



香港特別行政區政府

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Trade and Industry Department

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

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BY POST AND EMAIL

3 January 2022

The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Ma Liu Shui, New Territories,
Hong Kong

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Invitation for Proposals for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
Study Centre in Hong Kong, China**

The Trade and Industry Department (TID) is inviting University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions to put forward proposals to host the APEC Study Centre (ASC) in Hong Kong, China for a term of five years, tentatively from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2027. Details are set out in the attached document.

Institutions interested in hosting the ASC may submit their proposals to TID **by 4 February 2022 (Friday)**. Any proposals received after this date will not be accepted.

Address: Room 1817, 18/F,
Regional Cooperation Division,
Trade and Industry Tower,
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Kowloon City,
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The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

For enquiries, please contact the undersigned at 2398 5446 or Miss Sharon Wong at 2398 5452.

Yours sincerely,

(Ms Kathy Chan)
for Director-General of Trade and Industry

Encl.

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Study Centre in Hong Kong, China

Invitation for Proposals

Objective

The Trade and Industry Department (TID) is inviting University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions¹ to put forward proposals to host the APEC Study Centre (ASC) in Hong Kong, China (HKC) for a term of five years, tentatively from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2027.

2. The objectives of the HKC ASC are –
 - (a) To promote cooperation in higher education and advanced research as well as facilitate cultural and intellectual exchanges in the Asia-Pacific region;
 - (b) To assist the APEC process by undertaking advanced, collaborative and interdisciplinary policy research pertaining to APEC's ongoing agendas from an independent and longer-term perspective;
 - (c) To encourage student, faculty and research exchanges among APEC member economies and promote training and other education programmes that address regional needs;
 - (d) To encourage informal participation of other sectors of society, especially youth, private sector and non-government organisations in dialogues and studies relating to APEC cooperation;
 - (e) To provide policy analysis and research support for HKC's participation in the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC);

¹ The eight UGC-funded institutions include City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, Lingnan University, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, The Education University of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and The University of Hong Kong.

- (f) To represent HKC in the annual ASC Consortium Conference² (to be organised by APEC host economy); and
- (g) To enhance HKC's profile in APEC and ABAC.

Scope and deliverables

3. With reference to the objectives in paragraph 2 above, the host of the HKC ASC will –

- (a) Operate the HKC ASC during the five-year term;
- (b) Carry out activities and produce deliverables as set out in the proposal submitted to and endorsed by TID. The format of such activities may include but not limited to policy research and analysis, study, seminar, meeting, conference, workshop, visit, capacity building programme etc.; and
- (c) Enhance HKC's participation in ABAC by providing policy analysis and research support for HKC's Representatives, with a view to formulating proposals and advices to APEC Leaders on business sector priorities. The host should recruit and supervise up to five undergraduate or postgraduate students as interns, on either full-time or part-time basis, throughout the five-year term to provide the abovementioned support.

Eligibility

4. Academics from any of the eight UGC-funded institution who are interested in hosting the ASC may submit proposals to TID in the name of their respective faculties, departments or research centres. In case academics from more than one faculty, department or research centre of the same institution wish to collaborate in hosting the ASC, they should name the relevant faculties, departments or research centres in the proposal.

² Themed "Post COVID-19 and Future Directions of APEC", the next annual ASC Consortium Conference is scheduled to be held on 14-15 July 2022 in Phuket, Thailand, and tentatively in hybrid mode. For details, please refer to <https://asccc2022.org>.

More than one proposal may be submitted from each UGC-funded institution. In case academics from more than one institution wish to collaborate in hosting the ASC, they should appoint among themselves a lead institution for the proposal. The faculty(ies) / department(s) / research centre(s) of the lead institution submitting the selected proposal will host the ASC in the name of its UGC-funded institution.

Funding arrangement

5. TID will provide a maximum grant of HK\$2.5 million over five years for the ASC host on a **one-to-one matching basis**, with no annual funding cap. The funding will be provided to the hosting institution on a reimbursement basis. The hosting institution should submit a half-yearly financial report (supported by properly validated receipts and evidence of payment where applicable) in April and October every year to facilitate TID's consideration of reimbursement of expenditure.

