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## **APEC Social Media Guidelines**

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## **PART I: APEC Social Media Strategy and Guidelines**

1. Social media is a rapidly changing domain that has become an increasingly effective way for organizations to conduct outreach and communicate directly with its stakeholders.
2. It is undeniable that all organizations engaging in public communication must adapt to a landscape dominated by it.
3. Social media tools can be harnessed to impart and effectively communicate information about APEC to create awareness and understanding of our mission, goals, activities and achievements.
4. This includes educating and engaging with individuals, groups, specific audiences and the general public.
5. Establishing a more prominent presence on social media and tapping into the power of social networks can yield significant communications benefits.
6. It is important to note that social media conversations are instantaneous and can help communicate key messages more efficiently.
7. But this means mistakes can occur more easily, which may lead to reputational risk. Organizations and individuals engaging in social media conversations thus need to be aware of both social media's power and pitfalls.
8. The strategy surrounding the use of social media must, at the very least, aim to do no harm to an organization's reputation, and, at best, aim to establish the organization's online prominence, relevance, reach and influence.

### **Document purpose**

9. This document lays out the social media strategy of the APEC Secretariat as well as the prescribed policies and guidelines for social media use of official channels and those channels officially related to APEC.
10. Its intended user will be anyone handling the official social media platforms of the APEC Secretariat, as well as anyone who wishes to engage in social media guided by the Secretariat's policies.
11. Because social media is constantly evolving, as new tools constantly emerge while existing tools are updated regularly, this must be treated as a living document, which must be audited and improved upon regularly.

## **Overview of APEC's Social Media Strategy**

### **Objective**

12. The objective of APEC's social media strategy is to raise awareness of APEC by engaging with and reaching a broader, more diverse global constituency,
13. and by expanding APEC's audiences' understanding of the region and organization through online dialogue with constituents, and the communication of new research and initiatives.
14. To meet this goal, APEC must grow and maintain its social media audience to build an online community whose members will consider content from APEC a regular part of their daily media consumption.
15. This constant presence in the online activity of an audience even during intersessional periods will aid in easing audiences into being familiar with APEC's key messages, and in fostering trust in the organization and its goals.

### **Target Audience**

16. Social media caters to the general public, but focus on the APEC Family (Leaders, Ministers, SOMs, Chairs, Lead Shepherds, delegates, etc.), the APEC Secretariat, host economy, member economies, business, media, government officials and parliamentarians, students, academics, interest groups.

### **Channels**

17. Twitter profile, Facebook page, LinkedIn page, Instagram, others

### **Goals**

18. To promote APEC's agenda by promoting the APEC website and fora pages.
19. To engage APEC's audience directly online with increased comments, likes, shares or retweets by posting more interesting and relevant content.
20. To increase the overall number of APEC Facebook likes and Twitter followers.

- 21. To diversify the means by which the APEC audience can be engaged.
- 22. To ensure that fora meetings, projects and initiatives are given prominent coverage.
- 23. To ensure the online prominence of APEC initiatives in between fora meetings.

## **General principles**

### *Language and Persona*

- 24. APEC social media channels should mirror the sentiment of APEC delegates when they engage. Interaction is serious and thoughtful, respectful of cross-cultural awareness, and exhibits a sense of humor and fun, when appropriate.
- 25. When handling official social media, an administrator of APEC social media speaks/posts as the organization. Keep a cordial but professional tone.
- 26. A degree of informality in language (e.g., contractions, exclamation points) is permitted especially if they are needed for the sake of brevity, simplicity and the cultivation of a friendly tone.
- 27. Although social media may seem inherently informal, every post should be treated as official publication, as would any news release or feature article.
- 28. Political slant and personal opinion should be left out.
- 29. The APEC Secretariat is an English-speaking organization. With the exception of posts targeted only to a host economy's population, all APEC's social media activity will engage users in English.
- 30. Should members want to post on APEC social media, local languages can be used for targeted domestic audiences after review of conformity to APEC nomenclature by the APEC Secretariat.
- 31. Follow nomenclature and style as directed by the APEC Publication Guidelines.

