

Trade Forum Work Program 2003

(time table)

The coming year will be a challenging one for the Forum and its two task forces – the Task Force on Trade and Investment Issues in WTO and APEC (the “TIWA task force”) and the Task Force on Regional Trading Arrangements (the ‘RTA task force”).

The purpose of this memo is to highlight the target that we will be aiming at throughout the year, and to outline the steps along the road to that target. Detailed work programmes for the two task forces will be the subject of separate bulletins.

A draft schedule of Trade Forum meetings and activities and related activities of other organisations accompanies this bulletin.

The Target

The target is to complete the work programmes of both Task Forces in time for the PECC General Meeting at the beginning of September, so that substantial outputs can be delivered to the General Meeting and can then be publicly released in time for both the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Mexico and the APEC Leaders’ meeting in Thailand.

The output of the TIWA task force will be based on the completed work programmes of the individual study groups that have been established within the task force – on Services, Agriculture, Competition Policy, Investment, Trade Facilitation and Industrial Tariffs. Most of these study group work programmes have been finalised and circulated to members. Some remain to be finalised and there are also proposals outstanding for additional study groups on anti-dumping and fisheries subsidies. A summary of the overall work programme for the TIWA task force will be circulated shortly.

For the RTA Task Force, the suggested preparation of a set of “RTA Principles” has been enthusiastically taken up by the PECC Standing Committee and has been signalled already to APEC as a likely PECC deliverable for 2003. The Task Force (and the Forum) is thus effectively committed to produce the “RTA Principles” as one of its outputs. “RTA Principles” is a shorthand for the set of conditions under which RTAs in the APEC region can be regarded as not only WTO-consistent but also consistent with APEC’s principles and objectives. From the results of the Bangkok, Lima and Vancouver meetings it is clear that production of such a set of “Principles” cannot be a simple exercise. In order to be robust and credible, the “Principles” will have to be grounded in a thorough appreciation of all relevant analytical, policy, and strategic issues, as well as the detail of what is actually being proposed and implemented in the region, and the motivations, incentives and constraints of the participants. This implies the need for a further extensive work programme for the RTA Task Force, building on the progress already achieved in Bangkok, Lima and Vancouver. Details of the proposed work programme will be circulated in the next few days. The results of this programme will in themselves be a substantial output of the task force, and it is intended that they should be the basis of a major publication, to complement and support the proposed “Principles”.

Steps Along the Way

It is proposed to hold three Trade Forum meetings during 2003 to advance the work programme of the task forces.

1. Washington DC, April (in conjunction with PECC Coordinating Group and Standing Committee meetings): one day joint meeting of both task forces at Institute for International Economics and half day meeting of RTA task force at Inter-American Development Bank (both to be confirmed). There will also be opportunities for TIWA task force study groups to hold internal sessions. The dates for these meetings are likely to be 22-23 April, and this will be confirmed as soon as possible.

In addition to the general objective of advancing the Forum's work programme, the holding of a meeting in Washington has two specific objectives:

- Access to the US trade policy community: absence of US input was identified as a major gap at our Lima meeting, and there was consensus that a better understanding of the US trade policy environment is essential if we are to produce well-targeted policy analysis and practical policy recommendations. By going to Washington we hope to achieve this. This of course in no way implies that the Forum will adopt the US position on any specific issue.
- Input from multilateral institutions and international organisations based in Washington

2. Phuket, Thailand, May (joint meeting with APEC Study Centre Consortium 26-28 May): we may have proposed that the PECC section of this meeting should be scheduled for 25 May (to be confirmed).

This will be followed by Trade Forum participation in a Trade Policy Dialogue on RTAs at the APEC CTI meeting in Khon Kaen, Thailand, on 28 May.

3. Brunei, 30-31 August (immediately before the PECC General Meeting): this will be the opportunity for final review of the output of the Forum's work programme prior to presentation at the General Meeting and public release. Since the Finance Forum will be meeting at the same time, it may be possible to also hold a joint session with them on regional economic integration issues.

The agendas for the Washington and Phuket meetings will be designed to take maximum advantage of the opportunities at each venue, taking into account the availability of Trade Forum members (recognising that some members may be able to attend one meeting but not the other). Early indications from Forum members of availability for one or both meetings will be very helpful for planning purposes.