6. Apart from the funding from TID, the host institution is encouraged to make use of funding sources from other Government and Government-funded agencies, including but not limited to the UGC, in supporting their initiatives and activities for operating the ASC.

Requirements of the proposal

7. The proposal should consist of two parts, namely, a five-year plan and a five-year budget of expenditure.

8. The five-year plan should include the following –

- (a) The proposed theme(s) of the ASC;
- (b) A detailed description of the proposed activities and deliverables;
- (c) How the proposed theme(s) and activities relate to the objectives of the ASC as set out in paragraph 2 above;
- (d) How the proposed theme(s) and activities help enhance HKC's

profile in APEC and ABAC (e.g. publicity plan, information sharing with APEC/ABAC and other organisations);

- (e) A timeline for the proposed activities and deliverables during the five-year hosting period;
- (f) Information, qualification and experience of the key academics involved in the operation of the ASC;
- (g) Manpower plan for the operation of the ASC, including recruitment of undergraduate or postgraduate students as interns; and
- (h) Proposed collaborations, if any, with other institution(s)/ organisation(s) during the hosting period.

9. The five-year budget of expenditure should include the following –

- (a) Proposed annual expenditure broken down into various expenditure items over the five-year hosting period; and
- (b) Estimated cash-flow requirement from the Government in each of the five-year hosting period.

Selection criteria

10. Proposals will be assessed by TID in the following aspects –

- (a) Relevance to and effectiveness in achieving the objectives of the ASC;
- (b) Diversity and content of the proposed activities and its effectiveness in addressing APEC's and ABAC's agenda;
- (c) Extent to which deliverables will help address HKC's priorities and enhance HKC's profile in APEC and ABAC;

- (d) Manpower plan of the institution for implementing the five-year plan; and
- (e) Effective use of budgeted funds.

TID may or may not invite interested institutions to an interview to discuss their proposals, and has full discretion to select the hosting institution having regard to these selection criteria.

11. In relation to paragraphs 10(b) and (c) above, the recent major APEC themes and HKC's priorities are set out at **Annex** for reference. Interested academics are also highly recommended to refer to the websites of APEC and ABAC for more up-to-date developments on the two fora from other APEC member economies –

- APEC: <http://www.apec.org>
- ABAC: <https://www2.abaonline.org>

Operation of HKC ASC

12. The appointed host of the ASC should conduct activities and produce deliverables in accordance with its proposal as endorsed by TID. Any alteration of the proposal should be discussed with and agreed by TID. TID reserves the right to accept all or any part of any proposal at any time.

13. The ASC is required to prepare and provide the TID with a half-yearly progress report each in April and October every year, summarising the activities conducted during the reporting period, together with a statement of expenditure.

14. TID will keep close contact with the ASC on its operation.

Right to use deliverables of HKC ASC

15. The Government has the right to use the deliverables of the ASC for publicity, education, training and information sharing purposes.

Submission of proposals

16. Institutions interested in hosting the ASC may submit their proposals to TID **by 4 February 2022 (Friday)**. Any proposals received after this date will not be accepted.

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Trade and Industry Department,
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Enquiry

17. For further information, please contact –

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APEC Themes and Priorities**(I) APEC recent themes and priorities (2019-2022)**

Year (APEC Host)	Theme	Priorities
2019 (Chile)	Connecting People, Building the Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Digital Society• Integration 4.0• Women, SMEs and Inclusive Growth• Sustainable Growth
2020 (Malaysia)	Optimising Human Potential Towards a Future of Shared Prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improving the Narrative of Trade and Investment• Inclusive Economic Participation through Digital Economy and Technology• Driving Innovative Sustainability
2021 (New Zealand)	Join, Work, Grow. Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economic and Trade Policies that Strengthen Economic Recovery• Increasing Inclusion and Sustainability for Recovery• Pursuing Innovation and a Digitally-Enabled Recovery
2022 (Thailand)	Open. Connect. Balance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open trade and investment to all opportunities;• Restoring connectivity in all dimensions; and• Promoting balance, sustainability and inclusivity in all aspects.