### *Conduct*

- 32. Share only information that is appropriate for the public. Be aware of political repercussions.

- 33. Be discreet and err on the side of caution—if there is any doubt, remember that it is better to not post than to post something that should not have been made public.
- 34. Do not use derogatory slang or swear words, vulgarity and expletives.
- 35. Do not promote unconfirmed, inaccurate or unsubstantiated facts.

#### *Audience*

- 36. Keep in mind that the sun never sets on the APEC region, which covers multiple time zones and two hemispheres. As such, schedule content for a 24-hour audience.
- 37. Use months and days instead of seasonal time stamps.
- 38. Avoid language or phrases that may be offensive or demeaning to certain groups of users.
- 39. Assume that people reading your content know little to nothing about the organization. Hence,
- 40. keep jargon and abbreviation to a minimum.

#### **What to Post**

- 41. As much as possible, post links to content on the APEC website or to APEC-produced media. These include news releases, feature articles, videos, photos, infographics, APEC reports and publications.
- 42. Keep posts visual: With the exception of live tweets and comments, make sure every social media release is accompanied by featured/embedded images or featured videos.
- 43. Promote multilateral/regional initiatives and success stories.
- 44. Promote positive stories or successful initiatives in individual APEC member economies, but make sure to vary the economies over time, so there is no favoritism.
- 45. Emphasize success stories and projects from the host economy of any given year.

#### **What to Avoid**

- 46. Do not post sensitive images, such as photos depicting violence.
- 47. Minimize images, photos or mentions of APEC government officials at banquets etc. Images should reflect the seriousness of the forum.
- 48. Avoid topics or images that negatively portray APEC members.
- 49. Minimize rankings of APEC member economies unless confirmed by APEC endorsed reports.
- 50. Do not highlight bilateral agreements. Focus on regional and multilateral work.
- 51. Avoid images or graphics of global/regional maps to avoid boundary issues. Exercise judgment when reviewing individual economy maps without borders on a case by case basis.
- 52. Avoid condolences or congratulations of individual leaders from member economies.
- 53. Call it APEC Leaders' Week or APEC Leaders' Meeting, NOT "Summit," which implies sovereignty.
- 54. Do not refer to seasons (Spring, Summer); refer to calendar month.
- 55. Avoid contravening APEC Conventions (Section 2) as approved in the APEC Guidelines for Hosting APEC Meetings.

## **Sharing Guidelines**

- 56. Sharing content refers to "sharing" Facebook posts from other accounts using the APEC Secretariat Facebook page;
- 57. sharing posts on LinkedIn using the APEC LinkedIn corporate page; and
- 58. retweeting using the Twitter handle, @APEC.

## ***Feed Curation***

- 59. Official social media may curate content from the web in a manner that promotes the agenda of APEC.
- 60. The goal is a feed of original and third-party content that demonstrates the benefits of free trade, inclusive growth, sustainable development and APEC priorities.
- 61. Share from international organizations and non-profits or credible providers of content such well-known international and local media.

- 62. If retweeting individuals, please vet the credibility and organization of the individual, e.g., journalist, government official, academic think tank.
- 63. Because sharing posts may be misinterpreted as endorsement (despite the disclaimer), read the content that will be shared before sharing.

#### *Neutrality*

- 64. The Secretariat must represent its full membership, and as such must not appear to lobby for a certain agenda or outcome.
- 65. As such, do not retweet or share posts from government officials or academics advancing a personal agenda.
- 66. We should not appear to be endorsing products or private organizations.

#### *Follow the Post Guidelines*

- 67. When choosing third-party content to share, follow the same guidelines for posts.
- 68. As such, stick to multilateral and regional initiatives.
- 69. Style rules may be relaxed somewhat for post sharing.

