



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

**Independent Assessment of the
Telecommunications and Information Working
Group**

**SOM Steering Committee on Economic and
Technical Cooperation**

July 2012

APEC Project SCE 01/2011

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**Independent Assessment of the Telecommunications and Information Working
Group (TELWG)
(July 20th, 2012)**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key findings

The first and more important finding is that the Telecommunications Working Group is contributing with APEC overall objectives. In 2010 the TELMIN endorsed TEL Strategic Plan 2010-2015 and all the activities developed in this working group are aligned with the strategic plan.

Not only the activities of TEL are aligned with APEC goals but in the interviews and the questionnaire distributed among the focal points of the member economies these are satisfied with the work done and find the resulting information useful and an important contribution towards sustainable economic and social growth.

Member economies do believe that the work done in this group contributes to regional integration, to address the social dimensions of globalization, to safeguard quality of life, to achieve structural reform and finally to improve human security.

TEL WG has ways of improving from an organizational point of view. The strategic plan was the first fundamental step to streamline the working process, now it is important to continue in this path. The strategic plan must be accompanied by specific objectives and expected outputs. The Strategic Plan must be from its elaboration in line with APEC overall Vision and Objectives. In this sense it is important to work it out following the recommendations stated in annex 5: Strategic Planning – Process Guide for Working Groups of the “2011 Senior Officials’ Report on Economic and Technical Cooperation”. Even though TEL activities do result in reports and publications that are very much appreciated by the sector stakeholders more organized outputs will facilitate the diffusion of the work helping the economies in one hand and contributing to the outreach of APEC as an organization.

In these difficult times of economic constraints efforts must be made to ensure economies’ participation in APEC work. Planning ahead venues and topics to be discussed can help the economies to organized budgets and prepare their participation. Also remote participation should be consider in some of the working group activities

Key recommendations

- I. **Raise the awareness** to the other working groups on the work elaborated by TEL and on its relevance in terms of infrastructure. At least 5 working groups have been identified whose activities can be complemented with the ones done by TEL.
- II. **Foster communications** between the groups chairs: a better communication between the groups chairs could end in joint working sessions that could be beneficial to some of the activities of the working groups. This kind of work will strengthen APEC's position and already prestigious reputation.
- III. **Detailed objectives, expected results and targeted audiences:** TEL WG is responding to the priorities and demands from APEC Leaders and Ministers. Nevertheless a more detailed plan with clear objectives, expected outputs and the targeted audience can be useful for the organization of the work and activities.
- IV. **Establish mechanisms to determine when a topic had been sufficiently discussed:** elaborate a report that will include the important amount of information sharing as well as the workshops results on a particular subject and submit these documents to the economies for consideration. This mechanism will also help identify the topics that have not been sufficiently discussed.
- V. **Plan ahead.** The identification of subjects ahead of time gives the Economies more time to plan and finance the workshops attendance as well as to invite relevant stakeholders that could enrich the discussions.
- VI. **Add two categories to the project proposals.** In order to facilitate the organization of the processes the project proposals should include two more categories, one with information on the expected result and the second on its contribution to TEL Strategic Plan and objectives.
- VII. **Targeted audience.** A clear definition of the expected outcomes from TELs activities will permit the member economies to identify the targeted audience.
- VIII. **If possible set the venues of the meeting as the major SOM meetings or propose in the next TEL WG to elaborate a list of venues for the next TEL meetings following an agreed order.** In these difficult economic times with budgetary constraints it would be beneficial for TEL work to be able to establish a list of TEL meeting venues.
- IX. **Participation should be encourage.** The strength and fruitfulness of the meetings depends directly upon the economies' participation.
- X. **Remote participation.** Remote participation to the meetings should be considered.

- XI. **Elaboration of a roadmap.** The elaboration of a roadmap that will organize future topics to be developed in the different steering groups could enhance participation and collaboration in the meetings.
- XII. **Assign a clerk for each working group:** that will help TEL SOM to work with the economies in order to achieve the strategic plan's objectives.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Asia-Pacific region is one of the most important regions of the world due to its economic significance and the population it represents. The Asia-Pacific community reunites 21 economies and accounts for approximately 41% of the world's population and 55% of the world's GDP.

The telecommunications and information sector plays a major role in the economic and social development of these economies not only in terms of trade and investment facilitation but also in the assistance needed for capacity building.

APEC is lead by 21 economies from the Asia- Pacific region and it is aim to achieve a free and open trade and investment in that region by 2010 for developed economies and by 2020 for developing economies. APEC has been a reference for the rest of the world on how trade and investment liberalization, business facilitation, economic and technical cooperation can be accomplished despite the wide variety of economies and cultures involved.

APEC TEL is one of the working groups of the Senior Official's Meeting – Steering Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation (SCE) and has been operating for more than twenty years already. TEL plays a key role in contributing to strengthen APEC Member Economies in the development and improvement of the welfare of its people. Its original structure has evolved consistently keeping pace with the technological and regulatory transformations of the telecommunications and information and communications technologies sectors on a competitive marketplace.

In its years of existence, TEL has always been quite alert and reactive to external factors that could harm economic growth such as, natural disasters, terrorism, cyber-vulnerability, digital divide, connectivity, interoperability issues and the so important transition to IPv6.

