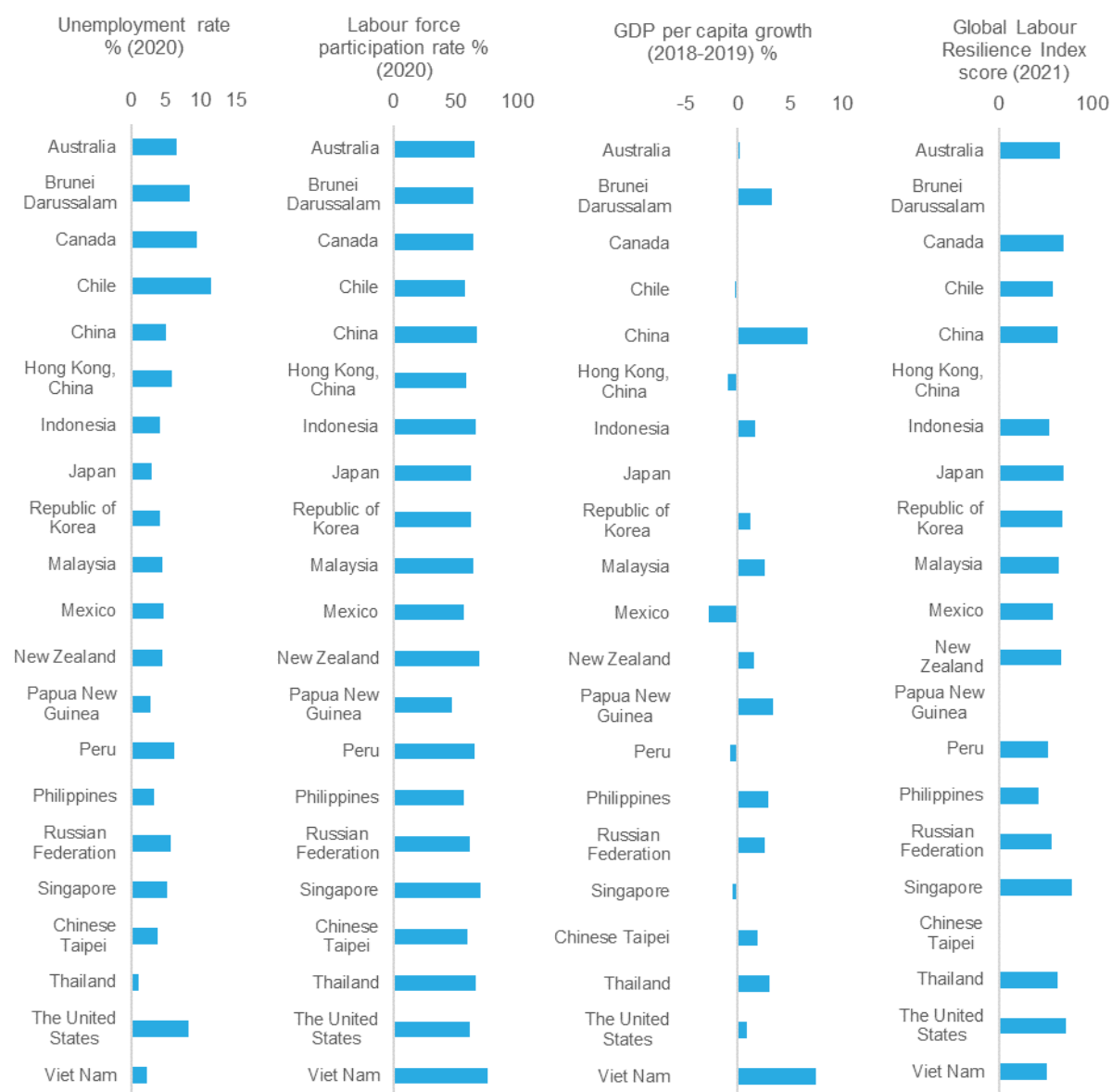
For this report, the intention was to use APEC economies' responses to the survey as a means of testing the association between two variables: the extent to which they believe their social dialogue processes are advanced, and their assessments of the performance of their economy and labour markets. However, there were too few responses to enable useful analysis.

Studying the correlations between the labour market indicators and social dialogue indicators from OECD, ILO and Whiteshield Partners (2021), there was a moderate correlation between collective bargaining and labour market resilience (as measured by the GLRI) (Figure 10).

There were strong correlations between institutional capability and unemployment, and institutional capability and GDP per capita growth but in the wrong direction (Table 4). That is, the higher the institutional capability, the greater the levels of unemployment, and lower or negative GDP per capita growth (Figure 9).

Simple correlations can only suggest associations between two variables, rather than causal effects. Importantly, there are many different variables that will affect labour market resilience – not just social dialogue, and the indicators used for both social dialogue and labour market resilience are imperfect. Future research could perform more sophisticated econometrics on a wider set of variables that are likely to influence labour market resilience to test the association between social dialogue and labour market resilience in APEC economies.

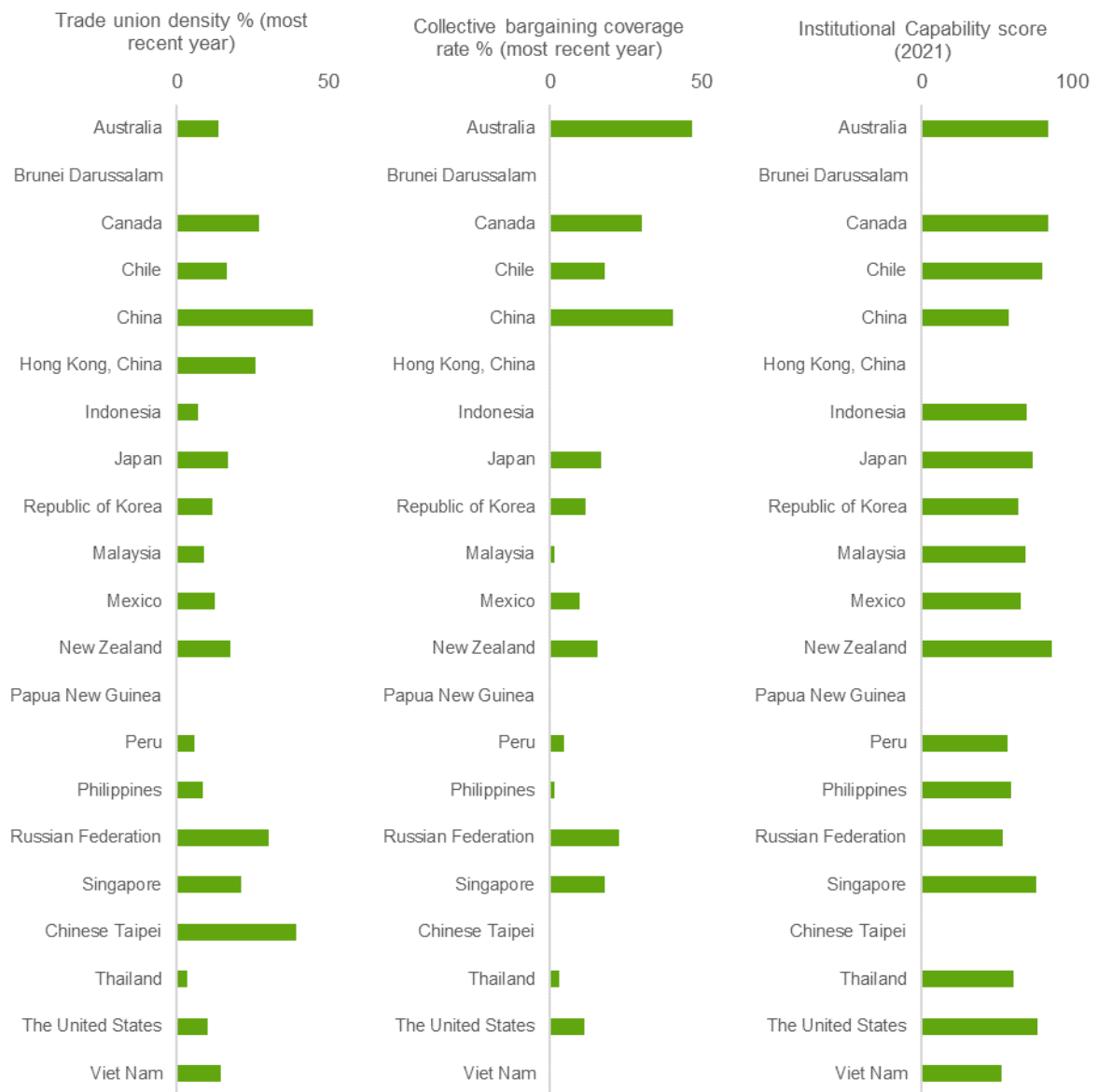
**Figure 7: Labour market performance of APEC economies**