#### *Copyright, permission and sharing*

- 70. Administrators should feel free to share or retweet third-party content without fear of infringing on copyright, so long as it is apparent who owns the content being shared. Usually, an embedded link to a third-party content provider's website will suffice.
- 71. However, administrators must not copy text or post images without permission and pass them off as their own.
- 72. All images to be published on the APEC website, and directly published on APEC social media must be free of copyright, properly attributed or used with permission of the owner.

#### **Engagement**

- 73. APEC's social media efforts should encourage fans and followers to share their thoughts with one another by commenting on stories, videos, links, posts, tweets etc. Address any feedback truthfully and calmly.

- 74. Keep to a cordial, and even friendly towards everyone, with no exceptions.
- 75. Do not engage in unpleasant online conversations that enflame unruly discussion.
- 76. Account administrators reserve the right to review all comments and posted materials and remove such materials for any reason.

## **Comments Policy**

### *Positive to Neutral Comments*

- 77. Commenters offering praise should always be thanked.
- 78. Comments that contain links that are believed to be spam will be hidden from public view (or, in the case of Twitter, ignored).
- 79. Commenters that are off-topic may be encouraged by moderators to keep to the topic.
- 80. Commenters that ask questions or relay requests within reason will be entertained.

### *Negative Comments*

- 81. Commenters offering non-vulgar and constructive criticism should be thanked for sharing their opinion.
- 82. Comments that are abusive, contain profanity, are threatening in tone or devolve into personal attacks will be hidden or removed immediately (or, in the case of Twitter, ignored).
- 83. Comments with links that are determined to be spam or sales and advertising should be removed (or, in the case of Twitter, ignored).

## **Answering Direct Messages**

### *Positive to Neutral Messages*

- 84. Correspondents offering praise should always be thanked.
- 85. Messages that contain links that are believed to be spam will be ignored.
- 86. Messages that are off-topic may be ignored.
- 87. Correspondents that ask questions or relay requests will be entertained when possible.

### *Negative Messages*

88. Correspondents offering non-vulgar and constructive criticism should be thanked for sharing their opinion.
89. Messages that are abusive, contain profanity, are threatening in tone or devolve into personal attacks will be ignored.
90. Messages with links that are determined to be spam or sales and advertising should be ignored.

### **Frequency of Content**

91. APEC must grow and maintain its social media audience. The tactic is to keep a constant presence on the feeds of APEC social media subscribers by posting as much content as possible on a daily basis. A constant presence online, even intersessionally, will familiarize APEC's audience with APEC's key messages, and generate trust in the organization and its goals.
92. Increasing frequency means more content (articles, images and video) should be published on the APEC website.
93. Crucially, publishing on social media must be scheduled multiple times on a daily basis, including weekends. Publishing daily on social media is so important for keeping a momentum of engagement with audiences that it is preferable to conspicuously recycle content over the course of a publishing cycle than it is to create a lacuna of content for even one or two days.
94. In this way, the website and the social media platforms will complement each other: the website will try to keep up in providing social media with fresh content; social media will ensure audiences are engaged with APEC's message and content, increasing the likelihood of website visits.

### **Tools and best practices**

95. APEC engages an online audience through social media using four platforms: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram all of which are, at their core similar. They all connect users with family, colleagues, media and friends—or in the case of organizations, with stakeholders—through shared and recommended content within a cultivated network.
96. This content comes in different media—text, links to websites, images, and video. They show up on the feeds of APEC users' followers' social media

accounts when they go online and check their respective applications or websites.

97. Social media platforms monetize their businesses by offering amplification services: a variety of payment options to make content feature more prominent or noticeable in users' feeds.
98. The following sections spell out what makes each network different from each other, and proposes the strategic and/or tactical direction for each.

## **Facebook**

### *Recommendations for use*

99. APEC should take advantage of English-language social media to push out content more frequently.
100. Treat Facebook as an extension of the APEC website: Refrain from using it to post and share content from other websites, and instead post content leading back to the APEC website.
101. Take advantage of Facebook's well-developed platform to engage APEC's multicultural audience and target specific demographics in different economies with both paid and organic posts.
102. Post at least twice a day and evaluate frequency depending on the news cycle.
103. Take advantage of the popular short video medium. Post at least once a week.

