



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

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

E-commerce Opportunities for Indigenous and Ethnic Minorities: Bringing Innovation, Expanding Markets and Unleashing Potential

APEC Policy Partnership on Food Security

December 2022



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APEC Policy Partnership on Food Security

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents a summary of the E-commerce Opportunities for Indigenous and Ethnic Minorities: Bringing Innovation, Expanding Markets and Unleashing Potential Virtual Seminar Series (hereafter referred to as the seminar series). APEC New Zealand choose to deliver its 2021 host year responsibilities almost exclusively virtually using the APEC New Zealand platform. The seminar series was held online on-line, in October 2021 and was delivered by the Ministry for Primary Industries New Zealand as part of APEC New Zealand host year activities, particularly in relation to Indigenous Peoples' economic inclusion and empowerment.

The objective of the virtual seminar series was to enhance the capability, participation, and success of indigenous and ethnic minorities' agribusinesses in e-commerce. It spanned technical capability, capacity building, international trade and the protection of indigenous knowledge needed to leverage the e-commerce opportunities relevant to indigenous and ethnic minority communities.

The seminar series traversed how indigenous and ethnic minority communities and their agribusinesses can make best use of technology to bring innovation and expand into domestic and global markets. In addition, the series aimed to create connections between indigenous and ethnic minority communities, policy makers, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector to build e-commerce capacity. Speakers, panellists, and short films was provided from Australia, Canada, Mexico, New Zealand, Chinese Taipei and wider Latin America and Samoa. Further information is provided in the digital toolbox resource that accompanies this report.

The advent of Covid-19 has acutely placed focus on the need to support indigenous and ethnic minority communities to not only survive, but to thrive.

The ongoing response to COVID-19 presents both a challenge and a unique opportunity for economies to leverage e-commerce and build capacity within their indigenous and ethnic minority communities. Empowered by the means and know-how to engage digitally, indigenous, and ethnic minority communities have the potential to be leaders in innovative ways of doing business. By analysing and sharing best practice in e-commerce, the seminar series sought to empower indigenous and ethnic minority producers to leverage their strong cultural credentials particularly relevant in the areas of environment and sustainability. In so doing, the seminar series will contribute to fostering inclusive regional trade and social development and wellbeing outcomes within the Asia-Pacific.

The seminar series supports APEC themes of inclusive economic growth and digital innovation and aimed to strengthen indigenous and ethnic minorities' agribusinesses and increase participation in global markets by identifying and exploring challenges related to leveraging e-commerce. Through presenting examples of best practice, the seminar series captured in both this report and the accompanying digital toolbox it will be an ongoing reference for indigenous and ethnic minority communities. The seminar series was intended to foster greater inclusivity and sharing of different perspectives and to engender an environment that enables indigenous and ethnic minority communities to lead discussion and benefit from direct participation.

Indigenous and ethnic minority communities, particularly those in agribusiness, are often the least integrated and included in domestic and global markets. When used to the advantage of such groups, the internet and e-commerce as tools, can enable cost-effective access to new markets. Through specifically identifying issues, challenges and capacities needed for market entry by indigenous and ethnic minorities, the seminar series created a forum for learning how to leverage e-commerce to gain access to markets and online platforms for their agricultural products and services.

BACKGROUND

The global COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of e-commerce as a tool for sustaining economic activity in an uncertain and changing world. The recent [Statement from APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade](#) (5 May 2020) highlighted the impact COVID-19 has had on vulnerable developing economies and the effect that economic slowdown has had on communities. This statement also *encouraged economies to take all necessary steps to ensure the most exposed economic sectors and workers are given support, and ensure that inclusive policy instruments are in place to fast-track their recovery.....Harnessing the opportunities of the digital economy and technologies, through utilisation of smart working solutions that enable seamless international business and cross border trade, is essential to alleviate the wide-range impact of the pandemic and further advance economic growth, as we embrace the future.*

In a comparative study of indigenous wellbeing across five economies (Australia, Canada, Mexico, the United States and New Zealand), the OECD (July 2019) [reported](#) significant gaps between indigenous and non-indigenous populations across indicators such as income, employment, educational attainment and life expectancy. This is further reflected by the FAO which [estimates](#) that Indigenous Peoples comprise around 6.2% of the global population, 19% of the world's poorest people, with territories encompassing 28% of the globe's surface, 11% of the world's forests and 80% of the remaining biodiversity and Indigenous People's food systems have self-sufficiency of 50-80% in food resources generation.

APEC seeks to help contribute to better health, education, and economic outcomes for disadvantaged communities and so inclusion and rural development has been a theme of growing importance for policy discussion in recent years. APEC has made several commitments that have driven the need for this seminar series:

- Due to the pandemic New Zealand made [“Increasing inclusion and sustainability for recovery”](#) one of its hosting priorities. The priority theme of inclusion for [APEC New Zealand](#) speaks to the need to make sure policies are created that are no longer ‘one size fits some’, but nuanced policy environments that help to build all communities up.
- The [APEC Philippines 2015 theme](#) of “Building Inclusive Economies, Building a Better World” focused on key inclusive growth drivers to increase the participation of all members and communities in the region, in particular indigenous businesses is also a key driver.
- [Focus area 10 of the 2017 APEC Internet and Digital Economy Roadmap](#) asks APEC economies to create favourable policy environments and the technical means by which there is greater access to information and communication technologies (ICT) for disadvantaged groups.
- The APEC policy priority of [supporting and globalising MSMEs and individual entrepreneurs](#). By using digital integration to enhance productivity, nurture innovation, improve competitiveness, and lift participation - indigenous and ethnic minority groups can begin to address some of the barriers they face to accessing new markets.
- The [APEC Food Security Roadmap towards 2030](#) which encourages well-functioning food systems to improve people's health and wellbeing, and the success of economies.
- The [Niigata Declaration on APEC Food Security](#) at the establishment of PPFS in 2010, set out some key commitments to enhance markets and trade – one of which is a commitment to develop rural communities. This declaration states that *‘Rural areas present challenges and opportunities for food security. About 75 percent of the poor in developing economies live in rural areas. Conversely, growth in the agricultural sector, the dominant income source for rural inhabitants, is at least twice as effective in benefiting the poorest as growth from non-agricultural sectors.’*
- The [Digital Innovation Sub-Fund](#) established in 2019 which gives funding to economies that aims to supporting inclusive, integrated, and sustainable growth of digital solutions that enable greater inclusion of disadvantaged communities.