Sources: See Table 3



**Figure 8: Social dialogue indicators, APEC economies**



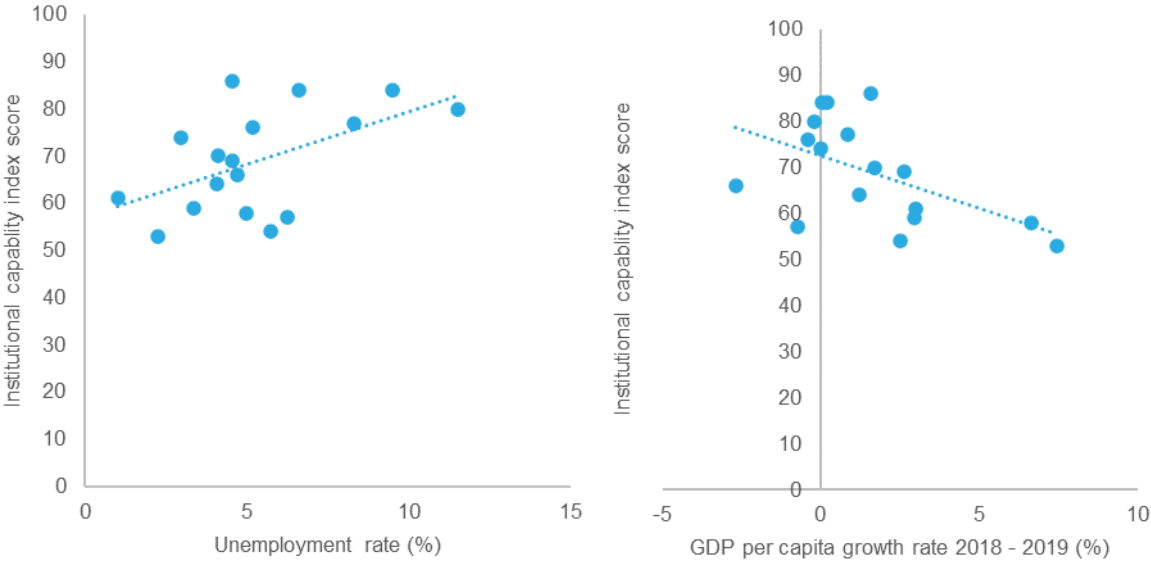
Sources: See Table 3

**Table 4: Correlations between social dialogue and labour market resilience, APEC economies**

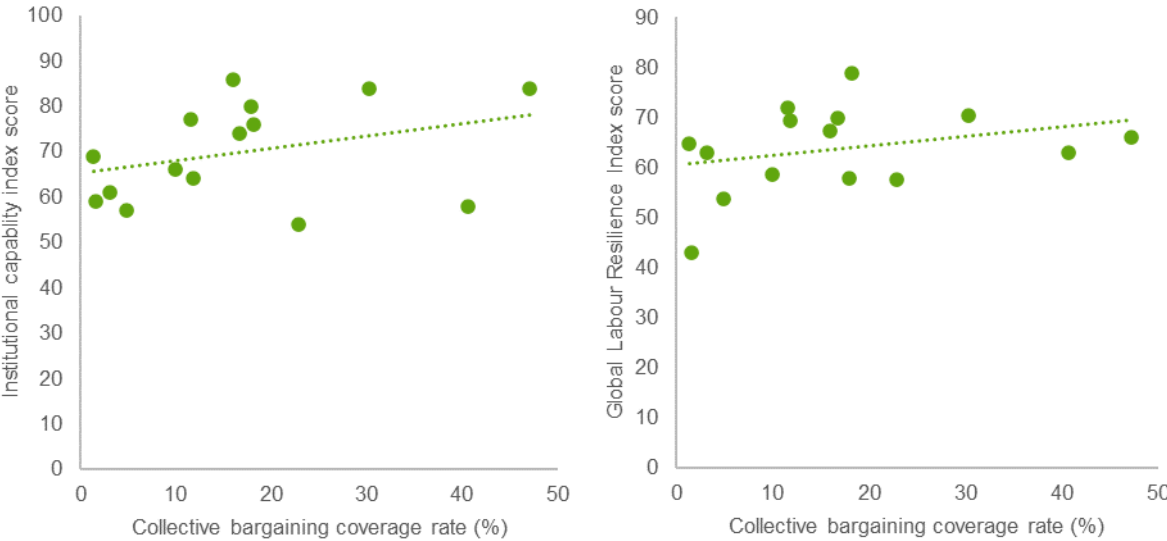
	Unemp rate (ILO)	GDP per capita growth (ILO)	Labour force participatn (ILO)	Trade union density	Collect. barg coverage rate	Days not worked due to strikes and lockouts	Days not worked as a propn of 1000 workers	GLRI score	Inst. cap.	GDP per capita (OECD)	GDP per capita growth (OECD)
Unemployment rate (ILO)	1										
GDP per capita growth (ILO)	0.384	1									
Labour force participation (ILO)	0.109	0.311	1								
Trade union density	0.196	0.240	-0.066	1							
Collective bargaining coverage rate	0.360	0.157	0.261	0.705	1						
Days not worked	0.406	-0.007	-0.044	-0.086	0.012	1					
Days not worked as a proportion of 1000 workers	0.141	-0.232	0.239	0.211	0.123	-0.047	1				
GLRI score	0.197	-0.317	0.197	0.233	0.303	0.320	0.090	1			
Institutional capabilities	0.530	-0.528	-0.068	-0.016	0.344	0.233	0.515	0.598	1		
GDP per capita (OECD)	0.066	0.681	0.564	-0.041	0.250	0.677	-0.279	0.919	0.282	1	
GDP per capita growth (OECD)	0.450	0.863	0.708	-0.248	0.083	0.190	-0.172	0.722	0.037	0.699	1

Key		Strong correlation
		Medium correlation

**Figure 9: Relationship between institutional capability and unemployment, and institutional capability and productivity**



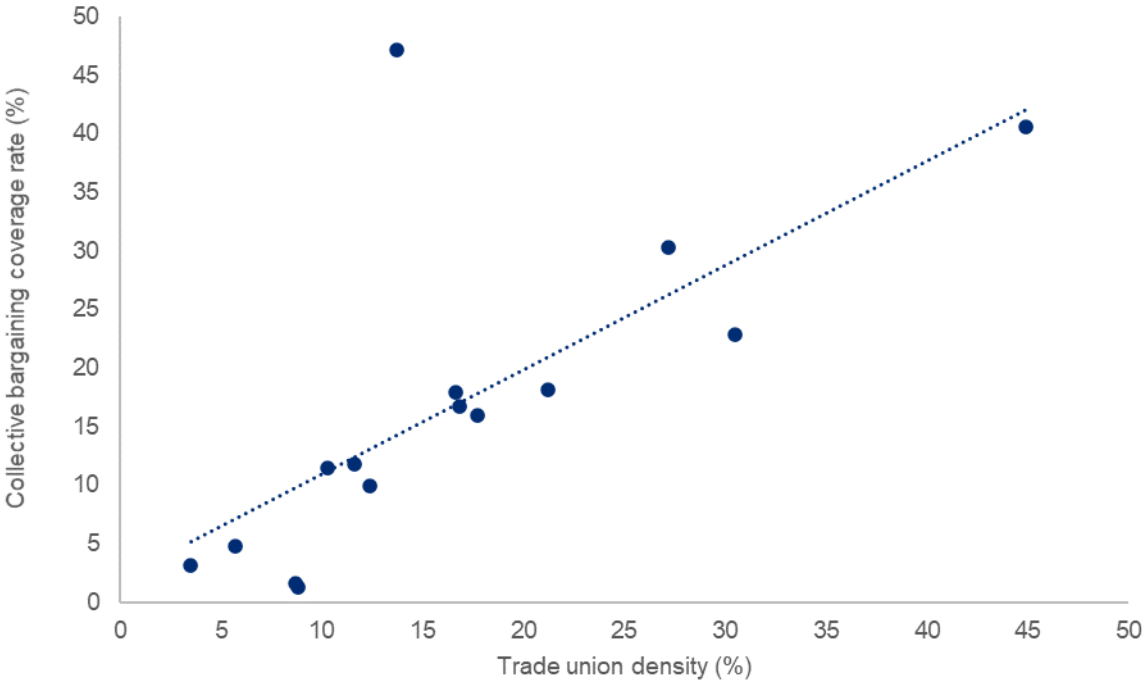
**Figure 10: The relationship between collective bargaining and institutional capability, and collective bargaining and labour market resilience**



While the analysis revealed only moderate support for the association between social dialogue and labour market resilience, it did reinforce some of the concepts and theoretical reasoning underpinning the indicators. For example:

- The GLRI score may be a good indicator of labour market resilience as it is strongly correlated with GDP per capita, and GDP per capita growth.
- The institutional capabilities sub-pillar may be a good indicator of social dialogue, as it has strong correlations with ‘days not worked due to strikes and lockdowns as a proportion of 1000 workers’ and moderate correlations with collective bargaining coverage.
- The relationship between trade union density and collective bargaining coverage highlights that APEC economies are relatively similar, in that coverage and density are below 50%, and in most cases, well below 30% (Figure 11). This tends to be associated with collective bargaining in APEC economies being limited to the level of the company only (OECD, 2020). This differs to other groups of economies who:
  - have high rates of coverage and unionisation (like Nordic economies and Belgium), or
  - have high coverage and rates of coverage that are higher than the rate of unionisation due to the extension of collective agreements to the non-unionised workforce (economies in continental Europe including the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, and in South America like Argentina and Brazil).

**Figure 11: Joint distribution of collective bargaining coverage and union density, latest year, APEC economies**



Sources: See Table 3

# What works well

## The process needs to be well-designed, with adequate time and resourcing

### A well-designed project/process

Based on the literature, we found there is no one best model for social dialogue; instead, “different approaches can be used in different contexts to get good outcomes” (ILO & OECD, 2017, p. 2). Good project or process design is crucial, and poor or weak project design can hinder social dialogue (ILO, 2017). A well-designed project should have defined components, results, and performance measures, and find a balance between objectives and resources (ILO, 2013b).

Findings from our survey of APEC economies supported this with respondents noting some of the practical aspects associated with supporting social partners to engage, including making it as easy as possible:

- Going to where the social partners are – for example, online methods. COVID-19 has resulted in increased use of virtual platforms and online engagement (ILO, 2020d). Survey respondents note that this has made access easier for many people as it has reduced travel time and cost. However, there are other access barriers to overcome, such as suitable technology, and access to reliable Wi-Fi.
- Consider who is being engaged and ensure the process is suitable for them – for example, if engaging with disabled people it is crucial there is suitable access at any venues.

They also noted the need:

- for informed and experienced facilitators to guide the conversations
- to ensure social partners have sufficient resourcing, budget, and time to engage, and to be respectful of their time – especially if they are involved in multiple simultaneous processes.

Timeframes need to be realistic and provide sufficient time for adequate engagement; complex issues will take longer to address (ILO, 2013b, 2017):

*An insufficient and unrealistic time frame is a particular issue for projects that address complex issues, are implemented in countries with weak social dialogue and/or legal structures, and in countries in transition situations. (ILO, 2013b, p. 31)*

While project management is also important, it cannot on its own make up for a poorly designed project (ILO, 2013b).

Relevant processes and procedures must be clear – including effective dispute resolution mechanisms (Guardiancich & Molina, 2017; Hermans et al., 2017; ILO, 2013c; Ratnam & Tomoda, 2005). For example, in 2011 the ILO published the “Manual on Collective Bargaining and Dispute Resolution in the Public Service” to highlight best practice in dispute prevention and resolution in the public service

(Bordogna, 2018). It is important to have a cooperative way of managing conflicts to arrive at higher-quality agreements (Pender et al., 2018).

## **Adapting the approach to the context**

The literature emphasises the importance of adapting social dialogue approaches to the specific context. As the ILO (2003, p. 4) notes, social dialogue approaches cannot simply be “exported from one country to another” (see also Araújo & Meneses, 2018), but need to be adapted to the local context (ILO, 2020b), including “the characteristics and specificities of local context from a cultural and institutional point of view” (ILO, 2017, p. 65) and domestic framework conditions (ILO, 2013b).

Historical context is also an important consideration (Araújo & Meneses, 2018). Adapting processes to the local context also helps embed ownership (ILO, 2003).

## **Clear needs and objectives**

The issue being discussed needs to be very clearly defined and the intended outcome of the specific dialogue made explicit (ILO, 2013b). The literature suggests that social dialogue projects work better when they are:

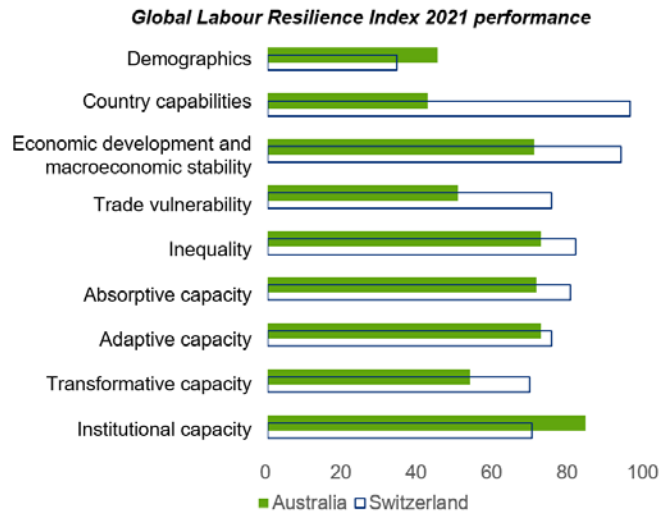
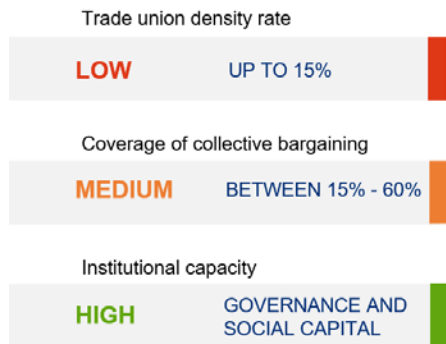
- in direct response to stakeholder demands and in line with strategic priorities (ILO, 2020b)
- based on specific and defined objectives (ILO, 2013b, 2017)
- designed with an accurate understanding of needs – so that the groups who stand to benefit are identified and can be encouraged to be involved (ILO, 2017).

See the case study at page 45 for how Australia has used social dialogue to design and develop a new approach to employment services.

Findings from our survey of APEC economies supported this with respondents noting the importance of having clear roles and expectations – including being clear around the issue being discussed and the intended outcome of the specific dialogue.

Figure 12: Case study<sup>8</sup> – Australia

# AUSTRALIA



## New Employment Services Model

In March 2019, the Australian Government announced that from July 2022 the New Employment Services Model, now known as Workforce Australia, would replace 'jobactive' which had been in place since 2015.

Workforce Australia features a licensing system, which reforms the traditional approach to procuring employment services providers and makes it more flexible. It was designed to reform employment services in Australia and deliver better outcomes for job seekers, employers, and taxpayers. Trials of the new model commenced in July 2019 and Workforce Australia will be delivered from July 2022.

### Who was involved and how?

The Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) and its predecessor agencies collaborated with over 1,400 stakeholders:

- employers
- employment service providers
- job seekers
- community organisations
- unions
- think tanks/academia

- industry
- state and local governments
- the public.

Social dialogue was undertaken through a variety of means. DESE convened an **Employment Services Expert Advisory Panel**, consisting of representatives from employer, provider, and welfare group representatives, as well as a labour market economist and an expert in business transformation. The expert panel released a report following consultation with stakeholders through:

<sup>8</sup> Switzerland is used as a comparator as it was ranked at number one in the GLRI 2021

- roundtables held in metropolitan and regional centres
- intensive user-centred design research workshops
- focus groups and one-on-one interviews
- written submissions.

