

PPSTI Statement on COVID-19

We recognize that the APEC region's post-COVID-19 recovery is dependent on science, technology, and innovation (STI). It is through the skills, investments, solidarity, and collaborative efforts of our scientific community, including the private sector, that we can achieve breakthroughs, advance priority research (e.g., clinical treatments and therapeutics, diagnostics, drug discovery and vaccine development, etiology and epidemiology, etc.), and rapidly scale manufacturing and distribution networks of safe, effective, and affordable innovations needed to combat pandemics, including COVID-19, while protecting incentives for innovations.

As economies grapple with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of STI in delivering evidence-based policy advice, identifying innovative solutions, identifying ways to share information on efforts to mitigate risks and on disaster management in a pandemic, and supporting new technologies to respond to the crisis, has never been more important. The urgency of having science evidence and data to inform policy decisions, also underlines the need for Open Science as a transformational approach towards data sharing and knowledge dissemination based on collaborative networks. APEC economies should strengthen cooperation on the application of technologies, especially on those related to combating COVID-19 and leading to economic recovery.

We support the Statement on COVID-19 by APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade, including its commitments to mitigate the health and economic impacts of the pandemic and to support the APEC region's swift recovery and harness the opportunity of the digital economy and technologies. As STI are drivers of sustainable growth and healthy economies, APEC will continue to leverage STI to support inclusive and innovative growth to enhance cooperation on digital economy and technologies to bolster the potential of STI.

We note that the COVID-19 pandemic has and continues to impact the people, systems, and outputs of the APEC STI ecosystem. We acknowledge the pressure this places on the research community, especially women and other vulnerable populations, such as Indigenous peoples, early and mid-career researchers, and all those already experiencing disadvantage and inequity within the STI ecosystem. APEC can prepare for the future and better withstand new economic shocks by leveraging the expertise and skills of the entire STI community, including traditional knowledge systems, by eliminating systemic barriers that impact vulnerable and marginalized groups, thus

building resilience in the STI ecosystem and the region's capacity to support a robust recovery.

We reaffirm our commitment to the APEC Women in STEM Principles and Actions and will continue to raise awareness about their value and encourage their widespread application. Women play a critical role in supporting economic recovery and their participation, inclusion, and leadership in the STI response to the pandemic are essential to delivering equitable growth.

We encourage economies to continue to share the knowledge and best practices they have gained from their experiences in combating the pandemic and in supporting the recovery of the APEC region. We encourage economies to identify and strengthen research collaborations, enhance their engagement with all sectors (including the private sector), and build public trust and confidence in STI in order to spur affordable innovations that support APEC economies' response to pandemics, including COVID-19.

Moving forward, PPSTI economies endeavor to share their experiences, lessons learned, and best practices under STI areas to support capacity building and innovation, encourage further collaboration in STI, and better inform policy recommendations for improving health systems and resilience planning in the APEC region.