



Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation

# Highlights: Economic and Technical Cooperation in APEC 2021

Advancing Free Trade  
for Asia-Pacific Prosperity

## Cooperation for an Inclusive and Sustainable Asia-Pacific

APEC is a place for economies to explore creative solutions to shared challenges in these trying times as well as learn from each other through economic and technical cooperation (ECOTECH).

The Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) Steering Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation, or SCE, coordinates APEC's ECOTECH agenda.

## Indigenous peoples vs COVID-19

Of the approximately 370 to 476 million Indigenous peoples all over the world, an estimated 70% to 80% call the Asia-Pacific region home, many of whom were severely affected by COVID-19.

APEC conducted studies to better understand the value of Indigenous economies to the region and to assess the economic impact of the pandemic on them.

**Employment and incomes of Indigenous peoples took a real hit in 2020.** Tourism-based economies were heavily affected.

**We still do not know the full impact on the Indigenous economies.** Between 2019 and 2020 the income and employment gap between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population increased in several economies as a result of the still ongoing pandemic.

However, Indigenous communities displayed an extraordinary amount of creativity and resilience. Indigenous peoples:

- Locked down their communities to protect elders
- Mobilized to support family, friends and other communities facing poverty.
- Produced their own food utilizing access to traditional lands, avoiding food insecurity
- Used traditional knowledge and wisdom to combat the negative health and economic effects of the pandemic

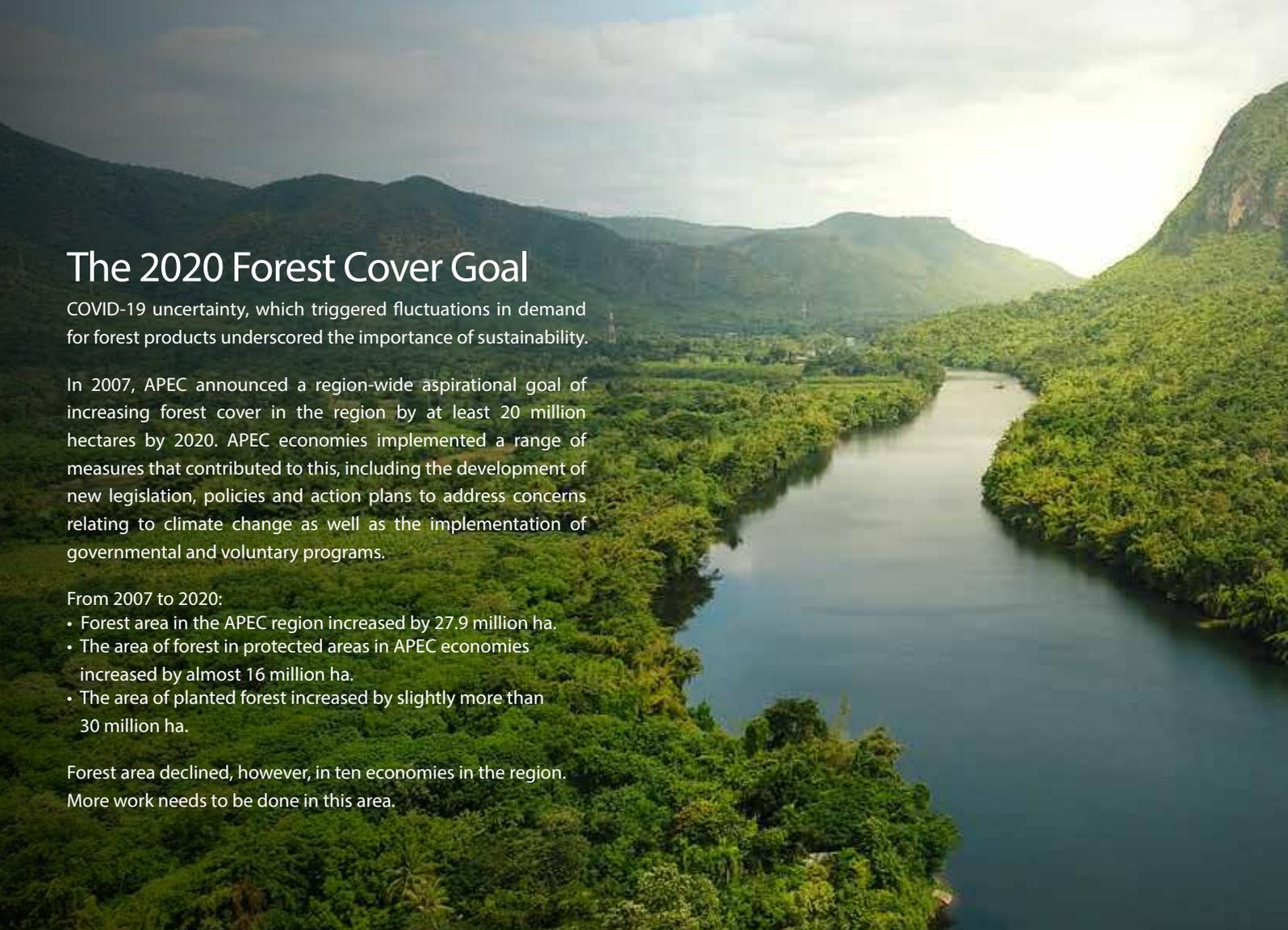
## Data and Representation

### **Inclusive Policymaking Requires:**

**Data collection and analysis.** There is a lack of information about the economy of Indigenous communities as well as sex-aggregated data.

**Representation at the top.** There are few women, Indigenous peoples and other underrepresented members of society who are in high-level decision-making positions.





## The 2020 Forest Cover Goal

COVID-19 uncertainty, which triggered fluctuations in demand for forest products underscored the importance of sustainability.

In 2007, APEC announced a region-wide aspirational goal of increasing forest cover in the region by at least 20 million hectares by 2020. APEC economies implemented a range of measures that contributed to this, including the development of new legislation, policies and action plans to address concerns relating to climate change as well as the implementation of governmental and voluntary programs.

From 2007 to 2020:

- Forest area in the APEC region increased by 27.9 million ha.
- The area of forest in protected areas in APEC economies increased by almost 16 million ha.
- The area of planted forest increased by slightly more than 30 million ha.

Forest area declined, however, in ten economies in the region. More work needs to be done in this area.

## Digital Innovation

The Pandemic has exacerbated the digital skills divide as well as gaps in digital infrastructure.

The Human Resources Development Working Group conducted initiatives to help economies better understand the size of the gap and their level of readiness to address it. They aim to close the gap by 2030.

The Telecommunications and Information Working Group conducted several workshops in support of a digitally enabled recovery by exploring virtualized and/or disaggregated telecommunications networks. They also sought to understand how digital readiness initiatives can aid society to better access technology as well as equip citizens with the skills that are needed to use that technology.

## Implementing the La Serena Roadmap for Women

The world has changed dramatically since the La Serena Roadmap for Women and Inclusive Growth was adopted in 2019. The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on women has reinforced the need for APEC working groups to build capacity, increase resilience and address the barriers to women and girls from participating in the economy.

As at June 2021, over 100 initiatives have been completed or are underway with much progress in empowering women's access to capital and markets, and increasing women's business competencies to encourage their participation in the digital economy.

- Supporting policies to close the gender pay gap
- Preventing gender-based violence and discrimination
- Countering gender stereotypes in education and skills development.
- Promoting the transition of women from the informal to the formal economy
- Enabling an environment that supports gender equality and women's empowerment
- Strengthening access to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and careers.