

Strategic Plan 2021-2024

Emergency Preparedness Working Group (EPWG)

Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

1. Introduction

Most APEC economies are situated along the Pacific Ring of Fire, where strong earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions pose constant threats. The region is also the world's most frequented by tropical cyclone formations, including yearly occurrences of Category 5 cyclones, or super typhoons. Furthermore, the Asia-Pacific region is subjected to temperature changes in the Pacific Ocean, resulting in the El Niño and La Niña phenomena. Many of these conditions could be further exacerbated by climate change.

The APEC Emergency Preparedness Working Group (EPWG) was first established as the APEC Task Force for Emergency Preparedness (TFEP) by APEC Senior Officials in 2005. In 2009, APEC Leaders reaffirmed the importance of enhancing human security and reducing the threat of disruptions to business and trade in the Asia-Pacific Region. In 2010 the TFEP was elevated to an Emergency Preparedness Working Group (EPWG).

The Emergency Preparedness Working Group comprises heads and expert level staff of emergency management agencies, working with APEC member economies and private sector, who share experiences, lessons, tools, and the latest thinking related to disaster preparedness in order to strengthen regional cooperation and domestic and collective emergency preparedness efforts. The APEC EPWG brings together government officials from the region's various emergency management agencies to build its members' capacity to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters.

In 2015, APEC Leaders adopted the APEC Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (DRRF), primarily to address the pressing concerns resulting from the persistence of disasters in the Asia-Pacific region, which are considered to be the "new normal."

This "new normal" is characterized by at least two phenomena: the increasing frequency, magnitude and scope of disasters, and the resultant disruption of the increasingly integrated and interlinked production and supply chains of the region. It disrupts the free flow of trade and investment across economies; it presents tremendous challenges and serious threats to the inclusiveness and sustainability of growth and development in the region.

The importance of addressing environmental challenges has also been highlighted in the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 that was adopted by APEC Leaders in 2020. APEC Leaders stated that, "We will promote economic policies, cooperation and growth which support global efforts to comprehensively address all environmental challenges, including climate change, extreme weather and natural disasters¹, for a sustainable planet". The EPWG's work directly supports the Putrajaya Vision through cooperation on measures that increase economic and societal resilience to environmental challenges.

¹ The expression that will be used in this Strategic Plan is "disasters" instead of "natural disasters"

This Strategic Plan focuses on EPWG activities for the period 2021-2024 in line with the APEC Disaster Risk Reduction Framework.

2. Vision Statement

An Asia-Pacific region whose societies and economies are resilient to the increasing frequency, scope and intensity of disasters. EPWG will contribute to achieve APEC Vision 2040 particularly in promoting economic policies cooperation and growth which support global efforts to comprehensively address all environmental challenges, including climate change, extreme weather and disasters.

3. Mission Statement

The EPWG's threefold mission is to:

- Develop capacity in the region so that APEC member economies can better mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies and disasters
- Improving intra-APEC coordination and cooperation around integrating best practices in emergency management and disaster preparedness
- Providing APEC economies with updated information on how to reduce the economic and social costs of disasters.

4. Critical Success Factors

Recognizing the multi-faceted characteristics of natural hazards and disaster management, the capacity of EPWG to successfully execute this plan will depend on a number of factors:

- Identifying the gaps to address that will help to enhance disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness capacity in the APEC region
- Developing and strengthening public-private partnerships that support business and community resilience to disasters, including involvement of all levels of government, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector
- Enabling, a greater role for women in supporting disaster resilient businesses and communities
- Facilitating science and technology application to disaster risk reduction by sharing good practices and implementing EPWG projects
- Leveraging existing programs and resources to sustain long-term public-private collaboration and avoid duplication of effort
- Engaging and developing cross-cutting collaboration with APEC fora, as well as regional and international organizations whose work interacts with and complements the EPWG Strategic Plan priorities and objectives to ensure their awareness of and participation in EPWG projects
- Strengthening information sharing, best practices, and learning from experiences
- Encouraging direct participation of key stakeholders in the EPWG projects.

5. Agreed Priorities, Objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

In order to achieve the EPWG's mission, the EPWG will work on the four overarching priority areas with the following outlined objectives to enable better focus on disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness.

EPWG projects will be measured by the key performance indicators (KPIs) for their effectiveness in achieving EPWG objectives under each priority area. Member economies are encouraged and welcomed to utilize KPIs to report on the progress of projects on a voluntary basis.