## **Twitter**

104. A "microblogging service" that enables users to send and read messages called tweets—text-based posts of up to 140 characters.
105. Some call Twitter the "SMS of the Internet." A misleading nickname: Twitter is increasingly a more visual and multimedia platform, capable of posting images and lengthy videos.

### *Recommendations*

106. Twitter's format makes it ideal for establishing institutional ties with stakeholders.
107. Use Twitter to curate third-party content about topics relating and related to APEC and its agenda.

108. Use Twitter to send out live updates of events and speeches as they happen.
109. Flood the Twitter feed with tweets, even if content has to be recycled over and over again.

## **LinkedIn**

110. LinkedIn is an online global network of professionals. Although it is popularly thought of as a recruitment hub, the platform also allows users to engage with each other, share content, new releases, reports or events.

## *Recommendations*

111. Maintain and manage a network of current and former employees and delegates committed to APEC.
112. Extend these connections to non-Secretariat professionals who are interested in APEC—experts, consultants, project overseers, potential talent.
113. Eventually, organize these networks into fora discussion groups for fora working groups.

## **Other Social Networking Sites for Consideration**

### *Instagram*

114. Allows users to share pictures and videos, apply filters to them and also share them on other social networking sites. Recommended for sharing quickly produced videos and photos.
115. Instagram is the most visually reliant of all the social media platforms. It is best accessed as a smartphone app; its user base is expected to take their photos with their mobiles.
116. As such, Instagram can be the perfect vehicle to carry a version of the APEC Photo Contest that requires contestants to submit photos taken with their phones—thus democratizing the exercise.
117. Furthermore, Instagram can be especially useful during events. One of its more popular features, called Instagram Stories, ties together snippets of short video and photographs, taken with a smartphone, that run as a series

of multimedia vignettes that could be used to piece together for an audience the goings on of a meeting.

118. These photos and videos can be stored for the record and eventually archived, but publicly, they will disappear after 24 hours, lending a veneer of urgency to them.

#### *YouTube*

119. Now that both Twitter and Facebook have native video functions, Google's video publishing site is best used for embedding video on a website page. The site is also better suited for building video archives.
120. It is ripe for a regular video-consuming niche that uses the digital video platform for learning—the platform can be host to educational animated videos, vlogs (video blogs) and online video.

#### *Medium.com*

121. A popular blogging site that offers a platform for long-form text. Ideal for articles that may be too informal for the APEC website, but still merits publication. Low population, but can be paired with Facebook for amplification.

#### **How Fora Can be Active in Social Media**

122. Fora members are encouraged to take advantage of the established audiences already following APEC's social media channels, and to ensure a message that is clear and unified, members and fora should feed content through APEC's official social media channels, which have been verified as authentic with blue ticks. At the same time, fora are discouraged from opening sub-level APEC accounts.
123. This will eliminate confusion by stakeholders and enable a conscious approach to releasing information in line with APEC priorities and the news cycle.
124. It is good industry practice for brands and organizations to use a single set of channels. This would not only help focus the messaging of an organization as diffuse as APEC, it would also devote often limited resources to fewer channels that would, in turn, grow faster.

125. Single channels with large follower and engagement counts are more effective at amplifying information and breaking out to new audiences than multiple small accounts, which overexposes the brand and leaves it open to inconsistencies.
126. APEC members and stakeholders, especially the Lead Shepherd/Chair of a working group, are encouraged to contribute content to APEC official accounts to generate conversations about the issues related to their fora.
127. To promote this activity, they are encouraged to directly engage @APEC who can assist with outreach.
128. Posts may include: Major project milestones or deliverables (e.g. workshops or reports); quotes from a news release or article; outcomes of an activity; Quotes from the Lead Shepherd/Chair on a specific topic.
129. The content would be hashtagged with the fora name and/or contributor's name. The APEC Secretariat will moderate this content according to consolidated editorial calendar and news cycle.

