



APEC Business Travel Card (ABTC): Moving Forward

- **Update**
- **ABAC Recommendations**

APEC Business Travel Card

BENEFITS:

- **Visa-waiver convenience within member economies**
 - Multiple short-term visits**
(minimum stay per visit: 59 days)
 - Three-year validity**
- **Fast-track entry / departure through special APEC lanes at major airports**

APEC Business Travel Card

Operating Framework (OF)

Core Principles

1. Preserves economies' rights
2. Provides entry authority for multiple stays of 2 or 3 years to all economies
3. Allows faster entry / departure processing at major airports
4. Single application process (one-step concept)
5. No fees payable by applicants to foreign economies
6. Facilitates travel for business people
7. Facilitates travel for senior government officials

APEC Business Travel Card

PARTICIPATING ECONOMIES (17):

Australia

China

Japan

New Zealand

The Philippines

Thailand

Brunei Darussalam

Hong Kong (China)

Republic of Korea

Papua New Guinea

Singapore

Vietnam

Chile

Indonesia

Malaysia

Peru

Chinese Taipei

REMAINING ECONOMIES (4):

Canada

Mexico

Russia

US

Proposal No. 1: ABAC Two-Tier Model

Two-Tier Model:

- **1st Tier: Fast-track entry/departure and visa waiver**
- **2nd Tier: Fast-track entry/departure (only)**
- **Benefits both public and private sectors**

Proposal No. 2: US Model

US Model:

- **Phase One: Priority Visa and Border Processing**
- **Phase Two: Full membership in ABTC Scheme**

APEC BMG Working Group

Discussions:

- **US model is preferable because:**
 - **US model offers more than Two-Tier model**
 - **Two-Tier model requires additional resources**

- **US requires transition period**
 - **Legislative change could take 4 years**
 - **Must benefit US citizens**
 - **Avoids backsliding**

APEC BMG Working Group Proposal

Proposal: Amend Operating Framework so that ...

- Every APEC card would facilitate border facilitation at all participating & transitional economies;
- New 3-year transitional category is created;
- The US is admitted as first transitional economy.

APEC BMG Working Group Proposal

Impact on Cardholder from Participating Economies

| Travels to: | Classified for: | VISA | BORDER |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Fully participating economy (17) | VWP* or Pre-clearance | Not required | All cardholders can use priority border processing (APEC Lanes) even though pre-clearance not indicated on back of card. |
| | Non-VWP or No Pre-clearance | Required (with fee), but granted expedited interview scheduling | |
| Transitional economy (4) | VWP* or Pre-clearance | Not required | |
| | Non-VWP or No Pre-clearance | Required | |

*VWP: Visa Waiver Program

APEC BMG Working Group Proposal

Evaluation:

- **Historic opportunity: Path-finder approach prevails**
- **Card benefits enhanced**
- **Significant steps already taken by US
(prospect of substantial compliance in mid-term)**

Concern No. 1: Length of Transition Period

- **Low incentive for 17 fully participating economies — must accept non-pre-cleared cardholders.**
- **Low incentive for full scheme compliance among Transitional Economies — some already enjoy visa-free entry to most APEC economies.**
- **Cannot leave above issues unresolved for duration of no longer than 3 years.**

Concern No. 2: Confusion at Ports of Entry

- **APEC Lane border officials must distinguish between VWP and non-VWP cardholders.**

(Current process simple: information printed on back of card)

Concern No. 3: Cardholder Confusion

- If announcement indicates APEC lane can be used without pre-clearance, cardholders might assume full pre-clearance.

(Cardholder without pre-clearance who is mistakenly cleared at border risks legal problems)

Concern No. 4: Concept of ABAC Two-Tier Model

- To ensure successful transition period, ABAC's Two-Tier Model is a useful tool.

(In fact, this idea is retained in the transition plan)

ABAC Recommendations

ABAC urges APEC to:

- **Continue to improve the ABTC operation; and**
- **Bear in mind the following criteria during transition:**
 - ▲ **Keep transition period short: maximum limit 3 years;**
 - ▲ **Carry out capacity building to avoid confusion at border;**
 - ▲ **Publicize changes to ensure widespread awareness;**
 - ▲ **Retain core idea of ABAC Two-Tier Model.**