Priority Area	Objectives	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
Enhancing regional capacity on disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage and develop cross-cutting collaboration with APEC fora, regional and international organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate further with other APEC fora to jointly work on logistics/supply chain recovery following a large-scale disaster, the economic benefits of risk reduction for MSMEs, climate change and disasters, gender integration in disaster management, and the structural and non-structural measures associated with disaster risk reduction, including cross-fora collaborations with the representative of the APEC Health Working Group (HWG) in responding to and recovering from COVID-19. Invite and welcome non-APEC fora collaboration and participation. Contribute to regional and international initiatives on disaster risk reduction, emergency preparedness and humanitarian assistance. Support the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, facilitating contribution and inputs to the Sendai Framework progress and Mid-Term review.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance mutual assistance in preparedness for emergency response among APEC economies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue tracking and sharing information on COVID-19 measures related to emergency management adopted by EPWG economies, assessing the impact of such measures on international and regional emergency response actions. Conduct a survey to understand operational frameworks and legal regulations of emergency response, including modifications made or planned in light of the global pandemic and other disasters. Build up a contact network for senior disaster management officials in APEC. Implement programs on enhancing emergency preparedness, with a focus on risk-informed public investment based on multi-hazard risk and vulnerability analysis. Operate the APEC Emergency Preparedness Capacity Building Center under EPWG, offering a flexible capacity building program consisting of online and offline training and exchange opportunities, therefore expanding access to knowledge and skills that support management of disaster impact on people, the economy and ecological systems.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen communications among senior disaster management officials in APEC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement annual forum for senior disaster management officials in APEC. Build up a contact network for senior disaster management officials in APEC. Report updates of recent disasters and progress on post-disaster recovery.

Priority Area	Objectives	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
Promoting innovative partnerships including public-private partnerships to develop joint disaster preparedness actions and build up disaster resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and strengthen innovative partnerships including public-private partnerships that support business and community resilience to disasters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance collaboration on community-based disaster risk management, including information-sharing of updated risk information, disaster risk reduction-related statistics and research. Cultivate public-private-partnerships that are open to flexible and innovative ways of working together to build disaster-resilient business and livelihoods and communities. Number of private sector or nonprofit organizations that attend EPWG meetings in accordance with APEC Guidelines on Managing Cooperation with Non-Members.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the development of effective business continuity and critical incident tools and guides for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to reduce vulnerability and promote resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen understanding and capability of MSMEs to cope with preparedness for natural hazards. Implement programs to vulnerability at community and MSMEs level. Develop Public/Business Service Continuity Plans at national, local, and MSMEs level Number of MSME officials who attend EPWG meetings subject to the meeting agenda.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen regional partnerships to advance economies' capacity in anticipating, coping with, and preparing for disasters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen policy efforts to shift the balance from investing in response, to investing in prevention and risk reduction Reinforce and cross-sectoral collaboration in multi-hazard surveillance, early warning, impact assessment, and comprehensive disaster risk reduction actions, Promote public and private efforts in harnessing outcomes of science and technology for anticipation of and preparation for disasters
Supporting recovery processes in disaster affected economies through long-term development approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance resilience capacities of small and medium businesses and local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement programs to enhance resilience to natural disasters at community and MSMEs level. Promote disaster preparedness at all levels: from individual, to community, local, domestic and regional level.

Priority Area	Objectives	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on medium- to long-term recovery of economic activity in COVID affected and other disaster affected sectors with a focus on critical infrastructure, business, livelihood and production losses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement programs and deliver guidelines to help understand issues of disaster recovery; serve as a reference product in disaster recovery operations; assist disaster preparedness. Support member economies in embedding disaster and climate risk management in the planning and investments of economic recovery activities at different levels, strengthening the resilience of critical social and economic infrastructure and lifelines. Enhance urban and rural planning and resilience in Building Back Better efforts by providing guidance and support on multi-risk and hazard mapping and screening, taking steps to mitigate and reduce disaster risks based on identified vulnerability and hazardous areas.
Facilitating sharing of information, knowledge, expertise, best practices and experience learned from disasters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop joint research on risk, vulnerability and specific instruments for risk reduction and mitigation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify technical capacities of member economies in preparedness and response, particularly related to technology, training, and related human and material resource development. Implement programs to better integrate science and technology into disaster management. Collate and exchange regional experience on application of multi-hazard surveillance and mapping tools, creating a pool of best practices and sharing on APEC website. Conduct research on global/regional best practices of public and private partnerships for disaster risk reduction, offering evidence for the development of a guideline for such partnerships as a reference for member economies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the Group's outreach and communications efforts including by improving the effectiveness and contents of the EPWG website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote exchanges of good practices and lessons learned and to fill gaps in disaster preparedness. Implement program to upgrade EPWG website for better contents related disaster risk reduction, emergency preparedness and humanitarian assistance. Encourage utilization of available Information and Communications Technologies to facilitate access to and open communication of non-sensitive disaster risk information, using APEC website to exchange and sharing experience in promoting participatory, community-based disaster risk management initiatives at grass-root level.