- The seminar series also carries forward the recognition made of Indigenous Peoples in the [Fifth Ministerial Meeting on Food Security Statement in Chile](#) (August 2019, para 15) and acknowledges the synergies with the Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy project - Indigenous and Diverse Women-led Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises narratives that improve inclusion and empowerment for public and private partnerships.

PURPOSE

The seminar series covered a range of topics to stimulate debate and discussion about the opportunity that e-commerce presents indigenous and ethnic minority communities as well as the broad range of consideration they may encounter when embarking on this journey.

The objective of this APEC virtual seminar series is to enhance the capability, participation, and success of indigenous and ethnic minorities' agribusinesses in e-commerce. This allows them to achieve the broader and intergenerational aspirations of thriving and prosperous communities.

To create connections between indigenous and ethnic minority communities, policy makers, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector to build e-commerce capacity.

OUR APPROACH

Three specifically themed seminars were held to explore in depth the opportunity of e-commerce from indigenous and ethnic minority communities' perspectives. While all businesses face must overcome many of the same challenges, there are additional specific challenges to be faced for indigenous and ethnic minorities that require their careful and informed consideration and decision-making.

With the seminar series being delivered virtually using the APEC New Zealand platform, it was structured to keep it engaging for an online audience. A variety of components we incorporate to keep it lively including:

- leadership statements by key APEC leaders
- expert keynote speakers
- panellist statements followed by an interactive panel question and answer session open to all attendees, and
- specifically commissioned short film case studies of indigenous development and indigenous businesses engaging e-commerce made by indigenous film makers.

The seminar series was held virtually on the APEC New Zealand platform on 15, 19 and 21 October 2022. Each seminar was approximately three hours each.

There was a focus on ensuring Indigenous Peoples were able to utilise the APEC platform to share their own experience themselves. All but a couple of speakers throughout the seminar series were indigenous. There was also a deliberate focus on ensuring indigenous women and indigenous young people were prominent in the speaker line-up to share their experience, knowledge, and insight.

Topics covered across the three seminars included:

- The challenges and opportunities that e-commerce brings to indigenous peoples
- How to build e-commerce capability
- Digital accessibility and infrastructure

- Understanding supply chain complexity and market pathways
- The need to understand your consumers
- How to maintain cultural integrity and holistic development
- The role and importance of women and youth in indigenous communities.
- How businesses can best prepare for international commerce
- The challenges with protecting cultural and intellectual property
- How to develop a brand proposition to boost commercial value.
- Policies of inclusion and the need for the public and private sectors to collaborate

Opening the Seminar Series

It was important to the project team that Maori tikanga (protocol) was adhered to within the new virtual environment. It was important that the first voice of welcome heard by participants attending the series was a Maori woman's voice. Therefore, the seminar series was opened with a karanga (Maori welcome call) by a young Maori woman, Josephine Dawson and the mihi (formal Maori greeting) and mihi whakamutunga (closing speech of thanks) at the end of Seminar 3 by a young Maori man, Mikaere Berryman-Kamp. Both Josephine and Mikaere are emerging Maori leaders working in the primary industries in New Zealand. This indigenous Maori opening acknowledges the people from around the great connector – Te Moana Nui A Kiwa (the Pacific Ocean) and nga hau e wha (from the four winds) - acknowledging the opportunity to connect through this APEC seminar series.

The Seminar Series was ably facilitated by Jessica Smith, a Regional Director for Te Puni Kokiri (the Ministry of Maori Development) New Zealand. Jessica's role was to encourage full participation and discussion of issues of importance to Indigenous Peoples and ethnic minorities in considering the e-commerce space. Jessica also had the challenge of keeping the series lively, varied, and high energy to maintain engagement in a virtual environment for those in the many and varied time zones across Asia-Pacific.

Keri Iti, APEC Project Overseer, and Indigenous Maori Agribusiness Programme Lead at the Ministry for Primary Industries in New Zealand provided a brief overview and summary at the conclusion of each of the three seminars.

Seminar 1 – Can I e-commerce my business?

Objective: To explore e-commerce know-how, supply chain integrity, market pathways, and knowing your consumers

- Digital accessibility and infrastructure
- Demonstrating traceability, including through blockchain
- Building e-commerce capability

Leadership statement – Rachel Taulelei, 2021 ABAC Chair, New Zealand

The seminar series kicked off with a leadership statement by Rachel Taulelei, 2021 Chair of the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC).

Rachel Taulelei is a prominent New Zealand and indigenous business leader and a strong advocate for the Māori economy and sustainability in the food and beverage sector. She has a strong commitment to kaitiakitanga¹ (guardianship) that has been evident throughout her career, as founder of sustainable seafood company Yellow Brick Road in 2006, as CEO of Māori-owned food and beverage company Kono, and now in her current role as co-founder of business design and brand strategy firm, Oho. Rachel has held a wide range of governance roles as chair and board directorships on government entities, private sector, and community focused organisations.

Rachel highlighted the opportunities digital solutions offer for indigenous communities to prosper. While also needing to think about who will be managing the earth's resources in the future, and that the future must be based on inclusivity of all peoples.

ABAC business leaders dialogue she led in 2021 discussed infrastructure needs of indigenous peoples with the theme Tangata, Taiao me te Taurikura – People, Place and Prosperity. People are at the heart of everything and there cannot be true prosperity if some people are left behind.

Indigenous communities have not featured heavily in APEC conversations to date and often fail to be recognised. Yet indigenous peoples have maintained traditional systems over millennia that can and do benefit the community and the economy. There is a now a new Food Security Road Map in PPFs this year, and New Zealand is responsible for the Indigenous Action Point in the Road Map – which is focused on indigenous collaboration.