## **PART II: APEC Host and Member Economy Facebook Integration**

This section shows how the APEC Secretariat, host economies, member economies can effectively integrate Facebook activities by:

- Defining both parties' roles,
- Determining a working mechanism for content approval and publishing, and
- Agreeing on guideline for Facebook content.

### **Roles**

To integrate Facebook activities, administration roles need to be determined. The roles reflect which degree of access is accorded to the respective party.

- APEC Secretariat: Page Administrator Page administrators can access all the features of APEC's Facebook page
- Host Economies: Page Editor
- Member Economies: Page Editor Page editors can access all the editorial features of APEC's Facebook page.

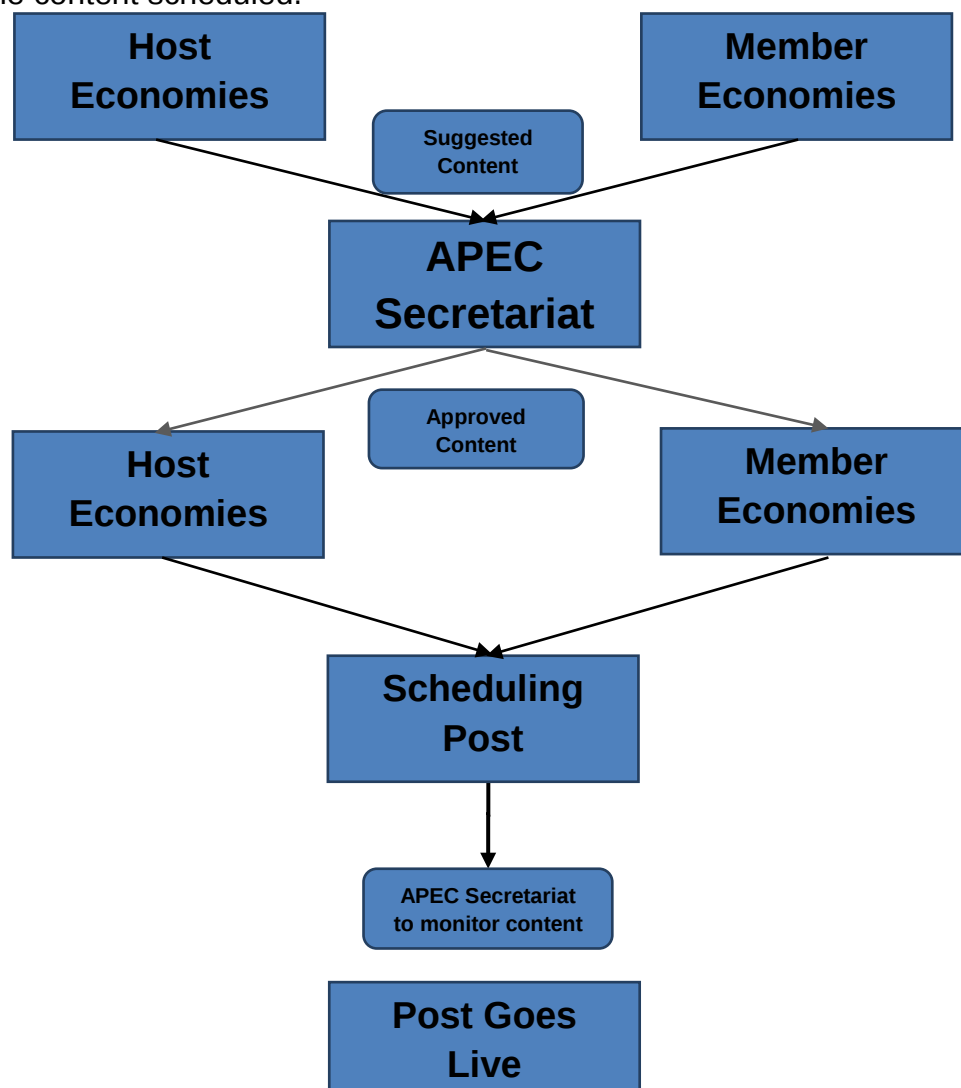
### **Mechanism**

#### *Approval Mechanism for Facebook*

The review mechanism explains how content should be approved prior to publishing on the Facebook page.