(II) Hong Kong China (HKC)'s priorities

APEC

- Thailand is the APEC Host for 2022³. Building on the priorities during the previous host years, Thailand will strive to drive APEC towards a sustainable and balanced post-pandemic recovery through the overarching concept of Bio-Circular-Green Economy. HKC supports Thailand's priority of "Open Trade and Investment to all Opportunities", which underscores the importance of facilitating open trade and investment, advancing regional economic integration, as well as supporting a rules-based Multilateral Trading System (MTS) with World Trade Organisation (WTO) at its core in revitalising economic recovery. We also welcome Thailand's initiative for a refreshed conversation on the realisation of Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP), including a proposed policy dialogue, surveys and stocktaking exercise to gauge member economies' expectations towards regional economic integration in post-COVID era.

- HKC's major priorities in APEC in recent years are as follows –
 - ***Putrajaya Vision 2040***: Upon the expiry of the Bogor Goals, APEC Leaders launched the "APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040" at the 2020 APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting. The Putrajaya Vision envisions an open, dynamic, resilient and peaceful Asia-Pacific community by 2040, for the prosperity of all our people and future generations. HKC is committed to working closely with member economies and achieving the Vision through implementation of the "***Aotearoa Plan of Action***"⁴ under three economic drivers, viz. (i) trade and investment; (ii) innovation and digitalisation; and (iii)

³ Thailand aims to host a fully physical APEC 2022, acknowledging the remaining threats of COVID-19 but ensuring member economies that vigorous consideration to public health measures will be taken to ensure the safety and security of all meeting participants, as well as local staff and communities.

⁴ At the 2021 AELM, Leaders endorsed the Aotearoa Plan of Action to chart APEC's work for the next 20 years towards implementing the Putrajaya Vision. The Aotearoa Plan of Action consists of an introductory section; objectives with individual and collective actions; provisions for APEC's continuous improvement; and a review and renewal mechanism. The Plan adopts each sentence under the three economic drivers of the Putrajaya Vision as a corresponding objective, and sets out individual actions and collective actions for achieving each objective. For more details, please refer to <https://www.apec.org/press/features/2021/introducing-the-aotearoa-plan-of-action-apec-s-playbook-for-the-next-two-decades>.

strong, balanced, secure, sustainable and inclusive growth.

- ***Support for the MTS:*** HKC is fully committed to support an effective rules-based MTS with the WTO at its core. HKC will continue to work closely with APEC member economies to rebuild confidence in the MTS through supporting expedited progress in the ongoing WTO negotiations and its necessary reform.
- ***FTAAP:*** Advancing further economic integration in the region through the FTAAP is one of the key priorities of HKC. HKC has been leading research and capacity building initiatives contributing to the early realisation of FTAAP, and supports pursuing trade and investment agreements on bilateral and plurilateral fronts as building blocks of FTAAP.
- ***Services:*** The services sector is the heart of HKC's economy. HKC strives to ensure an open and predictable environment for accessing services markets in the region, and actively supports the APEC-wide actions to improve the competitiveness of services sector.
- ***Supply chain connectivity:*** HKC strives to ensure the resilience of supply chain. We closely collaborate with APEC member economies to tackle chokepoints in supply chains and enhance supply chain connectivity in the region.
- ***Digital economy:*** Digital economy has been a major focus of work in APEC over the last decade and will continue to be a priority in the foreseeable future. APEC's work on this front is guided primarily by the APEC Internet and Digital Economy Roadmap. Noting the vital role that digital technologies can play in ensuring business continuity and fostering economic recovery amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, HKC will continue to participate actively in the discussion on digital economy-related issues in APEC, with a view to contributing to the long-term economic recovery of the Asia-Pacific region.