Consultation was conducted at all levels:

- with sectoral stakeholders directly
- with targeted focus groups of relevant experts
- with state and local governments
- local roundtables and workshops with local communities.

Broad public consultation was also conducted via public discussion papers, seminars, and webinars accessible on the DESE website, and with stakeholders and members of the public being able to make written submissions on options for new employment services.

Consultation and user-centred design is continuing during the **New Employment Services Trial** and during the development of the final model. Updates on the new model are presented at events including CEO Forums and a monthly CEO Livestream for employment services providers.

DESE also established a series of Provider Forums and Employer Forums to facilitate two-way dialogue with key stakeholder groups. These forums were designed to provide updates on the development of new systems in support of delivering the new model, and as an opportunity for open discussion. All forum content is made publicly available.

### What made it successful?

- One of the largest consultation processes ever undertaken by the Australian Government.

- Conducted over an extended period (three years).
- Multiple stages of engagement.
- Wide range of social partners at different levels.
- Targeted engagement approaches for specific groups.
- Use of professional facilitators (rather than government officials), as required.
- Pivoting quickly to online consultation during the pandemic to ensure continued engagement.
- Buy-in across government agencies to discuss policy at a strategic level.
- Independent Chair who reported directly to the government and an expert panel which was appointed for expertise in their fields, including business transformation.

### Why was social dialogue used?

Consultation informed the design of Workforce Australia, including ways to improve employment service outcomes for Australians and how to best use technology, and helped produce a client-centric model that provides a high-quality digital platform, strong links to training and skills, and enhanced services for job seekers who need additional support.

Social dialogue was crucial to ensuring that the model provides effective services and solutions for job seekers, employers, and taxpayers. Without extensive consultation and support of stakeholders there would be significant challenges in successfully implementing a programme with such broad societal coverage and wide-reaching impact.



## A broad range of social partners need to be engaged and to feel they are being heard

### A broad range of stakeholders

Social dialogue should be inclusive, and a broad range of stakeholders should be involved to provide a wide range of voices (ILO, 2013c; Ratnam & Tomoda, 2005). This may require social partners broadening participation from their usual membership:

*The need to broaden participation in social dialogue institutions applies equally to all the social partners. For example, a major criticism of employers' bodies has been that small-scale enterprises are outside the mainstream of employers' organizational strategies, even though efforts may be made to represent all employers. Similarly, trade unions must improve their representativeness by spreading their net wide enough to capture, first, the unorganized wage earners and, second, the large pool of non-wage workers in the informal economy. (Fashoyin, 2004, p. 362)*

It is particularly important to engage groups who are at risk of being excluded from the consultation process because they may not be well-organised – this includes both workers (for example, youth, women, disabled people, migrants, cultural, ethnic or religious groups, or non-unionised or informal workers such as home workers (González-González et al., 2021; ILO & ADB, 2020; Jung, 2021; Parker & Arrowsmith, 2014; van Empel & Werna, 2010)) and employer groups (for example, small businesses, as the Republic of Korea seeks to include through the Small Business Committee (Jung, 2021), and farmers' groups, as occurs in the Philippines (Fashoyin, 2003)). The following example is from New York City:

*A local domestic workers' organisation, Domestic Workers United, engaged in an experiment in informal neighbourhood-based bargaining to raise standards in the industry above the relatively low level of State-mandated standards. The organisation brought together domestic workers who worked in the neighbourhood with a small network of progressive employers that had been organised by an allied Jewish social justice organisation, Jews for Racial and Economic Justice for "kitchen table dialogues". These dialogues were used to draft a "Code of Care", setting higher standards for the industry in the neighbourhood, including paid vacation, notice of termination, a living wage and a written work agreement (ILO 2015, as cited in ILO, 2017, p. 46).*

Social dialogue partners need sufficient strength to engage – for example, high trade union density, and strong employer organisations (Bechter et al., 2017). This can make it difficult in sectors where there is high employee turnover, as this makes it difficult to maintain a sufficient level of unionisation (Lévesque et al., 2018).

Sometimes bipartite structures can be a stepping-stone to tripartite social dialogue, especially if there are not formal structures in place to support tripartite engagement, or if tripartite social dialogue has broken down during periods of economic crisis (Guardiancich & Molina, 2017). In some cases, simply getting groups involved "that have previously been excluded from decision-making processes can be considered an achievement in itself." (van Empel & Werna, 2010, p. 13).

Findings from our survey of APEC economies supported this with respondents noting the importance of engaging broadly rather than relying on representative bodies, including diversity/representation in stakeholder groups.

## Buy-in, commitment, and trust

The literature repeatedly emphasises the importance of getting buy-in and commitment from social partners to engage (ILO, 2013b, 2017; ILO & OECD, 2017; Ratnam & Tomoda, 2005). Social partners need to have the political will and commitment to engage (Ratnam & Tomoda, 2005). Social partners should see each other as equal partners – that is not to say that they necessarily have equal numbers of representatives, but that each party’s viewpoint is giving equal consideration (ILO, 2013a). A study of the Brazilian aluminium sector identified difficulties when different stakeholders hold different statuses in society (Cornejo et al., 2010)

Social dialogue requires high levels of trust internally and between social dialogue partners (ILO, 2017; Pender et al., 2018).

*Each party should enter the dialogue with a common framework of reference and a common understanding of the purpose of social dialogue. All parties should have a certain level of trust in, and loyalty and commitment to the process (Ishikawa, 2003, p. 11).*

This trust can take decades to develop (Araújo & Meneses, 2018). When social dialogue is stopped, it can be difficult to rebuild the necessary trust between social partners and the government. Sometimes it is easier to do this by starting with more specific, less controversial topics before moving to larger issues with wider distributional impact (Guardiancich & Molina, 2017). Inviting high-level people from tripartite players can ensure buy-in at the top, which then filters through the organisations (ILO, 2017).

By the very nature of social dialogue, social partners must participate voluntarily and cannot be compelled (ILO, 2013a). As Fashoyin (2004, p. 263) notes, “the sustainability of social dialogue depends largely on whether or not the parties involved recognize its instrumental value to them and to society at large”.

Findings from our survey of APEC economies supported this, with respondents noting the importance of:

- strong and open communication, particularly when engaging with indigenous people
- social partners being committed to, and confident in, the process and appreciating the desired outcomes.

Respondents also noted that a lack of trust between social partners as a result of poor historical relationships, power imbalances, or historical inequity can prevent social dialogue from working as well as it could. Poor experiences of consultative or other processes where proposed recommendations have been ignored or only partially adopted can lead to an unwillingness to engage and work together and challenges to stakeholder management.

## Engaging early

The literature suggests that social partners prefer when they are actively contributing to decision-making rather than taking part in meetings that are simply for information sharing (ILO, 2017). They should be involved early in the process (ILO, 2013b, 2017) – for example, inviting them to workshops at the design phase (ILO, 2017).

*It is essential to start the social dialogue process as early as possible in order to maximize its impact, and the social partners need to be involved at all stages of crisis responses: from initial needs assessment to formulation of measures, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.* (ILO, 2020d, p. 3)

Engaging early helps develop commitment to, and ownership of, the project since once stakeholders feel engaged and heard, they are more likely to engage further. This then makes the project more likely to achieve its objectives and more likely to be sustainable (ILO, 2017).

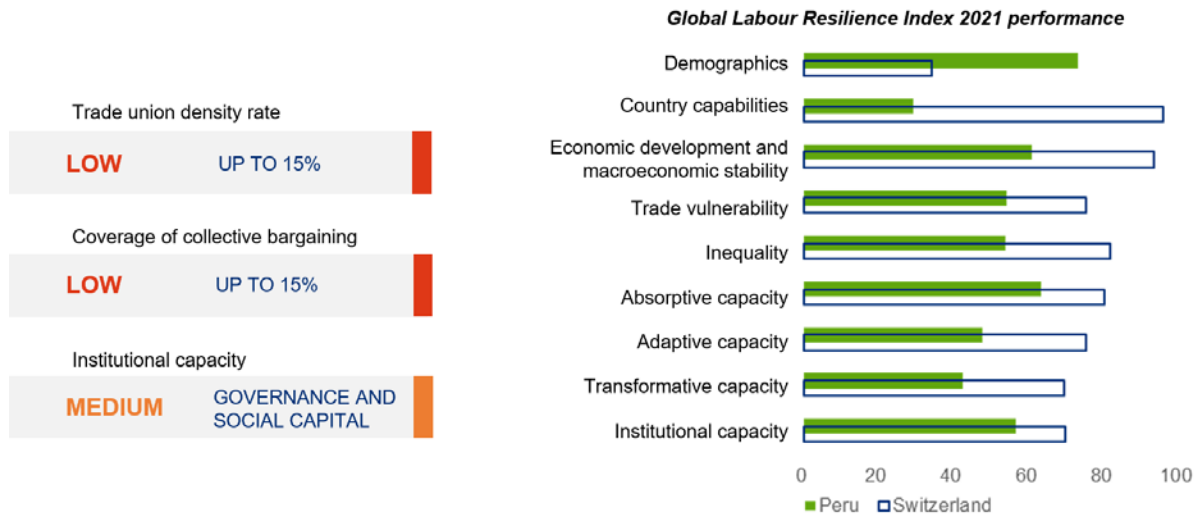
For example, in its COVID-19 response, the Republic of Korea engaged the support of workers' and employers' organisations from the beginning, which has "facilitated the rapid implementation of the emergency measures adopted, thus recognising the added value of social partners' involvement in all stages of policy response" (ILO, 2020d, p. 2).

See the case study of Peru at page 50, which highlights the importance of engaging early and often.

Findings from our survey of APEC economies supported this: respondents noted the importance of engaging early, and of ongoing and regular engagement through multiple formal and less formal channels.

Figure 13: Case study – Peru<sup>9</sup>

# Peru



## Minimum Wage

In Peru, the Political Constitution indicates that the minimum wage is regulated by the State, with the participation of representative organisations of workers and employers. In practice, the minimum wage is set by the government after a process of social dialogue by the National Council for Labour and Employment Promotion (Consejo Nacional de Trabajo y Promoción del Empleo – CNTPE).

The CNTPE is the most important mechanism of tripartite social dialogue in Peru. Its core function is to discuss and agree public policies on labour, employment promotion, job training, and social protection. It includes eight technical commissions:

- Special Commission on Productivity and Minimum Wages

- Technical Commission of Labour
- Committee of Youth Social Dialogue
- Technical Commission of Employment
- Anti-crisis Technical Commission
- Technical Commission of Social Security
- Technical Commission of Professional Training
- Technical Commission of Informal Economy.

This case study focusses on social dialogue on the minimum wage conducted by the Special Commission on Productivity and Minimum Wages.

<sup>9</sup> Switzerland is used as a comparator as it was ranked at number one in the GLRI 2021

## Who was involved and how?

The CNTPE is made up of the Government, represented by the Minister of Labour and Employment Promotion, and the most representative organisations of workers and employers in the private labour sphere. CNTPE carries out social dialogue at three levels:

- Domestic social dialogue (CNTPE)
  - Meeting with the President and the Chief of Ministers
  - Meetings with Labour and Employment Promotion Minister
  - Bilateral meetings with labour unions or employers' organisations
  - CNTPE's General Assembly and Technical Commissions
- Sub-domestic/regional dialogue (Regional Council for Labour and Employment Promotion)
  - CRTPE's General Assembly and Technical Commissions
  - Workshops and courses (virtual or face-to-face)
  - Joint between CRTPE and MTPE
  - Regional meetings with the 25 CRTPE
  - Regional dialogue processes
- Tripartisan+ and thematic dialogue (processes with civil society participation)
  - Thematic dialogue and consultation
  - Sectoral committees for the reactivation of employment
  - Workshops and meetings with other stakeholders
  - Committee for labour formalisation
  - Meetings with specialists

- "Labour dialogue" with organisations

Social dialogue is also carried out at a level of coordination and international dialogue. During the COVID-19 pandemic all dialogue was moved online which allowed it to continue. As of the end of 2021, some face-to-face dialogue spaces have been resumed.