The first decade of the XXI century has been one of changes and new paradigms. Information technology and communications play a key role in strengthening different economic and social sectors. They are the means to grant equal access and connectivity, without gender inequalities, to reach all kinds of goods and services. Technology has become one of the most important tools to train and build capacity skills of human resources of every economy.

In 2015, TEL will have carried out its important mission of contributing in the achievement of the goal set in 2008 by the economies, which is: “universal broadband penetration in all APEC economies¹”. Therefore, this time is an appropriate one to review TEL’s activities, meetings and projects and assess their impact and responsiveness to APEC’s priorities and goals in order to start thinking about TEL next goals and priorities in line with its Leaders’ interests.

Among the main objectives of this assessment are:

- Review key APEC policy documents, including Leaders’ and Ministers statements, TEL records of meetings, key project documentation and activities to assess the outcomes and how they support the main objectives/goals of TEL and APEC and their impacts in APEC economies;
- Evaluate whether TEL is operating effectively and efficiently; whether the group’s Terms of Reference or operation could be modified to better respond to APEC ECOTECH priorities and contribute to the achievement of APEC goals;
- Identify ways to strengthen TEL’s strategic priorities and direction for future work;
- Provide recommendations on how the forum can better focus and more efficiently and effectively manage its tasks and assure that its capacity building activities are providing benefits according to Leaders’ and Ministers’ priorities;
- Identify ways to develop synergies among the work of the forum and other relevant APEC groups;
- Identify opportunities and provide recommendations for greater collaboration with non-APEC parties, including the private sector, civil society and other international organizations; identify ways for TEL to tap resources for programs;
- Explore how TEL can better take into account the APEC commitment to give gender greater consideration in accordance with directions outlined by the Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy;
- Finalize an array of recommendations on the above-mentioned areas. Recommendations are to be provided in two lists: the first list containing a maximum of 5 decision points for consideration by SCE to provide further instruction to the group, and the second list covering those recommended actions that can be further discussed for implementation by the TEL itself.

This document is organized as follows. After the description of the methodology guiding this assessment, the alignment of TEL’s objectives with APEC priorities will be

¹ TELMIN7, Bangkok, Thailand, 2008

discussed. Then, the different projects proposed during the last 7 TEL WG² will be analyzed in the terms of the objectives and priorities identified in the previous section. After that the operation and organization of the forum will be revised following by an analysis of its cooperation with APEC fora and other organizations.

For each of these sections there is a review of the corresponding issue, including an evaluation of its performance and a set of recommendations. The document ends with some concluding remarks as well as with a listing of the recommendations.

Methodology of this Independent Assessment

Conceptual framework

This assessment is based upon verifiable and well-established facts but also relies on a particular view of the processes and systems under review.

There are three elements in this framework that will be taken into account for the elaboration of the recommendations. The first element is the recommendations of the previous assessment. In 2009 an independent consultant realized a thorough analysis of TEL WG activities since its creation and till the year 2008 and proposed a set of recommendations. The second element is the analysis of relevant documents in order to highlight the APEC Leaders and Ministers priorities in achieving APEC goals. In the third place we have TEL activities and their alignment with the identified priorities. In this regard we have not only the analysis of TEL's activities with regards of APEC priorities but also the perceptions of the Member Economies on TEL's activities through the elaboration and distribution of a survey among the economies.

The Asia Pacific community is one of highly heterogeneous members. The challenges faced within APEC and in particular in the TELWG are to comply with different needs for the same goals, with different sectorial development and, at the same time, stimulate participation of the relevant actors. TELWG must define clear programs and scenarios of cooperation to bring into scene relevant actors and to strengthen APEC as an organization.

Previous Assessment Recommendations

In 2009 an independent assessment of the Telecommunications and Information Working Group was fulfilled. This assessment analyzed TEL's activities from its creation in 1990 until 2008. The assessment was very thorough and clear recommendations were made. In this assessment, the recommendations from the previous work reported by SOM in its 2009 Report on ECOTECH are taken into account³ and the documentation analyzed is from the period of 2009 – 2012.

² In 2009 a first independent assessment on TELWG analyzed the performance of this group from its beginning till TEL 38. The results of this previous assessment will be taken into account.

³ "2009 Senior Officials' Report on Economic and Technical Cooperation" annex 8.

Two decision points for considerations by SCE and five decision points for consideration by TEL were suggested in the previous assessment.

Decision points for TEL

1. Outreach: TEL has to develop an outreach strategy
2. Prioritizing: TEL has to delimit its scope of work
3. Roadmap: TEL has to have its own roadmap
4. Wants and needs: TEL has to integrally address stakeholders' needs
5. TEL has to further streamline processes

Analysis of Documentation

For the sake of this assessment, the Consultant reviewed the pertinent documents, the TEL records of meetings and key project documentations all available from APEC's web page.

Documents reviewed included, but were not limited to, the following: Declarations from Economic Leaders' Meetings; Declarations from Annual Ministerial Meetings; Statements from the Ministerial Meetings of the APEC TELMIN; summary reports of TEL39 through TEL45 meetings, and its correspondent steering group reports.