- ***Connectivity***: Connectivity has been a core agenda for APEC in advancing regional economic integration. In 2014, APEC Leaders endorsed the APEC Connectivity Blueprint for 2015-2025, with an overarching goal of strengthening physical, institutional and people-to-people connectivity by taking agreed actions and meeting agreed targets by 2025. With the growing importance of digital economy, discussions on strengthening digital connectivity has become increasingly important in APEC in recent years. As an international financial, transportation and trade centre, HKC will continue to participate actively in connectivity-related initiatives in APEC.
- ***Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)***: MSMEs have been the engines of promoting growth and innovation in the APEC region. As an economy underpinned by MSMEs, HKC is supportive of APEC's activities and initiatives to strengthen MSMEs' competitiveness, and has been sharing experiences in the APEC Small and Medium Enterprises Working Group.
- ***Strengthening Economic and Legal Infrastructure (SELI)***: HKC has participated actively in the APEC Economic Committee (EC) by sharing our experience with member economies to strengthen their economic and legal infrastructure in the region. In particular, HKC has been spearheading the development of an online dispute resolution (ODR) platform under the EC to resolve low-value dispute across borders, which will support participation of MSMEs in international trade by providing speedy and cost-effective dispute resolution through the use of digital technology. In this regard, HKC has been organising workshops and policy discussions to develop the APEC ODR Collaborative Framework and its Model Procedural Rules. As an important step to take forward the implementation of the Collaborative Framework, the EC launched an APEC satellite website on ODR at <https://www.apec.org/SELI> in September 2021.
- ***Climate Change and Sustainable Growth***: As an active participant in global efforts to combat climate change, HKC has contributed to the work of the APEC Energy Working Group by hosting various meetings and workshops for member economies

to deepen cooperation on energy issues. HKC will continue its active participation in APEC's energy agenda and work with member economies to address the opportunities and challenges brought about by climate change for the sustainable growth of the Asia-Pacific region.

ABAC

- ABAC was established by APEC Economic Leaders in 1996 as a body of representatives from the private sector to advise APEC on the liberalisation and facilitation of trade and investment and on other business sector priorities such as finance, women empowerment, innovation and digitalisation, sustainable growth, financing for micro, small and medium enterprises, etc. ABAC formulates its position and recommendations to APEC's work through four quarterly meetings each year, and formally tenders its advice to APEC through a series of letters and reports, including the annual ABAC Report to APEC Economic Leaders, and recommendations to APEC Sectoral Ministers.
- HKC's Representatives to ABAC are appointed by the Chief Executive. The incumbent Full Representatives and Alternate Representatives are as follows –

Full Representatives

- Ms Marjorie Yang, Chairman of Esquel Group;
- Mr Nicholas Ho, Chairman of hpa (Ho & Partners Architects Engineers and Development Consultants Limited); and
- Ms Mary Huen, Chief Executive Officer, Hong Kong; Cluster Chief Executive Officer, Hong Kong, Taiwan & Macau, of Standard Chartered Bank (Hong Kong) Limited.

Alternate Representatives

- Mr Spencer Fung, Group Executive Chairman of Li & Fung; and
 - Ms Nisa Leung, Managing Partner of Qiming Venture Partners.
- HKC has been participating actively in the work of ABAC. In recent years, ABAC HKC Representatives took up leading roles in relevant ABAC Working Groups and Task Forces. For instance, HKC was the Convenor of the Task Force on WTO under the Regional Economic

Integration Working Group in 2021; Co-Chair of the Sustainable Development Working Group in 2019; Co-Chair of the Regional Economic Integration Working Group in 2017 to 2018; and Co-Chair of the Connectivity Working Group from 2015 to 2017.

- The theme for ABAC 2022 is “*Embrace, Engage and Enable*”, representing embracement of opportunities and reconnections to the world; collaborating new ideas, creativities, and possibilities; and enabling a digitalised, sustainable and inclusive new transformational model. Under ABAC Thailand’s leadership, there will be five ABAC Working Groups (WGs) driving initiatives on regional economic integration (REI), digital, MSMEs and inclusiveness, sustainability as well as finance and economics. Mr Nicholas Ho will serve as one of the Co-Chairs of the REIWG, taking lead on the priority of reopening borders for safe and seamless travel.
- TID co-ordinates HKC’s participation and provides secretarial support for ABAC HKC Representatives. With a view to enhancing HKC’s profile and participation in ABAC, we see merits for enhanced synergy between ASC and ABAC; and would like to engage the future ASC host to provide policy analysis and research support for ABAC HKC Representatives.

Trade and Industry Department
January 2022