The APEC Secretariat has the authority to give final approval for all content published on APEC's Facebook page. The mechanism is:

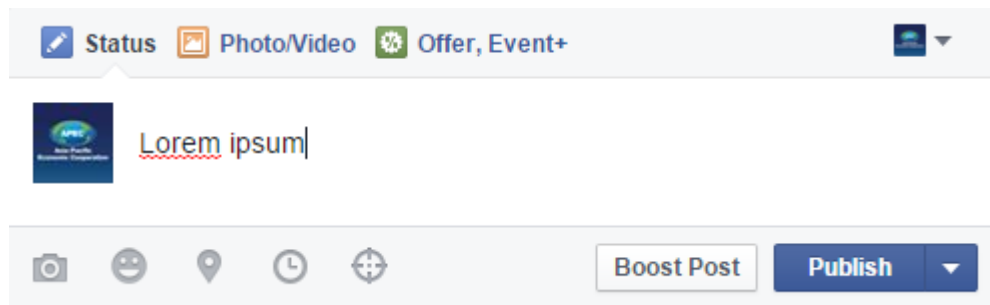
- Editor sends APEC Secretariat content suggestion
- CPAU approves the content suggestion based on the APEC social media guideline.
- Editor can schedule the approved content on the agreed timeslot. The Secretariat's content should be published at 14:00 (Singapore). The Host Economy's content should be published at 15:00 (Singapore). In case there are multiple content in a day, the second content should be published two hours after the first content.
- Host or member economy will then check the post scheduled by the Host Economy's editor and will alert APEC Secretariat should there be any doubt about the content scheduled.



