

Second Round of Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Negotiations – Solid progress

The second round of TPP negotiations, held in San Francisco from 14-18 June 2010, resulted in significant progress on both the broad architecture of the agreement, and on a range of specific issues to be covered in the TPP.

As part of developing appropriate architecture for a high quality, comprehensive 21st century FTA, TPP Parties agreed that existing FTAs between TPP Parties would continue to co-exist alongside the TPP. This will allow businesses to choose to use whichever agreement provides the better treatment for their particular good, service or investment.

Solid progress was also made on how to approach the negotiation of market access outcomes and how to reflect those outcomes in the agreement. In order to lay the groundwork for positive outcomes on this issue at the third round of negotiations in October, TPP Parties agreed to meet intersessionally in Peru in August to further progress discussions.

Chief Negotiators also agreed in San Francisco on a set of cross-cutting 21st century issues to help guide the negotiations, such as:

- encouraging the participation of small business in trade;
- addressing behind the border issues like reducing customs paperwork;
- promoting regulatory coherence, including through encouraging cooperation between regulatory bodies;
- considering how best to enhance the competitiveness of TPP Parties;
- focussing on transparency in terms of regulation and administrative processes; and
- considering the needs of developing countries.

In addition, TPP officials made good progress on a wide range of more traditional FTA issues to be covered by the agreement including goods, services, investment, government procurement, intellectual property, technical barriers to trade, competition policy, legal and institutional issues; and capacity building. Discussions also focussed on what types of trade and labour and trade and environment provisions would be appropriate for the TPP.

TPP Parties agreed on a forward work program that will allow TPP Parties to be in a position to begin negotiating text for the agreement at the third round in Brunei on 4-8 October 2010. This includes preparation of elements papers for discussion, possible textual proposals, as well as information exchange on various topics.

TPP Parties also agreed on an intensive schedule of meetings for 2010-11 in order to make maximum headway in the lead-up to the APEC Leaders meeting in Honolulu in November 2011. However, no deadline has been set to conclude the negotiations.

The United States Trade Representative's office made arrangements for accredited stakeholders' attendance in the margins of the negotiations in San Francisco. Australian negotiators took the opportunity to meet with and attend presentations by some of these stakeholders.

We thank those of you who have participated to date in the Australian Government's public consultation process on the TPP, including most recently in meetings and teleconferences held in the lead-up to the San Francisco round of negotiations. The Government is committed to transparent and inclusive trade policies and will continue to consult stakeholders as the TPP negotiations progress, with a further set of meetings and teleconferences in state and territory capitals to be held later in 2010. We welcome written submissions at any time on any issues which may be relevant to the negotiations.

For more information, or to provide submissions on the TPP, please email us at tpp@dfat.gov.au