COVID-19 has accelerated e-commerce by a decade and digital is now a 'must-have' for all businesses to be successful. Digital is a key enabler for resilience and success for indigenous communities.

Indigenous businesses can showcase their stories all over the world. E-commerce provides the opportunity for indigenous communities to reach more people and tell their stories through global markets. There is an opportunity to showcase indigenous provenance.

There is always more that can be done to improve trade and commerce for indigenous people. There are regulatory and structural hurdles. But there is a compelling case for change. Priorities need to include infrastructure, training, data flows, paperless trade, and tax treatment of low value goods. There is a need to support more business.

The objective must be **to be good ancestors**.

Keynote Speaker 1 and Panellist: Kaye-Maree Dunn (New Zealand)

Kaye-Maree Dunn is a Tech Entrepreneur, co-founder of MEA Ltd (Make Everything Achievable), has been working in Māori and Community development for over 19 years. talk about understanding e-commerce and making it work for you and your business

¹ Traditionally, the indigenous Māori people of New Zealand believe there is a deep kinship between humans and the natural world. This connection is expressed through Kaitiakitanga. Kaitiakitanga means guardianship and protection. It is a way of managing the environment, based on the Māori world view. Reference: Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal, 'Kaitiakitanga – guardianship and conservation', Te Ara - the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/kaitiakitanga-guardianship-and-conservation> (accessed 26 January 2022).

Kaye-Maree spoke about understanding e-commerce and making it work for you and your business. She shared key insights around the need to be educated to utilise e-commerce opportunities. She explained Te Whare Hukahuka, the e-commerce training organisation she works with to provide education, including online, to indigenous businesses wanting to better utilise e-commerce.

The mission of Te Whare Hukahuka is to improve the lives of 10 million indigenous people by lifting household income through e-commerce.

E-commerce is more than a Facebook page, scaling up requires acceleration of e-commerce. Scaled up e-commerce is not just about establishing a website. It is 20% technology and 80% marketing. You also need to ensure the quality and delivery of goods and services to customers and quality customer service.

Keynote Speaker 2 and Panellist: Dr William Wang (Chinese Taipei)

Dr William Wang is currently serving as Chief Advisor of a logistics management company in Chinese Taipei and is a former long-serving Director General of Customs in Chinese Taipei. Throughout his more than three decades of Customs service, he has a wealth of knowledge about best practice in Customs Administrations. Dr Wang spoke about the intricacies of e-commerce and how to involve indigenous and ethnic minorities in e-commerce.

Dr Wang advocates that e-commerce is an important channel for indigenous and ethnic minorities to benefit from domestic and international trade. They need a balanced ecosystem to provide them with all-around support, which are based on their type of business, culture, capability, and strengths. The support should not be “One size fits all”.

APEC has committed to a Digital Economy Action plan of which most of the priorities (97%) where most of the focus is on small to medium enterprises.

E-Platforms are the operation centre of the business model and are a critical part of the infrastructure. It is important for businesses to get educated and have good business discipline, as well as a strong business model. It is important to have a government providing an environment to operate effectively with appropriate infrastructure, financial, logistical, and technical supports.

There are two types of e-commerce markets to be reached – domestic e-commerce markets and international markets. Anyone entering the e-commerce space needs to know how to design it, produce it at scale, market it and distribute it efficiently. The e-commerce ecosystem is a network of key players and is a mix of public and private organisations. At the centre is the e-commerce operator.

It is also advocated that governments involve minorities’ enterprises in Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) programs to which can more efficiently facilitate cargo clearance at borders. Customs should create flexible criteria for minority enterprises to become AEO and through a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) signed with other economies, their e-commerce cargoes can enjoy cargo clearance facilitation and other privileges.

Panellist: Liz Te Amo, Chief Executive of Miro (New Zealand)

Liz Te Amo is Chief Executive of MIRO in New Zealand, a collective of Māori land entities, whānau (families) and landowners looking to transform their land and people through high-value horticulture. Liz spoke about the interface between traditional values and modern practices, and how they can work together in business, as well as what indigenous and ethnic minority businesses need to do to get ahead.

Key themes

Miro means berry in Māori. Miro is an indigenous start-up business with new varieties of blueberries never grown before in New Zealand using modern farming practices. They adhere to Māori values and traditions as a part of their business model. Miro combines cultural traditions and values with modern technology, science, and commerce.

The business is intended not to just make economic gain but also change the lives of whānau (families) and tribes by providing jobs and opportunities to upskill. They want to transform what have typically low-income lands into having high returns and increase employment opportunities in rural areas so that Māori whānau (families) can continue to live in their tribal areas and not have to move to the cities, and by extension grow the wellbeing and aspirations of the local community.

Panellist: Fa'aso'otauloa Sam Saili, Chief Executive SkyEye Pacific Ltd, Maua App (Samoa)

Fa'aso'otauloa Sam Saili (Sam) is from Samoa with 20 years in the information and communication technology sector. He is a fellow of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce (RSA) and twice selected as one of Samoa Observer's People of the Year in 2017 and 2019. He is active on the global technology scene.

Key themes

Sam and his siblings launched SkyEye Technology and have created an app called Maua enabling micro and small businesses. Maua provides access a delivery network similar to Uber in Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu. The service brings primary producers in food and fibre products closer to their consumers through Maua that creates its own marketplace including setting up their own paygate. This has been especially important following the impact of COVID-19 and the decimation of the international tourist flows to the Pacific Islands including Samoa.

Sam spoke about his journey and the challenges when trying to create e-commerce platforms in where the infrastructure is undeveloped. The Maua app has been available via e-commerce for the last two years. Critical solutions included:

- Building an addressing system to give every locale on the islands an address to enable Maua to be able accurate deliveries as most don't have street addresses
- Building an electronic wallet into Maua app called Maua Pay where they can put money into and use that wallet to make purchases as most people in the islands don't have credit cards so can't make online purchases
- Building its own delivery network - Maua Driver as there was no delivery network set up
- Working to lift the low e-literacy in the islands through creating Maua Seller
- Making it easy to use and accessible on mobile phones where income is guaranteed at online purchase point.

