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## **Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance**

### **Highlights of ongoing discussions, current projects and deliverables**

Given the current situation around COVID, the SCSC Chair circulated a COVID-19-related questionnaire in June 2020 to share information regarding the policy responses and measures taken up by each member economy with regards to the pandemic. The questionnaire consists of eight questions that focus on standards and conformance including the development of new standards due to the impact of COVID-19 and the role standards and conformance plays in mitigating its impact. The result of the questionnaire showed that standards and conformance play a significant role in combating the pandemic and in mitigating its impact (results are available on the Meeting Document Data Base [MDDDB] on the APEC website, accessible to APEC members).

The SCSC held its second meeting for 2020 (SCSC2) virtually on 14–15 September. Delegates from 19 member economies attended SCSC2, along with Special Regional Bodies members (SRBs) as well as guests—namely, the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).

### **Highlights of SCSC2 are as follows:**

- The SCSC Chair provided updates on the results of the COVID-19-related questionnaire to share information regarding the policy responses and measures taken up by each member economy with regards to the pandemic.
- The SCSC continued its work on alignment with international standards through the implementation of its Voluntary Action Plan (VAP). The 8th VAP included the conduct of a survey on the alignment of 55 International Standards (IS) in the field of electrical appliances, cybersecurity, environmental management, greenhouse gases, smart cities, etc., with the participation of 14 economies. The 9th VAP will be conducted focusing on COVID-19 related standards.
- Special Regional Bodies (SRBs) reaffirmed the importance of working with stakeholders such as regulators, scheme owners and industry during the COVID-19 pandemic is the key to assure continuous delivery of accredited services in the marketplace. SRBs emphasized the necessity of accepting remote assessments as an alternative means, which should be further enhanced with more experience gained and acceptance by scheme owners especially in high-risk areas such as food safety management.
- A number of initiatives are undertaken in the SCSC, particularly in the areas of transparency, alignment of standards and conformity assessment systems, and education through capacity building, regulatory, cross-fora cooperation and promotion activities.

The 25th Joint Regulatory Advisory Committee (JRAC) convened on 10 September in the margins of SCSC2 2020, with the International Electrotechnical Commission in attendance. The JRAC is a body established by APEC member economies to be the official sub-group under the SCSC, for the purpose of:

- Promoting and facilitating regulator-to-regulator dialogue, cooperation and information sharing
- Administering, facilitating and reviewing the implementation of the TILF Pathfinder on APEC Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Conformity Assessment of Electrical and Electronic Equipment (the MRA Pathfinder)

Highlights of the 25th JRAC are as follows:

- A JRAC member shared a case study in which the COVID-19 pandemic required a member economy to widen its recognized standards and certification systems to increase its options for suppliers.
- Another experience in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic was shared in which one of the JRAC member economies decided to simplify an application process for a license to import products that requires industrial standards.

Source: <https://www.apec.org/Groups/Committee-on-Trade-and-Investment/Sub-Committee-on-Standards-and-Conformance>.