



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

2019/SOM3/HWG/008
Agenda Item: D1_5.3d

Concept Note Operating Protocols

Purpose: Consideration
Submitted by: United States



**Second Health Working Group Meeting
Puerto Varas, Chile
19-20 August 2019**

CONCEPT NOTE OPERATING PROTOCOLS

Sub-Working Group Member Economies

- Australia;
- Canada;
- People's Republic of China;
- The Russian Federation;
- Singapore;
- Chinese Taipei; and,
- United States of America (Lead Economy).

Background

In October 2017, the 12th Edition of the Guidebook on APEC Projects was released by the APEC Secretariat. The Guidebook describes a new process for determining funding of APEC projects, in alignment with a decision by APEC Senior Officials in August 2017. In particular, the Guidebook outlines new roles and responsibilities for the responsible APEC fora (RAF) of proposed projects.

Under the new process implemented in October 2017, scoring will no longer be undertaken by the proposing forum; instead eligibility assessment and scoring will be undertaken by the APEC forum responsible (the 'RAF') for the funding source nominated by the Project Officer (PO) in the concept note. These changes aim to ensure that concept notes are more strategic and targeted.

All 21 economies have representatives on each of the RAF. HWG members are encouraged to reach out internally to their RAF counterparts to ensure their technical expertise and advice is considered during the RAF assessment and scoring.

As a result of these changes in 2018-2019, HWG member economies decided to re-examine how it reviews and endorses its concept notes. During the second HWG meeting of 2018, the sub-working group presented a new protocol on how the HWG vets and endorses concept notes. This new protocol for HWG concept notes has been developed, including three steps:

- Agreement to increase the threshold of any HWG concept note requesting funding to at least **three** co-sponsors prior to the end of the HWG review process;
- Clear articulation of an internal vetting process (further described below); and,
- Provision to review the concept notes electronically (also further described below).

The formalization of this process will be reviewed after the second HWG meeting of 2020, and as required as the HWG adapts to the new protocols.

CONCEPT NOTE OPERATING PROTOCOLS

Background

APEC projects help to build the capacity of member economies to create a dynamic and harmonious Asia-Pacific - they build capacity to turn policy goals into concrete results.

The APEC HWG recognizes the importance of building a culture of collaboration amongst APEC fora to effectively address issues at the nexus of health and the economy and encourages member economies to develop multi-disciplinary approaches to addressing these issues by collaborating across APEC fora.

In 2017, the process for determining the funding of APEC projects underwent changes that have a direct impact on all economies. In alignment with decisions made by APEC Senior Officials, project concept notes are now scored at a single level, by the APEC forum responsible (the 'RAF') for the funding source nominated by the PO in the concept note, replacing the two-tiered scoring process that incorporated scoring from the proposing APEC forum. For the HWG this means that concept notes will no longer be scored in session and as a result of this change, the HWG has re-examined how we review and endorse concept notes.

The new concept note endorsement process was developed in light of the fact that APEC projects are selected for funding through a highly competitive application process. By developing a stringent internal vetting process, the aim of the HWG is to ensure that concept notes endorsed by the HWG are strong contenders when being assessed and scored by the RAF. The HWG's new process is described below.

Internal Vetting Process

In order to receive endorsement, each concept note is reviewed by HWG member economies individually prior to the project session deadline, against the below checklist. For a concept note to advance, it must meet all the criteria included in the checklist. Therefore, if a concept note receives all 'Yes' responses it gets endorsed by the HWG and advances to the RAF. Should a concept note receive one or more 'No' responses in the checklist it will automatically result in a 'Re-Submit'. Member economies will submit completed checklists to the APEC Secretariat. The APEC Secretariat will automatically share checklists that include 'No' responses with the proposing economy (including the identity of the scoring economy) and any comments on the score sheet that might assist the submitting economy in improving the note. All submitting economies whose concept notes receive a 'Re-Submit' assessment will be provided with the completed checklist(s) that include a 'No' response (i.e.: an assessment resulting in a 'Re-Submit') automatically by the APEC Secretariat to submitting economy.

In order for the concept note to be put forward by the HWG, in addition to having a minimum of **three** co-sponsors, the concept note must **not** have received any 'Re-Submit' assessments from the reviewing economies. Should one or more economies' assessment result in a 'Re-Submit', the concept note will not advance, but can be re-submitted for the next round making another attempt to meet the criteria. Should an economy's assessment result in a 'Re-Submit', the reviewing economy will be required to provide a rationale on each criteria that the concept note did not meet.