### Initial work to set the minimum wage (2007)

In 2007, the Plenary of the CNTPE agreed, by tripartite consensus, a mechanism to adjust the minimum wage to protect the purchasing power of workers who earned the minimum wage, and to guarantee that higher business incomes derive greater efficiencies which is translated into higher wages for workers who participated in the production process.

This mechanism consists mainly of two variables (inflation and multifactor productivity) and four criteria to assess whether the context is adequate: (i) deep recession, (ii) sharp rise in the open unemployment rate, (iii) sharp rise in labour informality, and (iv) excessive rise in the ratio of minimum wage / average wage.

Since 2007, when the tripartite agreement was reached, the Ministry of Labour and Employment Promotion has continued to produce technical analysis reports to implement and complement the compensation adjustment mechanism. The Plenary of the CNTPE has also continuously maintained dialogue on this issue to reach tripartite agreements. The institutionalised social dialogue took place through existing channels within the CNTPE, which allowed the holding of meetings in the Plenary of the CNTPE and of the technical commission Special Commission on Productivity and Minimum Wages.

### Special Commission on Productivity and Minimum Wages (2018-2019)

Between 2018 and 2019, the Special Commission on Productivity and Minimum Wages (one of eight CNTPE Commissions) carried out intense work, with weekly meetings, bilateral dialogues, and negotiations, seeking to reach consensus and the success of the process.

In addition, the ST-CNTPE (an office that reports directly to the Ministerial office and has a multidisciplinary team that brings technical support to the CNTPE) relied on the ILO to provide technical assistance, which was very important for the members of the Special Commission. This allowed the development of dialogue capacities among the social actors via workshops and training developed by ILO specialists:

- Trust building workshop (July 2018)
- Social dialogue workshop for reaching agreements (September 2018)
- Training on Minimum Remuneration and Productivity (October 2018)

After more than a year of work, a tripartite consensus was reached on 12 of the 22 criteria linked to the institutionalisation of minimum remuneration.

The ST-CNTPE, in collaboration with the Universidad del Pacífico, also organised the International Forum of Good Governmental Practices in Socio-Labor Dialogue and Minimum Remuneration, held in November 2018 and attended by representatives from 11 economies from America and Europe.

### What made it successful?

- The process had clear objectives, regular meetings, and clear goals.
- Social actors had built up trust over 15 years engaging with one another.
- Social actors had identified a common interest in trying to institutionalise a mechanism that provides predictability to future adjustments of the minimum wage.
- Social actors had access to technical support and information to generate confidence in the results of the process.
- The Technical Secretariat of the CNTPE functioned as a "neutral chair" which facilitated trust between employers and workers, providing spaces for sharing free and frank advice and information.

During COVID-19, the fast adaptation to the virtual format and support provided to social actors so they could adapt and participate were important to a successful response.

### Why was social dialogue used?

The Political Constitution of Peru establishes that the regulation of minimum wages is done with the participation of workers and employers. Therefore, the CNTPE is used for tripartite social dialogue, which has the objective of promoting joint decision-making and agreeing on adjustments to the minimum wage. Consequently, social dialogue was essential to achieve the objective and give legitimacy to the agreement.

## Social partners need to have sufficient capability and capacity to engage

One of the key requirements of strong social dialogue is that social partners have sufficient capability and capacity to fully engage in social dialogue processes (Fashoyin, 2004; Ishikawa, 2003; Ratnam & Tomoda, 2005). Otherwise, there is a risk that only stakeholders with sufficient resources (including budget) will be able to engage, which results in poorer outcomes as it prioritises groups with greater resources rather than those who should necessarily have their voices heard and included (Prosser et al., 2021).

### Capacity building

Social partners need the necessary knowledge, technical competence, and capacity to fully engage in social dialogue processes (Fashoyin, 2004; ILO, 2013b; ILO & OECD, 2017; Ishikawa, 2003). The literature suggests that in developing economies in particular, trade unionists may not have the capacity or expertise (or financial resourcing) to engage effectively (ITUC, 2012). Social dialogue partners can be supported through capacity-building activities to enable them to fully participate in social dialogue processes, and therefore strengthen the social dialogue more generally (ILO, 2017; Papadakis & Ghellab, 2014).

Additional support may be required for marginalised workers, for example, those from the informal sector who can be difficult to represent (ILO, 2013b; ITUC, 2012), and particularly groups that are vulnerable or not unionised, for example domestic workers (ILO, 2017). This may need to be done repeatedly in places where employee turnover is high and sufficient unionisation is difficult to maintain (Lévesque et al., 2018).

Successful capacity building can include sharing experiences and good practice (ILO, 2020b), developing better knowledge and understanding of the law and labour rights, and training activities to support workers to apply practical workplace-level approaches (ILO, 2013b).

It is also useful to build skills in management negotiation, communication, cooperation, conflict-management, organising techniques, collective bargaining, grievance handling, and organisational development (Hermans et al., 2017; ILO, 2013b; Ishikawa, 2003). Social partners can help support training for workers, and this can also be built into collective agreements (OECD & ILO, 2020).

Capacity building can also function as an entry to more extensive social dialogue through, for example, building capacity and capability at the regional level. In the Republic of Korea, the Economic & Social Labour Committee gave support for the formation and operation of 'regional tripartite councils', consisting of local tripartite representatives and public interest members. Contributions included holding meetings for high-level officials, local forums for high-level tripartite leaders, searching for and disseminating best practices, and providing financial support (Woo, 2009).

Findings from our survey of APEC economies supported this, with respondents noting several measures in place in their economy to support the ability of social partners to engage in social dialogue:

- training for social dialogue actors to improve engagement – including via trade union training schools or government-organised seminars and conferences
- a combination of structured approaches for specific issues (for example, taskforces, and working and advisory groups) and more informal consultation
- government-mandated guidelines and regulations to require or support social dialogue
- government support for non-governmental organisations to represent specific communities (such as the disabled community) in social dialogue.

These measures are all generally government-funded, although some also received funding from membership fees, training activities etc.

## Access to knowledge

The literature highlights the importance of access to accurate information and knowledge to successful social dialogue (Hermans et al., 2017). Social partners must have access to the relevant information (Hermans et al., 2017; ILO, 2003; ILO & OECD, 2017; Ishikawa, 2003) and knowledge “regarding the area of intervention of projects and actions in order for them to develop awareness and the capacity to formulate proposals and express needs” (ILO, 2017, p. 64). All relevant information should to be disseminated to those who would benefit (ILO, 2017; Ratnam & Tomoda, 2005).

As well as sharing existing information, Ishikawa (2003, p. 11) suggests that in Western Europe, many workers’ and employers’ organisations have associated research institutions, and these can “strengthen the technical capacity of the social partners and enable them to negotiate with the Government on an equal footing”. This is supported by the ILO (GLO/12/60/SID, GLO/12/56/ NOR, GLO/14/73/SID, GLO/14/59/NOR, RAS/14/58/NOR as cited in ILO, 2017, p. 64), who states that it is:

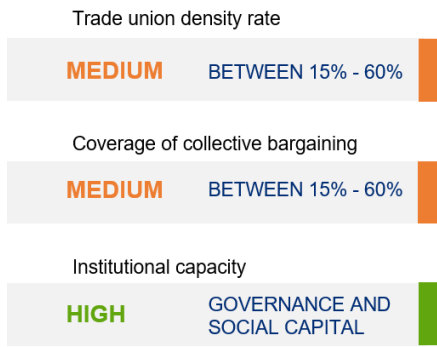
*Increasingly clear that Employers’ Organizations cannot simply rely on connections and networks to influence government, at least if they want their reforms to last: rather they need to undertake (or commission) excellent and objective research and need to be able to prepare persuasive policy position papers.*

Sharing existing knowledge and information is therefore not enough and new understanding also needs to be generated.



Figure 14: Case study – Canada<sup>10</sup>

# CANADA



## Migrant Worker Support Network

The Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program in Canada enables employers to fill labour and skills shortages with migrant workers on a temporary basis when Canadians and permanent residents are not available. However, migrant workers may face barriers to accessing services and exercising their rights while in Canada due to a number of factors, such as:

- Fear of reprisal for exercising their rights
- Lack of knowledge about rights
- Language barriers, isolation, gaps in funding for services.

The Government of Canada established the Migrant Worker Support Network (MWSN) pilot initiative in the province of British Columbia in 2018 to enhance the protection of migrant workers by supporting and empowering them to learn about, understand, and exercise their rights while in Canada. The primary goals of the MWSN were to:

- Provide information to migrant workers on their rights to temporarily remain and work in Canada free from harassment and abuse
- Support migrant workers in reporting wrongdoing
- Detect and deter abuse of migrant workers
- Increase employers' awareness and understanding of program conditions and their responsibilities in upholding migrant workers' rights

<sup>10</sup> Switzerland is used as a comparator as it was ranked at number one in the GLRI 2021

- Address migrant workers' and other stakeholders' and partners' education, support, and outreach needs
- Build trust, strengthen collaboration, and harmonise services
- Network and share information
- Develop policy and funding recommendations to improve worker protections (short-term and long-term).

The MWSN included two components in the pilot to June 2021:

- **Funding for Community-Based Supports**
  - Funding provided to three organisations, one of which redistributed funding through partnerships with 20+ organisations
    - Enabled groups to provide migrant worker-centric information and services, including orientation on arrival at the Vancouver International Airport, community-based workshops, case management, and emergency supports
    - Provided an opportunity to address gaps experienced by workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Multi-Stakeholder Network Meetings**
  - Diverse group of stakeholders, including migrant workers themselves
  - Networking, sharing of information and best practices, collective dialogue on policy and funding issues.

Canada's Budget 2021 announced the creation of the new Migrant Worker Support (MWS) Program, whose overall objective is to provide support to migrant workers to learn about and exercise their rights while living and working in Canada. The MWS Program builds on the lessons learned from the MWSN pilot and other funding to support migrant workers across Canada.

## Who was involved and how?

The MWSN provided a platform for stakeholders to dialogue and share information from a variety of perspectives to address the key challenges faced by migrant workers in Canada. The following stakeholders engaged in meetings and collaborated on funded initiatives to provide information, referrals, and services to migrant workers throughout the pilot:

- Government of Canada
- provincial government (British Columbia)
- community organisations and union/labour representatives
- migrant workers

- foreign governments
- independent experts (for example, researchers)
- employers and industry representatives.

MWSN members collaborated in working groups to develop policy, funding, and community action recommendations to respond to the challenges faced by migrant workers in exercising their rights while in Canada.

Several times per year, all members met at the MWSN plenary to discuss new initiatives, share best practices, and recommend changes to policy and funding activities.

## What made it successful?

- The design of the MWSN was informed by an extensive six-month development phase led by the Government of Canada in consultation with key stakeholders who play a role in migrant worker protections. During this phase, stakeholders – many of whom continued to participate in the MWSN into 2021 – worked together to identify gaps and barriers in migrant worker protections and employer education, and to develop the governance model.
- Regular multi-stakeholder meetings facilitated relationship building and information sharing. Service providers gained knowledge from other participants about best practices and were able to make productive connections with other individuals and groups. This helped to build trust and dispel myths, encouraging partnership-building.
- Multi-stakeholder, bottom-up engagement allowed multiple perspectives to be heard and to work together. There was a strong emphasis on information sharing and capacity building – for funding recipients, this included regular check-ins, sharing of best practices and collaborating on activities for migrant workers. Resources such as webinars and e-courses were funded for service providers (train the trainer model). Feedback from users was then incorporated to help improve future resource offerings.
- Dialogue processes were informed throughout the pilot by the lived realities of participants, particularly marginalised groups. Migrant worker participation was encouraged by:

- hosting some meetings at times and on days when workers were available rather than standard working hours (such as Sundays)
- providing lunch and transport to enable access
- providing language interpretation services
- hosting forums specifically for migrant workers.

- The dialogue process recognised and built on the expertise of existing stakeholders within the worker protection arena. Connecting with migrant worker support organisations directly provided further information regarding other potential partners and how best to approach them.
- Importance was given to respect and complementing each other's roles, including mandates and jurisdictions. For example, the provincial government has oversight of employment while the federal government has oversight of immigration.

A lesson learned from the project was the importance of committing to longer-term dialogue to maintain trust and encourage sustainability. This includes ensuring groups have sufficient time to engage – which may be several months.