Once the relevant documents were analyzed and priorities and requests were detected, we compared them with the activities realized by TEL.

Annex A to this document: Leaders', Ministers', TELMIN Instructions to TEL and Collective Actions

Annex B to this document: TEL activities and project analysis in relation with APEC priorities and TEL 2010 – 2015 Strategic Plan

The Questionnaire

A necessary and important input for the preparation of this Assessment was provided by the replies to a questionnaire that was sent, through the APEC Secretariat, to Contact Points in all APEC economies during the TEL45 meeting in Da Nang, Vietnam.

In addition to seeking the particular views and positions originating from each economy, the questionnaire was designed in order to obtain further information about a number of relevant areas. In the first place, the questionnaire asked questions about the meetings of the Working Group, its preparation and its conduction, including the quality of communications within the WG and the degree of participation of members in its activities. Secondly, there were questions about TEL projects and activities intended to grasp the perception of the economies of the relevance of its activities and their accordance with the Bogor goals and the priorities highlighted in TELMIN8 and APEC TEL Strategic Plan 2010-2015. In the third place, the questionnaire sought to obtain

information about the expectations of the member economies on the TEL activities after 2015. Finally, it contained questions about the outreach of TEL's work and coordination with other APEC fora and organizations.

Annex C to this document: Questionnaire

Working Group Meeting

Finally, as part of the Terms of Reference of this Assessment, I attended as an observer the 45th Meeting of the TEL WG (Da Nang, Vietnam, April 3rd – 11th, 2012) and participated in all of its sessions. In addition to observing the meeting, I had the opportunity to interact with most of its members during those nine days. The rapport established on that occasion proved to be useful for subsequent contacts and also to complement the information to be gathered from the questionnaire with other views that, though personal and somewhat subjective, played an important role in the shaping of my own perspective on the activities of the Working Group.

Other Contacts

Throughout the period of preparation of this report, I have maintained a continuous relationship with the APEC Secretariat, particularly with TEL Program Director. His comments to a first draft of this document (prior to its first circulated version) were extremely useful.

Last but not least, the comments to the first version of this document received from member economies and from the SCE Chair were essential to give it its finishing touches.

2. ALIGNMENT WITH APEC PRIORITIES

APEC works following three main pillars: trade and liberalization, business facilitation and economic and technical cooperation. Four Committees conduct these activities: the Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI), the Budget and Management Committee (BMC), the Economic Committee (EC) and the Senior Official Meeting Steering Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation (SCE). TEL is one of the SCE working groups.

TEL outputs are reported to SCE and through SCE to the Senior Official Meeting (SOM), the Telecommunications and Information Industry Ministers (TELMIN), the APEC Ministerial Meeting (AMM) and the APEC Economies Leaders Meeting (AELM).

TEL's work responds to the directions of APEC Leaders, APEC Ministers and APEC Telecommunications and Information Ministers and Senior Officials.



The main objectives that guide its activities are defined in the Bogor Goals.

1. - Bogor Goals⁴

The Objective of APEC is to lead the way in:

- A. Strengthening the open multilateral trading system;
- B. Enhancing trade and investment liberalization in the Asia-Pacific region; and
- C. Intensify Asia-Pacific development cooperation.

2. - The Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) Steering Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation (SCE) coordinates and manages APEC's economic and technical cooperation (ECOTECH) agenda.

Five areas have been identified as medium-term ECOTECH priorities (these priorities will be reviewed by 2015):

- i. Regional economic integration
- ii. Addressing the social dimensions of globalization (inclusive growth)
- iii. Safeguarding the quality of life through sustainable growth
- iv. Structural reform
- v. Human security

As a response to the goals and priorities stated by the APEC's Leaders as well as by the Senior Officials TEL WG worked a strategic plan intended to prioritize its work. This document not only helped TEL WG to build a roadmap of its future activities but was also one of the 2009 assessment's recommendations.

3. - Strategic Plan: 2010 - 2015

⁴ Bogor, Indonesia. November 15, 1994

To achieve APEC's objectives of trade and investment liberalization, business facilitations and, economic and technical cooperation TEL's steering groups and task force developed a strategic plan. In 2010, the 8th Ministerial Meeting on Telecommunications and Information endorsed the Strategic Plan for 2010-2015.

Strategic Plan	ECOTECH priorities	Bogor Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop ICT to Promote New Growth ○ Universal broadband access by 2015 ○ Assist developing economies to deploy broadband networks ○ ICT availability to people with special needs ○ Regional deployment of IPv6 ○ Infrastructure sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Regional economic integration iv) Structural reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Strengthening the open multilateral trading C. Intensify Asia Pacific development cooperation
Strategic Plan	ECOTECH priorities	Bogor Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance Socio-Economic Activities through the Use of ICT ○ Development of innovative technologies and services ○ Smart grids and sensor networks ○ ICT applications to drive socio-economic activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) Addressing the social dimensions of globalization (inclusive growth) iii) Safeguarding the quality of life through sustainable growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C. Intensify Asia Pacific development cooperation
Strategic Plan	ECOTECH priorities	Bogor Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a Safe and Trusted ICT Environment ○ Safe and trusted ICT environment ○ Cyber security capacity building ○ Raising cyber security awareness ○ Cyber security initiatives with industry ○ Safe and secure online 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> v) Human Security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Strengthening the open multilateral trading C. Intensify Asia Pacific development cooperation

