



**PECC Internship Program 2023  
Internship Report**

**Period of internship:  
26<sup>th</sup> June 2023 to 15<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

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2023 marked a pivotal moment where the global community was yearning for a return to economic normalcy and stability. However, this aspiration was accompanied by a sense of caution due to the ever-changing geopolitical terrain and the ongoing turmoil stemming from the Russia-Ukraine war. It was during this period that I once again grasped the undeniable significance of international cooperation in navigating the path forward, enabling different countries to fortify their resilience against the multifaceted challenges and forge a prosperous future in the aftermath of the pandemic. I was privileged to be nominated by the Hong Kong Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation (HKCPEC) for the internship opportunity with the PECC International Secretariat in Singapore. In retrospect, my journey with PECC had been profoundly inspiring, offering me priceless insights and a wealth of knowledge in realms of international affairs and macroeconomics that had enriched both my studies and career development.

### **Exposure at PECC International Secretariat**

I reported directly to Mr Eduardo Pedrosa, the Secretary-General of PECC. As a chief economist of the organisation, Mr Pedrosa was busy with preparing the upcoming State of the Region Report (SOTR) and numerous publications. I had the privilege of assisting him on data mining and compilation for the Global Connectivity Index project and the Country's Risk to Growth project. Through working on the projects, I gained a deeper understanding of the importance of physical connectivity, people-to-people connectivity and institutional connectivity, as these data serve as crucial proxies for assessing a nation's trade development and economic performance. Meanwhile, Mr Pedrosa contributed numerous ideas to improve the research structure, which entailed exploring additional proxies to be incorporated into the ICT/digital sub-pillar. This also inspired me to delve deeper into the significance of digitalisation in the context of trade and economic cooperation across the Asia-Pacific economies. It was fascinating to see a lot of potential opportunities emerging due to the development of digital trade and e-commerce platforms since the pandemic. In fact, Mr Pedrosa always deliberated insightful discussions to me that I had never thought about. I was truly grateful for his guidance along the way and for being entrusted with these tasks, which significantly enhanced my research capacities particularly in terms of calculating weighting and compiling data.

In addition to my assigned tasks, I had the privilege of engaging in conversations with several senior professionals at PECC. Through the daily coffee chat with Ms Betty Ip, Ms Nor Irdawaty, and Ms Zakiah Kassim at the PECC International Secretariat, I

acquired a deeper appreciation on Singapore's economic structure, social dynamics, and its multicultural fabric. Their unique insights into various aspects of Singapore's government policies, ranging from housing, talent attraction, ethnicity, healthcare, to foreign affairs strategies, significantly enriched my knowledge and made me appreciate the remarkable transformation of Singapore from its historical roots to its current state of success.

### **Regional and foreign affairs meetings attendances**

I am truly grateful to have the opportunity to attend several high-level meetings throughout my internship. By participating in the PECC Standing Committee Meeting and General Meeting, I had a glimpse of how representatives from different member committees, including those from China, the United States, Australia, France, Thailand and Japan, deliberated their speeches and provided updates on their projects. This was undeniably an eye-opening experience for me, as it enabled me to absorb insights from professionals around the globe in the fields of digitalisation, trade and economic cooperation through direct participation in these meetings. The meetings also placed emphasis on discussing the impact of digitalisation and how the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can better leverage this advancement to transform their businesses and seize the opportunities to grow further. The knowledge transfer among the professionals in these meetings served a great source of inspiration for me.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Ms Ip for facilitating my participation in foreign affairs meetings, such as a site visit by Qatar's Prime Minister to Singapore which took place at Raffles Hotel. This was a rare opportunity for me to understand more deeply the economic ties between Qatar and Singapore, as well as the potential business opportunities in the Middle East. The meeting also highlighted Qatar's strategy in navigating the contemporary geopolitical landscape, and had intrigued me to delve into the foreign affairs strategy among the small states nowadays and analyse what the best way for these economies to situate would be. Meanwhile, I had the privilege to attend different seminar talks held by the National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technology University of Singapore. One of the memorable talks was debating the future of ASEAN which enabled me to recognise the challenges ASEAN countries were encountering that may hinder their development in the long term and the ways to resolve these risks by fostering stronger and united cooperation among the ASEAN member states. The seminar created the opportunity for me to connect with scholars, industry experts and professionals from other international organisation, thereby broadening my professional network. The talk also underscored the potential of ASEAN market which had a large consumer base filled with young labour force that

hone extensive opportunities for long-term economic growth. It was fascinating to observe that geopolitical risk had risen to the forefront of concern for nations in recent times, frequently being raised on meeting agendas, thus how to navigate and mitigate these risks to the nation's trade and economic development were worth exploring.

## **Final Remarks**

I must say that this internship had been truly invaluable to me. It offered a once-in-a-lifetime experience to work abroad as an intern, immerse myself in a multicultural working environment, engage in meaningful discussions with experienced professionals and industry experts in the fields of trade and foreign affairs, attend insightful international meetings, and spent plenty of time fully embracing the vibrant cultural diversity of Singaporean society. My time in Singapore was particularly special as it coincided with memorable events such as Singapore National Day celebration, witnessing the Singaporean Presidential election and the pre-celebration of the Formula One Singapore Grand Prix. I was grateful for the cherished memories during my stay in Singapore.

Most importantly, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the senior professionals I met at PECC. Your warm hospitality, unwavering support, and genuine mentorship had left an indelible mark on my journey. Throughout my time here, I felt like I had found a second home in Singapore. Particularly, I would like to thank Mr Pedrosa for his boundless wisdom and insights into global economy and digital trade which play an instrumental role in shaping my understanding, Ms Ip for her warm guidance, valuable career advice and support in facilitating my participation in high-level meetings, Ms Irdawaty for her thought-provoking discussions on various aspects of Singaporean society, and Ms Kassim for her support in managing my employment pass and for her generously sharing of experiences at PECC. I also appreciate the support of HKCPEC and the HKCPEC Secretariat throughout the journey and providing me with this precious opportunity. My experiences and interactions in Singapore had illuminated my path forward and instilled in me a sense of hope for the future. I eagerly anticipate the opportunity to make a positive impact on my surroundings and contribute to the betterment of Hong Kong in the years to come.