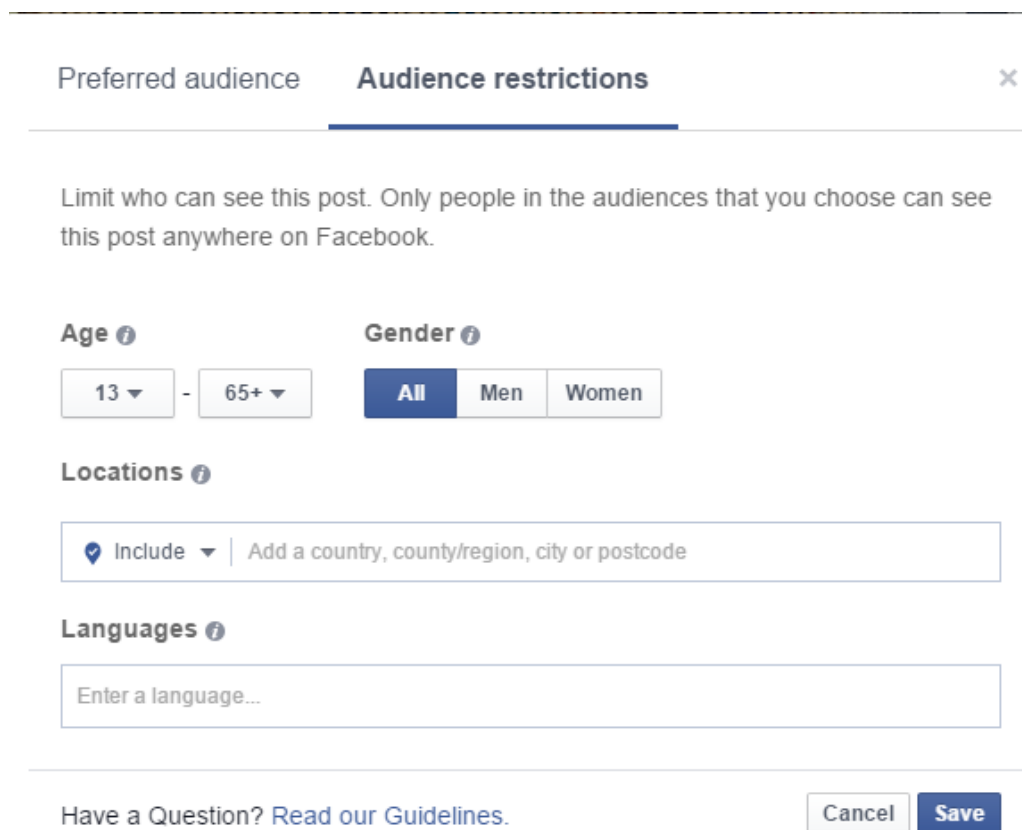
*Publishing Mechanism*

In certain cases involving local content (local language; host logistical issues; etc.) Host economies and member economies target their own audience only. In order to reach a specific geographic target audience, the page editor should follow these steps:

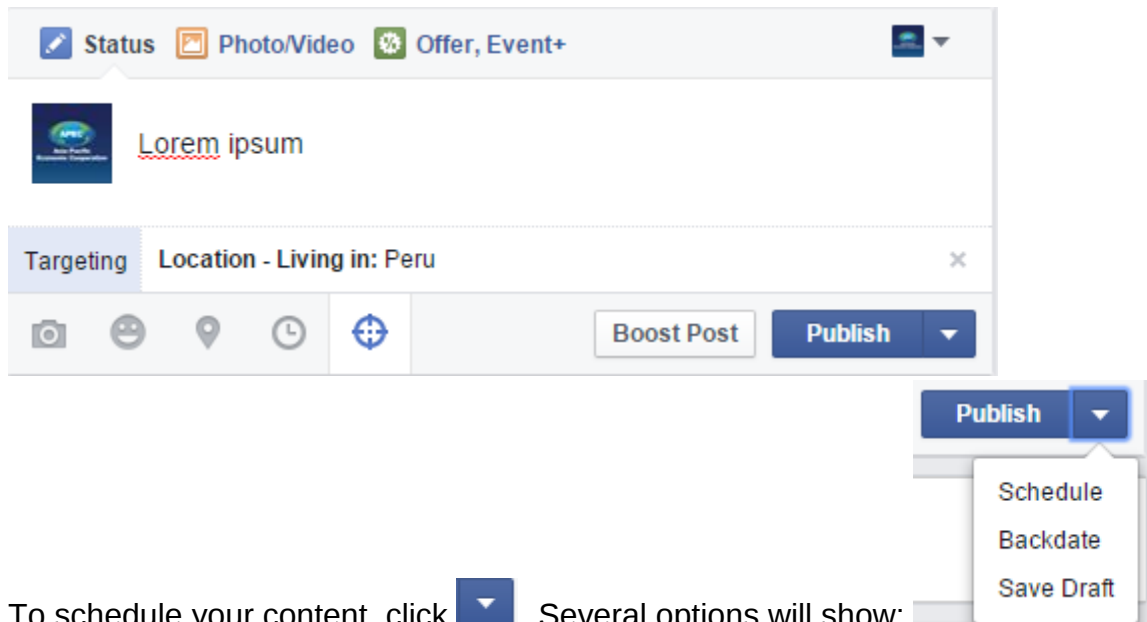
- Log yourself on APEC's Facebook page on an editor setting.
- Put your content in the update box.



- Target your content to specific audiences by clicking . A dialogue will pop-up.
- Choose Audience Restrictions to geo-tag your content.



- Once you set the location, click save. Your content box should look like this:



- To schedule your content, click . Several options will show:
- Choose "Schedule". The following dialogue will pop-up.

Schedule Post

Publishing schedule

Publication

Select a date and time in the future for when you want your post to be published.

18/2/2016

19:56

UTC+07

Distribution schedule

Stop News Feed Distribution

Cancel

Schedule

- Select the time and click "Schedule".
- Your content will be scheduled on your preferred time. You can check your content on a menu under the content box.

