

## **Promoting Human Capacity Building in an Era of Knowledge-based Economy through Tripartite Cooperation**

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Facing the challenges and opportunities brought by globalisation and knowledge-based economy, and for the common prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region, APEC leaders have reached consensus on the great significance of human capacity building and determined to incorporate human capacity building as a central theme among the highest priorities in APEC agenda. To promote human capacity building and entrepreneurship development under the environment of knowledge-based economy, the utilization of computer and network plays a very important role. In the aspect of human capacity building, the revolution in computer science and network blazed a new way in teaching. It creates additional new channels for inquiring more information. The APEC HCB Promotion Program was initiated and implemented under this background.

### ***I. The Background of HCBPP***

At the initiation of ex-president Jiang Zemin of China and the Sultan of Brunei, the APEC High Level Meeting on Human Capacity Building was successfully held in Beijing in May 2001, focusing on promoting human capacity building with the rapid development of knowledge-based economy in the Asia-Pacific region in the new century.

It was the first time in APEC history that, with the engagement of the top leaders of two APEC economies, ministers and senior officials had face-to-face dialogue with business executives and experts from education and training sectors to address the issue of human capacity building with the central theme *New Economy, New Strategy: Cooperation and Innovations to Building Human Capacity for Common Prosperity*. The High Level Meeting and the *Beijing Initiative* adopted by the meeting have been warmly appreciated and strongly supported by relevant Ministerial Meetings, Working Group meetings and Senior Officials Meetings of APEC, which encouraged member economies to take follow-up actions to initiate or support pilot projects based on the tripartite model of cooperation of government-business-academia in specific areas of their interest.

To maintain the momentum of the APEC High Level Meeting on Human Capacity Building, China and other 10 co-sponsoring economies<sup>1</sup> have worked closely with business and education/training sectors to launch the APEC Human Capacity Building Promotion Program as the first pilot project of tripartite cooperation.

## ***II. Objectives and Implementation Plan of HCBPP***

The APEC Human Capacity Building Promotion Program is an Internet based three-year project, which aims at:

- Promoting human capacity building in APEC member economies with new opportunities and challenges brought about by the knowledge-based economy and rapid technology advancement.
- Demonstrating tripartite cooperation of government-business-academia in online training to prepare the IT professionals which is in urgent need in the knowledge-based economy for APEC members, particularly for the developing ones.
- Facilitating Internet learning by developing a Virtual Classroom in order to enable more people to enjoy the benefit of the knowledge-based economy.

As the first step to implement the project, the APEC HCB platform and the portal web site ( [www.apechcb.org.cn](http://www.apechcb.org.cn) ) have been developed by China with support of Tsinghua Tongfang Co. Ltd and China Training Network. The APEC HCB platform was fundamental to the implementation of the APEC Human Capacity Building Promotion Program.

To attract wide participation of the citizens from all APEC member economies is one of the fundamental targets of the APEC HCB Program. For this goal, various forms of activities have been designed for different target groups, such as online training for senior IT professionals, popularization of basic computer and Internet knowledge, and discussion on key issues of APEC among people from different sectors. To be concrete, the APEC HCB Program is made up of three components, including:

- **Online training for IT professionals**

This part of the program aims to meet the urgent needs of highly skilled expertise in network information technology of APEC member economies, especially the developing member economies. With the support of three transnational IT enterprises (Oracle, Cisco and Sun), APEC Human Capacity Building Promotion

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<sup>1</sup> The co-sponsoring economies include Brunei, Canada, Hong Kong China, Mexico, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand and Vietnam.

Program offers free online Training for 1,500 IT Professionals in network technology, who are nominated by participating member economies, within 3 years.

- **Virtual Classroom**

In order to support the people and organizations of APEC economies to access basic training about Internet and computer applications, the Virtual Classroom for Internet Literacy is developed with the support of McGraw-Hill company to provide basic training materials on Internet and computer applications including HTML, Web Design, Flash 5 and FrontPage 2002.