environment for vulnerable groups o Internet economy		
Strategic Plan	ECOTECH priorities	Bogor Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Regional Economic Integration; o Free and open trade and investment o Technical conformity assessments and equivalence of technical requirements (MRA) o International mobile costs o Consumer awareness o Peer learning o Submarine cable protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Regional Economic Integration v) Structural reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Strengthening the open multilateral trading B. Enhancing trade and investment liberalization C. Intensify Asia Pacific development cooperation
Strategic Plan	ECOTECH priorities	Bogor Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen Cooperation in the ICT Sector o Collaboration within APEC o Collaboration outside APEC 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C. Intensify Asia Pacific development cooperation

In the table above we can observe that the TEL Strategic Plan 2010-2015 takes into account all the priorities highlighted by ECOTECH, as well as the Bogor Goals. The last point in the Strategic Plan refers to the goal of cooperation within the Asia Pacific area and also responds to APEC's outreach strategy.

The activities and the work achieved in TEL WG aim at the development of the XXI century infrastructure. This infrastructure is vital for trade and sustainable economic and social growth. In this sense TEL WG activities do have or should have an impact in a wide range of different APEC fora.

For example:

- i. In the electronic commerce steering group of the Committee on Trade and Liberalization (CTI), where the security and reliability of the infrastructure play an important role and where ICT applications and broadband penetration encourage electronic commerce among APEC economies.

- ii. TEL WG have done a lot of interesting work on cyber security including best practices analysis on cooperation between stakeholders like law enforcement agencies, information exchange with the counter terrorism task force group of the SCE is pertinent.
- iii. TEL WG has been very active in terms of emergency preparedness and can and should sum its efforts with the task force group on emergency preparedness of SCE.
- iv. E-health has been one ICT application area with the most impressive developments than should be shared with the Health Working Group of SCE.
- v. Finally, in terms of human resources development ICT applications enable mobility, inclusion in the labor markets, productivity, gender equality, education and represents a valuable input for the Human Resource Development Working Group of SCE as well as with the Policy Partnership on Women in the Economy.

Recommendations to SCE

- I. **Raise the awareness** to the other working groups on the work elaborated by TEL and on its relevance in terms of infrastructure. At least 5 working groups have been identified whose activities can be complemented with the ones done by TEL.
- II. **Foster communications** between the groups chairs: a better communication between the groups chairs could end in joint working sessions that could be beneficial to some of the activities of the working groups. This kind of work will strengthen APEC's position and already prestigious reputation.

Recommendations to TEL

TEL WG and in special its SOM have the difficult task to balance in TEL's activities the economies expectations and particular needs with the needed work to comply with the strategic plan. Taking into account the five elements described in the "Strategic Planning – Process Guide for Working Groups⁵" for the elaboration of the strategic plan is fundamental. Nevertheless two more pieces of information will be beneficial in the strategic plan one is the expected output for every activity and the other one is the targeted audience. A more detailed plan that will include actions and results can help TEL's chair, vice chairs and conveners to prioritize the work and avoid overlapping, inviting the economies to focus for the next meeting on the issues that have not been extensively discussed.

- III. **Detailed objectives, expected results and targeted audiences:** TEL WG is responding to the priorities and demands from APEC Leaders and Ministers. Nevertheless a more detailed plan with clear objectives, expected outputs and the targeted audience can be useful for the organization of the work and activities.

⁵ "2011 Senior Officials' Report on Economic and Technical Cooperation" annex 5.

TEL Strategic Action Plan (Key Areas)	TEL's activities	Expected Results	Targeted audience
Universal access by 2015	Workshop (TEL 40) Workshop (TEL 43)		
Strategies to assist developing economies	Information sharing (TEL 44) Enhancing Broadband Development and Internet Usages for Improving Networks and Services in APEC Member Economies (2011)		
ICT availability to people with special needs	Workshops (TEL 45)		
Regional deployment of IPv6	Workshop (TEL 40) Workshop (TEL 41)		
Infrastructure sharing	Workshop (TEL 41) Workshop (TEL 40) Workshop (TEL 43)		
Development of innovative technologies and services	Industry roundtable (TEL43)		
Smart grids and sensor networks	Workshop (TEL45) Workshop (TEL 42)		
ICT applications to drive socio-economic activities	Workshop (TEL 40) Seminar (TEL44) Workshop (TEL44)		
Safe and trusted ICT environment	Workshop (TEL43) Workshop (TEL44)		
Cyber security capacity building	Workshop (TEL 40) Training session (TEL44) Experts group meeting (TEL44) Experts group meeting (TEL45) Seminar (TEL45)		
Raising cyber security awareness		TEL has an annual APEC Cyber Security Awareness Day on 29th October.	
Cyber security initiatives with industry	Workshop (TEL45)		
Safe and secure online environments for vulnerable groups	Workshop (TEL 39)	Child online protection	
Internet economy			
Free and open trade and investment	Exchange of information (TEL 42) Exchange of information		

