
Health

The emergence of regional and global health epidemics—including severe acute respiratory syndrome, avian influenza and H1N1 influenza—impacts not only the health sector but also agriculture, trade, tourism, transportation and business. APEC’s wide-ranging economic work program makes it uniquely positioned to address the multi-sectoral impact of today’s health threats.

In October 2003, APEC established the Health Task Force (HTF) to help address health-related threats to economies’ trade and security, focusing mainly on emerging infectious diseases, including naturally occurring and man-made diseases.

In 2007, after a review of the APEC fora, the HTF was upgraded in status to become the Health Working Group (HWG).

To respond to the recommendations of the Senior Officials’ Meeting (SOM) Steering Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation (SCE), the HWG and Life Sciences Innovation Forum (LSIF) met in March 2011 in Washington DC, with the purpose of exploring possible areas of cooperation. The HWG has launched several initiatives to introduce more substantive policy discussions into the working group’s activities as well better integrating APEC’s work within the broader global health agenda.

In addition to engaging with other APEC fora and international organizations like the World Health Organization, the World Bank and the Association of South East Asian Nations, the HWG has positioned itself as a regional health forum dedicated to demonstrating the value of health to economic growth and development and to building awareness of the return on investment on health innovation. The HWG’s mandate, goal and the objectives are as follows:

Mandate

The mandate of the Health Working Group is to work with partners to improve people’s health and well-being, aiming to promote trade, security, inclusive growth and development in the APEC region.

Goal

The goal of the Health Working Group is to help reduce the impact of health-related threats to the economy, trade and security of member economies. The Health Working Group aims to strengthen health systems to increase their efficiency, responsiveness and resilience to achieve and maintain universal health coverage.

Objectives

- To enhance **preparedness and response** to public health emergencies and disasters, including prevention and control of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases
- To **strengthen health systems** to improve accessibility, sustainability and quality of healthcare
- To **support healthy populations across the life-course**, including the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases and improved maternal, newborn and child health
- To encourage and facilitate **collaboration** between health and other sectors, other APEC fora and international health bodies

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