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**Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations**

**Submission by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation on the  
Chemical Dialogue of the Committee on Trade and Industry**

**Note by the secretariat**

1. The secretariat has the honour to circulate, in the annex to the present note, a document on a regional contribution to SAICM implementation by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation's Committee on Trade and Industry Chemical Dialogue for the information of participants at the current session.
2. The document has been reproduced as received without formal editing.

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## **Annex**

## The APEC Chemical Dialogue: A Regional Contribution to SAICM Implementation

### Background

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is a regional forum that promotes regional economic integration among its 21 member economies.<sup>1</sup> APEC's members account for approximately 40% of the world's population, around 54% of global GDP, and about 44% of world trade. APEC operates on the basis of non-binding commitments, open dialogue, and equal respect for the views of all participants. Decisions made within APEC are reached by consensus and commitments are undertaken on a voluntary basis. APEC meets throughout any one year at the senior officials' level, and annually at Ministerial and Leaders level. Further information on APEC can be found at [www.apec.org](http://www.apec.org).

APEC has established a number of groups to promote its objective of facilitating economic growth, cooperation, trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region in different sectors. Under its Committee on Trade and Industry, APEC established a Chemical Dialogue in 2002. The Dialogue serves as a forum for government officials and industry representatives to find solutions to challenges facing the chemical industry and users of chemicals in the Asia-Pacific region. It reflects recognition among APEC member economies of the importance of engaging with the private sector and building public-private sector dialogue and cooperation for mutual benefit.

Issues addressed by the Chemical Dialogue include trade liberalization and facilitation in the chemical sector, capacity building, and improving regulatory policies and business practices to promote regional integration while ensuring health, safety and environmental protection. The work of the Chemical Dialogue reflects broader APEC strategic objectives, such as strengthening regional economic integration and expanding trade; promoting green growth; expanding regulatory cooperation and advancing regulatory convergence.

### Strategic Framework for Chemicals in the Asia-Pacific Region

In 2009, the Chemical Dialogue made a submission to ICCM-2 outlining its work on Principles for Best Practices for Chemical Regulation and on efforts to promote clarity and consistency in the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System for Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS).<sup>2</sup> Building on this earlier work, in 2011 the Chemical Dialogue adopted a Strategic Framework for Chemicals in the Asia-Pacific Region. The Strategic Framework sets out five overarching objectives for the Chemical Dialogue's work:

- To facilitate alignment with APEC Leaders' goals for sustainable economic growth and regulation.
- To promote regulatory capacity and convergence in order to facilitate trade while enhancing environmental and health protection.
- To enhance chemical management and product stewardship over the life cycle and in cooperation with other initiatives and institutions where appropriate, e.g. the OECD, UN, SAICM, WHO.
- To identify barriers to using chemicals, products and processes to achieve sustainable and innovative solutions to global problems.
- To strengthen the positioning of the sector globally as an enabler of technological change and innovation.

To achieve these objectives, the Strategic Framework identifies three shared goals around which the work of the Chemical Dialogue will be organized:

- Shared Goal 1: Expand and support cooperation and mutual recognition among chemical regulators in the Asia-Pacific Region.
- Shared Goal 2: Enhance understanding of the chemical industry's role as an innovative solutions industry.
- Shared Goal 3: Encourage chemical product stewardship, safe use, and sustainability.

The Strategic Framework is intended to be a living document, with an action plan that will be continually updated as projects are completed and new initiatives begun. The action plan is structured around the three shared goals listed above.

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1 APEC's 21 member economies are Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Chile; People's Republic of China; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Republic of Korea; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Peru; The Republic of the Philippines; The Russian Federation; Singapore; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; United States of America; Viet Nam.

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For the purposes of highlighting the work of the Chemical Dialogue as a regional contribution to SAICM implementation since 2009, projects and initiatives listed under the action plan are listed below according to how they relate to the five SAICM core objectives.

