

# APEC 2021 New Zealand Media Kit

Small and Medium Enterprises Ministerial  
Meeting



NEW ZEALAND  
APEC 2021

# Small and Medium Enterprises Ministerial Meeting

The 27th Small and Medium Enterprises Ministerial Meeting (SMEMM) will bring together ministers and senior leaders on 9 October, 2021. The meeting aims to build the resilience of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) across the Asia-Pacific region through a focus on digitalisation, inclusive growth and wellbeing.

SMEs are the engines of growth and innovation across the APEC region, accounting for more than 97 percent of businesses, employing more than 60 percent of the workforce across the region and comprising 40 to 60 percent of GDP in most economies. Despite these strong contributions, SMEs face disproportionate barriers to international trade, accounting for just 35 percent of direct exports.

COVID-19 has had significant impacts on the APEC region's SMEs, and economies have had to urgently step up their efforts to respond to the needs of their business communities. As the region continues to respond to the pandemic, strengthening SME resilience will be essential to the success of its recovery. There is a need for sustainable economic growth that is digitally enabled, inclusive and supportive of SME well-being.

The theme for the SMEMM is 'SME Resilience in a World with COVID-19'. The SMEMM will provide an opportunity for the APEC region's ministers and senior leaders to discuss the critical role SMEs play in ensuring our economies, businesses and people thrive, and the policy settings required to achieve SME resilience and growth.

The SMEMM will culminate in a Ministerial Statement, which will address the actions and commitments required to support the ongoing operations and recovery of the region's SMEs.

This media kit provides background information and supporting media materials for the Small and Medium Enterprises Ministerial Meeting.

The APEC New Zealand media team is committed to providing you with access to everything you need to cover APEC 2021 remotely, so please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries or requests.



### Contacting the media team

Media registration enquiries: [APEC2021Support@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:APEC2021Support@mfat.govt.nz)

All other media enquiries, including interview requests: [APEC2021media@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:APEC2021media@mfat.govt.nz)

### Official APEC 2021 channels

Website: [apec2021nz.org](http://apec2021nz.org)

- [Twitter](#)
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### APEC Secretariat channels

Website: [www.apec.org](http://www.apec.org)

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## APEC 2021 media registration

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### APEC 2021 accredited media

Media who have already completed the APEC 2021 accreditation process will automatically receive all media materials related to the Small and Medium Enterprises Ministerial Meeting.

### New media registrations

All media who are part of an APEC media delegation must be registered by their economy's Media Accreditation Officer, via the APEC 2021 Registration Portal.

If you **are not** part of an APEC media delegation, **not** already accredited for APEC 2021, and wish to register as a media delegate, apply by email to [APEC2021Support@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:APEC2021Support@mfat.govt.nz). We will need the following information:

- Title (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dame/Sir/Dr/Prof)
- First name and surname
- Gender (male/female/gender diverse)
- Email address
- Mobile phone number, including international dialling code (for example +64). This will be used to receive a secure two-factor authentication code to log into the APEC 2021 virtual meeting platform
- Media organisation
- Job title
- A photo of your business/press card; or an email/letter confirming your employment.

For assistance with the registration process at any stage, please contact [APEC2021Support@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:APEC2021Support@mfat.govt.nz).



## SME Ministerial Meeting media materials

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After the Small and Medium Enterprises Ministerial Meeting, accredited media will receive an email with the following:

- post-meeting media release
- Joint Ministerial Statement
- Chair's opening remarks (video recording)
- Official SME Ministerial Meeting family photo.

## What happens at the SME Ministerial Meeting?

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The Small and Medium Enterprises Ministerial Meeting takes place annually. APEC ministers and senior leaders will come together to discuss the Asia-Pacific's SME policy response, with a focus on strengthening the resilience of SMEs, both now, and post-COVID-19.

The meeting will focus on two key levers of SME resilience: digitalisation as an enabler of effective recovery from economic shocks, and promoting inclusion and well-being for recovery.

At the core of the ministers' discussions will be four key SME policy priorities.

1. Pursuing innovation and a digitally-enabled recovery for SMEs through small business digitalisation.
2. Measures to increase inclusion for recovery by supporting Indigenous peoples and women-led SMEs.
3. Improving the mental well-being and resilience of SMEs.

