



Science Centre Impact Project

An initiative supported by science centres and museums in APEC economies, in cooperation with the international networks of ASPAC, ASTC and RedPOP

2005 Action Plan

Project Objectives

The project, coordinated by Questacon, Australia's National Science and Technology Centre in cooperation with the Asia Pacific, North American and Latin American science centre / museum networks, aims to:

- strengthen linkages and the sharing of data and best practice approaches among science centres and museums in the APEC region; in particular, to:
 - obtain, collate and analyse data concerning personal, societal, economic and policy development impacts of science centres and museums in the APEC region
 - capture and disseminate best practice approaches and innovative ways in which science centres and museums develop and deliver programs to benefit their communities
- assist science centres and museums to articulate, to governments and stakeholders, their particular assets and their contributions to community and economy interests.

Setting up the Project

Following the Australian Science Minister's proposal at the APEC Science Ministers' Meeting in New Zealand in March 2004, the Science Centre Impact Project was officially approved at the APEC Industrial Science and Technology Working Group (ISTWG) Meeting in Singapore in September 2004.

The self-funded project is sponsored by Australia and co-sponsored by Canada; Chinese Taipei; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; and Thailand.

A Project Scoping Meeting, hosted on 4 December 2004 by the Hong Kong Science Museum, attracted delegates from 16 of the 21 APEC economies: Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; China; Chinese Taipei; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Korea; Malaysia; New Zealand; Philippines; Singapore; Thailand; and USA. This meeting discussed the types of input and best-practice areas that would be beneficial and timely for the science centre and museum sector to investigate, providing direction for the three-year project plan that is currently in preparation.

Institutions in 19 economies ('participating institutions') have confirmed their willingness to be involved in the project, and the Executive Directors of the three major science centre networks in the APEC region have agreed to promote the project and to encourage participation in it by their member science centres and museums.

Since December 2004, the following set-up activities have been completed:

- An International Steering Group has been established. Current members are:
 - Mr Chee-kuen Yip, Chief Curator of the Hong Kong Science Museum
 - Dr Tuan Chiong Chew, Chief Executive of the Singapore Science Centre
 - Dr Wen-Hao Chou, Deputy Director, National Museum of Natural Science, Chinese Taipei
 - Ms Bonnie VanDorn, Executive Director of the Association of Science-Technology Centres, USA
 - Dr Julia Taguena, Executive Director of RedPOP (Latin American Network for the Popularisation of Science and Technology).

- Ms Ilze Groves has been selected and appointed as Project Officer to carry out project activities under the direction of Project Overseer, Mr Brenton Honeyman.
- The Science Centre Impact Project website has been established on the ASPAC (Asia Pacific Network of Science and Technology Centres) website: <<http://www.aspacnet.org/apec>>.
- The report of the International Study of the Economic Impact of Science Centres on Their Local Communities has been published on the ASPAC website.
- Two web-based contact lists have been established, one for people in relevant government positions in the APEC economies and one for people in science centres and museums.
- An e-newsletter for the project has been set up, with the first issue to be disseminated in early April 2005.
- Projects and meetings in several APEC economies have been identified, which will generate outputs relevant to this project. Approval has been negotiated to obtain reports and data for use in this project from relevant organisations, including the Canadian Association of Science Centres, the Association of Science-Technology Centres (based in the USA), the Public Communication of Science and Technology Working Conference in China, and a conference on socio-cultural effects of science communication in Korea.
- Representatives in several APEC economies have indicated their interest in hosting, as an in-kind contribution, a meeting to advance the outcomes of this project. Specific offers have been made by institutions in Brunei Darussalam, Chinese Taipei and Korea, as well as by the Association of Science-Technology Centres. At the 4th Science Centre World Congress, hosted by Museu da Vida, Brazil, April 2005, several sessions have been designed to develop outputs relevant to this project.

Three-year Project Plan (2005–07)

The project proposal set out several potential areas of activity. These have been approved by the APEC Industrial Science and Technology Working Group and endorsed by participants at the December 2004 Project Scoping meeting. They include:

- collect data and carry out other research relating to the impacts of science centres and museums
- collect and disseminate best-practice and innovative exemplars of science centre and museum activity
- arrange meetings, workshops or seminars to support or complement the collection of impact data and best-practice exemplars, and to promote networking by project participants
- encourage involvement by project participants in relevant meetings arranged by other organisations; negotiate the use of outputs from such events for this project.

Three areas of science centre and museum activity emerged from discussion at the December 2004 Scoping Meeting as being of particular interest. Thus project activities during 2005 will initially focus on how science centres and museums:

- involve their communities in their activities and programs, especially by increasing access for community sectors that have been difficult to involve, and delivering and designing programs in a community-focused and culturally appropriate way
- assist people to understand difficult or controversial issues
- engage others in partnerships and cooperative ventures to enhance the quality of outcomes.

The detailed Action Plan for 2005 is set out in the table on the following page. This shows the proposed timing for activities in four categories: impact research and data collection; exemplars of best practice and innovative approaches; meetings, workshops and seminars; and general research or administrative activities to underpin the project.

Activities during 2006 and 2007 will build on the work of this first year, with detailed directions to be guided by the International Steering Group on the basis of both 2005 project outcomes and regional or worldwide trends in the science centre / museum sector.

APEC Science Centre Impact Project: Action Plan for 2005

Task	When	Who*	Impact research	Best practice / innovation	Meetings	General research & admin.
Redevelop the project website to reflect planned activities and outputs	April 2005	IG, Q				•
Set up a mailing list for contact officers at participating institutions	April 2005	IG				•
Prepare and disseminate monthly e-newsletters to government and science centre / museum contacts	From April 2005	IG				•
Carry out research and networking to identify and negotiate the use of existing impact studies and best practice / innovation exemplars	Ongoing	IG, ISG, PI	•	•	•	•
Develop an overview of science centres and their activities to provide background for government audiences	From June 2005	IG	•			•
Negotiate a meeting / seminar to be held in Chinese Taipei (first half of 2006 — theme to be confirmed)	April–May 2005	BH	•	•	•	
Draw on outcomes of relevant sessions at conferences, e.g. 4 th Science Centre World Congress (April 2005, Brazil); Public Communication of Science and Technology (June 2005, China); ASTC annual conference (October 2005, USA)	Ongoing	IG, ISG, PI	•	•	•	
Collaborate with the Korea Science Foundation on an international conference about the impacts of science centres, to be held in November 2005 in conjunction with the APEC summit meeting	Ongoing in 2005	BH, IG	•	•	•	
Develop and implement a survey on partnerships between science centres / museums and other organisations	Commence in July 2005	IG, ISG	•	•		
Seek out case studies on communicating controversial or cutting-edge science	Commence in July 2005	IG, ISG	•	•		
Pursue further funding for the project	From April 2005	BH, ISG, IG				•

* BH: Brenton Honeyman; IG: Ilze Groves; ISG: International Steering Group; PI: participating institutions (institutions that have agreed to participate actively in the project); Q: other Questacon personnel.