	(TEL\$")		
Technical conformity assessments and equivalence of technical requirements	MRA Task Force (TEL39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45)	MRA issue and has drafting session at every TEL meeting.	
International mobile costs	Workshop (TEL43)		
Consumer awareness	Workshop (TEL43)		
Peer learning			
Submarine cable protection		Final report of 'Submarine Cable Information Sharing Project' was submitted after TEL44.	
Collaboration within APEC	Cooperation with CTI on Submarine Cable Protection.		
Collaboration outside APEC	OECD, APCERT, ICANN		

In the table above we can observe the activities realized by TEL WG in the past 4 years. There have been activities in every priority area but few concluding papers or reports on the issues. Besides the goals of free trade and broadband access that had expected times (2010, 2020 and 2015 respectively) the other activities seem to be ongoing ones till asked otherwise by the Economic Leaders, or simply there depending on an economy interest to propose a project or activity on this particular issue.

- IV. **Establish mechanisms to determine when a topic had been sufficiently discussed:** Telecommunications and ICT are a relevant infrastructure and a proved mean to achieve economic and social development. It is also a sector that is changing and evolving continuously hence it is very difficult to determine when a question has been sufficiently discussed. One way to move forward is to elaborate a report that will include the important amount of information sharing as well as the workshops results on a particular subject and submit these documents to the economies for consideration. If the member economies consider that the information contained is sufficient to help them advancing in their objectives then the document should be presented to SOM meeting for approval, then to TELMIN, to the Minsters Meeting and finally to the APEC Economic Leaders Meeting. Once the document approved by the relevant actors it should be published. These publications will enhance APEC outreach strategy considering the known fruitfulness and richness of TEL's work. This mechanism will also help identify the topics that have not been sufficiently discussed, for example an issue like the internet economy and internet costs have not been discussed in-depth in the working group and it is vital for the future of the Asia Pacific Information Society.
- V. **Plan ahead:** A mechanism to determine when a subject have been sufficiently discussed will allow the group to move forward and discuss more issues also

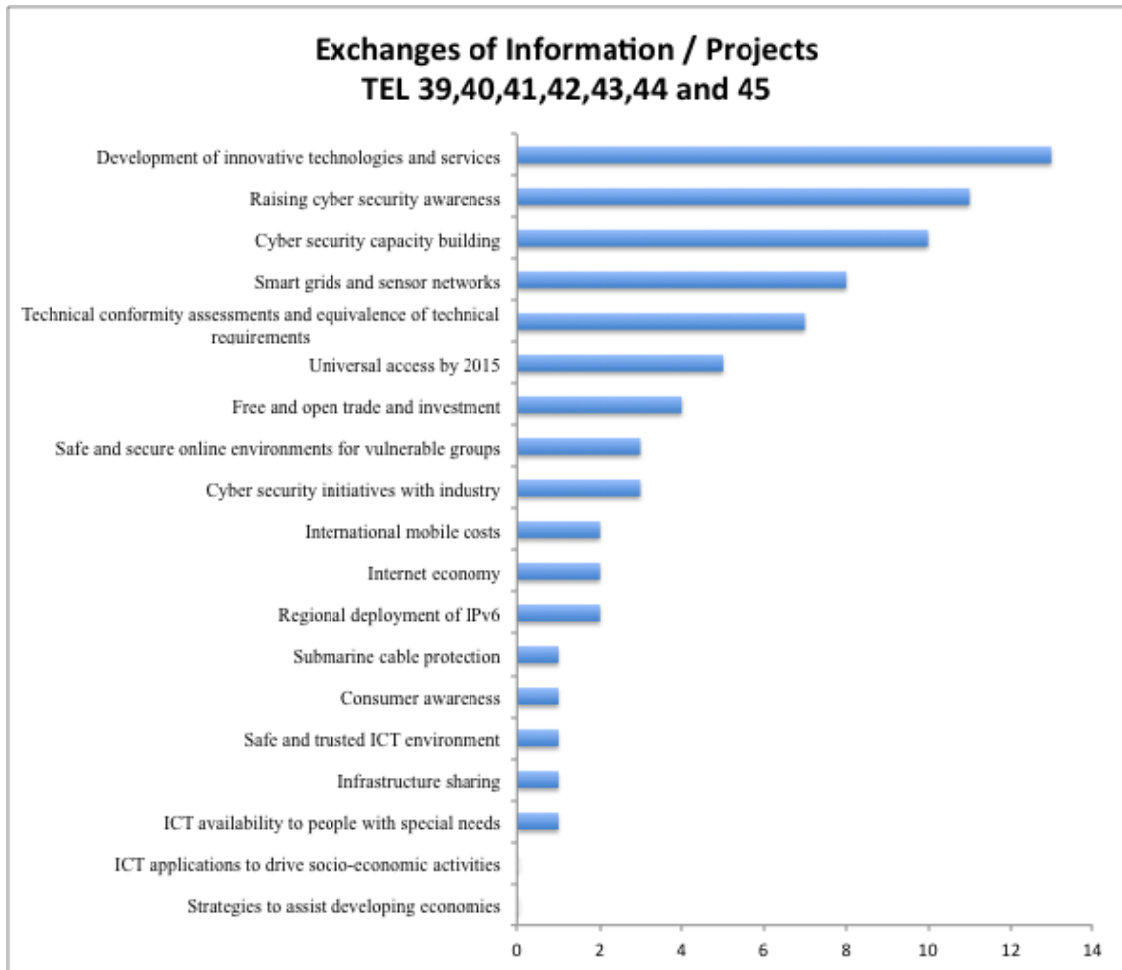
relevant for trade liberalization and investment. Prior to the elaboration of the next Strategic Plan 2015-2020 TEL WG would be in a position to propose important topics and objects of study to consideration of the Economic Leaders. Also, and this issue will be proposed more in detail later on, but the identification of subjects ahead of time gives the Economies more time to plan and finance the workshops attendance as well as to invite relevant stakeholders that could enrich the discussions.