Maua app not only provides a useful service but also creates jobs, wealth creation for sellers and therefore supports whole communities.

When COVID-19 forced the economy into lockdown this had significant impact on many businesses and enterprises. Maua has helped create new access to markets by supporting producers to sell their products online and with a system that guarantees payment. This has created huge opportunities for the rural farmers.

Short film: Indigenous e-commerce

New Zealand: Kaitahi (New Zealand) – Smoothie Drops

Kaitahi is one of several businesses owned by Ngā Rauru Kīahi (a Māori tribe) in New Zealand and they work collaboratively to grow and source indigenous plant foods from their lands and transform them into healthy food and beverage products. With their award-winning frozen smoothie drops product with indigenous ingredients, Kaitahi utilises domestic supermarket e-commerce platforms to sell their products across New Zealand and use the platform Shopify. The products are sold into supermarkets and utilise the online shopping platforms of the supermarkets themselves.

Kaitahi spoke about how the model of their business is based on traditional knowledge systems using traditional ingredients to create their products. Kaitahi is trying to create a legacy for the generations to come. This level of commitment to their traditional values and beliefs brings a Māori authenticity to their products that helps create their brand. Kaitahi advocated for those groups wanting to start e-commerce trading to ensure they understand the e-commerce systems and jargon to be able to effectively operate.

The short film was made by Maoriland Charitable Trust.

Seminar 2 – Success for all beyond the horizon

Objective: Inclusive succession. Women, youth, environment, and culture.

- Women in agricultural leadership
- Engaging youth and succession planning
- Environmental sustainability
- Maintaining cultural integrity

Keynote Speaker 1 and Panellist: Jacob Birch (Australia)

Jacob Birch is a Gamilaraay mari (Australian Aboriginal man) through matrilineal descent, and has Irish, English, and other mixed European heritage. Jacob works with native Australian grasses, particularly their seeds (grain), that have been traditionally used for thousands of generations by First Nations² peoples across Australia. Jacob now works with [Black Duck Foods](#), a First Nations social enterprise, preparing a research and development roadmap for traditional aboriginal grains with aboriginal communities.

Key themes

The journey to reclaim First Nations food sovereignty and of the work being done to re-establish First Nations grain systems. These grain systems are a way of improving food security and access; improving biodiversity and food diversity; reinvigorating culture and community health; and generating sustainable income sources for First Nations communities, and rural communities to bring vibrancy and sustainability back to the land.

² Note that the term First Nations, in this context is the term used to refer to the many aboriginal tribes that claim indigeneity to Australia.

First Nations knowledge in Australia goes back 65,000 years. Extensive grain economies that traditionally were the stalwarts of the Aboriginal people's food economy and have intangible cultural importance.

'People of the First Economies' have been disconnected from their ancestral regions, culture, and traditional food practises further impacted by ongoing land degradation, climate change and drought issues.

Converting back to the grain economy has many benefits. It is possible to harvest grains without ever having to replace the fields and the grasses create structures in soils, allows water to penetrate and they don't require fertiliser or irrigation. Traditional grains are long-lived perennial grasses that prevent erosion, reduce temperature spikes, improve hydrology, cycle nutrients, and are keystone habitat forming species.

The work to regenerate the grain belt, alongside the financial outcomes, it can deliver improved social, environmental, and cultural outcomes for aboriginal peoples, and their communities.

Challenges such as co-designed research and development plans, indigenous intellectual property protection, blockchain authenticated products, women and youth involvement and a pipeline of aboriginal agricultural specialist pipeline are needed to support its establishment and continued growth.

Keynote Speaker 2 and Panellist: Dr Jolan Hsieh (Chinese Taipei)

Dr Jolan Hsieh is a Chinese Taipei Indigenous scholar from the Siraya Nation and a Professor in the Department of Ethnic Relations and Cultures Director, Centre for International Indigenous Affairs College of Indigenous Studies National Dong Hwa University. Dr Hsieh is active in international Indigenous Peoples language and cultural revitalization movements and is currently co-chair of the World Indigenous Higher Education Consortium (WINEHC).

Key themes

Dr Hsieh spoke about great examples of indigenous development in Chinese Taipei where 2.5% of the population are indigenous and in a small geographical area and have many different languages. It is a Matrilineal society where indigenous women have been centre of family and participate in the development of their communities and there is shared power/decision/labour with the men.

Indigenous entrepreneurs (especially women) often encompass cultural values into their businesses based on the needs of their communities. Furthermore, these businesses are a way to be 'decolonised' and improve their indigenous wellbeing by doing work that heals and reconnects them to their culture, and indigenous knowledge systems.

Dr Hsieh gave examples of in Chinese Taipei where people are using their indigenous knowledge, as well as creating new knowledge, to build authentically indigenous businesses.

The first business was focused on food sovereignty. A group of indigenous people have renewed the use of indigenous ingredients to provide a unique event catering experience.

The second business was an Artist's studio. Indigenous women come together and produce traditional textiles to sell ensuring the maintenance of that knowledge. It also becomes a support system whereby the women work together, learn from one another, and form a strong network of companionship and where scale assists them sell their wares.

The third example was a business where a small group of women are using traditional dying techniques to make water bottle carrying bags, hats, and bags with local patterns and design. These are then sold through websites to tourists. The workplace helps them receive support from other women. Young students run the website to learn more about running their own business and also deepen links with local indigenous communities through running the web platform for sales.

The final example is a business where local women offer indigenous experiences. Customers go on local sightseeing trips, pick their own leaves, and are taught eco-printing transferring plant designs onto garments. Customers leave with a unique product made into a scarf or a wrap.

Panellist: Quinn Morgan, Ahuwhenua Young Māori Farmer of the Year 2021 - Dairy Farming, New Zealand

Quinn Morgan won the prestigious Ahuwhenua Young Māori Farmer of the Year 2021 for Dairy Farming in New Zealand. This award launched Quinn into the spotlight and since then, he has become an inspiration for many indigenous farmers both in New Zealand and globally.

