

ASEM Connectivity

1. Definition

Connectivity is about bringing countries, people and societies closer together. It facilitates access and is a means to foster deeper economic and people-to-people ties. It encompasses the hard and soft aspects, including the physical and institutional social-cultural linkages that are the fundamental supportive means to enhance the economic, political-security, and socio-cultural ties between Asia and Europe which also contribute to the narrowing of the varying levels of development and capacities.

Bearing in mind the Asia-Europe Cooperation Framework (AECF) 2000, ASEM connectivity aims to establish the sense of building ASEM partnership of shared interests. It upholds the spirit of peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit. It will also adhere to and effectively implement relevant international norms and standards as mutually agreed by ASEM partners.

ASEM Connectivity covers all modes of transport (aviation, maritime, rail and road) and also includes, among others, institutions, infrastructure, financial cooperation, IT, digital links, energy, education and research, human resources development, tourism, cultural exchanges as well as customs, trade and investment facilitation.

ASEM connectivity covers all the three pillars of ASEM - economic, political and socio-cultural. It should be result-oriented, and in support of the following key principles: level-playing field, free and open trade, market principles, multi-dimensionality, inclusiveness, fairness, openness, transparency, financial viability, cost-effectiveness and mutual benefits. It should also contribute to the materialisation of the principles, goals and targets of *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Sustainability is one of the important quality benchmarks for the connectivity initiatives in the ASEM context.

2. Scope of work

Based on the definition and concept of connectivity, the APGC, in accordance with its Terms of Reference, will next explore possible areas of focus of ASEM cooperation. It will also bear in mind the deliberations and outcomes of the ASEM ministerial meetings which are held to mainstream connectivity into all relevant ASEM activities as envisaged by the ASEM leaders at the 11th ASEM Summit in Ulaanbaatar.

3. Timeline

In view of above, the APGC will continue to meet in the margins of the SOMs and as appropriate meetings including at technical/expert level according to the below timeline.

- 1st meeting of APGC, 2018 – To provide inputs for the development of the APGC outcome document to be presented to the Leaders in 2018 in Brussels.

- 2nd meeting of APGC, 2018 – Based on the 1st meeting; to further discuss the APGC outcome document with the aim of finalising it before the ASEM Summit 2018.
- 3rd meeting of APGC, 2018 – To adopt the APGC outcome document, to be submitted to the Summit for ASEM Leaders' approval.