## Why was social dialogue used?

Social dialogue was used to gain a better understanding of the issues faced by migrant workers and to provide all parties with a forum to share best practices and collaborate on emerging issues that required multi-stakeholder engagement. Social dialogue provided an outlet for information sharing between diverse groups of participants and facilitated relationship building between participants.

## There needs to be an appropriate political climate and political willingness to engage

### Political climate

The political context can support or hinder social dialogue (Guyet, Tarren & Triomphe, 2012; ILO, 2017). The ILO (2013b, p. 8) notes that “the national political context and climate in which the social partners and social dialogue operate... contributes significantly to either success and positive outcomes or failure” and this is particularly true during crises. From the 1960s and 1970s it was assumed that tripartite systems worked better when a social democratic or labour party was in place (Kim & Ahn, 2018). However, this is no longer assumed to be necessary.

Even once processes are in place it can be difficult to sustain them, and they may not last (Kim & Ahn, 2018). Similarly, internal restructures of ministries of labour or changes in leadership can create challenges (ILO, 2013b). Unsurprisingly, the literature suggests that economies that have recently experienced civil strife face particular challenges implementing social dialogue (ILO, 2013b), probably because the political aspects discussed below are not in place: “such countries often have only a weak social fabric and are characterized by other challenges, e.g. fragmentation within social partner organizations” (ILO, 2013b, p. ix).

As an example, social dialogue was institutionalised in Indonesia shortly after the fall of the military dictatorship in 1998:

*The new democratic government quickly recognized the right to organize and set up of tripartite task force to shape labor market policy and the tripartite dialogue to follow. Whilst relatively new, social dialogue was based on the traditional consensual decision-making approach known as “musyawarah and mufakat” (deliberation and consensus) employed in Indonesia, forming the background for joint consensus-oriented formulation of socio-economic policy and of minimum wages. The broader civil society organizations, such as environmental groups, human rights groups, universities et al, cooperated with unions through awareness raising and information campaigns, advocacy, etc. Social dialogue facilitated the development of new labor and economic policies, and stimulated the process of collective bargaining between unions and employers, which altogether contributed to an acceleration of economic recovery post-1998. (Tørres, 2021, p. 9)*

### Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining

Basic aspects of democracy are required for good social dialogue (Ishikawa, 2003). For example, without freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, social dialogue processes lack legitimacy and are unsustainable (Hermans et al., 2017; ILO, 2003, 2013a, 2013c, 2020a; ILO & OECD, 2017; Ishikawa, 2003; Lévesque et al., 2018; Ratnam & Tomoda, 2005; van Empel & Werna, 2010). Social dialogue is much more successful when there are sound industrial relations in place (ILO, 2013b). However, unionisation on its own is not sufficient and still requires strong social dialogue processes (Stavis, Krause & Mōrena, 2021).

While reflecting the right to join an organisation of one's choice, especially when representing a pluralist labour force, having multiple trade unions adds an extra level of complexity to social dialogue processes (ITUC, 2012). Where there are multiple unions there needs to be mechanisms for effective coordination (ILO & OECD, 2017). It is important to be aware of pre-existing power relations, including

potential imbalances, when developing social dialogue processes – for example, prioritising employers over workers (Kim & Ahn, 2018; van Empel & Werna, 2010).

## **Strong, independent, and representative employers’ and workers’ organisations**

Social dialogue requires strong, independent, and representative employers’ and workers’ organisations, “with appropriate competence and the capacity to [ensure that their members] comply with the commitments entered into” (Hermans et al., 2017, p. 12) (see also ILO, 2003, 2013a, 2020a; ILO & OECD, 2017; Ishikawa, 2003). Workers need to be protected by enforcement of existing labour laws, including for dispute resolution – for example, the ability to enforce collective agreements (ILO, 2013c; ILO & OECD, 2017; ITUC, 2012).

If workers cannot freely choose their representative organisation, then these organisations are not truly representative. Similarly, free and frank negotiations are unlikely to be possible unless members of unions are protected from anti-union discrimination (Fashoyin, 2004; Ishikawa, 2003; ITUC, 2012).

*Colombian workers could not exercise their rights to organize and engage in collective bargaining. No fewer than three attempts to organize a trade union had been led by workers but each attempt had failed, with workers active in the organizing campaigns being fired.* (Lévesque et al., 2018, p. 221)

Findings from our survey of APEC economies supported this with respondents noting the importance of a sound and stable social environment, including comprehensive policies, institutional support, political wills, and full respect for human rights and for the privileges of labour associations.

## **Political willingness**

Successful social dialogue depends on political willingness on the part of all social partners to engage in good faith (Fashoyin, 2004; Hermans et al., 2017; ILO, 2003, 2013b, 2013a, 2017; van Empel & Werna, 2010). There must be political commitment (Guardiancich & Molina, 2017; Guyet, Tarren & Triomphe, 2012; ITUC, 2012; Tørres, 2021) and responsibility (Hermans et al., 2017), and social partners must recognise each other as equal partners (ILO, 2003).

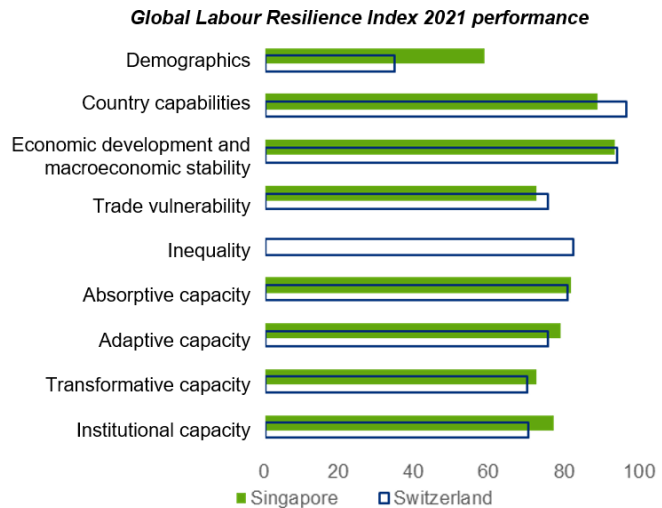
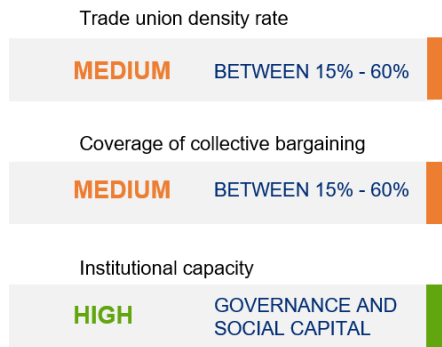
*Willingness to consult or negotiate, and generally to engage in social dialogue is key to effective participation. This point may easily be taken for granted, but in reality in several countries the social partners face enormous difficulties in being consulted on critical issues affecting them.* (Fashoyin, 2004, p. 361)

Political willingness is particularly important on the part of the government, and “even in countries with adversarial systems of industrial relations, tripartite partners can come together and achieve compromises” (Ghellab, 2009, p. 9).

In some cases, willingness to engage depends on the government of the day. As Ishikawa (2003, p. 9) writes: “in some countries social dialogue is generally accepted and promoted, but in other countries social dialogue processes depend heavily on the attitudes of the government in power”. Some economies have relatively closed political systems and members of the political classes may be “uncomfortable with social dialogue programmes and the proposed changes” (ILO, 2013b, p. 18).

Figure 15: Case study – Singapore<sup>11</sup>

# SINGAPORE



## Managing labour during economic uncertainty brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic

Tripartite partners developed advisories and guidelines during the pandemic to give timely guidance to employers and employees on sustaining businesses, managing excess labour responsibly, and reducing costs to save jobs. These advisories and guidelines had the strong support of employers, unions, and workers, resulting in peaceful industrial relations despite disruptions and uncertainties.

### Who was involved and how?

Consultations were held among the tripartite partners, namely, the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), the National Trade Union Congress (NTUC) and the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF). Consultation was both formal and informal, and many a times ad hoc during COVID-19 as the situation evolved quickly. Consultation occurred at a domestic or sectoral level depending on the extent to which sectors were affected.

The Tripartite Advisory on Managing Excess Manpower and Responsible Retrenchment (TAMEM), endorsed by the National Wage

Council (NWC) was updated in March 2020 and subsequently in October 2020 in view of the evolving COVID-19 situation which affected businesses. The advisory was updated to emphasise the key desired outcomes in retrenchment exercises; and to provide clearer guidance to employers on carrying out a retrenchment exercise responsibly, such as by having HR personnel and union representatives on-site to answer questions during the retrenchment exercise, providing employment facilitation support, and providing a longer notice period beyond contractual or statutory requirement where feasible.

<sup>11</sup> Switzerland is used as a comparator as it was ranked at number one in the GLRI 2021

The advisory also cited alternatives to retrenchment, such as the training of employees to upgrade their skills; redeployment of employees to other parts of the company; flexible work schedules and short work weeks; wage adjustments following social dialogue; and unpaid leave. The document indicates, “Where there is a need to implement any of the measures, the principle of leadership by example, close consultation and transparency should prevail. Employers should engage and communicate with unions and employees. The measures should be regularly reviewed to assess whether they remain necessary and whether other measures are required”. It further stated that if a company was unionised, the relevant union(s) should be consulted as early as possible on these measures.

During the COVID-19 crisis, tripartite partners leveraged the healthy relationship and mutual trust built up over the years when negotiating many challenging workplace and workforce issues, such as the implementation of cost saving measures and retrenchments. Employees shared the burden with employers to ensure survival of the business, especially during periods of business disruptions due to COVID-19 Safe Management Measures.

The Government further committed funds in four Budgets in 2020 to support workers, stabilise businesses, and build resilience.

### **What made it successful?**

Successful social dialogue relied on mutual trust and understanding as well as the appreciation for the longer-term goal of emerging from the COVID-19 crisis stronger together.

### **Why was social dialogue used?**

Consultation, as a matter of course, is held between employers, unions, workers and the Government on preventative and mitigation measures regarding COVID-19’s impact on businesses and workplaces.

Rapid action and changes were required in response to COVID-19. Because social dialogue relationships were already in place, tripartite partners could come together quickly via virtual meetings to discuss, negotiate, and agree employment positions. This flexibility was only possible with the relationship and trust that had been established prior to COVID-19 and without such mutual trust between partners, such quick resolution would not have been possible.

Tripartite consensus was critical to ensure that measures introduced had the support of both workers and employers, so as to support the longer-term objective to safeguard jobs and position businesses for recovery. There were no major disputes between unions and employers and industrial harmony was preserved.

# The necessary institutional structures and legal frameworks must be in place – and used correctly

## Institutional frameworks

### Level of institutionalisation

Having “an adequate level of institutionalisation, including funding and well-defined legal mandates” (Hermans et al., 2017, p. 12) to obtain meaningful and sustainable social dialogue is key (Fashoyin, 2004; Guardiancich & Molina, 2017; ILO, 2003, 2013a). The literature indicates that to be successful, social partner organisations should be institutionally recognised by both business and political actors (ILO, 2013b).

However, social dialogue does not depend on a specific institutional structure, or indeed on having an institutional structure at all: it can also be conducted through informal and ad hoc means, for example tripartite conferences (Fashoyin, 2004).

Guardiancich and Molina (2017, p. 12) analysed European economies post-GFC and found that:

*Germany has neither a formalized process of tripartite social dialogue nor a federal-level tripartite social dialogue institution. And yet, when compared to other countries (e.g., Spain), this absence of formal institutions has not been a weakness but rather a strength, by guaranteeing the involvement of the social partners in policy-making through so-called crisis summits.*

Instead, the most appropriate – and effective – approach likely depends on context-specific factors “including the political and socio-economic context, the characteristics of the social partners and the legal framework for industrial relations” (Guardiancich & Molina, 2017, p. 33; see also ILO, 2020d; van Empel & Werna, 2010). In economies with a strong tradition of social dialogue, a formalised institution may not be necessary, particularly if an established (albeit less formal) range of bodies and organisations already exist (van Empel & Werna, 2010).