Key themes

Quinn spoke about his journey towards farming and how it is providing him and his wife Sam with the opportunity to bring their whanau (family) home from Australia and be closer to their wider whanau (family) and have access to their culture. It has provided him with both education, employment. Importantly it has also provided a stable and enriching lifestyle for him and his wife to raise their children. He had always wanted a career that involved his whanau (family) and that had a connection to the land, so farming was a natural fit.

Quinn started off as a Farm Assistant on a 155-hectare farm in Otakiri near Whakatane. They milked 570 cross breed cows. The farming lifestyle has its challenges, and it is about understanding that it is a challenging field of work. Not only is it important to learn on the farm every day but there is a need to compliment those learnings with academic training. Quinn advocated for studying practices specific to your farming needs (e.g., dairy, beef, horticulture) and agribusiness as an area that would help progress both individual expertise but also the productivity of the farm. Education also helps business planning.

Winning the award has also provided a platform by which Quinn can give back to communities and this has led him to become a leader and mentor for other young farmers through being a [Farm 4 Life](#) Ambassador making himself accessible through Facebook to young people interested or starting in farming. His best advice to newcomers is to get experience in your own time and reach out to local farmers to seek advice and support.

Post-seminar series update: Quinn has also won the 2022 Primary Industries New Zealand - Emerging Leader Award.

Panellist: Paulina Maycotte, Indigenous Melipona Bee honey practice of Mayan Women (Mexico)

Paulina Maycotte is a tertiary student of international relations in Mexico, and she works helping small women entrepreneurs to grow their businesses.

Key themes

Paulina explained a project she was supporting to rescue the native Melipona bee by working with indigenous Mayan women in the Yucatan. Meliponiculture is the breeding and handling of bees without a stinger. Bees are a critical part of their environment and the work they do to fertilise plants underpins the whole regeneration lifecycle of their green spaces and ecosystem.

The bees are originally from the Yucatan Peninsula and are a group of culturally important organisms for the various indigenous peoples of the area (Mayan). They can produce around 40 kilos of honey per year (80 pounds) and the honey holds a value of 1,000 Mexican pesos per kilogram of honey (2020-2021) (50 USD per 2.2 pounds). Currently there are 34 families active in meliponiculture (Census 2016). Eighty percent of Meliponiculture' economy is dependent on harvesting of this honey. But there have been dramatic losses in the number of Melipona bee colonies over the last decade. Some of the key challenges including but aren't limited to:

- deforestation,
- natural disasters,
- expansion of agriculture and livestock,
- expansion of conventional beekeeping overwhelming the Melipona bee, and
- the increased use of pesticides to name a few.

There is now an attempt to revitalise both the Melipona Bee and Meliponiculture. Part of this plan is to teach more communities about meliponiculture. Workshops are being run by Mayan women to teach the correct way to produce honey. As Meliponiculture is the domain and responsibility of Mayan women. With this training it will be possible to sell Melipona Bee honey which has many uses including but not limited to being edible and has long been used as a medicinal for the stomach, as an ointment or eye drops and as a hair treatment.

It is important to encourage more people to work in meliponiculture to preserve the practice and knowledge, improve food security, as well as help generate income for Mayan families and communities. It will be important to increase access to markets to facilitate export trade of Melipona products to other economies. COVID had an impact on these communities and made it harder for them to sell their products. Currently these products only access a very small market and there is a need to work with other economies to help these Mayan families expand their businesses. They also make ointments eye drops, hair, and skin products. E-commerce options are being investigated through social media and a website to sell the products.

Short films: Indigenous e-commerce and social enterprise

New Zealand: AWHI Mānuka Honey

Ātīhau Whanganui Incorporated, otherwise known as AWHI, is a Māori company that produces high quality beef, lamb, milk, wool and Mānuka honey. AWHI is owned by the whānau (families) of Te Āti Haunui a Pāpārangi Iwi (a Māori tribe). Their unique products all tell a story of connection to the land. Their Mānuka honey is harvested by hand just once a year. Their bees have a single home for life, to reduce stress and ensure the honey they produce is consistently high quality. This brings significant value to the product in terms of its quality. AWHI utilise the AMAZON e-commerce platform as one of their sales channels. Through their journey they have learnt that sometimes there is always a need to review what you are doing to adapt to changes in the markets.

Australia: Black Duck Foods

Black Duck Foods is an Indigenous social enterprise committed to traditional food growing processes that care for the land and return economic, social, and cultural benefits directly to Aboriginal people in Australia. Black Duck Foods are interested in native bush foods all over Australia and use cultural techniques such as cultural burning of fields to regenerate grasses. Black Duck Foods grow a range of plants and are working to create an enterprise that creates a sustainable economy for First Nations people.

Seminar 3: Your unique story. Value. Protect. Share.

Objective: Where traditional knowledge meets intellectual property and international trade

- Navigating cultural and intellectual property
- Developing brand proposition in a way that increases commercial value
- Preparing for international commerce and import/export requirements.

Leadership Statement: Hon Nanaia Mahuta, Minister of Foreign Affairs, New Zealand

In 2020, Hon Nanaia Mahuta became the first woman in New Zealand to hold the Foreign Affairs portfolio. Minister Mahuta is also Minister of Local Government, and Associate Minister for Māori Development and has held a Maori electoral seat in the New Zealand House of Representatives since 1997.

Key themes

The Minister acknowledged the importance of opportunities for indigenous people and ethnic minorities. Indigenous Peoples are no strangers to the benefits of international trade, however in the context of today's trade it has not always benefited Indigenous Peoples. Economic inclusion of indigenous people and economies can transform broader outcomes having positive social, economic, and environmental impacts.

Unlocking potential will help us recover from the effects of Covid-19. This is our opportunity to build a more resilient future for the communities across the region currently and for the future.

Indigenous peoples throughout the APEC region have their own unique views that have the potential to empower, provide leadership and contribute to addressing the big challenges the world and our region face.

Getting indigenous issues on the APEC agenda is about recognition. It is also about respect and integrity and reciprocity which are inherent values of many indigenous trade relationships. This work can lead to greater social inclusion and economic prosperity for our societies. APEC has a great ability to bring people together.