## Guidelines

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## **Differentiating content from APEC Secretariat, host economies and member economies**

To differentiate content coming from host economies and member economies, each post should be finished with the following disclaimer:

“# APEC ] [Host Economy] [Year]”

### **1. Dos**

- Be discreet about what to disclose. Some information is private and confidential to the organization. Check with the APEC Secretariat if you are unsure of your post.
- Remember that you are posting to your group's social media page, not your personal social media page. Controversial personal opinions should be left out.
- Address any feedback truthfully and calmly. Do not engage in unpleasant online conversations that enflame unruly discussion.
- Review your group's social media policy so that you know the goal of social media engagement for your organization.
- Adhere to the APEC Guidelines when posting on social media.
- What you just shared cannot be withdrawn. Think before you share or post.
- Have a Social Media Administrator (single point of contact) to track/monitor feedback from users
- Hyperlink the social media page to the APEC member's Satellite Website.

### **2. Don'ts**

- Don't violate APEC's policies and procedures.
- Don't infringe copyrights of other organizations when you post.
- Don't use language or phrases that may be offensive or demeaning to certain groups of users. Social media covers a global audience.
- Don't post inaccurate or unsubstantiated facts.

## **APEC Member Economy Workflow and Approval Process**

A member or host economy is responsible for drafting social media posts for publications compliance review by the APEC Secretariat.

### **A. Content for posting on social media process (Daily and Weekly)**

| <b>Task</b>                                                                                                               | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>APEC Secretariat Action</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Daily Content for posting on social media</b>                                                                          | <b>Daily</b>     |                                |
| Member economy sends content as it is generated to APEC Secretariat for review and posting on social media. (Note: During |                  |                                |

|                                                                            |                 |                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| meetings, this pace will be higher than in between meetings.)              |                 |                                                             |
| Member economy sends drafted social media posts for review within 24 hours | Within 24 hours | APEC Secretariat staff approve as soon as possible same day |
| APEC Secretariat posts as soon as possible once approved                   |                 |                                                             |

|   | Task                                                                        | Frequency     | APEC CPAU Action                       |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------------|
|   | <b>Weekly Content for posting on social media</b>                           | <b>Weekly</b> |                                        |
| 1 | Member economy sends content calendar plan on Thursday each week for review |               |                                        |
| 2 | APEC to respond with feedback no more than a working day later              |               | APEC Secretariat to review and approve |

## B. Twitter engagement process

|   | Task                                                                                                                                                      | Frequency    | APEC Action                    |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
|   | <b>Twitter engagement process</b>                                                                                                                         | <b>Daily</b> |                                |
| 1 | APEC Secretariat will monitor a curated list of partners (academics, government, journalists, official accounts, embassies etc.) and keywords             |              |                                |
| 2 | Based on tweets monitored, member economies will provide tweets/re-tweeting opportunities weekly to APEC (dynamically depending on the content available) |              | APEC Secretariat Staff approve |

|   |                                                                                                     |  |  |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|
| 3 | Upon APEC's approval, the tweets will be re-tweeted and posted (response within 24 hours preferred) |  |  |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|

### C. Community Management/Daily direct message response process

|   | Task                                                                                                                           | Frequency                                                 | APEC Action                                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
|   | <b>Daily Direct Message response process</b>                                                                                   | <b>Daily M-F, as necessary</b>                            |                                                                  |
| 1 | APEC Secretariat to collect comments/direct messages on APEC Social Media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn). | As necessary, depending on whether there are any comments |                                                                  |
| 2 | APEC Secretariat to consult internally on comments for feedback on response, if needed                                         |                                                           | APEC Communications and Public Affairs Unit (CPAU) staff approve |
| 3 | APEC Secretariat to post responses                                                                                             | Later that same day                                       |                                                                  |
|   |                                                                                                                                |                                                           |                                                                  |

### APEC Secretariat's social media channels

Twitter: @apec

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/APECnews](http://www.facebook.com/APECnews)

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/user/apecsec](http://www.youtube.com/user/apecsec)

LinkedIn <http://www.linkedin.com/company/asia-pacific-economic-cooperation-apec-secretariat>

Instagram @apec