

ASIA PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION 2015

Ad Hoc Steering Group on the Internet Economy Terms of Reference (TOR)

I. Background

1. In 2014, APEC Leaders formally recognized the role of the Internet Economy in promoting innovative development and empowering economic participation. They endorsed the *APEC Initiative of Cooperation to Promote Internet Economy* and instructed Ministers and officials to discuss the Internet Economy further, promote member Economies' cooperation on developing the Internet Economy, and facilitate technological and policy exchanges to bridge the digital divide.
2. Further, Ministers welcomed the establishment of an Ad Hoc Steering Group to guide the discussion on issues arising from the Internet Economy. In this regard, they endorsed the *APEC Initiative of Cooperation to Promote Internet Economy*.

II. Objectives

3. Observing established guidelines focusing on practical economic cooperation, respecting the diversity of APEC members, the objectives of the Ad Hoc Steering Group are to:
 - a) Discuss issues related to the Internet and Digital Economy and propose cooperative activities on Internet and Digital Economy-related projects and initiatives between APEC fora and sub-fora
 - b) In collaboration with relevant APEC fora and subfora, organize the development of a cross-APEC work program for endorsement by Senior Officials and consideration by Minister and Leaders, for coordinating cross-cutting APEC initiatives that promote economic growth through the Internet and Digital Economy; encourage cooperation across APEC fora and subfora, and build an open and cooperative environment.

III. Roles and Functions

4. To meet these objectives, working with all relevant APEC sub-fora as identified to fall within the scope of APEC's work on the Internet and Digital Economy-related projects and initiatives, the Group will:
 - a) Serve as a mechanism that will act as a steering and coordinating group that will identify cross-cutting objectives of APEC's Internet and Digital Economy activities as may later originate from either the Group or relevant fora or subfora;
 - b) Promote innovative approaches to development of a more secure, resilient, and trusted cross-border ICT environment in the Asia-Pacific region;

- c) Propose cross-APEC work on Internet and Digital Economy issues; and identify potential initiatives to address these issues; placing focus on cross-cutting aspects while leaving specific matters to the relevant fora and subfora;
- d) Identify synergies among APEC fora on cross-cutting issues related to the Internet and Digital Economy; identify duplicative activities in APEC fora and coordinate the reduction of those redundancies; explore the implementation of joint initiatives as well as any relevant financial mechanism for the implementation of projects
- e) Engage and coordinate with APEC member economies, ABAC, international organizations and other stakeholders, on discussion of APEC fora's collaborative projects, reports, policy forums, conferences and capacity building programs, in addition to policy and regulatory discussions
- f) Develop and publish best practice guidelines for intra-APEC collaboration on the Internet and Digital Economy;
- g) Report annually at CSOM, or as appropriate, to update Senior Officials on the progress of the implementation of the cross-APEC work program, and make recommendations to SOM.

IV. Composition

- 5. The Ad Hoc Steering Group will be constituted by APEC member economies, Lead Shepherds/Chairs or his/her representative from the following APEC fora: CTI, EC, ECSG, GOS, HRDWG, IPEG, PPSTI, PPWE, SCCP, SCE, SCSC, SMEWG, TELWG and relevant fora and subfora. ABAC and APEC Observers may also attend.

V. Chairmanship

- 6. The Ad Hoc Steering Group will be led by a Chair and supported by a Vice-Chair. Two Economies will be selected and endorsed by the SOM as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, each of which could nominate one government official to represent their respective economy, with a term of 2 years, according to a nomination and selection procedure as may be agreed upon.
- 7. The Chair, working with the host economy, will be responsible to propose the time and mode of meeting that will take place, propose the agenda of the meeting, report to SOM and liaise with the APEC Secretariat. The Chair will be responsible to report and provide recommendations to Senior Officials at CSOM annually.

VI. Reporting Mechanism

- 8. The Ad Hoc Steering Group will report progress to SOM on a regular basis.
- 9. SOM will guide, instruct and oversee the Group. SOM will make appropriate recommendations to the Leaders and Ministers.

VII. Decision Making

10. All decisions and/or recommendations to be taken by the Ad Hoc Steering Group will be taken by consensus.

VIII. Participation

11. The Ad Hoc Steering Group may invite other international fora and other stakeholders, including representatives from the private sector and industry (providers and users), civil society, academia, and the technical community to speak at meetings as appropriate. Non-member participation should follow the required procedure.

IX. Frequency and Venue of Meetings

12. The Ad Hoc Steering Group will meet regularly on the margins of SOM. The Group's outreach activities collaborated with the private sector, industry, academia and other relevant international organizations, are also welcome.

X. Role of the APEC Secretariat

13. The APEC Secretariat will provide the necessary support for the effective functioning of the Group. The assigned Program Director of the APEC Secretariat will help to organize the meetings, provide guidance regarding APEC guidelines and protocols and serve as a focal point for the distribution of information regarding the Group.
14. The APEC Secretariat shall also manage the nomination and selection procedure of the Ad Hoc Steering Group's Chair & Vice-Chair.

XI. Review

15. The Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Ad Hoc Steering Group will be subject to review by the SOM as and when necessary and by consensus.

XII. Sunset Clause

16. The Ad Hoc Steering Group will have a mandate of 2 years (to be concluded two years after the formal establishment of the Group), renewable thereafter upon consensus by the SOM.