E-commerce reduces high barrier entries for new business. E-commerce creates exciting opportunities, exposure to and connections with domestic and international markets. This growth is on the rise, but more can be done at the government level so that all can participate and share the benefits.

Governments can help to support the advancement of tradition knowledge and prevent cultural misappropriation. Progress is happening in developing ways to ensure that indigenous trade reflects indigenous frameworks. For frameworks and protection of Māori knowledge, Indigenous knowledge is paramount.

We must create solutions so that economic value is captured and gained by indigenous communities. We are very diverse and have different challenges but there is strength in sharing the way we have met those challenges.

We are all on a journey and APEC can be a space for indigenous entrepreneurs and for others to join, learn and collaborate, demonstrate leadership and to build strong leadership and strong communities.

Keynote Speaker 1 and Panellist: Lynell Tuffery-Huria New Zealand

Lynell Tuffery-Huria is a Managing Partner in Kahui Legal, a New Zealand law with a goal to provide specialist legal services of the highest quality that advance the Maori economy and the future wellbeing of Maori including all aspects of trademark protection, management, and enforcement. Lynell is regarded as a leading expert on indigenous intellectual property (IP) law in New Zealand and the Pacific. She specialises in advising Māori organisations on IP issues and is passionate about helping Māori navigate the IP system. She currently chairs the Indigenous Rights Committee for the International Trademark Association.

Key themes

Lynell spoke about the many complexities to the protection of intellectual property for indigenous people's knowledge and the legal frameworks in place both in New Zealand and globally. Noting there are many examples of misuse of indigenous knowledge through the years. Patents threaten to misappropriate Māori knowledge and current intellectual property settings do not protect words, imagery, songs, stories, narratives and indigenous flora and fauna. Indigenous knowledge is collectively owned by indigenous peoples for their own benefit, and it is their responsibility to safeguard this knowledge. There are cultural practices that help indigenous peoples do this, but in law there are few legal safeguards.

In New Zealand there is a claim that has been made to the Waitangi Tribunal (an organisation set up to consider claims of historical and modern grievance from Māori) to protect indigenous intellectual property. Current law doesn't protect the rights and interests of the Māori people in New Zealand and although there has been some progress to protect knowledge there is still a way to go, and a need for other structures to be put in place.

Lynell advocates that New Zealand's law should make room for the relationships between kaitiaki (guardians) and their knowledge to flourish as a matter of New Zealand's interest, and that this knowledge should be legally protected. The benefits of doing so would be numerous in both the short and long term. Coverage would, for example, need to include:

- Upholding intellectual property rights,
- Appropriately manage patent applications,
- Ethical guidelines for research and development,
- Maintained registers of intellectual property interests, and
- An appropriate bioprospecting regime.

In international law, the debate continues. Globally, there has been movement in India, Peru, Panama, Mexico, and Chile to protect indigenous people rights and knowledge. The World Intellectual Property Organization: Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge, and Folklore has been working to finalise an

agreement on international legal instruments for the protection of Traditional knowledge, Traditional cultural expressions, and Genetic resources.

In 1992 at the UN Earth Summit, the Convention on Biological Diversity was adopted aimed at stemming the loss of biodiversity which has an objective to ensure the Fair and equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources.

In 2022, the Bonn Guidelines were drafted to help assist governments to help negotiate benefit sharing agreements to ensure that the benefits of intellectual property were being received by those who traditionally owned the knowledge. There is also the Nagoya Protocol which also tries to provide guidance on how to protect genetic resources and the benefits arising from the utilisation of that knowledge.

There is still much work that needs to continue in order to put more protections in place for indigenous people worldwide.

Keynote Speaker 2 and Panellist: Ana Tejero-Aranda, Biologist, CEPCO Coffee, Mexico

Ana Tejero-Aranda is a trained biologist and a member of the technical staff of the **Coordinadora Estatal de Productores de Cafe del Estado de Oaxaca (CEPCO)**. She leads the development of monitoring and evaluation strategies and tools and has spearheaded an intense innovation process within the organization. Ana has worked hand in hand with producers, she has helped to start a process of productive diversification that will help to gain both ecologic and economic resilience.

Key themes

CEPCO is the largest association of small coffee growers in Mexico. CEPCO was founded in 1989, has over 3000 coffee growers. Participation of women and men in growing is relatively even, and the growers are spread out over seven regions, across 130 communities with a total of around 8,500 hectares of land. CEPCO has been exporting coffee for many years including to Europe and the United States. CEPCO is founded on shared values of economic stability, social justice, and community empowerment.

Most producers and farmers come from indigenous communities in the Oaxaca region in Mexico who are either monolingual or bilingual indigenous: Zapotecos, Mixtecos, Mixes, Chinantecos, Cuicatecos, and Mazatecos. Ana works with growers to help them improve coffee production while preserving the environment.

Mexico is the most ecological diverse environment in South America and provides an important habitat for migratory birds, so it is important that coffee production does not deteriorate the ecology of the area. There is strong demand from consumers in North America for Mexican coffee and consumers are prepared to pay a premium for it.

Incentives are provided for certificated shade-grown coffee farmers. Production of coffee done through a shade-system generates and provides numerous environmental and socioeconomic services: environmental health, social equity, economic viability, sociocultural services, and ecosystem services.

One of the ways to create trust in the products is certifications. There are three types for coffee – organic, fair trade and rainforest protection. These certifications are eco-label certifications and allow the consumer to decide what to purchase based on most resonates with their own values. CEPCO offers incentives to coffee growers to get certified and promotes sustainable agriculture for this very reason. The market is increasing its

demand for ecologically gentle products that make minimal impact to the environment. Certifications also add a layer of transparency to the product and create increased trust in its authenticity and origins.

Panellist: Kristen Kohere-Soutar, Executive Chair, Te Pitau Ltd, Mānuka Charitable Trust, New Zealand

Kristen Kohere-Soutar holds a diverse range of governance roles and executive experience. She is currently Chair of Mercer New Zealand, Executive Chair of Te Pitau, Director of Ngāi Tahu Holdings and Trustee of Trust Tairāwhiti. Kristen previously worked for New Zealand Trade and Enterprise on export revenue growth strategies for coalitions of leading exporters in premium New Zealand food and beverage product categories including Mānuka honey, New Zealand strong wool and koura our 'Southern Rock Lobster'.