Additional Meeting Possibilities

The meetings outlined above will form the “backbone” of the Trade Forum work programme in 2003. The following additional possibilities also exist:

- ABAC Meeting, Lima, 2-5 May and PBEC meeting: opportunities to present Trade Forum work programme and explore potential for cooperation/collaboration.
- APEC Trade Ministers meeting, Khon Kaen, Thailand; possible presentation or dialogue with Ministers immediately after SOM-II and before Trade Ministers’ meeting (very tentative proposal at this stage from PECC Director-General): this would follow on from the joint meeting with the APEC Study Centres and participation in the CTI Trade Policy Dialogue as outlined above.
- PECC Finance Forum meeting, Hua Hin, Thailand, 9-10 July: possible joint session with Finance Forum on regional economic integration issues.

Further Activities

Sherry Stephenson will continue to direct the “Menu of Options” project for the APEC Group on Services (GOS). This project, now in its third year is a major contribution to the work of the GOS and also major factor behind the advanced state of work in the services study group within the TIWA task force.

Also for the GOS, the Trade Forum will in 2003 coordinate a research project on costs and benefits of services trade liberalisation

Unfinished Business from 2002

The following items remain to be concluded from the 2002 work programme:

- Two “PECC Issues” papers based on the work of the TIWA and RTA task forces respectively: to be completed in January 2003.
- Organisation of publication of papers from Vancouver seminar (together with relevant papers from earlier meetings)
- Publication of papers based on earlier “Impediments” studies: papers on Services and NTMs ready immediately, papers on Tariffs and Investment possibly to follow

Time table

Events	Date	Issues	Outcome
2003			
“Issues@PECC” publication: TIWA	January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revise the current version to 8 or 12 pages 	Publication of Issues@PECC
“Issues@PECC” publication: RTA	January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Summarize the Lima and Vancouver meetings 	Publication of Issues@PECC
“Impediments” Update Publications	Jan-May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Update and develop earlier PECC Trade Policy Forum work in impediments to liberalisation 	
APEC Group on Services (GOS) meetings: “Menu of Options” project	Feb-Aug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify approaches to services trade liberalisation by APEC economies ● Directed by SherryStephenson ● Phase III to be implemented in 2003 	Report to APEC Ministers and Leaders
APEC project: “Study on Costs and Benefits of Services Trade Liberalization:	Jan-Aug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Series of case studies on services trade liberalisation in selected sectors by APEC economies ● PECC Trade Forum will coordinate the study for APEC Group on Services, also contribute to the case studies 	APEC Publication
ABAC Meeting, Lima Peru	March 2-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opportunity to present Trade Forum work programme and explore prospects for cooperation/collaboration 	
Tokyo, Japan	May 13-16		
Bali, Indonesia	Aug 5-8		
Bangkok, Thailand	Oct 18-21		

Events	Date	Issues	Outcome
2003			
Trade Forum Meeting, Washington, DC	April 22-23 (tbc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Further development of RTA task force work programme and preliminary work on “RTA Principles”; plan RTA publication ● Link with RTA researchers in the Americas ● TIWA task force study groups meet as agreed to review initial outputs ● Exchange views with US trade policy experts 	First drafts of papers
PBEC Meeting	May 9-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opportunity to present Trade Forum work programme and explore prospects for cooperation/collaboration 	
IADB Meeting, Paris, France	May 23-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Rules of Origin” Author’s Workshop, part of the Regional Integration Network 	
Joint meeting with APEC Study Centres, Phuket	May 25-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review outputs of RTA task force work programme and publication plans; first draft of “RTA Principles” ● TIWA task force study groups meet as agreed 	First drafts of papers, “RTA Principles”
APEC CTI, Khon Kaen	May 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in Trade Policy Dialogue on RTAs; test reaction to proposed “Principles” 	
APEC MRT, Khon Kaen	June 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Possible meeting or dialogue prior to APEC MRT meeting (tentative) 	
PECC Finance Forum, Hua Hin	July 9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Possible joint session on regional economic integration issues 	

Events	Date	Issues	Outcome
2003			
Trade Forum Meeting, Brunei	August 30-31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Finalizing task force outputs ● Finalizing RTA principles ● Possible joint meeting with Finance Forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Publication of papers representing output of TIWA and RTA task forces ● Release of “RTA Principles”
PECC GM, Brunei	September, 1-3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Presentation of Forum outputs
APEC Ministerial Meeting	October, 17-18		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Presentation of selected Forum outputs including “RTA Principles” ● Media conference