



Frequently Asked Questions

– The Virtual ABTC

What is the Virtual ABTC?

The Virtual APEC Business Travel Card (ABTC) is a new method for presenting the ABTC on a smart device 'app'. It provides access and displays a digital version of the ABTC for approved applicants and cardholders from fully participating Member Economies when using their ABTC to enter an APEC Economy.

Why have we created the Virtual ABTC?

The Virtual ABTC has been created for the convenience of approved cardholders and will bring the ABTC Scheme into the modern and digitised era of global travel. It provides cardholders from fully participating Member Economies with a more secure, efficient, convenient and user-friendly service. The Virtual ABTC automatically updates as a cardholder opens or refreshes their smart device 'app', ensuring all relevant information is up-to-date and readily available for the cardholder's travel.

When will the Virtual ABTC be available?

The Virtual ABTC will be officially launched at the *APEC Leaders' Week* in **November 2020**. Once released, fully participating Economies may choose to offer the Virtual ABTC to their approved cardholders.

Each Economy will determine its own timeline in transitioning to the use of the Virtual ABTC for its cardholders. Please consult with your Home Economy for further details.

Who can access and use the Virtual ABTC?

Following the transition to the Virtual ABTC by a fully participating Member Economy, approved cardholders from fully participating Member Economies can access and use the Virtual ABTC.

Cardholders from transitional Member Economies (Canada and the United States) will not have access to the Virtual ABTC for the foreseeable future. However, can continue to use the physical ABTC without any change of procedures.

All Economies, including transitional Member Economies are expected to accept the Virtual ABTC at their international ports of entry following its official launch at the *APEC Leaders' Week* in **November 2020**.

Are there any changes to procedures when presenting on the Virtual ABTC?

No. The Virtual ABTC is a digital version of the physical ABTC.

When passing through international Ports, you will be required to present the Virtual ABTC using the smart device 'app', just as you would your physical ABTC, as instructed by a Port Official either when entering the APEC fast track lane or when entering an Economy.

How is the Virtual ABTC different to the physical ABTC?

The Virtual ABTC provides the cardholder and Port Officials with up-to-date information:

- **Real time data** - The Virtual ABTC is linked to the ABTC System, providing cardholders and Port Officials with real-time information on the status of the ABTC.
- **ABTC System** – As the Virtual ABTC is linked to the ABTC System, any updates made in the system will be immediately reflected when the cardholder opens or refreshes their smart device 'app'. Examples of updates that appear immediately include:
 - if Pre-Clearance to enter an Economy has been approved, updated or removed,
 - the ABTC has expired, or
 - the holder's passport has been renewed.

Can applicants apply for and use both the Virtual ABTC and the physical ABTC?

Only new or renewing applicants are able to use and be offered access to the Virtual ABTC, and only where a Home Economy has agreed to move to the digital platform. Existing cardholders will not necessarily be granted the ability to transition to the Virtual ABTC, until they are approved for a renewed ABTC.

While it is intended for the Virtual ABTC to eventually replace the physical ABTC in fully participating Economies, this transition will vary among APEC Economies. Your Home Economy will determine if you are eligible to hold both the physical ABTC and have access to the Virtual ABTC.

Note: It is important for cardholders to enter and exit on the same ABTC, e.g. if a cardholder enters an Economy on the physical ABTC they must exit on the same card, and the same applies with the Virtual ABTC.

What happens if I get a new Passport?

If an ABTC holder updates their passport details during the validity of their ABTC, they may be given the option to make use of the Virtual ABTC, instead of receiving a replacement physical ABTC. Please consult your Home Economy for further details.

Does the Virtual ABTC cost more to use?

The Virtual ABTC is free to download and access for those applicants who have been approved an ABTC. Individual Economies set, review and charge ABTC application fees as each deem necessary.

How do applicants and cardholders receive the Virtual ABTC?

Where a new or repeating applicant indicates the preference for the Virtual ABTC and their Home Economy offers this service, an auto-generated email will be sent to the nominated point of contact email address upon approval for an ABTC. The email will include the application number and instructions on how to download the smart device 'app' and log into the Virtual ABTC. Applicants should be informed of the option to use the Virtual ABTC at the time of their application by their Home Economy.

Note: to use the Virtual ABTC an applicant must provide their email address.

Has the ABTC Application Process Changed?