### Domestic social dialogue institutions

Even if a formal institution is to be established, “there is no ideal model, or ‘one-size-fits-all’” (Guardiancich & Molina, 2017, p. 22). Domestic social dialogue institutions (DSDIs) are a common form of institutionalising social dialogue, but their structures vary widely. As the ILO (2020d, p. 3) notes, “these bodies are diverse, ranging from formal institutions (such as economic and social councils, national councils for social dialogue, labour advisory councils) to ad hoc institutions”. Their composition, mission and mandates may all vary, depending on the specific “history, traditions and economic, political and social conditions of the country concerned” (Guardiancich & Molina, 2017, pp. 22–23).

Generally, DSDIs include representatives from workers’ and employers’ organisations (bipartite) and from the government (tripartite). They may also include wider membership, such as representatives from other interest groups (Guardiancich & Molina, 2017). Few DSDIs have direct negotiating power (Guardiancich & Molina, 2020)

However, while having such an institution can support social dialogue, it does not guarantee it (Ishikawa, 2003). As with social dialogue generally, Guardiancich and Molina (2020) identify three



mutually reinforcing characteristics that enable effective social dialogue through an DSDI: capacity to solve problems (including resourcing), an effective mandate (either implicit or explicit) to deal with issues of interest, and an acceptance that social dialogue is part of the policymaking process (that is, an enabling external environment. Ishikawa (2003, p. 25) suggests that if a specific institution is established, putting a permanent secretariat in place “is one of the most effective means to ensure sustainability of the institutions established”.

Guardiancich & Molina (2021) note that in some economies DSDIs are being eroded, due to factors like the expansion of neoliberal policies, declining union membership, and the slow response of social dialogue to urgent problems.

See the case study from New Zealand at Figure 16 on page 14 which details the establishment of the Future of Work Tripartite Forum in 2018 as a standing tripartite body for a specific labour market topic area.

## Legal frameworks

Institutional or legal frameworks vary across regions and social dialogue may be very limited or non-existent in fragile situations or where social partners are weak (ILO, 2020a).

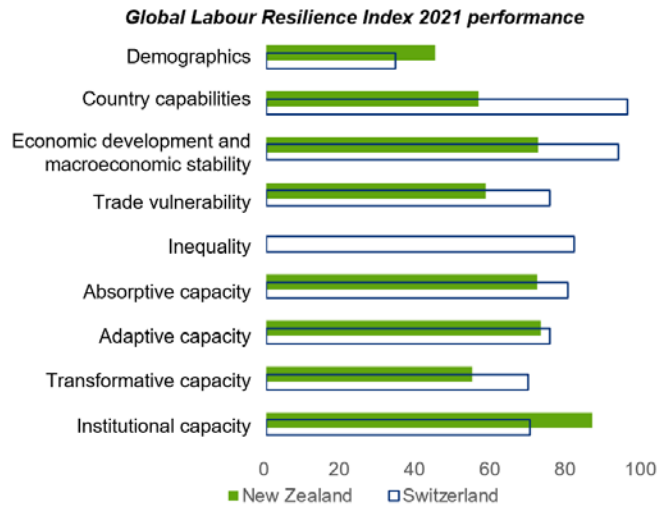
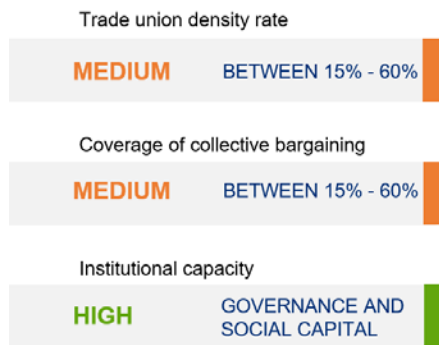
*Institutional frameworks for industrial relations are at very different stages across Asia and the Pacific. At one end of the spectrum are countries in which labour relations are well developed, such as Australia, Japan, New Zealand and Singapore. At the other, in countries such as Cambodia, China, Mongolia, Nepal and Viet Nam, the legal framework for collective bargaining has evolved significantly and the practice of collective bargaining is developing.* (ILO, 2013c, pp. 26–27)

This compares to the EU where social dialogue is embedded in the policy process through the European Treaty and its legal foundations. As the ILO (2013b, p. 10) states, “in practice, the EU remains the only region of the world where social dialogue is anchored as an integral part of good governance and policy-making”.

Nonetheless, even when the necessary social dialogue institutions and mechanisms are in place, this does not guarantee they will be used correctly (ILO, 2013b; Ratnam & Tomoda, 2005). For example, Turkey had legislation, social partnerships, and procedures in place, but its legal framework of industrial relations required reform and there were not always positive perceptions of the social partners taking part in social dialogue (European Parliament, 2008, as cited in ILO, 2013b, p. 19).

Figure 16: Case study – New Zealand<sup>12</sup>

# NEW ZEALAND



## Future of Work Tripartite Forum

The Future of Work Tripartite (FWT) Forum focuses on projects where there is value to be gained from taking a joint approach between the three parties. Its purpose is to investigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the changing nature of work and employment and help shape the government's work in this area.

### Who was involved and how?

The FWT Forum is a partnership between:

- the Government
- BusinessNZ – as representatives of business groups
- New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (NZCTU) – union representatives.

The FWT Forum is the main standing tripartite body in New Zealand. It first met in August 2018 when BusinessNZ and the NZ Council of Trade Unions jointly approached the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance about working together. The FWT Forum now meets three times per year and is supported by

officials from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

The Strategic Assessment of Future of Work Priorities was commissioned by the FWT Forum to identify priority areas which could benefit from a coordinated tripartite approach. It was released in November 2019 and outlined the key priorities it had identified that needed to be addressed to build labour market and economic resilience, and to prepare New Zealand's businesses and workforce for the future of work megatrends. It provided an opportunity to reiterate the government's commitment to strengthening tripartite social

<sup>12</sup> Switzerland is used as a comparator as it was ranked at number one in the GLRI 2021

dialogue on important cross-cutting issues. The five broad strategic priorities identified are:

- creating more adaptive and resilient institutions
- raising workplace productivity and wages
- responsive skills systems enabling learning for life
- helping workers find and keep decent jobs
- protecting vulnerable workers.

Each of these identified strategic priorities have associated work programmes being pursued by government, business, and unions. The FWT Forum has identified some of these work programmes as areas of particular focus, where the Forum is in a unique position to aid in policy design or implementation, champion change on the firm and worker side, and share exemplars.

#### **Social unemployment insurance scheme**

An example of one of these work programmes is the New Zealand Income Insurance (NZII) Scheme, which aims to provide workers greater financial security for a period of time when they are unemployed and give them the flexibility and time to find a job that matches their skills, needs, and aspirations.

In February 2022, the Government, Business New Zealand and the NZCTU released the NZII proposal, co-designed by the three partners. A term of reference was developed to set out the roles of the partners and the scope of the project.

A tripartite working group and tripartite governance group at the ministerial level was established. This provided clarity, openness, and transparency on how partners would work together. This enabled the working group to reach consensus on most aspects of the NZII design, acknowledge issues it could not reach consensus on, and provide options for the governance group to make decisions on,

particularly as it related to seeking public feedback as part of the consultation.

The Government is also working closely with the Pou Tangata Skills and Employment Iwi Leaders Group to ensure it meets its obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi on the design of NZII and engagement with Māori/iwi.

#### **What made it successful?**

- Allows for a wider range of perspectives than would usually be incorporated.
- Allows for a co-design model which helps ensure the work has broad buy-in and subsequently makes it easier to implement and more likely to be enduring.
- Identifies areas of common ground between government, business, and labour interests. Allows groups to put aside personal differences and instead focus on their shared interest in a successful economy and workplace.
- Use of a rotating chair which ensures all three partners have ownership of the FWT Forum, including opportunity to prioritise the work of the FWT Forum and shape the agenda and content of individual meetings. This is reinforced by having a tripartite Governance Group to oversee the work of the FWT Forum.

#### **Why was social dialogue used?**

The FWT Forum primarily adds value to policy relevant processes through the exchange of information and consultation, in particular:

- business and worker perspectives are integrated in a formal way into higher-level government strategy discussions
- consultation on key policy initiatives is more thorough and at times, evolves into a more co-design-based approach with Ministers and/or officials.

# Conclusions

There is widespread agreement (in both the literature and reflected in our survey results) that social dialogue is a useful mechanism, particularly during times of economic crisis, and it has been widely used as part of COVID-19 responses. Social dialogue has many benefits, including to democratise and legitimise policy, support economic growth (while creating a more equitable work environment), and helping to reduce social conflict and provide mechanisms for conflict resolution.

While there is agreement that social dialogue mechanisms should be in place, how they should operate is less clear, and the most appropriate approach often depends on the specific context. In some areas, particularly where there is an embedded culture and acceptance of social dialogue, ad hoc or informal processes are sufficient. However, in other areas a more formal or institutionalised approach is preferred – although the existence of such an institution does not guarantee successful social dialogue.

As highlighted throughout this report and identified in Figure 17, there are five characteristics that make social dialogue more likely to succeed. As put forward by Guardiancich and Molina (2020, 2021), these enabling conditions are mutually reinforcing and work together to create an ideal scenario for successful social dialogue.

**Figure 17: Enabling conditions for effective social dialogue**



Source: Adapted from Guardiancich & Molina (2020, 2021)

# References

- AICESIS, & ILO. (2014). *AICESIS-ILO Joint Database*. The International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions. <http://www.aicesis.org/database/>
- Allinger, B., & Adam, G. (2022, January 27). *Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the social services sector and the role of social dialogue: Research led in the framework of the Foresee project*. Federation of European Social Employers and the European Federation of Public Service Unions.
- Araújo, S., & Meneses, M. P. (2018). *The effectiveness of social dialog as an instrument to promote labour and social justice*. ETHOS consortium.
- Bechter, B., Brandl, B., & Prosser, T. (2017). Engagement in European social dialogue: an investigation into the role of social partner structural capacity. *Industrial Relations Journal*, 48(4), 365–382. <https://doi.org/10.1111/irj.12192>
- Bechter, B., Weber, S., Galetto, M., Larsson, B., & Prosser, T. (2021). Opening the black box: Actors and interactions shaping European sectoral social dialogue. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 27(3), 269–288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09596801211000012>
- Bordogna, L. (2018). *Social dialogue in the public service in selected countries of the European Union* (Working Paper No. 318). International Labour Organization.
- Castillo, M. (2013, September 11). *Dimension 5: Social dialogue concept paper: Measuring the quality of employment: The measurement of social dialogue through statistical and legal framework indicators*. Meeting of the Group of Experts on Measuring Quality of Employment, Palais des Nations, Geneva.
- Choi, Y.-K. (2000). *Social dialogue and economic revival in Korea*. The New Institutionalism and the Study of the European Union: The Case of the Social Dialogue.
- Cornejo, N., Kell, C., Ortiz de Zuniga, T., Roen, S., & Thompson, B. (2010). Promoting social dialogue in the mining sector in the state of Pará, Brazil. *Consilience: The Journal of Sustainable Development*, 3(1), 1–67.
- Canalda Criado, S. (2022). Social partner participation in the management of the COVID-19 crisis: Tripartite social dialogue in Italy, Portugal and Spain. *International Labour Review*, 161(1), 149-167. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/ilr.12362>
- Daga, R., & Ritchotte, J. (2016). *The state of social dialogue in Asia-Pacific* [Research Note]. International Labour Organization.
- Eurofound. (2021a). *Mixed impacts of COVID-19 on social dialogue and collective bargaining in 2020*. Publications Office of the European Union. <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/article/2021/mixed-impacts-of-covid-19-on-social-dialogue-and-collective-bargaining-in-2020>
- Eurofound. (2021b). *Involvement of social partners in policymaking during the COVID-19 outbreak*. Publications Office of the European Union.
- European Commission. (2016). *A new start for social dialogue*. European Commission.
- Fashoyin, T. (2003). *Social dialogue and labour market performance in the Philippines* [Working Paper]. International Labour Office. [http://www.oit.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms\\_100413.pdf](http://www.oit.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_100413.pdf)