Kristen spoke about the challenges involved with establishing trademarks and protections over the Mānuka tree, a species of tree native to New Zealand. Mānuka is a native species of New Zealand, and it is a Māori word. Māori people have a strong connection to the treasured species and regard the tree as an ancestor in their creation stories. The government, industry and Māori have an interest in protecting the species because of the unique economic and cultural benefits it brings to New Zealand.

The Mānuka Charitable Trust has a role in protecting the use of the tree and its properties. The Trust has an Intellectual Property Protection Strategy where the objective is to protect the term "Mānuka Honey" so that only Mānuka can only be attributed exclusively to honey that comes from New Zealand. It is an onerous process, and the Trust is currently going through a legal process of trademark.

The intention is to be able to protect the image and properties of Mānuka. It can then ensure it has

- New Zealand provenance,
- provides consumer protections so that consumers know what they are buying,
- protects the scientific knowledge base gained from study of the Mānuka, and
- ensure consumers know they are buying Mānuka products that identify with an indigenous story.

New Zealand Mānuka honey for example is different in texture, taste and microbiological properties from the forest and land, which make it distinct from the Australian product. The tree also has a number of therapeutic properties and products made from it are sold domestically and exported globally.

Indigenous principles guide the work that the Trust does. The Trust prioritises its work through a set of principles:

- Of inclusivity and that they need to bring everyone with them as a matter of the public good, acknowledging the stewardship role to protect knowledge gained in perpetuity,
- Of ensuring that the work they do is professional, with robust and intellectually rigorous analysis. Māori knowledge has been built up over centuries of observation. Now we have technology and new systems that can be utilised,
- To remain proactive and ethically aligned to Māori values, and
- To maximise opportunities arising from the value chain.

Panellist: Mauricio Mireles, Indigenous Peoples Officer, Latin America and the Caribbean, UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (UNFAO), Chile

Mauricio Mireles has more than a decade of international experience working on issues related to social inclusion, indigenous people's rights and the implementation of rural development policies and programs. Originally from Oaxaca, México, Mauricio is a sociologist and anthropologist by training, with a master's degree in Environmental Security awarded by the University for Peace in Costa Rica, and a second master's degree in Peace, Development, Security, and International Conflict Transformation studies, granted by the University of Innsbruck, in Austria.

Key themes

Mauricio spoke about indigenous food systems and how they connect with e-commerce. He identified the challenge to address the structural, socio-economic, and historical barriers that limit the participation of indigenous people in Latin America to create win-win e-commerce opportunities.

In Latin America:

- Only 43 percent of indigenous peoples over 15 years of age had completed primary education and only 56 percent had electricity (Thiede and Gray, 2020).
- Indigenous Peoples have less than half the access to cell phones than their non-indigenous peers.
- The Covid-19 epidemic has aggravated the problems, affecting indigenous and tribal peoples disproportionately and this is exacerbating access to markets and services.

Indigenous Peoples hold immense knowledge, and their food systems preserve 80 percent of the remaining biodiversity in the planet (Sobrevilla, 2008). This makes a significant contribution to the world's sustainability. Most of indigenous peoples produce half of the food they consume in their own territory. The richness of biodiversity generates a broad food base, which in some cases exceeds 250 edibles for food and medicinal purposes. Indigenous peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean manage between 330 and 380 million hectares of forest (Fa et al., 2020); an area more than three times the size of Colombia. Those forests store more than one eighth of all the carbon in the world's tropical forests (Saatchi et al., 2011; Frechette et al., 2018).

The imminent danger is that Indigenous Peoples' food systems risk disappearance or full assimilation by the dominant cultures mainstreamed in the globalization process. There needs to be a concerted effort by governments and industry to support Indigenous Peoples to protect their food systems. The future of Indigenous Peoples' food systems depends largely on the decisions indigenous youth and indigenous women are making. Access to digital technologies ((and capacity development) by Indigenous Peoples is a must - to create sustainable e-commerce enterprises. E-commerce can become an opportunity to support indigenous people's priorities if structural gaps are addressed and the markets properly compensate indigenous peoples for their traditional knowledge and products.

There are many examples across Latin America where indigenous peoples are successfully utilising e-commerce.

Short film: Indigenous e-commerce

Canada: Giizhigat Maple Products

Giizhigat Maple Products are a maple syrup producer on St Joseph Island, Sault Ste Marie, Ontario who are Six Nations Mohawk. Giizhigat Maple Products harvest and produce 100% maple syrup in the traditions of their ancestors. The business itself grew out of family traditions and they acknowledge their upbringing and connection to maple syrup. They respect the traditional teaching of harvesting and making maple syrup that has been utilised for many generations.

Giizhigat Maple Products sell in person at Powwows, the business also had a physical shop and a website where they sell their product mainly domestically and internationally, with plans to diversify and create value-added

maple products. They updated their online platform with the use of experts due to Covid-19. But acknowledge there is always more to be done on the e-commerce front including to keep the sit current and utilising a range of social media channels.

Giizhagit Maple Products seek to run a successful business that aligns with their First Nations values, to fulfil their aspirations. The long-term vision of the business is to reinvest profits to build a teaching lodge where all are welcome, to learn how to reconnect with Mother Earth and how-to live-in harmony through traditional knowledge.

The short film was made by Six Nations Mohawk television and film producer James Kinistino and his production company, Ravensun Media, from Oshweken, Ontario. It was important to commission a First Nations Canadian film producer to make this short film for this event, to maintain the integrity of Indigenous Peoples telling their own stories in their own ways.

EVALUATION: WHAT WE FOUND

The seminar series aimed to engage 50 to 70 participants, and the series almost doubled these numbers for each session demonstrating a high level of interest and demand. The gender participation target for speakers and panellists was 50% women and the seminar series achieved this target as 64% of the speakers and panellists were women, of which 100% were indigenous women. The gender target for attendees was also 50% women and the seminar series had 71% of attendees were women.