3. PROJECTS

The approved projects from the past 7 TEL WG meetings are adequate with both the ECOTECH priorities and the subsequent strategic plan. From the more than 30 projects proposed or reported during those meetings all of them had a connection with at least one of APEC's objectives. Nevertheless the inexistence of a clear roadmap results in a lot of work done in the same areas (security, broadband, disaster prevention or management, and even green technologies). Comparatively, very little have been done in topics related with competition like lowering internet costs, infrastructure sharing, ICT as a facilitator of trade, investment and maintenance of the infrastructure etc...

Another remark, during the TEL45 meeting two economies proposed slightly different projects related to broadband. The convenor proposed to merge both projects and both economies argued against which resulted in the approval of two projects on the same main topic. This difficulty will always arise in an open organization like APEC and that is why the importance to define the topics and the expected results with regards to its relation with APEC overall objectives before hand in order to avoid this kind of situations.

In the information analyzed from the Chair reports from the past 7 TEL WG we can observe that 77% of the projects and information exchanges were focused on 5 of the 19 Strategic Plan key areas. The following chart shows the distribution of the projects and exchanges of information from the past 7 TEL meetings according to the identified key areas from TEL Strategic Plan 2010-2015.



TEL WG plays an important role as an enabler of infrastructure, which is vital for the economic and social development, and as an available platform to present and discussed applications development that is also an important tool for sustainable growth and development.

APEC Economic Leaders as well as Telecommunications Ministers have endorsed the work done in both areas the infrastructure and the applications development. The result of such an endorsement can be appreciated in the work done in TEL. Most of the projects are either in cyber security (which is a critical issue for both infrastructure and applications), broadband and development of innovative technologies and services. Also, it is important to mentioned that the member economies that answered the questionnaire were satisfied with the work done and did believed that it responded to the TEL commitments.

Recommendations to APEC Secretariat and TEL Chair

One of this assessment recommendation is to clearly state the expected results or development of the different topics in the key areas. If there is a clear expected output

that is a document or a report or a combination of multiple presentations under one subject. A clear roadmap will allow the economies while proposing a particular project to identify where the project belongs in the overall work of TEL's group and include the expected output from the particular project proposed. A more organized process will also facilitate the member economies to find relevant information and maybe to avoid duplication in the proposed activities.

- VI. **Add two categories to the project proposals:** when a project is propose it generally includes information on the steering group it comes from, the proposing economy, the cost, the source of funding, the topic and the priority. In order to facilitate the organization of the processes and TEL's work it would be interesting to add two more categories, one with information on the expected output and the second on its contribution to TEL Strategic Plan.

Recommendations to TEL

- VII. **Targeted audience:** a clear definition of the expected outcomes from TELs activities will permit the economies to identify the targeted audience. For example the workshop on cyber security that took place in TEL45 was aimed to build capacity among law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and cyber crime laboratories. The clearer the information of the work to be done and the expected competences of the audience the better the results and the higher the quality of the work achieved by TEL. Telecommunications and ICT applications are subjects that are developed not only by the Ministries of Telecommunications and ICT's or their equivalent but also by other Ministries as well. In this new information society economies have to adapt to these new conditions and TEL WG should be the platform where health minister and the information technology or telecommunications ministers share information and find the way to adapt to this new conditions. There is a lot of information to exchange in this subject.

The clearer the expected output from the projects and the targeted audience the more interested stakeholders will attend and hopefully will boost the interest of the economies and result in more funding.

4. FORUM OPERATIONS

TEL WG within the SCE

TEL WG is one of the 14 working groups within the SCE. As mentioned before telecommunications and ICTs are the infrastructure through which economic integration can be promoted and nowadays act as enablers in every sector of the economy. Therefore some of the issues discussed in the working group are important and can have a direct impact in topics discussed in other SCE WG.

Today the relationship between the work elaborated by TEL and the SCE is at a senior level only. Later in the document it is proposed to have TEL WG meeting at the same time than the major SOM meetings. It is important to have in mind that this arrangement can nurture the relationship between TEL WG participants in all levels with other sub-fora participants as well as other Senior Official.

Logistics

TEL WG meets twice every year. Normally each TEL meeting has a length of approximately 6 days and the member economies financed these meeting in a voluntary manner.