The HWG strongly encourages member economies to engage in the review process and submit the completed checklists to the APEC Secretariat for collation. In line with APEC standard practice, if an economy does not submit a completed checklist it will be interpreted as a NIL response, meaning it will count as a 'Yes'. In addition to ensuring that quorum (14) is met, this approach also provides a strong incentive for member economies to review and submit completed checklists as, by default, all economies will have a response, even if they choose not to complete the checklist.

Endorsement Criteria Checklist - HWG economies will review concept notes based on the below criteria. Economies will decide if the notes meet or should be re-submitted to meet the individual criteria.

1. The concept note clearly addresses one or more of the [objectives](#) of the Health Working Group (HWG) and engages in at least one of the four key areas of the Healthy Asia Pacific 2020 Initiative. It should also align with the HWG Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020, and future iterations of the HWG Strategic Plan.

- Continuing to work on the unfinished health-related MDGs in a manner that complements activities of the post-2015 agenda.
- Strengthening the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, including injuries.
- Strengthening health systems to support Universal Health Coverage.
- Improving health emergency preparedness, surveillance, response and recovery systems for public health events and disasters in the APEC region.

2. The concept note supports at least one of the five key factors in the Healthy Asia Pacific 2020 Roadmap, and future iterations of this Roadmap.

- Government commitment to health;
- Platforms for policy dialogue and stakeholder engagement;
- Prevention, control and awareness;
- Innovation; and
- Inter-sectoral and cross-border collaboration.

3. The concept note demonstrates strong quality, is evidence based/informed; and does not duplicate recently completed project work in any APEC forum or replicate another concept note submitted to HWG for endorsement in the current project session.

4. The concept note is relevant and of sustained benefit to more than one economy in the region, preferably to a mix of developed and developing and/or large and small member economies.
5. The concept note has clear links to APEC's broader work in enhancing human security, trade and investment and/or economic growth.
6. The concept note complements the work of other international health bodies. It also demonstrates the added value APEC brings to global health foras.

NB: A concept note can be re-submitted a maximum of two (2) times.

NB: A concept note will automatically receive a 'Re-Submit' if it receives a 'No' on one or more of the criteria.

Provision to review the concept notes electronically

HWG member economies will review concept notes electronically. An electronic review process might take six weeks and look like this:

- A. The submitting economy submits the concept note to the APEC Secretariat six weeks prior to submission date to the Program Director.
- B. The APEC Secretariat distributes the concept note to member economies with the checklist and a request for review within 2 weeks. Co-sponsorship must be confirmed two weeks prior to the final deadline.
- C. Economies may ask for clarification (or raise concerns with the concept note) during those 2 weeks by contacting the APEC Secretariat. The Secretariat will then give the project overseers and/or the lead sponsoring economy at least five working days to respond (for example, if the request for clarification comes on the last day of those two weeks, the project overseer would still have five working days). Discussions must be concluded one week prior to the final deadline.
- D. Completed checklists are submitted to the APEC Secretariat.
- E. Checklists that indicate a 'No' response (de facto 'Re-Submit') will be shared with the proposing economy automatically by the APEC Secretariat.
- F. The APEC secretariat advises the chair or co-chairs office which concept notes will move forward based on the submitted checklists and number of co-sponsorships. The APEC secretariat then shares with the HWG which concept notes will advance.
- G. Concept Notes that did not advance have the opportunity to re-submit for the next round.

There will be no presentation of concept notes at HWG meetings, given that all concept notes will be reviewed electronically intersessionally.

SAMPLE TIMELINE:

Concept Notes (CNs) for PS1-2020 due ~ March 2020	October 2019 – November 2019 Concept Note submission time line for 2020 released	Early February 2020 APEC Secretariat calls for Concept Note submission	Early March 2020 Release of Fund Balance for Project Session 1 2020	Before 10 March, 2020 Deadline for CN Submission
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Attachments:

- A. HWG Strategic Plan
- B. Proposed score sheet
- C. Criteria and funding sources for various sub-funds relevant to HWG

B. Proposed Score Sheet

Name of economy:
Name of responsible person from the economy (<i>who fills these tables</i>):
Contact information:

Sample of Endorsement Checklist

	Clarification (by author of CN)	Assessment by economy Please, choose “yes” or “no” (if “no”, please, provide the rationale)
1. The concept note clearly addresses one or more of the objectives of the Health Working Group (HWG) and engages in at least one of the four key areas of the Healthy Asia Pacific 2020 Initiative. It should also align with the HWG Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020, and future iterations of the HWG Strategic Plan.		Yes / No <i>Comments:</i> <i>Rationale (required if ‘no’ selected):</i>
2. The concept note supports at least one of the five key factors in the Healthy Asia Pacific 2020 Roadmap, and future iterations of this Roadmap. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government commitment to health; • Platforms for policy dialogue and stakeholder engagement; • Prevention, control and awareness; • Innovation; and 	<i>(point which one)</i>	Yes / No <i>Comments:</i> <i>Rationale (required if ‘no’ selected):</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-sectoral and cross-border collaboration. 		
3. The concept note demonstrates strong quality, builds on previous projects without replication or does not duplicate other submitted concept notes; and is evidence based/informed.		<p>Yes / No</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p> <p><i>Rationale (required if 'no' selected):</i></p>
4. The concept note is relevant and of sustained benefit to more than one economy in the region, preferably to a mix of developed and developing and/or large and small member economies.		<p>Yes / No</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p> <p><i>Rationale (required if 'no' selected):</i></p>
5. The concept note has clear links to APEC's broader work in enhancing human security, trade and investment and/or economic growth.		<p>Yes / No</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p> <p><i>Rationale (required if 'no' selected):</i></p>
6. The concept note complements the work of other international health bodies. It also demonstrates the added value APEC brings to global health foras.		<p>Yes / No</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p> <p><i>Rationale (required if 'no' selected):</i></p>

<p>Final decision – Should this concept note advance? <i>(If any 'No' responses above – the concept note will automatically receive a 'Re-Submit')</i></p>
<p>Yes / Re-Submit</p>
<p>If 'Re-Submit', please provide a strong rationale as to why the concept note should be re-submitted and feedback on how the concept note could be strengthened to fully meet all criteria:</p>

C. Criteria for various sub-funds relevant to HWG

Economies are encouraged to refer to the APEC Project Funding Sources, that can be found at the following link: <https://www.apec.org/Projects/Funding-Sources>

Project Fund	Description and Eligibility Criteria for APEC Project Funds
General Project Account (GPA)	<p>GPA funding is sourced from mandatory annual APEC membership contributions. There are no restrictions on funding from the GPA. It can support all types of APEC projects. All member economies may apply for funding under GPA. Projects may be fully funded under GPA, as there are no self-funding requirements for GPA-funded projects. Nonetheless, Concept Notes must be compliant with the Guidebook on APEC Projects including the requirements on co-sponsorship and endorsement, to be eligible for funding under the GPA.</p> <p>The GPA funding priorities change each year. They are determined by combining the priority host-year themes of the incoming and outgoing APEC Host. The final list of priorities are endorsed by Senior Officials at the Informal Senior Officials Meeting (ISOM). The GPA funding priorities for 2018 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting Sustainable, Innovative and Inclusive Growth • Improving Connectivity, Deepening Regional Economic Integration • Strengthening MSMEs' Competitiveness and Innovation in the Digital Age • Enhancing Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture in Response to Climate Change • Strengthening Inclusive Growth Through Structural Reform <p><i>Responsible APEC forum: Senior Officials Meeting (SOM)</i></p>

<p>APEC Support Fund (ASF) General Fund</p>	<p><i>Please note: The ASF General Fund is subject to a cap of US\$150,000 (not inclusive of any self-funding/co-funding portion of the project) with effect from 1 January 2015.</i></p> <p>The ASF General Fund was established in May 2005.</p> <p>To be eligible for this fund, your Concept Note must demonstrate that your project supports capacity building needs for APEC developing economies.</p> <p>Capacity building in APEC refers to a process to enable member economies - particularly developing economies - to obtain, share, strengthen, maintain and develop knowledge, abilities, skills and technical know-how to improve their policies and regulations or their institutional structures or processes. In APEC, capacity building can be delivered through a range of activities including (but not limited to) workshops, symposia, seminars and training events.</p> <p>The funding priority areas covered by the ASF General Fund are the ECOTECH Priority Themes articulated in the Manila Framework, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Human Capital; • Developing stable, safe and efficient capital markets through structural reform; • Strengthening economic infrastructure; • Facilitating technology flows and harnessing technologies for the future; • Safeguarding the quality of life through environmentally sound growth; and
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and strengthening the dynamism of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs); • Integration into the global economy; • Human security and counter-terrorism capacity building; • Promoting the development of knowledge-based economies; and • Addressing social dimension of globalization. <p>Your Concept Note must address how your project will support one or more of these Priority Themes.</p> <p>Responsible APEC forum: Senior Officials Meeting (SOM)</p>
<p>APEC Support Fund – Sub-Fund on Human Security</p>	<p>The ASF Sub-Fund on Human Security was established in 2006. To be eligible for this fund, your Concept Note must demonstrate that your project supports capacity building needs for APEC developing economies. The funding priority areas for the ASF Sub-Fund on Human Security are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counter-Terrorism and Secure Trade; • Health Security, including Avian and Pandemic Influenza, and HIV/AIDS; • Emergency Preparedness; and • Energy Security <p>Responsible APEC forum: SOM Steering Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation (SCE)</p>
<p>APEC Support Fund – Sub-Fund on Innovative Development, Economic Reform and Growth (IERG)</p>	<p>Please note: The ASF Sub-Fund on IERG is subject to a cap of US\$150,000 (not inclusive of any self-funding/co-funding portion of the project).</p>

