Concept Note

Upload Endorsed Concept Note	NZ- APEC Digital Identity Equivalency Mapping Concept Note.docx	**Sponsor Confirmation Doc**	Concept note endorsement emails digital identity.msg AUS.msg CT.msg PNG.msg

Project Overview

Project Year and Session	2025 2		
Project Title	APEC Digital Identity Equivalency Mapping		
Fund Source	APEC Support Fund (ASF)	**Sub-Fund**	ASF: Digital Innovation (Digital)
APEC Forum	Digital Economy Steering Group (DESG)	**Co-Proposing Forum**	
Proposing APEC Economy	New Zealand;	**Co-Proposing Economy**	
Co-Sponsoring APEC Economies	Australia; Papua New Guinea; Chinese Taipei;	**CN Final Submission Date**	11-08-2025
Expected Start Date	01-11-2025	**Project Completion Date**	31-12-2026
Project Topic(s)	Digital Economy; Digital Technology and Innovation;		
Project Summary	APEC Economies are progressing domestic digital identity (DI) initiatives at different paces and in markedly diverse regulatory contexts. Understanding the degree of conceptual, technical and assurance-level alignment is essential for any future bilateral or multilateral recognition of DI credentials, which in turn underpins cross-border trade, travel and public-service access. This project would commission a concise study to map equivalency across APEC economies and provide policy-ready insights for officials from all APEC economies. The study will cover four domains: 1. Core digital identity concepts, definitions, and approaches in all participating APEC economies. 2.Stated Levels of Assurance (LoA) frameworks. 3.Trust Frameworks and approaches to regulation of digital identity services. 4.Usage or endorsement of international technical standards. The study will also consider how these work in practice through three use-cases, such as: 1.In-person presentation (mobile driver licence).		

	2.“Know Your Customer” anti-money laundering compliance for online banking. 3.Delegated authority (e.g., parent presenting a child’s vaccination credential).
List All Project Outputs	1. APEC Economies Digital Identity Survey 2.APEC Publication on Digital Identity in APEC including equivalency matrix cross tabulating key elements of DI approach by participating economy, including use cases 3.Virtual presentation on research findings

Project Alignment to APEC's Putrajaya Vision 2040 and Aotearoa Plan of Action

Alignment to Primary Driver	2 Innovation and Digitalisation	**Primary Objective**	2.2 Digital economy and global interconnectedness
Alignment to Secondary Driver (Optional)	2 Innovation and Digitalisation	**Secondary Objective (Optional)**	2.3 Digital infrastructure and transformation

Budget

a. Labor Costs (USD)	100,000.00				
b. Travel (USD)	0.00				
c. Hosting (USD)	0.00				
d. Publications & Distribution (USD)	0.00				
e. Other (USD)	0.00				
Total Amount Being Sought from APEC (a+b+c+d+e) (USD)	100,000.00	**Self-Funding Amount (USD)**	0.00	**Total Project Value (USD)**	100,000.00

Main Project Overseer Information

Name	Callum Hames	**Job Title**	Senior Policy Officer
PO Organization	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	**Primary Contact No** *(Economy Code/Area Code + Telephone No)*	+64210364927
Primary E-mail	Callum.Hames@mfat.govt.nz		

Alternate Project Overseer Information

	SN	Alternate PO	Job Title	PO Organization	Contact No	E-mail
☐	1	Alex Reuhman	Senior Policy Officer	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	+6421815839	Alexandra.reuhman@mfat.govt.nz

Project Synopsis

Project Objective	This project aims to map equivalency across participating APEC economies in digital identity frameworks, with a view to enabling trusted cross-border recognition of digital credentials. It will catalogue core concepts, trust frameworks, assurance levels, and technical standards in participating economies. Inspired by the recent G7 Mapping Exercise, it seeks to identify alignment and divergence that may impact interoperability. The project will produce a cross-economy equivalency matrix and policy-ready insights to support future bilateral, regional or multilateral recognition. This initiative may inform, and complement, parallel APEC projects on digital identity by providing foundational analysis of identity framework compatibility across the region.

1. Relevance

1a. Issues	Problems Addressed 1.Diverse and Unaligned Digital Identity Frameworks APEC economies operate under differing legal, technical, and assurance frameworks for digital identity. This fragmentation prevents seamless cross-border recognition of identity credentials and inhibits interoperability for key services like banking, travel, and public administration. 2.Lack of Equivalency Understanding Across Economies Without a structured comparison of identity systems (including concepts, trust frameworks, and technical standards), economies struggle to assess how their systems align with or diverge from others in the region. This knowledge gap impedes coordination and trust. 3.Challenges in Building Cross-Border Services Businesses and governments face inefficiencies and duplicative verification processes when trying to operate across borders. This is especially burdensome for small and medium enterprises, mobile professionals, and cross-border digital platforms. 4.Unclear Path for Bilateral or Multilateral Recognition In the absence of a baseline equivalency map, economies lack the evidence needed to negotiate mutual recognition agreements or design scalable cross-border pilots. This results in policy inertia and missed opportunities for integration. 5.Risks of Incompatible Future Investments As economies invest in next-generation digital identity solutions (e.g., wallets, verifiable credentials), uncoordinated approaches could lead to systems that are secure and effective domestically but incompatible regionally or globally. Sustained Benefits for Multiple APEC Economies 1.Improved Policy Coordination and Governance Insight Economies will benefit from a shared reference for understanding and aligning on core digital identity principles, enabling better policy decisions and regulatory convergence.