- Fashoyin, T. (2004). Tripartite cooperation, social dialogue and national development. *International Labour Review*, 143(4), 341–372. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1564-913X.2004.tb00553.x>
- Ghellab, Y. (2009). *Recovering from the crisis through social dialogue* (Dialogue in Brief No. 1). International Labour Office.
- Gold, M., Cressey, P., & Léonard, E. (2007). Whatever happened to social dialogue? From partnership to managerialism in the EU employment agenda. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 13(1), 7–25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959680107073963>
- González-González, M., Fernández-Álvarez, Ó., Lally, K.-A., & Ouali-Fernandez, S. (2021). Religion and workers' associations for decent work in Spain. *Social Sciences*, 10(5), 169. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10050169>
- Grimshaw, D., Koukiadaki, A., & Tavora, I. (2017). *Social dialogue and economic performance: What matters for business - A review* (No. 89; Conditions of Work and Employment Series). International Labour Office.
- Guardiancich, I., & Molina, O. (Eds.). (2017). *Talking through the crisis: social dialogue and industrial relations trends in selected EU countries*. ILO.
- Guardiancich, I., & Molina, O. (2020). *The effectiveness of national social dialogue institutions: From theory to evidence* (Working Paper No. 16). International Labour Organization. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_dialogue/---dialogue/documents/publication/wcms\\_762099.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---dialogue/documents/publication/wcms_762099.pdf)
- Guardiancich, I., & Molina, O. (2021). From gradual erosion to revitalization: National social dialogue institutions and policy effectiveness. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 095968012110183. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09596801211018318>
- Guyet, R., Tarren, D., & Triomphe, C-E. (2012). *Social dialogue in times of global economic crisis*. European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.
- Hayter, S., & Stoevska, V. (2011). *Social dialogue indicators: International statistical inquiry 2008-09* [Technical Brief]. International Labour Office.
- Hermans, M., Huyse, H., & Ongevalle, J. V. (2017). *Social dialogue as a driver and governance instrument for sustainable development* (Research Paper) [ILO-ITUC Issue Paper]. International Labour Office, International Trade Union Confederation and HIVA Research Institute for Work and Society. <http://www.ituc-csi.org/issue-paper-social-dialogue-development>
- ILO. (2003). *Social dialogue: Finding a common voice*. International Labour Office.
- ILO. (2013a). *National tripartite social dialogue: An ILO guide for improved governance*. International Labour Organization.
- ILO. (2013b). *Social dialogue interventions: What works and why? A synthesis review 2002-2012*. International Labour Organization. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms\\_212381.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_212381.pdf)
- ILO. (2013c). *Social dialogue: recurrent discussion on social dialogue under the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization* (1. ed). ILO.
- ILO. (2017). *Social dialogue interventions: What works and why? Lessons learned from a synthesis review 2013–2016*. International Labour Office.
- ILO. (2020a). *Peak-level social dialogue as a governance tool during the COVID-19 pandemic: Global and regional trends and policy issues* [ILO brief]. International Labour Organization.

- ILO. (2020b). *Social protection (social security) interventions: What works and why? Lessons learned from a synthesis review, 2012–2018*. International Labour Organization. Social protection (social security) interventions: What works and why? Lessons learned from a synthesis review, 2012–2018
- ILO. (2020c). *The ILO's Strategic Plan for 2022-25*. International Labour Organization.
- ILO. (2020d). *The need for social dialogue in addressing the COVID-19 crisis* [Policy Brief]. International Labour Organization.
- ILO. (2020e). *The role of social dialogue and the social partners in addressing the consequences of COVID-19 in the informal economy* [Questions & Answers]. International Labour Organization.
- ILO. (2021a). *Social dialogue one year after the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic: Spotlight on outcomes* [Research brief]. International Labour Organization.
- ILO. (2021b, September 2). *COVID-19 and the world of work: Country policy responses*. International Labour Organization. <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/regional-country/country-responses/lang--en/index.htm>
- ILO. (2021c, January 25). *A global trend analysis on the role of trade unions in times of COVID-19. [Executive summary]*. International Labour Organisation. [Executive Summary: A Global Trend Analysis on the Role of Trade Unions in Times of COVID-19 \(ilo.org\)](https://www.ilo.org/global/trends/analysis-on-the-role-of-trade-unions-in-times-of-covid-19/lang--en/index.htm)
- ILO. (2021d, July 5). *Let's talk! Social dialogue helps Asian garment industry navigate the COVID-19 crisis*. [https://www.ilo.org/asia/media-centre/news/WCMS\\_810623/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/asia/media-centre/news/WCMS_810623/lang--en/index.htm)
- ILO. (2022). *Enhancing social dialogue towards a culture of safety and health: What have we learned from the COVID-19 crisis? World Day of Safety and Health at Work 2022 Report*. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---safework/documents/publication/wcms\\_842505.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---safework/documents/publication/wcms_842505.pdf)
- ILO, & ADB. (2020). *Tackling the COVID-19 youth employment crisis in Asia and the Pacific*. Asian Development Bank and the International Labour Organization.
- ILO, & OECD. (2017). *Achieving decent work and inclusive growth: The business case for social dialogue*. International Labour Organization and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.
- Ishikawa, J. (2003). *Key features of national social dialogue. A social dialogue resource book*. International Labour Organization. <https://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=4954639>
- ITUC. (2012). *ITUC's input on social dialogue in development cooperation*. International Trade Union Confederation – ITUC.
- Jung, H. (2021, April 12). *National level social dialogue in Korea*. Civil Society Forum under the EU-Korea FTA.
- Kenworthy, L., & Kittel, B. (2003). *Indicators of social dialogue: Concepts and measurements* (Working Paper No. 5). International Labour Office. <http://www.ssrn.com/abstract=907429>
- Kim, D.-O., & Ahn, J.-Y. (2018). From authoritarianism to democratic corporatism? The rise and decline of social dialogue in Korea. *Sustainability*, 10(12), 4514. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10124514>
- KPMG. (2020, June). *Hong Kong (SAR), China: Government and institution measures in response to COVID-19*. KPMG. <https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/insights/2020/04/hong-kong-sar-china-government-and-institution-measures-in-response-to-covid.html>

- Labor Institute Indonesia, & ITUC/TUDCN. (2016). *Examples of social dialogue in Indonesia (2004-15) and its contribution to development*. Labor Institute Indonesia and TUDCN.
- Larsen, T. P., & Mailland, M. (2018). Lifting wages and conditions of atypical employees in Denmark—the role of social partners and sectoral social dialogue: Lifting wages and conditions of atypical employees. *Industrial Relations Journal*, 49(2), 88–108. <https://doi.org/10.1111/irj.12205>
- Lawrence, S., & Ishikawa, J. (2005). *Social dialogue indicators: Trade union membership and collective bargaining coverage: Statistical concepts, methods and findings* (Working Paper No. 59). International Labour Office.
- Lévesque, C., Hennebert, M.-A., Murray, G., & Bourque, R. (2018). Corporate social responsibility and worker rights: Institutionalizing social dialogue through international framework agreements. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 153(1), 215–230. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-016-3370-9>
- Louis, M. (2016). The ILO, social partners and the G20: New prospects for social dialogue at the global level? *Global Social Policy*, 16(3), 235–252. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468018115611193>
- Milman-Sivan, F. (2009). Representativity, civil society, and the EU social dialogue: Lessons from the International Labor Organization. *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, 16(1), 311–337.
- OECD. (2019a). *OECD Employment Outlook 2019: The future of work*. OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9ee00155-en>
- OECD. (2019b). *Negotiating our way up: Collective bargaining in a changing world of work*. OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/1fd2da34-en>
- OECD. (2020). *Social dialogue in the 2030 Agenda* [Thematic brief]. <https://www.theglobaldeal.com/news/newsrelease/Social-Dialogue-2030-Agenda-Global-Deal-Thematic-Brief-June-2020.pdf>
- OECD. (2022). *Supporting transitions and securing jobs*. Tackling Coronavirus (COVID-19): Contributing to a global effort. [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=1128\\_1128544-e0b2iw6bom&title=Supporting-transitions-and-securing-jobs](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=1128_1128544-e0b2iw6bom&title=Supporting-transitions-and-securing-jobs)
- OECD, & ILO. (2018). *Building trust in a changing world of work: The global deal for decent work and inclusive growth flagship report 2018*. Global Deal, ILO and OECD.
- OECD, & ILO. (2020). *Social dialogue, skills and COVID-19: The global deal for decent work and inclusive growth flagship report 2020*. Global Deal, ILO and OECD.
- Otieno, O. G., Wandeda, D. O., & Mwamadzingo, M. (2021). Trade union membership dynamics amidst COVID-19: Does social dialogue matter? *International Journal of Labour Research*, 10(1-2), 2-12.
- Papadakis, K., & Ghellab, Y. (Eds.). (2014). *The governance of policy reforms in Southern Europe and Ireland: social dialogue actors and institutions in times of crisis*. ILO.
- Parker, J., & Arrowsmith, J. (2014). Collective regulation and working women in New Zealand and Fiji. *Relations Industrielles*, 69(2), 388–416. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1025034ar>
- Pender, E. R., Elgoibar, P., Munduate, L., García, A. B., & Euwema, M. C. (2018). Improving social dialogue: What employers expect from employee representatives. *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 29(2), 169–189. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1035304617739506>
- Prosser, T., Bechter, B., Galetto, M., Weber, S., & Larsson, B. (2021). Institutions or resources and capabilities? Explaining engagement in European sectoral social dialogue. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 0143831X2110160. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143831X211016052>
- Ratnam, V., & Tomoda, S. (2005). *Practical guide for strengthening social dialogue in public service reform*. International Labour Organization.



- Rychly, L. (2009). *Social dialogue in times of crisis: finding better solutions* (Working Paper No. 1). International Labour Office.
- Somavia, J. (1999, June). *Report of the Director-General: Decent Work*. International Labour Conference report. <https://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc87/rep-i.htm>
- Stevis, D., Krause, D., & Morena, E. (2021). Towards a just transition for all: Lessons from the pandemic. *International Journal of Labour Research*, 10(1-2), 52-64.
- Suttawet, C., & Bamber, G. J. (2018). International labour standards and decent work: a critical analysis of Thailand's experiences, with suggestions for theory, policy, practice and research. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 56(4), 539–565. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1744-7941.12190>
- Tørres, L. (2021). *Social dialogue as a tool to fight inequality & recover after a pandemic* [Policy Paper]. Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, hosted by the Center on International Cooperation at New York University. [https://cic.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/cic\\_pathfinders\\_social\\_dialogue\\_as\\_a\\_tool\\_to\\_fight\\_inequality\\_recover\\_after\\_a\\_pandemic\\_july\\_2021.pdf](https://cic.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/cic_pathfinders_social_dialogue_as_a_tool_to_fight_inequality_recover_after_a_pandemic_july_2021.pdf)
- UN IASG. (2014). *Indigenous peoples' access to decent work and social protection* [Thematic paper]. United Nations Inter-Agency Support Group (IASG) on Indigenous Issues. [https://www.un.org/en/ga/69/meetings/indigenous/pdf/IASG%20Thematic%20paper\\_%20Employment%20and%20Social%20Protection%20-%20rev1.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/ga/69/meetings/indigenous/pdf/IASG%20Thematic%20paper_%20Employment%20and%20Social%20Protection%20-%20rev1.pdf)
- van Empel, C., & Werna, E. (2010). *Labour oriented participation in municipalities: How decentralized social dialogue can benefit the urban economy and its sectors* (Working Paper No. 28). International Labour Office.
- Voss, E., Homan, B., & Kwiatkiewicz, A. (2011). *European social dialogue: Achievements and challenges ahead: Results of the stock-taking survey amongst national social partners in the EU Member States and candidate countries* [Integrated programme of the EU social dialogue 2009-2011]. European Social Partners with the financial support of the European Commission.
- Whiteshield Partners. (2021). *Global labour resilience index 2021: The resilience of work amid COVID-19*. Whiteshield Partners with support from Oxford University Saïd Business School and the Institute for the Future of Work. [https://www.whiteshieldpartners.com/files/2021/glri/WhiteshieldPartners\\_GLRI\\_Global%20Labour%20Resilience%20Index.pdf](https://www.whiteshieldpartners.com/files/2021/glri/WhiteshieldPartners_GLRI_Global%20Labour%20Resilience%20Index.pdf)
- Woo, J.-H. (2009). *After 10 years of social dialogue in Korea*. Economic and Social Development Commission.

# APPENDIX 1: THE SURVEY

## **APEC Social dialogue survey**

For the purposes of this survey and the study we are undertaking, social dialogue is defined as:

All types of negotiation, consultation or information sharing among representatives of governments, employers and workers, civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on issues of mutual interest.

