

SOM Steering Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation Terms of Reference

Introduction

In 1996, Ministers adopted the Framework for Strengthening Economic Cooperation and Development to further strengthen economic and technical cooperation (ECOTECH) in APEC. To effectively implement this ECOTECH agenda, the SOM Sub-Committee for Economic and Technical Cooperation (ESC) was established in 1998. The ESC was later elevated to the SOM Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation in 2002. As part of the reform process, with effect from 2006, the ESC was transformed into the SOM Steering Committee on ECOTECH (SCE) with an enhanced mandate to strengthen the prioritisation and effective implementation of ECOTECH activities by various APEC fora. In 2009, SOM agreed to further strengthen the SCE's policy guidance role as recommended by the SCE internal review. In 2010, a new Framework to Guide ECOTECH activities was endorsed to guide APEC-funded capacity building efforts and all ECOTECH activities.

In 2020, APEC Leaders endorsed the APEC Putrajaya Vision (APV2040) of “an open, dynamic, resilient and peaceful Asia-Pacific community by 2040, for the prosperity of all our people and future generations.” The document sets out three economic drivers of “Trade and Investment,” “Innovation and Digitalisation” and “Strong, Balanced, Secure, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth,” which provide guidance to strengthen ECOTECH across APEC. In 2021, APEC Leaders endorsed the Aotearoa Plan of Action (APA), which outlines objectives under the three economic drivers and identifies as well as tasks comprehensive collective actions to implement the APV2040.

The SCE plays a lead role in supporting the achievement of APEC's vision including through the APA and provides direction to SCE sub-fora on implementation matters. In 2022, SCE reviewed the ECOTECH Medium-Term Priorities to align with the APV2040 and identified ECOTECH-related Collective Actions outlined in the APA as the new ECOTECH Medium-Term Priorities. These collective actions are central to advancing APEC's ECOTECH agenda and APEC Leaders' ECOTECH-related priorities.

Objectives

- To support the achievement of APV2040 and APA objectives across the SCE and its sub-fora including through making provisions for their implementation in SCE and SCE sub-fora governance documents.
- To strengthen implementation of APEC's ECOTECH activities by prioritising in accordance with Leaders' and Ministers' commitments, coordinating and providing oversight of the work of APEC sub-fora.
- To provide policy guidance on ways to contribute to APEC's ECOTECH goals.
- To coordinate and implement ECOTECH objectives and priorities set by APEC's Economic Leaders and Ministers.
- To implement ECOTECH-related cooperation related to the APV2040 and APA, as well as advance and coordinate ECOTECH-related projects and initiatives.

Membership

- All Senior Officials (or designated representatives with decision-making authority) of APEC economies.

Internal organisation arrangements

- The operation and effectiveness of the SCE will be reviewed periodically, no less than every four years.
- SCE will report directly to the SOM.
- Chair to be the Senior Official of the incoming host economy and Vice-chair to be designated by the host economy.
- SCE will be assisted by the APEC Secretariat.

Meeting arrangements

- SCE will meet in the margins of each SOM.
- SCE will convene a Committee of the Whole (SCE-COW) meeting at SOM 1.
- Chairs/Lead Shepherds of all SCE sub-fora will be invited to participate at SCE-COW.
- Chairs of CTI, EC, BMC, ABAC, and SFOM will be invited to attend SCE-COW.
- Policy elements of the SCE agenda will be discussed in the SCE-COW meeting and at regular SCE meetings, as desired; routine and technical matters will be discussed at regular SCE meetings which will be scheduled back-to-back with SOMs.

Quorum

- Quorum for SCE meetings, including the SCE-COW, constitutes attendees from 14 economies. Should the SCE fail to meet quorum for two consecutive meetings, it shall be referred to Senior Officials for a decision on whether it should continue to exist.

Work mandate

SCE will implement the APV2040 including reflecting such implementation in Terms of Reference, Strategic Plans and Annual Work Plans, as well as advance APV2040 related projects and initiatives.

The SCE will advance action-oriented and integrated strategies in accordance with Leaders' and Ministers' commitments, the 1996 APEC Framework for Strengthening Economic Cooperation and Development, and the APEC Framework to guide ECOTECH activities. It will:

- Provide policy recommendations on APEC ECOTECH-related issues to SOM.
- Periodically review the 1996 Framework for Strengthening Economic Cooperation and Development and the APEC-wide ECOTECH priorities identified in the APEC Framework to guide ECOTECH activities and make recommendations to SOM.
- Develop APEC-wide medium-term ECOTECH priorities and an annual work plan to best implement APEC's ECOTECH activities.
- Advance projects and initiatives on ECOTECH-related issues of APV2040 and APA, as well as coordinate and supervise SCE sub-fora activities on these issues and projects.
- Coordinate and supervise ECOTECH-related Working Groups and Policy Partnerships and provide policy guidance to these groups on the ECOTECH agenda.

- Assess and direct realignment of individual work plans of Working Groups and Policy Partnerships with the APEC-wide medium-term ECOTECH priorities and annual objectives as outlined in the ECOTECH framework; to this purpose, all Working Groups and Policy Partnerships should submit their strategic and annual work plans to the SCE no later than three weeks prior to SOM I for consideration at the SCE-COW.
- Continue to review and update its mandate to align and support priorities, direction, and vision from SOM, Ministers, and Leaders.
- Determine eligibility and score concept notes applying for the funds of the APEC Support Fund (ASF) sub-funds in respect of: Connectivity; Cooperation on Combating COVID-19 and Economic Recovery; Economic Development in Remote Areas; Human Security; and Innovative Development, Economic Reform and Growth, together with any additional sub-funds which Senior Officials may from time to time assign to the responsibility of the SCE.
- Evaluate the progress of Working Groups and Policy Partnerships in implementing and achieving APEC's ECOTECH priorities.
- Oversee the assessment of SCE Working Groups and Policy Partnerships pursuant to a standardised assessment programme.
- Review the role and operation of Working Groups and Policy Partnerships, including through recommendations derived from the standardised assessment programme, with a view to making recommendations to the SOM on establishing, merging, disbanding, or reorienting these bodies or other appropriate actions.
- Review the ECOTECH Medium-Term Priorities every 5 years.
- Encourage active participation of relevant stakeholders in the capacity-building activities of economic and technical cooperation in accordance with the APEC rules, guidelines, and practices.