	2.Foundation for Interoperability Agreements The output can inform or underpin formal agreements or pilot programs between economies seeking trusted cross-border recognition of digital IDs and credentials. 3.Reduced Costs for Cross-Border Service Enablement Identifying alignment in assurance levels and technical standards helps reduce redundancy and cost for government and private-sector service providers operating across APEC borders. 4.Capacity Building Through Comparative Benchmarking Less mature digital identity ecosystems gain access to models and frameworks from more established systems, accelerating capability development without prescribing a one-size-fits-all model. 5.Stronger Enabler for the Digital Economy This work directly supports digital trade, online service delivery, and digital inclusion by helping economies move toward secure, trusted, and scalable digital identity systems that can interoperate over time.
1b. Alignment to APEC	The project aligns strongly with two of the drivers of the Putrajaya Vision 2040 and multiple actions under the Aotearoa Plan of Action. It will help the first driver (trade and investment), through promoting seamless connectivity, and physical, institutional and people to people connectivity. It will help the second driver, (Innovation and Digitalisation) by promoting adoption of new and emerging technologies, sharing best practice, promoting an open digital and innovation environment and accelerating digital transformation. This project strongly aligns with multiple Key Focus Areas (KFAs) from APEC's Internet and Digital Economy Roadmap (AIDER): KFA 2: Promoting Interoperability – through building the base knowledge of systems and approaches required to explore interoperability in particular use cases KFA 4: Development of holistic government policy frameworks - By examining existing digital identity systems the report will help build policy understanding. KFA 5: Promoting coherence and cooperation of regulatory approaches – Building understanding of digital identity systems will help promote regulatory cooperation while respecting each economies particular approach.
1c. Alignment to Forum	The Digital Economy Steering Group (DESG) aims to facilitate the development of the internet and digital economy and is tasked with proposing and undertaking work on digital economy issues and initiatives. DESG provides advice to senior officials annually on the implementation of the above mentioned AIDER with particular regard for each of the focus areas mentioned above. For these reasons the project is aligned to DESG's objectives. This project directly supports the Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI)'s work on its Trade Facilitation, Connectivity, Digitalization and Innovation priority areas by laying the groundwork for other work on digital identity in trade, and interoperability of systems and approaches. The project likewise covers a number of CTI's objectives under the Aotearoa Plan of Action, particularly on accelerating digital transformation.

2. Eligibility and Fund Priorities

The Digital Innovation Sub-Fund supports APEC's strategic objective of supporting inclusive, integrated and sustainable growth. It aims to provide ongoing support for APEC economies to improve the growth of the digital economy in the Asia-Pacific region. The Sub-Fund will support new and ongoing initiatives related to the digital economy. This project complies with the Digital Innovation Sub Fund because:
-The research and report will supporting capacity building needs for APEC developing economies by improving understanding of different approaches in the APEC region;

-as noted above the project aligns with the AIDER and specifically 3 of the key focus areas;
-plans for wide input from stakeholders from each economy, including through direct surveys and other feedback from APEC economies who wish to participate;
-builds and enables on work and projects in CTI and DESG on Digital Identity.

3. Capacity Building

This project will support capacity building across all developing APEC economies, by helping to clarify and demonstrate the convergence and divergence of digital identity approaches in the region. Developing APEC economies will benefit from increased understanding of different approaches which may inform a digital identity policy development.

4. Methodology

4a. Work Plan

SN	Start From	Finish By	Activity	Deliverables
1	01-11-2025	16-11-2025	Desk research - Collect white papers, legislation, technical standards, public strategy documents from participating economies.	Annotated bibliography
2	24-11-2025	14-02-2026	Structured Survey - Online survey to nominated officials in each participating economy	Response dataset
3	15-01-2026	28-02-2026	Comparative analysis - Populate an equivalency matrix; identify convergences, gaps and blockers.	Draft analysis table and narrative
4	14-02-2026	07-03-2026	Validation - Circulate preliminary findings for factual correction.	Revised matrix
5	28-02-2026	13-03-2026	Reporting -report and presentation.	Final deliverables

4b. Beneficiaries	This project will primarily benefit officials in APEC economies looking into Digital Identity systems, approaches or particular use cases, or wishing to start exploring interoperability of different Digital Identity systems. In the long term this project will benefit all APEC economies citizens as they use and benefit from different digital identity systems, particularly as part of international trade, travel and engagement.
4c. Evaluation	The key indicators of success for this project will be: -the level of engagement with the Survey -the breadth of APEC economies included in the report findings -the usefulness of the report in informing other digital identity projects in APEC, and bilateral or multilateral initiatives outside of APEC.
4d. Linkages	This project will facilitate cross-fora collaboration between DESG and CTI given Digital Identities relevance to trade. It builds on a range of existing

	and proposed projects on Digital Identity in APEC, including China's project in CTI "FTAAP Work Program: Digital Identity system for entities CTI 204 2023A.

Project Overseer Declaration	☑ I agree to the declaration stated below	**Date**	02-08-2025

As Project Overseer and on behalf of the above said Organization, I declare that this submission was prepared in accordance with the Guidebook on APEC Projects (the Guidebook) and any ensuing project will comply with said Guidebook. Failure to do so may result in the BMC denying or revoking funding and/or project approval. I understand that any funds approved are granted on the basis of the information in the document's budget table, in the case of any inconsistencies within the document. By submitting this APEC Concept Note to the APEC Secretariat, you (each Project Overseer or point of contact) agree that the APEC Secretariat will collect, use, disclose, and transmit the data contained in the APEC Concept Note, which you have provided to the APEC Secretariat, in accordance with the Singapore's Personal Data Protection Act 2012 and the APEC Secretariat's data protection policy (https://www.apec.org/PrivacyPolicy). The APEC Secretariat will transfer any data provided in this form, which may contain personal data of Project Overseer(s), to APEC member economies overseas via the APEC Secretariat.