### Risk Reduction

The Chemical Dialogue has committed to the following actions and initiatives to promote risk reduction in the Asia-Pacific region:

- Maintain a GHS virtual working group to gather information and develop practical case studies to guide industry and government in GHS transition and implementation, and manage the GHS Reference Exchange and Tool (GREAT) project – a web portal that serves as a clearing house to collect and provide information on GHS implementation, including translation into local languages: <http://great.cla.gov.tw/ENG/index.aspx> (ongoing).
- Develop an APEC Chemical Dialogue Principles Framework for GHS and consumer goods for use by member economies (ongoing).
- Establish a virtual working group on transparency and innovation to develop a paper on confidential business information and transparency practices by member economies. The objective of this work is to help guide the development of policy frameworks that promote chemical industry innovation while ensuring transparent access to relevant chemical information (ongoing).
- Promote global and regional chemicals management initiatives, including voluntary industry programs such as Responsible Care and the Global Product Strategy, by preparing an APEC Chemical Dialogue report on risk reduction programs and efforts to strengthen domestic capabilities for chemicals management (ongoing).
- Develop a website to assist emergency responders in member economies in responding to transportation emergencies involving the movement of dangerous goods, particularly across borders: <http://global.chemrec.com> (completed 2012).

### Knowledge and Information

Actions and initiatives to promote the sharing of knowledge and information on chemical management issues include:

- Prepare a report for APEC Ministers on the economic importance of the chemical industry to the region, including for efforts to promote innovation and sustainable development (completed 2011: [http://aimp.apec.org/Documents/2011/MM/MRT/11\\_mrt\\_010.pdf](http://aimp.apec.org/Documents/2011/MM/MRT/11_mrt_010.pdf)).
- Promote the chemical sector as a source of innovative solutions to global issues in other APEC focal areas such as the food system, agricultural biotechnology, and industrial science and technology (ongoing).
- Maintain dialogue with the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) and European Commission, and coordinate APEC member economies input on REACH surveys and implementation issues, ensuring small and medium sized enterprise (SMEs) issues are addressed (ongoing).
- Establish a virtual working group to consider policy and regulatory issues in the region related to chemicals and articles, including how this might relate to ongoing work in SAICM on chemicals in products (ongoing).
- Establish a virtual working group to discuss mechanisms for enhanced information sharing on chemical hazard properties and classifications (ongoing).

### Governance

Projects and initiatives under the Strategic Framework related to improving governance include:

- Establish and maintain an APEC Chemical Regulators Forum via annual meetings to discuss regulatory best practice and promote regional harmonization (ongoing).
- Contribute to broader APEC work on regulatory cooperation by establishing a virtual working group to promote enhanced regulatory cooperation on chemicals issues in the APEC region (ongoing).
- Establish a virtual working group on transparency and innovation to develop a paper on CBI and transparency practices by member economies (ongoing).

### Capacity Building and Technical Assistance

Projects and initiatives related to strengthen capacity and providing technical assistance in the Asia-Pacific region include:

- Conduct chemical management best practice seminars, including train-the-trainer workshops, and developing a regulatory best practice checklist (ongoing).

- Maintain a GHS virtual working group to gather information and develop practical case studies to guide industry and government in GHS transition and implementation (ongoing).
- Identify and develop tools that would assist industry groups to enhance their chemical management capabilities (ongoing).

### Illegal International Traffic

The Chemical Dialogue promotes activities within the APEC Trade Facilitation and Customs Working Group to promote rules based international trade in chemicals and prevention of illegal shipments.

### Conclusion

Since its submission to ICCM-2 in 2009, the APEC Chemical Dialogue has made considerable progress in developing projects and initiatives that both promote the objectives of the Dialogue and serve as a regional contribution to SAICM implementation. Befitting the multi-stakeholder nature of SAICM, the Chemical Dialogue serves as a valuable forum to bring government and industry representatives from APEC member economies together to work collaboratively on projects that promote sound chemical management and deepen regional economic integration. Looking ahead, the Chemical Dialogue will continue to develop new and existing initiatives under the Strategic Framework to address current and emerging challenges in the region, and responding to the priorities set by APEC Leaders.