Yes. In order to make use of the Virtual ABTC you will still need to complete the process outlined by your Home Economy to apply for an ABTC. Approved cardholders will receive a notification email with their Application ID.

What are the Security Features of the Virtual ABTC feature?

The Virtual ABTC will employ security features to provide confidence that an ABTC and cardholder are genuine. These features include:

- **Secure Login** – An approved ABTC applicant will be sent an email with a unique token (an individual application number) for the Virtual ABTC and a link to download and log onto the smart device 'app'. This unique token will change with every repeat application.
- **User Authentication** – Users are required to enter their user credentials, which are authenticated and verified when logging on to the smart device 'app'. Only ABTC cardholders who have been granted access to Virtual ABTC can log in. Please refer to the 'how to' quick reference for an easy step-by-step guide in using the Virtual ABTC.
- **Screenshots** - On Android smart devices, users are prevented from taking screenshots of the Virtual ABTC; and on iOS smart devices, users who attempt to take a screenshot of the Virtual ABTC will be presented with a message reminding them that Port Officials will not accept a screenshot of the Virtual ABTC.
- **Watermarks** - The replication of the Virtual ABTC on the smart device 'app' 'View Card' screen will have discrete security features, making it difficult to fraudulently replicate.
- **Locked to Gravity** – The holographic overlay and card background pattern change colour and visibility in correlation with the movement of the device, allowing Port Officials to quickly confirm that they have been presented with the official Virtual ABTC rather than a screenshot or video capture.

Security features for the Virtual ABTC mitigate fraudulent replication and misuse, along with protecting the cardholder's ABTC and personal details.

Tips for Getting the most out of the Virtual ABTC

This is general advice regarding common scenarios cardholders may experience:

- **Pre-Clearance Status** – It is important to ensure your ABTC remains valid for use to the Member Economy you intend to enter before you travel. This process is made easy by opening the Virtual ABTC, which automatically updates the status of your ABTC for display on your smart device. Alternatively, the status of an ABTC can be checked by entering one's details [online at the ABTC application status checker](#).
- **No Wi-Fi** – The Virtual ABTC and status of your ABTC is stored on your smart device's memory. Due to this cached memory, the Virtual ABTC is able to be used for a period of time in the event you are not able to go online after you arrive at your destination. Port Officials can check the date and time of last refresh. It is important that you refresh the Virtual ABTC by opening it and checking the status of your ABTC before you travel to ensure that your Virtual ABTC is valid for use to the Economy you wish to enter.
Note: the time of last refresh is displayed as a specific date and time according to a smart device's internal clock. Where the date and time is changed to reflect a new time zone, the time of last refresh adjusts according to the corresponding date and time in the newly entered time zone.
- **System Outage** – The Virtual ABTC and status of your ABTC is stored in your smart device's memory. If there is a system outage due to maintenance or issues connecting to the internet, the Virtual ABTC is able to be used for a period of time due to the cached memory. When there is no internet connectivity, the application will indicate its status as 'offline'. It is important that you refresh the Virtual ABTC by opening it and checking the status of your ABTC before you travel to ensure that your Virtual ABTC is accurate and valid to enter an Economy.

- **Uncharged Device** – Ensure that your smart device(s) are sufficiently charged to allow use of your Virtual ABTC on the smart device 'app' when entering an Economy. Alternatively, many international airports provide charging stations for smart devices.
- **Lost Mobile Device** – Ensure that you do not lose your smart device, otherwise you may not be able to use the Virtual ABTC or even enter the Economy you are travelling to. In the event you lose your smart device, you should contact your Home Economy as soon as possible so they can reissue you a link for you to use the Virtual ABTC on a different smart device.
- **Missing Information** – If there is any missing or incomplete information on your Virtual ABTC, such as your photo, signature or other information, you should contact your Home Economy immediately to ensure that your ABTC is valid. Please be aware that a Virtual ABTC that has missing information is not considered valid for use.

If you experience any difficulties with the Virtual ABTC, please contact your [Home Economy](#).

Note: the compatibility requirements for using the Virtual ABTC on your digital device are detailed within the respective Virtual ABTC store (download) pages on Apple Store and Google Play Store.

Note: Google Play Store may not be available in all regions.

“I am passionate about the transition to the Virtual ABTC as we modernize the Scheme for the world of digitised travel and I look forward to uptake across the region from Member Economies”

Kimberlee Stamatis, BMG Convenor