Two evaluation surveys were carried out for this seminar series. The first survey was to collect information from participants before the event, and the second survey was to find out how participants found the seminar series.

We had 34 respondents (12% response rate) to the first survey and of these over 70% were female. Almost all (97%) respondents told us that the objectives were clearly defined for the event and 100% agreed with the 'engaging' and 'interesting' descriptors. We had 95% agree the seminars were well designed. Only a small proportion of respondents indicated they had a lot of knowledge of the seminar series topics (13%) with the remaining respondents indicating that they had only some, or very little knowledge.

Respondents then confirmed that that the reason why they were attending the seminar series was to learn more about indigenous and ethnic minorities, to learn about e-commerce and gain knowledge that would help them in their organisation. Respondents said they were interested in:

- ✓ Understand how to do e-commerce including building capability, brand, export/import supply chains, logistics, marketing
- ✓ Protection of Intellectual property
- ✓ Women speakers and entrepreneurship
- ✓ Supporting their colleagues
- ✓ Learning from others and connecting with other indigenous groups
- ✓ Learning about specific indigenous case studies
- ✓ Youth in agriculture

Respondents told us that they were interested in Virtual Seminar T wo in particular.

Feedback from participants after the event was limited with only 5% responding. Male and female respondents were largely evenly split (53% male, 46% women).

- ✓ Over 70% of respondents agreed that the objectives of the seminar were met and that the topics were highly engaging. 80% strongly supported the design of the seminar series.
- ✓ Over 70% of respondents indicated they had strengthened their knowledge of indigenous and ethnic minorities in e-commerce after participating in the seminar.
- ✓ Over 65% of the respondents attending the entire seminar series.

Seminar Two: *Success for all beyond the horizon (Inclusive succession. Women, youth, environment, and culture.)* stood out to respondents as an intriguing session. This was consistent with the pre-event survey results.

Of the seminar series content presented across all three seminars respondents found the following topics the most interesting:

- ✓ Protection of Intellectual property
- ✓ Collaborative business models
- ✓ Similarities and differences in indigenous business in the APEC region
- ✓ The Meliponiculture programme run in Mexico
- ✓ The E-Farmers programme run in Chinese Taipei
- ✓ SkyEye technology in Samoa
- ✓ Indigenous entrepreneurship

Over 90% of respondents said they would be keen to hear about similar topics.

Over 70% indicated that the seminar series was relevant to their work and their economy.

When respondents were asked if the seminar series had made impact on them and to provide examples, they told us the following key learnings:

- ✓ It is important to include and cater for indigenous peoples when developing government policy
- ✓ The workshop has broadened views on the challenges facing indigenous peoples across the Asia-Pacific region
- ✓ It has helped in understanding strategies that other indigenous peoples are using and whether they can be applied in different APEC nations.
- ✓ It has developed understand of challenges facing Māori businesses
- ✓ It has prompted thought around e-commerce for agribusiness, and farmers.
- ✓ It has informed the development of a new workstream at the World Economic Forum on Inclusive Trade which proposes to include trade for indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities.
- ✓ It has prompted ideas to develop new strategies and policies on digital markets.
- ✓ It has strengthened the need to have a cooperative movement for indigenous communities across Asia Pacific
- ✓ It has initialised a conversation about policy development and how it needs to be more inclusive.

When respondents were asked if the seminar series could be improved, most agreed that it was well designed and that there weren't any improvements needed. Feedback was received about future topics that could be considered if there are similar series proposed.

Based on our evaluation feedback (despite the low numbers of respondents) we found the seminar series design and content was highly engaging and participants found it useful for their roles in their organisations/businesses. A positive outcome is that it prompted a lot of thought and discussion about policy settings and agribusiness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear from the seminar series that e-commerce is a vehicle to support Indigenous and ethnic minorities to expand their businesses. E-commerce examples throughout the series illustrated high levels of innovation, market expansion and the realisation of previously untapped potential. While challenge Covid-19 presents is further testing that resilience, creative solutions do exist. Common challenges in relation to e-commerce were identified across the APEC region. What was abundantly clear was that a wide range of responses were successfully developed by communities to both overcome challenges and meet their own specific needs and aspirations.

Better understanding the challenges faced and creating fit for purpose solutions where Indigenous Peoples and ethnic minorities are leading or co-leading design and implementation, will more likely contribute to further economic growth and a more inclusive recovery. This seminar series has proven there are multiple benefits for governments, businesses, and the economy by working more closely with indigenous and ethnic minorities communities.

The seminar series reaffirmed that APEC is an ideal vehicle to use an indigenous development lens to explore regional economic cooperation and exchange ideas on innovative and inclusive growth, that can enhance food security and sustainable agriculture. This contributes to an objective of New Zealand's host year to embed Indigenous Peoples economic empowerment and inclusion within APEC.

E-commerce can offer an innovative and low-cost way for indigenous and ethnic minority communities to develop new markets and platforms to sell agricultural goods and services. Based on the common experiences and opportunities identified in the seminar series some recommended areas for further exploration and knowledge sharing could include:

- Government policies that create enabling environments based on inclusion such as better trade and commerce settings that support indigenous and ethnic minorities communities' aspirations.
- Early government engagement with indigenous and ethnic minorities on problem definition, policy design, development and decision-making are a critical to policy success and delivery of outcomes for government and those communities.
- Increasing access to technology for indigenous and ethnic minorities and ensuring infrastructure supports technology utilisation such as in more isolated communities.
- Indigenous focused e-commerce education and training, to kick-start and grow businesses.
- Improving intellectual property laws and protecting cultural and commercial intellectual property including accessible regimes and with increased awareness by those communities.
- Identifying and removing regulatory barriers that prevent indigenous and ethnic minorities from entering markets and encouraging them to enter trade supportive schemes such as Authorised Economic Operator programmes within economies.
- Indepth understanding of the challenge of access to capital that is common for Indigenous People and ethnic minorities and supporting the creation of solutions with those communities and other partners.
- An information sharing platform that allows indigenous communities to connect and collaborate including on e-commerce development.