The SME policy priorities for APEC 2021 align with the economic drivers highlighted in the [Putrajaya Vision 2040](#) – particularly those related to innovation and digitalisation, and better support for the well-being of vulnerable communities.

A Joint Ministerial Statement will be released following the meeting and will reflect the discussions and commitments made by the APEC Ministers responsible for SMEs.



## APEC's work on the resilience of SMEs

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Supporting the work of SMEs has been a focus for APEC for the past 26 years, but supporting SME resilience has never been more important than now. SMEs have suffered disproportionately compared to other businesses from the impacts of COVID-19. Providing tools and measures to assist their recovery will be crucial to the region's social and economic recovery.

Over the years, APEC has launched a variety of initiatives and opportunities that stimulate SME development across the Asia-Pacific.

In 2005, the APEC SME Innovation Center was established in Korea, where hands-on business consulting was implemented to improve the competitiveness of SMEs throughout the region.

In 2013, the APEC Start-Up Accelerator Network was launched to promote entrepreneurship and innovation by connecting technology start-ups with funding and mentors. This initiative in 2014 sponsored six start-ups from the region to compete in the Intel Global Challenge and Siemens New Venture Forum in Silicon Valley.

SMEs are more vulnerable to disasters and economic shocks, with small- and medium-sized businesses more likely to go bankrupt and face enhanced barriers to global supply chains. To improve SME disaster resilience, APEC has trained more than 250 regional experts to assist SMEs with business continuity planning to minimise disaster-related disruptions.

In New Zealand, the Digital Boost Programme provides digital training, advice and support to small businesses, enabling them to take advantage of opportunities from digitalisation and building their digital skills to respond and recover from the impacts of the pandemic. The programme has, to date, assisted more than 306,500 SMEs. It offers over 400 learning modules and the digital business advisory service supports 15,000 SMEs each year to adapt their businesses and shift to a digital business model.

The Digital Boost Alliance, a public private partnership, has also been launched as part of this work. This involves 20 influential organisations supporting small business resilience and productivity, and enhancing well-being and social inclusion via greater digital adoption.



The sustainability of SMEs around APEC economies were impacted during the pandemic, resulting in deteriorating resilience and well-being of their owners. SMEs across the globe now face the single, levelling factor of COVID-19 and the impacts of COVID-19 intensified the stresses of business as usual. SME owners have managed cash flow concerns and compliance obligations, as well as having responsibility for staff, community, family and suppliers, at the same time as changing their business models and adopting new ways of working.

In New Zealand, our policy response is aimed at building the resilience of SMEs – from financial support, to building digital skills through partnering with industry and experts to focus on wellbeing. We see a positive relationship between the support packages we have put in place, such as the wage subsidy, resurgence payments and digital boost, as they help to alleviate some of the stresses SMEs are experiencing. There is no escaping that mental health and wellbeing challenges left unattended will have long lasting social and economic impacts for the region.

As we look to strengthen SME resilience in a world with COVID-19, we know that we cannot get through this pandemic alone. We need to lean on each other and work in partnership with experts and industry to achieve an inclusive, sustainable and resilient recovery across APEC.

## APEC 2021 policy priorities

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New Zealand's three policy priorities for APEC 2021 are shaped by the COVID-19 crisis and focus on bringing the region together for an inclusive, sustainable and resilient recovery.

There has been considerable progress made on these policy priorities this year, most significantly at the Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting where ministers agreed to take actions to improve the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines and to reduce harmful fossil fuels and fisheries subsidies.

APEC's efforts to increase resilience within SMEs aligns with work to build an inclusive and resilient COVID-19 recovery. The Small and Medium Enterprises Ministerial Meeting will provide an invaluable opportunity for APEC Ministers to share knowledge and drive change to better support SMEs across the region.



### **1. Economic and trade policies to strengthen recovery**

This priority focuses on APEC's economic response to COVID-19. It is about encouraging trade and economic policies, including macro-economic and micro-economic responses that will help the region bounce back as quickly as possible.

For 30 years, APEC has stood for open trade. It is critically important that markets remain open, and this is reflected in APEC's renewed efforts to rebuild confidence in the multilateral trading system and the WTO this year.