In the last 7 TEL WG meetings scrutinized since 2009 the attendance average of the economies was very high: 85%. Nevertheless only 2 of the 7 meetings were held in the Americas region, and if we go further back in time we notice that from the 45 TEL WG meetings held since 1990 the 22% was held in America where lies the 23% of the member economies. Of all the TELWG meetings around 30% of the economies had held 3 meetings while the other 70% had held 2 meetings.

It is important to notice that in this time of economic difficulties it is some times hard for the member economies to get the financial support to host the TEL meetings and that unfortunately ounce this kind of expense is out of the economies programed budgets it takes time and a lot of justifications to get this type of expenditure reconsidered. Thus the celebration of the TEL meeting is sometimes not guarantee and depends on last minutes negotiations from the economies heads of delegation with their correspondent governments.

APEC is familiar with this problem and that is why in its 2011 Senior Officials' Report on Economic and Technical Cooperation it included an annex on "Policy on Scheduling of Sub-fora Operations to Enhance Effectiveness"⁶. In this policy it is recommended to plan sub-fora meetings at the same time and at the same venue as the major SOM meetings (to the maximum extent possible and as long as the host economy is willing).

Having the different sub-fora meetings at the same time will augment the interaction and the networks between different actors, which, in the particular case of an infrastructure sector such as telecommunications and ICT could be beneficial.

In the case of there is substantial reasons to maintain a different set of venues and agenda for TEL WG, a way to avoid the present situation where there is no certainty upon future venues, can be by creating a list of venues for the meetings. The list should if possible contain various meetings; at list the next 4 TEL WG meetings. This way the economies can plan ahead their budgets considering not only the meeting that they are suppose to host but also to plan upfront who are the interested stakeholders for each meeting so they will have enough time to inform them so they can consider the TEL meeting in their budgets. SOM TEL, with the support of the Program Director, should endure the difficult

⁶ "2011 Senior Officials' Report on Economic and Technical Cooperation" annex 8

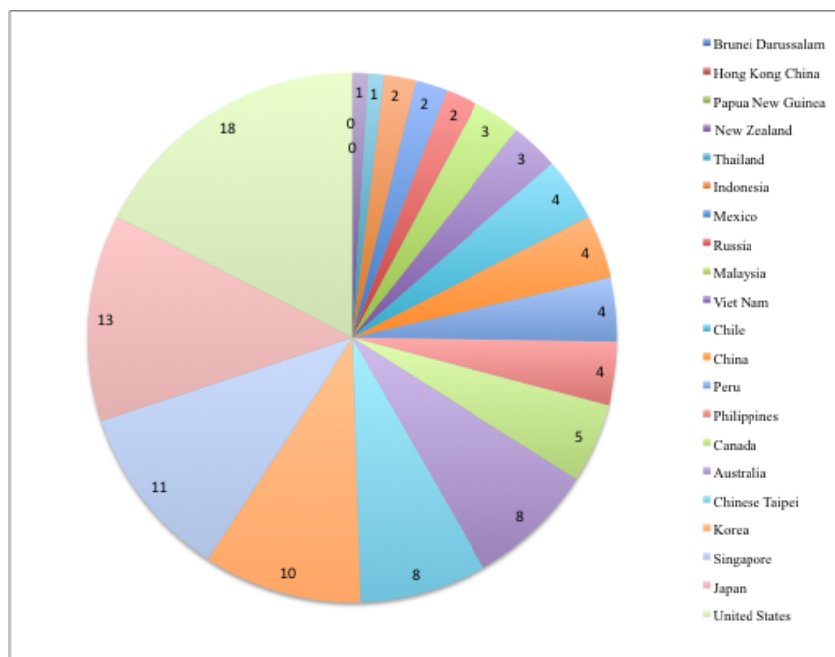
task of doing the pertinent consultations with the economies in order to ensuring sufficient venues proposals in order to prepare this list.

Another important consideration is to maintain the format of a maximum of 6 days meeting in order to limit the economies expenses.

In terms of information exchange nothing can replace the face-to-face interaction, nevertheless being a group of telecommunications experts it should be possible to allow remote participation to the meetings. There are many platforms now a day that with a minimum bandwidth offer a very straightforward remote participation. TEL chair through the expertise of the TEL group observers can determine the best platform in terms of costs and availability and accept remote participation from accredited member from the APEC economies.

One of the strength of APEC is the information sharing not only between the economies' administrations but also industry in the round tables. The results of these fruitful interactions are the most valuable information for the economies. The lesser economies participate the poorest the information gathered. In the past 7 TEL WG only 7 out the 21 economies participated in 73% of the TEL activities. Member economies must participate in the work in order to maintain the quality of the APEC's collaborations.

Economies participation (% of project proposals and information sharing)



Organization

The APEC TEL aims to “improve telecommunications and information infrastructure in the Asia-Pacific region by developing and implementing appropriate telecommunications and information policies, including relevant human resource and development cooperation strategies. This is reflected in the TEL's expanded vision of promoting the transition from an Asia-Pacific Information Infrastructure into the Asia-Pacific Information Society”⁷.