Established in 2015, this Sub-Fund supports the direction set in *the APEC Accord on Innovative Development, Economic Reform and Growth* endorsed at the APEC Economic Leaders Meeting in 2014 (Annex C of the 2014 Leaders' Declaration).

Drawing on the direction set in the APEC Accord on Innovative Development, Economic Reform and Growth endorsed at the AELM in 2014 (Annex C of the 2014 Leaders' Declaration), the proposed criteria are intended to be in line with the priority areas specified in the aforementioned document. Therefore, to be considered as eligible for the IERG Sub-Fund, the project must contribute to at least one of the following priorities:

- **Overcoming the Middle-Income Trap;**
- **Implementing the APEC Initiative of Cooperation to Promote Internet Economy;**
- **Implementing the APEC Cooperation Initiative for Jointly Establishing an Asia-Pacific Urbanization Partnership, including establishing a cooperative network of sustainable cities in APEC economies, organizing sustainable urban development forums and policy dialogues, and carrying forward relevant projects that advance sustainable urbanization goals;**
- **Implementing APEC Initiatives on Blue Economy cooperation;**
- **Implementing the “Healthy Asia-Pacific 2020” initiative;**
- **Carrying out relevant projects that promote experience sharing, policy dialogue, capacity building and practical cooperation, directly contribute to the goals and priorities of the APEC Accord on**

	<p>Innovative Development, Economic Reform and Growth, and primarily benefit developing economies.</p> <p><i>Responsible APEC forum: SOM Steering Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation (SCE)</i></p>
<p>APEC Support Fund – Sub-Fund on Women and the Economy</p>	<p>Established in 2017, this Sub-Fund aims to institutionalise and provide ongoing support to advance APEC’s objectives of increasing women’s economic participation. It will support new and ongoing initiatives related to advancing women’s economic participation.</p> <p>Any interested economy, within any APEC fora, may submit Concept Notes (CNs) which fall within the scope and eligibility criteria of the Women and the Economy sub-fund. To be considered eligible for the Women and the Economy Sub-Fund, CNs must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Be endorsed by both the PPWE and the proposing forum, where that forum is not PPWE. It is strongly encouraged that projects be generated and led by the non-PPWE forum, to encourage cross-fora collaboration and integration of gender issues across APEC. 2) Deliver capacity building activities in and/or benefiting one or more APEC developing economies and with lessons applicable for APEC members more broadly. 3) Build capacity of individuals, local businesses, non-governmental organizations, business associations, civil society organizations, and/or government officials and institutions charged with implementing programs or policies impacting women’s economic participation.

- 4) Improve the enabling environment for trade and investment and economic participation for women by focusing on one or more of the PPWE's five pillars impacting women's economic participation:
 - a) Access to capital
 - b) Access to markets
 - c) Skills, capacity building, and health
 - d) Leadership, voice, and agency
 - e) Innovation and technology
- 5) Include women and women's perspectives in their design, implementation and evaluation.
- 6) Demonstrate an evidence-based case for implementation, using data from the Women and the Economy Dashboard or other internationally recognized data source, if an appropriate indicator is not included in the Dashboard.
- 7) Take a multi-stakeholder approach, either through partnership and/or participation, by providing clear evidence that relevant private stakeholders and/or civil society are included in the project planning and implementation, such as through funding and/or in-kind contributions and expertise.
- 8) Be otherwise assessed as eligible by the PPWE.

Responsible APEC forum: Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy (PPWE)