6. Prioritized Implementation Schedule

The prioritized implementation schedule will be updated and modified in line with EPWG Work Plan annually and APEC Disaster Risk Reduction Framework.

Enhance regional capacity on disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness				
Objectives	Actions/Activities	Timeframe	Links with APEC DRR Framework	Stakeholders
To engage and develop cross-cutting collaboration with APEC fora, regional and international organizations	Invite other APEC fora to EPWG meetings to identify opportunities of cross cutting collaboration based on the Action Plan.	2021-2024	Four Pillars	EPWG , All other relevant APEC fora
	Attend ISDR Global Partnership and, Asia Partnership (IAP) Meeting and other DRR related meetings in the Asia-Pacific region	2021-2024	Four Pillars	EPWG, economies
To strengthen communications among senior disaster management officials in APEC	Hold Annual APEC Senior Disaster Management Officials Forum	2021-2024	Four Pillars	EPWG, economies, host economy

Promote public-private partnerships to develop joint disaster preparedness actions and build up disaster resilience				
Objective	Action/Activities	Timeframe	Link with APEC DRR Framework	Stakeholder
To promote the development of effective business continuity and critical incident tools and guides for Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to reduce vulnerability and promote resilience	EPWG Project “APEC Disaster Risk Management Strategies to Support MSMEs Business Sustainability” (EPWG 03 2019 A)	2021 - 2024	Four pillars	EPWG, economies
	Support the SMEWG in implementing SMEWG Project “2021 APEC Workshop on Business Continuity Planning with crisis management for SMEs/MSMEs”	2021	Four pillars	SMEWG, EPWG, economies

Support to recovery processes in disaster affected economies through long-term development approach				
Objective	Action/Activities	Timeframe	Link with APEC DRR Framework	Stakeholder
To enhance resilience capacities of small and medium businesses and local communities.	Enhancing APEC Cooperation on Community-based Disaster Risk Management	2021 - 2024	Prevention and Mitigation	EPWG, economies
	EPWG Project “Workshop on Enhancing Participation in Flood Disaster Preparedness through Community-based Hazard Mapping” (EPWG 02 2019A)	2021 - 2024	Prevention & Mitigation, Preparedness	EPWG, economies
	Self-funded Project “Regional Economic Integration through the Lens of Disaster Resilience” proposed by EPWG China	2021 - 2022	Four pillars	EPWG, economies
To focus on long-term recovery of economic activity in affected sectors with a focus on business, livelihood and production losses.	EPWG Project “APEC Programme in Rejuvenating Cities and Resilience Capacities for Dual Challenges of COVID-19 Pandemic, Extreme Weather Events and Climate Induced Disaster (Rejuvenate-Cities-C19)” (EPWG 01 2020A)	2021 – 2024	Four pillars	EPWG, economies
	EPWG Project “Enhancing natural disaster preparedness through understanding tsunami risks” (EPWG 02 2020 A)	2021-2022	Preparedness	EPWG, economies

Facilitate sharing of information, knowledge, expertise, best practices and experience learned from disasters				
Objective	Action/Activities	Timeframe	Link with APEC DRR Framework	Stakeholder
Improve the Group's outreach and communications efforts including by improving the effectiveness and contents of the EPWG website	Voluntary sharing of information on COVID-19 measures related to emergency preparedness among EPWG economies. The initiative encourages sharing and learning about COVID-19 response based on each economy's experience.	2021-2024	Response, Rehabilitation & Build Back Better	EPWG, economies
	Update EPWG website with latest documents and links to project outcomes.	2021-2022	Four pillars	EPWG

7. EPWG Project Development and Ranking

EPWG project proposals to develop capacity building activities should focus on issues/topics that will enable APEC member economies to achieve the priorities of this Strategic Plan.

Project proposals that have a direct link to the priorities of the EPWG Strategic Plan 2021 - 2024 will be given higher ranking by the EPWG.

8. Review of Strategic Plan

A review of Strategic Plan 2021-2024 will be presented by the end of 2024.