Progress under New Zealand's leadership has already seen APEC economies agree to speed the cross-border flow of vaccines; economic reforms to kick-start growth, create new jobs and help combat climate change; and agree a programme of work on sending a strong signal on our shared commitment to the WTO.

### **2. Increasing inclusion and sustainability for recovery**

This priority acknowledges the need for APEC's long-term response to COVID-19 to be sustainable and inclusive of all people. It is about enhancing the participation of groups such as women and Indigenous peoples in the economy, and ensuring their contributions are valued. It will also ensure the region's recovery can be used to improve outcomes in sustainability, including in the area of climate change.

Building from the **Putrajaya Vision 2040**, now is clearly the moment for APEC to design economic incentives that respond to the region's environmental challenges. There is an opportunity for APEC to take its work on environmentally harmful subsidies further and also support the liberalisation of goods and services that support a sustainable recovery.

Progress under New Zealand's leadership has already laid the groundwork for a voluntary standstill on fossil fuel subsidies; a programme to update APEC's List of Environmental Goods; and work to ensure the indigenous economy is of relevance to APEC.

### **3. Pursuing innovation, and a digitally enabled recovery**

The final priority focuses on accelerating APEC's work in support of the digital economy. The pandemic has dramatically accelerated digital transformation across trade, commerce, and the provision of public services, including healthcare services.

Just as APEC has successfully embraced virtual hosting, economies must come together to advance the Internet and Digital Economy Roadmap with a view to enhancing inclusion, driving the adoption of green technology and supporting a vital pathway to lifting regional economic growth.





Progress under New Zealand’s leadership already includes locking in digital and paperless customs procedures; agreement to explore initiatives that facilitate solutions to travelling under COVID-19 conditions; and agreement to progress the APEC Internet and Digital Economy Roadmap to promote inclusion and green technology.

## Putrajaya Vision 2040: The implementation plan

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With the [APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040](#) agreed in 2020, APEC economies are now working towards a detailed plan of action to make the vision a reality. This plan will be a key document in setting and monitoring APEC’s agenda for the next 20 years.

The implementation plan will expand on the three economic drivers of growth agreed to by the region in the Putrajaya Vision 2040: trade and investment; innovation and digitisation; strong, balanced, secure, sustainable and inclusive growth. The implementation plan is APEC’s most important task for the year, and a core focus for New Zealand as host.

### Putrajaya Vision 2040

At the APEC 2020 Leaders’ Meeting, hosted by Malaysia, APEC economies agreed the [Putrajaya Vision 2040](#). The Vision replaces the previous Bogor Goals, which guided APEC’s work up to 2020, and outlines a vision of an open, dynamic, resilient and peaceful Asia-Pacific community, for the prosperity of all people and future generations.



# Supporting media materials

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## Website content

- [APEC 2021 meeting calendar](#)
- [APEC CEO Summit 2021](#)
- [A virtual APEC 2021](#)
- [The theme of APEC 2021](#)
- [5 things to watch out for at APEC](#)

## Official media releases

- [APEC CEO Summit to Focus on COVID, Disruption and Trust; Registrations Open](#)
- [Women's economic opportunities in APEC improve, but persistent gender biases stifle progress](#)
- [PM Ardern chairs APEC Leaders' meeting on COVID-19](#)
- [APEC trade ministers unite on COVID-19 vaccine steps and rejuvenating the WTO](#)
- [New Zealand to host hybrid CEO Summit](#)
- [APEC's structural reform plan to boost resilience against future shocks](#)
- [APEC looks to partnerships to support business recovery](#)
- [Unlocking the potential of indigenous economies](#)
- [APEC strengthens fiscal and budget sustainability](#)
- [Senior officials expedite regional response to Covid-19](#)
- [Asia-Pacific business community's call to action](#)
- [New Zealand confirms APEC host year priorities](#)
- [APEC economies commit to 10-year food security roadmap – 19 August 2021](#)
- [APEC 2021 Women and the Economy Forum prioritises women's economic empowerment – 25 September 2021](#)

## Video

- [New Zealand's APEC host year](#) – Explains APEC and New Zealand's host year
- [Prime Minister Ardern's post-Informal Leaders' Retreat statement and media conference](#)
- [MRT Chair's post-meeting comments](#), by Minister Damien O'Connor

## Documents

- [APEC 2021 on a page](#), an overview of APEC and New Zealand's host year.