The Virtual Classroom is publicly accessible to the people and organizations of APEC member economies so as to support individual or organized training for non-professionals in families, schools, communities and work places.

- **Cyber forum for APEC Human Capacity Building**

The Cyber Forum for APEC HCB is established to provide a convenient platform for information exchange, experience sharing and policy discussion among government agencies, business corporations, education/training institutions and other organizations on strategies, policies and technical issues in the area of APEC human capacity building.

The Forum has a News Bulletin, a Discussion Area and a Reference Center. It is open to all organizations and specialists from the public and private sectors of APEC member economies. APEC Study Center of China is responsible for designing the topics.

The designing of the APEC HCB Program has clearly embodied the spirit of tripartite partnership among government, business and education/training sectors, which will give a full play of their advantages and lay a solid foundation for the final achievements of the program.

### **III. The Outcomes of the APEC HCB Program**

With the joint efforts of the government, business and educational/training sectors during the past three years, the APEC Human Capacity Building Promotion Program has been successfully implemented and achieved fruitful results in the following aspects:

- *The implementation of the program has accomplished the established goals and effectively promoted the development of human capacity building*

All the three components of the program have been implemented successfully and achieved substantial results. Through online training, more than 1,000 trainees from

17 APEC member economies have got the opportunities to attend the authoritative IT training courses. Therefore, the online training project has achieved the goal to prepare IT professionals for APEC members, particularly the developing ones. The Virtual Classroom, through supporting the people of APEC economies to access basic training about Internet and computer applications, has made significant contribution to bridge the Digital Divide between developed and developing APEC member economies. The establishment of the Cyber Forum has greatly facilitated the information and experience exchange among the government, business and educational sectors on the issue of Human Capacity Building.

The component establishment of the APEC Human Capacity Building Promotion Program has taken the current human resources structure of APEC member economies into consideration. While preparing high quality professionals and popularizing information technologies, the program has also achieved in promoting the informatization process within APEC and bridging the Digital Divide. The significance of the program also lies in preparing human resources reserves for APEC member economies to fit for the adjustment of economic growth pattern under the environment of Knowledge-based economy.

- ***The program has got wide support from government and non-government sectors of APEC member economies***

The APEC Human Capacity Building Promotion Program, for its well-designed project components, flexible and effective cooperation mechanism, and fruitful implementation achievements, has won strong support from different sectors of many APEC member economies. The program was initiated by the Ministry of Personnel of China and co-sponsored by 10 other APEC member economies. During the course of implementation, 7 other APEC member economies including Chile, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Peru and Russian participated the program successively. Up to June 2004, 17 APEC member economies have participated the APEC HCB program in different forms, and 25,000 people from 18 APEC member economies have visited the website of the program.

In fact, the program has attracted the participation of both government and non-government sectors. The Ministry of Personnel of China has established the project overseer's office in charge of steering and coordinating the preparation and implementation of the program. World famous IT enterprises, including Cisco Systems, Sun Microsystems, Oracle Corporation, and McGraw-Hill Company, have made great contribution in providing online training and studying courses. Tsinghua Tongfang Co., Ltd, and China Training Network have provided technology support for implementing the program. China Petroleum & Chemical Corporation has

provided partial financial support for the program. Educational institutions, such as APEC Study Center of China at Nankai University, Tsinghua University of China, Kyoto University of Japan and University of Southern California of the United States have actively participated into designing and implementing the program. The wide participation of government and non-government sectors has not only provided the program with necessary financial and technology support, but also extended the influence of the program among APEC member economies. The active participation of the business/private sectors has played an important role in making fully usage of the resources in APEC region to promote the development of human capacity building.

- ***The program has opened up a new channel to promote human capacity building in an era of Knowledge-based economy***

Human resources development has always been one of the priorities of APEC. It topped the list of 13 main areas of ECOTECH in the Osaka Action Agenda. APEC member economies have reached a consensus on the importance of human resources development in encouraging technology innovation and application, improving enterprises management and industrial escalation, and promoting sustainable economic development of the Asia-Pacific region.