It usually deals with labour, social or economic policy issues, and increasingly incorporates other themes, such as environmental issues.

Historically, the use of social dialogue to develop, improve and implement labour market policy increases in times of economic shocks. As APEC economies seek to recover from the social and economic impacts of COVID-19, social dialogue mechanisms can play a role in promoting consensus and cohesion, building longer term labour market recovery and in tackling broader labour market challenges.

New Zealand, in association with co-sponsoring economies Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Chinese Taipei, has developed this survey to collect information on APEC economies' experiences with social dialogue.

The survey responses will feed into a report on current approaches APEC economies are using, highlighting those that are effective in specific situations, and identify key considerations in maintaining social dialogue processes. The development of case studies from survey responses will support discussion at an online event New Zealand is hosting to understand the challenges to APEC economies of labour market recovery in a post COVID-19 pandemic environment.

We are happy to receive more than one submission from each economy. Please answer all questions (type in "not applicable" if the question is not relevant to your economy). Your responses are very important to us.

Please send completed surveys to MBIE via email to MBIE APEC 2021 (APEC21@mbie.govt.nz) and the Project Overseer Jessica Russell (Jessica.Russell@mbie.govt.nz) by Friday 13 August (your time zone). Any questions or clarifications may be sent to the same emails.

## Social dialogue in APEC economies

<b>Your organisation:</b>	Please type in here
<b>Your economy:</b>	Please type in here

### Section A: Social dialogue

<p>Social dialogue is:</p> <p>all types of negotiation, consultation or information sharing among representatives of governments, employers and workers, civil society, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on issues of mutual interest.</p> <p>Does your economy use social dialogue?</p> <p><i>Use your pointer to tick the boxes</i></p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No. Skip to question 19

<p>Why does your economy use social dialogue for <b>labour market issues</b>?</p> <p>Or why has your economy used social dialogue for <b>labour market issues</b> in the past?</p> <p><b>Labour market issues</b> are those that involve the supply and demand of labour and skills. It includes, for example, industrial relations, employment standards, immigration, unemployment support, minimum wages, labour market planning, active labour market policies etc.</p> <p><i>Use your pointer to tick the boxes. Indicate all those that apply</i></p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	To consult, impart and exchange information
<input type="checkbox"/>	To inform policy development – what’s the policy problem and problem solving
<input type="checkbox"/>	To coordinate a response to a specific issue across society
<input type="checkbox"/>	Build trust and consensus
<input type="checkbox"/>	To develop policy with the community it affects
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reduce social conflicts by facilitating partnership and a problem-solving attitude
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ease social tensions during economic hardship and transition periods
<input type="checkbox"/>	To ensure that solutions are sustainable and able to be implemented
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please type in box below)
	Please type in here

To what extent does your economy use the following types of social dialogue for **labour market issues**?

*Use your pointer to tick the boxes. Select one per row.*

	Never use	Almost never	Occasionally / sometimes	Frequently use	Almost every time
<b>Exchange of information</b> (e.g., information sharing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Consultation</b> (e.g., exchange of views)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Negotiation</b> (e.g., collective bargaining)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Joint decision-making</b> (e.g., co-design)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

At what levels of your economy are different types of social dialogue applied to?

*Use your pointer to tick the boxes, please select all those that apply*

	Not applicable (as do not use)	Economy wide	Regional	By sector or industry	Workplace or organisation level
<b>Exchange of information</b> (e.g., information sharing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Consultation</b> (e.g., exchange of views)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Negotiation</b> (e.g., collective bargaining)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Joint decision-making</b> (e.g., co-design)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What types of mechanisms are used, or institutional forms, do your social dialogue processes take?  
 How are they resourced?  
*Use your pointer to tick the boxes, and provide more detail in the boxes*

	Yes	Examples	Is it formal, informal or embedded in law?	How is it resourced or funded?
Standing Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please type in here	Please type in here	Please type in here
Standing institutional body	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Regular consultative body	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Advisory / working groups	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Ad-hoc	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Other (please type in box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Please type in here				

What measures are in place in your economy to support the ability of **social partners** to engage in social dialogue?  
  
**Social partners** include worker organisations, unions, employer organisations, associations, NGOs, civil society, etc.  
  
 Please provide further detail on these measures below.

Measures (e.g., support by officials, funding of activities)	Please type in here
---	---------------------

What measures are in place in your economy to support the ability of **social partners** to engage in social dialogue?

**Social partners** include worker organisations, unions, employer organisations, associations, NGOs, civil society, etc.

Please provide further detail on these measures below.

Why the measures were undertaken	
Who was involved	
How the measures are funded/ resourced	
What outcomes were sought	

What labour market policy areas does your economy use social dialogue for?					
	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	A moderate amount	A great deal
<b>Employment: Create greater opportunities to secure decent employment and income</b> Employment promotion, skills development, sustainable enterprises, public employment services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Social protection: Enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection</b> Social security; working conditions; occupational safety and health; labour migration; HIV/AIDS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Future of work and just transitions</b> How to respond to the megatrends driving the future of work, including technological advancement, demographic change, climate change, globalisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What labour market policy areas does your economy use social dialogue for?					
	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	A moderate amount	A great deal
<p><b>Labour protection:</b> Promote labour rights, working conditions, decent work, transitioning from informal to more formal forms of employment</p> <p>Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, forced labour, child labour, discrimination at work, international labour standards, mainstreaming decent work, informal economy</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Social dialogue as an outcome:</b> Strengthen tripartism and social dialogue</p> <p>Strengthening employers' organisations, workers' organisations, labour administration and labour law, social dialogue and industrial relations, capacity and ability to respond to social and labour market issues</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Response to economic shocks or economic/social events</b></p> <p>As a response to global or domestic pandemics, global financial crisis, natural hazards</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please describe in here					

To what extent has your economy experienced these benefits, in relation to social dialogue?						
	Not applicable	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	A moderate amount	A great deal
Better consultation and information exchange	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More informed policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better coordinated response to a specific issue across society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More trust and consensus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

To what extent has your economy experienced these benefits, in relation to social dialogue?						
	Not applicable	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	A moderate amount	A great deal
More community involvement in policy development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduction in social conflicts by facilitating partnership and a problem-solving attitude	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduction in social tensions during economic hardship and transition periods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More sustainable solutions that are able to be implemented	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please describe any other benefits your economy has experienced in using social dialogue for labour market issues

Please type in here

In your experience, what factors contribute to social dialogue being successful in your economy?  
What are the critical success factors?

Please type in here

In your experience, what factors or conditions have constrained the use of social dialogue or contributed to social dialogue not working as well as it could?

(Examples include capability of, or relationships between the parties, nature of the issues involved, outcomes sought, timeframes, historical context, etc)

Please type in here



How are indigenous perspectives, gender, age and other demographic characteristics incorporated into social dialogue processes in your economy?

Please describe 2 examples of how, and in what context, this has occurred.

Please type “not applicable” if you do not currently incorporate these perspectives into social dialogue processes in your economy.

Example 1

Please describe Example 1 here

Example 2

Please describe Example 2 here

Please describe an example of a successful social dialogue process that has been undertaken in your economy in the last 15 years (including the GFC period). Examples can also include current processes.

Please attach any evaluation reports related to your examples.

The issue involved	Please describe your example here
Why social dialogue was used	
The purpose/type of the social dialogue	
Who was involved?	
How was the social dialogue undertaken? (formal/informal, through existing channels or ad-hoc)	
At what level? (economy-wide, regional, sub-regional, sectoral)	
Outcomes sought and achieved	
How successful was social dialogue in achieving the objectives?	

Please describe an example of a successful social dialogue process that has been undertaken in your economy in the last 15 years (including the GFC period). Examples can also include current processes.

Please attach any evaluation reports related to your examples.

What key factors contributed to the success of the social dialogue?	
Other comments	

### Section B: Responding to economic shocks and the COVID-19 context

If relevant, what has your economy learned from social dialogue practices used during the GFC or other economic shocks (such as SARS, regional economic crises, natural hazards, etc)? What impact has this had on social dialogue processes used now?

Please type in here

To what extent have social dialogue processes been a priority in your economy in a COVID-19 policy environment?

Not a priority	Low priority	Medium priority	High priority	Essential
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What form has social dialogue taken during the pandemic?

	January 2020 – June 2020	July 2020 – December 2020	January 2021 –
Bilateral interactions only between government and employers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bilateral interactions only between government and workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bilateral interactions between government and employers and government and workers, separately	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tripartite interactions only: Interaction of government, employers and workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(through their representatives) as equal and independent partners			
Bipartite and tripartite together	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In what ways have social dialogue practices changed due to COVID-19, or other economic shocks?  
What are the challenges/barriers?  
What new approaches or techniques have been used?

Please type in here

Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:						
	Not applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
We had positive experiences of social partnership prior to COVID-19	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our social dialogue processes are well advanced	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We had established, formal social dialogue structures prior to the COVID-19 pandemic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have strong, capable and representative employers' and workers' organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is a high level of trust between social partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social dialogue processes were used at the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have achieved good outcomes using social dialogue during the pandemic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our economy has fared well since the initial onset of the COVID-19 pandemic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our financial system has shown resilience since the	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

	Not applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
initial onset of the COVID-19 pandemic						
Our labour market has been performing well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our communities have been resilient in the face of COVID-19	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have been able to respond to COVID-19 related labour market issues, as well as the future of work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social partners have been involved in the design and implementation of measures in response to the pandemic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have applied what we learnt through using social dialogue in the GFC or previous economic shocks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Section C: Concluding comments

Please provide any other comments you wish to make about whether and how useful you have found social dialogue processes and mechanisms in helping to cope with social or economic issues, including sudden shocks such as COVID-19.

For economies that do not use social dialogue, please comment on why social dialogue has not been used and your economy's perspective on what the critical success factors for social dialogue are.

Please type in here

## APPENDIX 2: DATA SOURCES

The data used for each APEC economy was the latest year available via OECD and ILO databases. The trade union density rate and collective bargaining coverage tends to be fairly consistent over time. The following sets out the year used for each economy, for each indicator.

Trade union density		Collective bargaining coverage		Days not worked due to strikes and lockouts		Days not worked per 1000 workers due to strikes and lockouts	
Australia	2018	Australia	2016	Australia	2019	Australia	2016
Canada	2020	Canada	2016	Canada	2019	Canada	2019
Chile	2018	Chile	2016	Chile	2020	Chile	2020
China	2015	China	2013	Hong Kong, China	2016	Hong Kong, China	2018
Hong Kong, China	2016	Japan	2016	Japan	2018	Korea	2020
Indonesia	2012	Korea	2015	Korea	2020	Malaysia	2017
Japan	2019	Malaysia	2016	Malaysia	2017	Mexico	2018
Korea, Republic of	2018	Mexico	2016	Mexico	2019	New Zealand	2010
Malaysia	2016	New Zealand	2016	New Zealand	2019	Philippines	2018
Mexico	2020	Peru	2016	Peru	2018	Russian Federation	2020
New Zealand	2018	Philippines	2016	Philippines	2020	Singapore	2020
Peru	2016	Russian Federation	2013	Russian Federation	2020	Thailand	2020
Philippines	2014	Singapore	2012	Singapore	2020	United States	2019
Russian Federation	2015	Thailand	2016	Thailand	2020		
Singapore	2015	United States	2016	United States	2019		

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

This report has been prepared for the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation by Jane Godfrey and EeMun Chen from MartinJenkins (Martin, Jenkins & Associates Limited).

MartinJenkins advises clients in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. Our work in the public sector spans a wide range of central and local government agencies. We provide advice and support to clients in the following areas:

- public policy
- evaluation and research
- strategy and investment
- performance improvement and monitoring
- business improvement
- organisational improvement
- employment relations
- economic development
- data analytics
- financial and economic analysis.

Our aim is to provide an integrated and comprehensive response to client needs – connecting our skill sets and applying fresh thinking to lift performance.

MartinJenkins is a privately owned New Zealand limited liability company. We have offices in Wellington and Auckland. The company was established in 1993 and is governed by a Board made up of executive directors Kevin Jenkins, Michael Mills, Nick Davis, Allana Coulon, Richard Tait and Sarah Baddeley, plus independent director Sophia Gunn and chair David Prentice.