

Concept Paper – High Level Policy Dialogue on Bridging Gap in Economic Development and Integration of Remote Areas for Sustainable Growth in the APEC Region

Background

Currently, the development of remote areas is one of the most pressing issues both for global and regional economies. The Asia-Pacific region is diverse in terms of its economic development. At the same time there are a lot of remote areas, suffering from deep economic and social problems. These problems can only be solved with active support of government and business community and timely application of appropriate measures.

Remote area (in the context of this paper) - is the area which is usually located far from political, financial and business centers. The access to this area may be impeded due to climatic and geographical conditions as well as poor infrastructure.

According to World Bank estimations, in 2015, 90 million people of East Asia and Pacific live in extreme poverty and another 300 million people are vulnerable to falling back into poverty as a result of climate change, natural disasters, disease and economic shocks. Majority of these poor live in rural communities in remote and isolated areas. Insufficient development of these areas hinders the economic growth, brings a number of problems, such as social tension, burdening financial aid and its irregular distribution, corruption, criminogenic environment, etc.

Based on discussions at SOM1 and broad exchange of views among APEC members, Russian Federation came to the conclusion that specific projects and initiatives concerning some aspects of remote areas development have been implemented by various APEC fora separately and uncoordinated, thus there is no comprehensive approach to this problem in APEC. Moreover, there is no common definition used by the APEC economies in relation to the concept of "remote area".

Goal

- To investigate the existing work within APEC devoted to developing remote and isolated areas in order to avoid duplication.
- To promote information sharing and understanding of the challenges and barriers for remote areas and communities in the APEC region.
- To explore the ground for cooperation among the APEC members on the problems of developing remote areas.

Proposed Cooperation and Actions

Russia proposes to convene the High Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on Bridging Gap in Economic Development and Integration of Remote Areas for Sustainable Growth in the APEC Region during the 3rd Senior Officials' Meeting. Representatives from all interested APEC sub-fora will be invited to participate.

The HLPD will promote awareness of the existing problems that remote areas face in the APEC region, along with sharing information and best practices, measures and mechanisms used by the APEC economies to solve these problems and create remote areas' own sources of growth. It is suggested that APEC members exchange views on how the issues of remote areas' integration are already covered within different APEC fora. APEC members will analyze how they could expand new areas of cooperation, not replacing and duplicating the work already undertaken.

Detailed arrangements of the HLPD will be worked out intersessionally after SOM2. It is suggested that the Concept Paper is adopted during SOM2, in order to leave enough time for the preparatory work.

Participants and Beneficiaries of the HLPD

Beneficiaries of the HLPD are participants from APEC member economies, including officials and experts from APEC economies, representatives from academic sector and the business community, representatives of IOs and other interested stakeholders. Participants to attend the HLPD should have proper expertise regarding remote areas development and integration or relevant research experience.

To ensure that the HLPD will benefit as many individuals as possible, all the outcomes and materials will be circulated to the APEC members and uploaded to the APEC website. Organizers will disseminate information through APEC Study Centers, SOM representatives and ask those to circulate information to relevant institutions in their home economies' organizations to interested stakeholders.