The wide application of computer and network technologies in the era of Knowledge-based economy has provided new environment and conditions for creating new patterns of human resources development. The successful implementation of the APEC Human Capacity Building Promotion Program has made pioneering efforts in reforming traditional pattern of human resources development. The online training and studying format adopted by the program has showed clear advantages of low cost, high efficiency and facilitation, which are very suitable for the participation of APEC developing member economies lacking of fund in implementing human resources development projects by themselves. The new pattern of human resources development based on Internet has also succeeded in overcoming the restriction of geographical distance and time, and thus creating a new channel with high efficiency in promoting human capacity building of APEC in the future.

#### ***IV. The Significance and Characteristics of the Program***

In the new century, the trends of globalization and Knowledge-based economy have brought unprecedented challenges and opportunities for APEC member economies. As the largest regional economic cooperation organization in the world, APEC has the responsibility and obligation to give a full play of the advantages of APEC Approach

and open regionalism, and take effective measures to strengthen ECOTECH and narrow the gap between the member economies in terms of economic development level, and thus realizing the ultimate goal of common prosperity in Asia-Pacific region.

However, due to the complexity of ECOTECH issues and lacking of fund, the process of ECOTECH has been lagging behind that of TILF for a long time. Therefore, it is the urgent task of APEC to find a more efficient pattern of cooperation in promoting ECOTECH, which will attract the wide participation of APEC member economies.

The APEC Human Capacity Building Promotion Program has provided APEC with the opportunities to realize the goals mentioned above.

At first, the importance of human capacity building was becoming more and more protruding in the agenda of APEC activities in recent years. Having reached consensus on the importance of human capacity building, the APEC economic leaders have indicated the APEC SOM, related sub-committees and working groups to carry out follow-up activities, which has laid a solid foundation for implementing HCB-related ECOTECH projects.

Secondly, more and more enterprises in APEC region have recognized human resources as an important part of their competitiveness. In other words, the high quality human resources reserve of a modern enterprise has become one of the key factors determining its survival and development under the environment of globalization and Knowledge-based economy. Therefore, the private/business sector is now becoming more and more active in participating into and providing financial support to HCB-related projects initiated by APEC.

Thirdly, it has been long since the educational/training sector recognized the significance of ECOTECH and human capacity building. The scholars and experts have both interests and capability to bridge the government and business sectors in HCB cooperation. On one hand, they would play the role as an advisor and provide consultative services to the government. On the other hand, they would serve as a tutor or trainer and transform the academic theories and knowledge into the productivity for enterprises.

To sum up, the tripartite partnership among government, business and educational sectors has created a new pattern in implementing ECOTECH activities with strong practicality. As one of the earliest APEC programs adopting the tripartite cooperation, the APEC Human Capacity Building Promotion Program is of extraordinary significance and fruitful. The program has accumulated valuable experiences in lowering the cost of human capacity building projects, enhancing the

government's role in organizing and coordinating ECOTECH activities, encouraging the wide participation of business/private sector, and improving the efficiency of ECOTECH activities. The successful experiences of the program should be extended more widely in the future ECOTECH activities, and thus bringing benefits to more APEC member economies.

The successful implementation of the APEC Human Capacity Building Promoting Program has clearly indicated that both the government and non-government sectors of APEC member economies have a strong enthusiasm to promote human capacity building in the era of Knowledge-based economy and narrow the "Digital Divide" in Asia-Pacific region. They also have a high expectation on the tripartite cooperation in promoting the efficiency of HCB activities. Consequently, it is believed that the future ECOTECH process of APEC would witness more active participation of APEC member economies and different sectors. Joint efforts would be made by all stakeholders of APEC to promote human capacity building, and thus realizing the long-term goal of sustainable and balanced economic development and improving the economic and social welfare of the people in APEC region.