To achieve this objective there are numerous activities taking place during the TEL meetings, among the main activities we have work shops, different formats of information exchanges, industry and regulators roundtables, development of projects and project proposals that terminates in general with the elaboration of useful documents for the achievement of economic integration, sustainable growth and human security among others. One of the strength of APEC as an organization is the participation of government, industry and academia. The presence of all this stakeholders enriches the quality of the work done.

The fruitfulness of the work depends on the contributions of the economies’ stakeholders hence preparation for the meetings will benefits the results. During the plenary of the TEL WG the list of projects for the next meeting is approved giving the members a few month to prepare for the next group meeting. With the approved strategic plan the TEL group is able to elaborate a roadmap with clearer topics to discuss during, for example the next 4 group meetings. This way the economies will have more time to prepare and also to complement their contributions with more stakeholders’ participations.

ICTs applications are not only part of the telecommunications sector. ICTs applications can foster development and growth as well as human security. In a workshop where information on e health is shared it will be interesting to have member from the health sector participating. The last workshop on cyber security that took place in Da Nang during TEL 45 was elaborated for law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and criminal laboratories and not necessarily for telecommunications and ICTs regulators or ministries.

A clear roadmap with defined topics and targeted audience will benefit the work done.

Recommendations to TEL

- VIII. **If possible set the venues of the meeting as the major SOM meetings or propose in the next TEL WG to elaborate a list of venues for the next TEL meetings following an agreed order.** In these difficult economic times with budgetary constraints it would be beneficial for TEL work to be able to establish a list of TEL meeting venues.
- IX. **Participation should be encouraged.** With enough anticipation and with the knowledge of the issues that are going to be revised during a meeting TEL SOM

⁷ <http://www.apec.org/Groups/SOM-Steering-Committee-on-Economic-and-Technical-Cooperation/Working-Groups/Telecommunications-and-Information.aspx>

could be invite the economies to make a presentation on a particular topic. As we mentioned before the strength and fruitfulness of the meetings depends directly upon the economies participation. An invitation to present a particular topic with time in advance could encourage participation from economies that generally do not participate.

- X. **Remote participation.** Being a telecommunications and ICT's group remote participation to the meetings should be considered. There are internet platforms that enable this kind of remote participation with a very low costs and different stakeholders will be able to participate in TEL's different activities.
- XI. **Elaboration of a roadmap.** The elaboration of a roadmap that will organize future topics to be developed in the different steering groups could enhance participation and collaboration in the meetings.

Finally I would like to add a last observation regarding the relationship between APEC Secretariat and TEL SOM. In the 2011 Senior Officials' Report on Economic and Technical Cooperation it was mentioned that: "a major reason that strategic plans fail to reach their objectives is that implementation is assigned to members who never participated in the planning⁸". I would like to add another reason to the previous comment and it is that in some economies there is a lot of personal rotation and so we have learning curves on the group activities and organizations. That is why as a last recommendation it would be useful that the APEC Secretariat assign a person to each working group who will be responsible for asking, searching and gathering the needed information in order to ensure the achievement of the objectives of the strategic plan.

- XII. **Assign a clerk for each working group:** that will help TEL SOM to work with the economies in order to achieve the strategic plan's objectives.

5. COOPERATION

From the information analyzed there is participation of organizations outside APEC in TEL's work. There have been a lot of join work between OCDE an APEC as well as APEC with different universities.

The previous Telecommunications Working Group independent assessment recommended the development of an outreach strategy. Even if there is participation of other organizations in TEL meetings, TEL as a group should continuously outreach for possible interested organizations and universities that are dealing and researching the same important subjects.

On the other hand, in terms of cooperation with other APEC fora it has been observed that there is very little interaction. As stated in the first recommendation of this document

⁸ "2011 Senior Officials' Reporto n Economic and Technical Cooperatio" annex 5 p. 49

APEC Secretariat should raise the awareness in the APEC fora of the work elaborated by this important working group in order to enhance cooperation.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The first concluding remark is I believe that TEL is working aligned with APEC main goals and objectives. TEL has taken into account the recommendations from the previous assessment and is working according a first strategic plan.

There is more to be done in the organization arena to boost TEL's effectiveness and exposure. The next steps after the strategic plan is to determine specific objectives and expected outputs. With the elaboration of a roadmap the economies will be able to plan ahead and by knowing the topics that are going to be discussed will have time to prepare a participation that will enrich the work and identify and invite relevant actors.

TEL should allow remote participation to its meetings and set an example of the benefits of broadband ICT applications. As we said before, the value of a face to face meeting cannot be replace but economies should have the opportunity to participate in the meetings remotely.

With the commitment of the economies to alternately host a meeting and the requirement of participation the expected quality and pertinence of the work for the years to come will be ensured.

Telecommunications and ICT are both infrastructure and applications and how the infrastructure interacts with the applications is an issue that must be analyzed in this group. Other important issues are the cost of internet and its impact in the information society and in trade liberalization and investment.

With the roadmap proposed TEL group should have enough time to start discussing what is next and to propose the APEC Economic Leaders and Telecommunications Ministers the topics that should be discussed for the sustainable growth of the economies in the next Strategic Plan.