

APEC Strategy on Movement of Business People

In the spirit of APEC's underlying approach of open regionalism;

Recognizing the importance of facilitating the movement of business people engaged in services trade among member economies through streamlined, transparent immigration clearance procedures for entry and temporary stay, with a view to facilitating cross-border trade and investment and consequently driving further economic growth;

Recognizing APEC's continuing work to promote services trade in the area through facilitation of movement of business people especially in Group on Services;

Recognizing the importance of the APEC Business Travel Card's (ABTC) role in facilitating the movement of business people in the region;

Acknowledging diversity in the level of development among APEC economies, and mindful of the particular economic situation and specific needs of developing economy members;

With a view to implementing the APEC Principles for Cross-Border Trade in Services and APEC Services Action Plan, the leaders endorsed in 2009;

Without prejudice to the right of each member economy to ensure its security, exercise immigration control, and protect its domestic labour force and employment;

Without prejudice to applicable bilateral, plurilateral, and multilateral agreements and other international instruments, or to APEC economies' positions with respect to discussions in other fora;

Recognizing the right of APEC economies to regulate entry and temporary stay of persons, in accordance with domestic laws and public policy.

APEC economies recognize the following non-binding Strategy on Movement of Business People, and will report information on improvements to their own respective policies or measures annually to the Group on Services, with respect to the following Principles and Actions.

I. Principles

APEC economies recognize the following principles relating to movement of business people, entry and temporary stay, and will endeavor to implement policies and practices consistent with these principles—

1. Making Procedures and Requirements Transparent

1) APEC economies should publish or make available through electronic or other means information on their respective requirements and procedures relating to the entry or temporary stay of business people.

2) APEC economies should, to the extent possible, and subject to their domestic laws and regulations:

(a) collect data respecting the granting of entry and temporary stay for business people who have been authorized to engage in business activities under the laws and regulations of the hosting economy; and

(b) upon request by another member economy, endeavor to make available the information referred to in (a).

3) APEC economies should, within a reasonable period of time after all administrative and other necessary requirements regarding an application requesting entry or temporary stay for business purposes are considered complete under their domestic laws and regulations, inform the applicant of their decision concerning the application. At the request of the applicant, the member economy should provide, without undue delay, information concerning the status of the application. APEC economies should endeavor to establish and publish the necessary time period to inform applicants of their decision on applications for entry or temporary stay from the date of such application's completion.

4) APEC economies should ensure that processing fees charged by their administrative authorities for applications for entry or temporary stay for business purposes are commensurate with the costs incurred by them.

2. Facilitating Entry and Temporary Stay

1) Each APEC economy should, subject to its domestic laws and policies, enhance the mobility of business people by implementing transparent and streamlined temporary entry procedures.

2) APEC economies should endeavor to introduce electronic systems using advanced technologies to identify the information necessary for immigration control to the extent possible in order to facilitate and accelerate immigration control procedures at airports in light of the increased number of business persons who frequently move across borders.

II. Actions

APEC economies have identified the following specific actions that can contribute to the facilitation of entry and temporary stay and movement of business people—

1. Further Develop the APEC Architect and APEC Engineer Initiatives

APEC economies will consider further improvements to the systems established by the APEC Architect and APEC Engineer Initiatives, enhancement of participation in them, enhanced mutual recognition among economies based on these projects, and expansion of the scheme to other professions as well as implementation of capacity buildings.

2. Enhance the ABTC Scheme

APEC economies should discuss possible ways to further enhance the ABTC scheme in relevant fora, mainly in the Business Mobility Group, through such measures as full membership participation of all APEC economies in the ABTC framework or upgrading transitional membership status in the ABTC framework, possible extension of ABTC eligibility, and enhanced use, on a best endeavor basis, of advanced technologies.

3. Further Develop APEC Professional Services Initiatives

APEC economies should identify steps that can be taken to advance the movement of business people through APEC work on professional services, including on-going GOS works in this area which include capacity-building and business development for professional services providers.