



**Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation**

# **APEC Services Trade Access Requirements (STAR) Database**

## **Final Report**

**Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI)  
and Group on Services (GOS)**

**December 2016**

APEC Project: CTI 03 2014 (GOS)

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### Project start and finish dates.

Start: 12 September 2014

Finish: 31 March 2017

### Planned and actual amounts of funding incurred throughout project.

Planned: \$104,500 USD

Actual: \$94,500 USD + \$10,000 proposed spending

### Project Background

The APEC STAR Database was a business-friendly, on-line tool aimed at helping services providers take advantage of export opportunities in APEC economies. By gathering information on services market access into a single, easily accessible knowledge bank, the STAR database increased awareness of the regulatory requirements to trade.

The APEC STAR Database was focused and targeted to be a business friendly tool. The APEC STAR Database was an Australian Government initiative, co-sponsored by Chile; Mexico; New Zealand; Philippines; Peru; and the United States. The database was launched in 2010 by then Trade Minister Craig Emerson.

The APEC STAR database was a key focus and flagship project of the APEC Group on Services (GOS) and has been jointly funded by APEC and the Australian Government.

The Australian APEC Study Centre (AASC) managed the research input and updating of the database.

The decision was made to archive the APEC STAR Database in February 2017.

### Objectives, outcomes and Scope of Works

Objectives	Assessment, Impact and Lessons Learnt
1. Improve the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the STAR database	Phase 4 of the APEC STAR Database allowed for a complete expansion of the database content to cover all APEC economies for each of the eight service sectors (distribution, education, financial, ICT, mining and energy, professional services, telecommunications and transportation and logistics). This data was supplied to each economy and economies had ample opportunity to correct any information that was out of date or inaccurate. This process of economy verification allowed for transparent and accountable data output that improved the accuracy of the database.

<p>2. Increase user confidence and usability of the website</p>	<p>Over the course of 2015, the APEC STAR Database was redesigned to increase usability of the website and accessibility of data. This included a number of phases inclusive of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The removal of modes as the delivery mechanism for information contained within the database.</li> <li>• A simplification in delivery of information to create less complexity within the backend of the website</li> <li>• A complete front end redesign to align the website with a modern and up to date design.</li> </ul> <p>It should be noted that the website front end had not been redesigned since 2010. The impact of the front-end redesign and the simplification of information delivery transformed the database into one that was easy to use, easy on the eye and intuitive.</p>
<p>3. Keep the database up to date for as long as possible</p>	<p>The database content has been regularly reported to GOS and each economy has had regular access to the information reported in the database. There has been significant feedback given to the content of the database particularly from Australia; Hong Kong, China Japan; and New Zealand. The AASC has updated the information supplied by economies to ensure that information is accurate and up to date. As of 2016, the data will not be updated and the website has been archived.</p>
<p>4. Increase awareness and usage of the database</p>	<p>The database was widely publicised throughout APEC channels and the AASC marketed the database through every appropriate opportunity. The database was presented on at the APEC Group on Services, regular ABAC meetings through the Regional Economic Integration Working Group (REIWG) and at each of the Regulatory services workshops hosted by DFAT. The database was also marketed through the APEC Services Coalition, The Hong Kong Chamber of Commerce, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Singapore Business Federation. The information within the database was utilized by the OECD's STRI. The database has also been marketed through the AASC's newsletter and annual reports. The data was used to inform the baseline studies of each of the DFAT services workshops on good policy and regulatory practices within the services sectors. This work was compiled into a comprehensive compendium that formed the APEC GOS' contribution to the APEC Services Competitiveness Roadmap (ASCR) publicised through RMIT, APEC and DFAT.</p>

Scope of Works	Completed/not completed
1. Research, compilation and verification of data covering the specified service sectors in all 21 APEC economies from publicly available sources.	The research output of data was completed in a number of phases as defined within the contract.
2. Providing opportunity to APEC economies to verify the data for accuracy.	Once compiled, the data was presented to GOS and each economy had the opportunity to comment and amend the data.
3. Uploading of the data onto the database and publication on the internet.	Once, verified through GOS, the data was uploaded to the website and published.
4. Ad-hoc updating on request when information is out of date or incorrect.	There were several instances throughout this project where economies would give feedback on the data and these updates were published on the website as soon as they were received by the AASC.
<p>5. Website maintenance and management throughout the duration of the contract, including the following improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• each web page to show when the information contained on it was last updated;</li> <li>• where possible, include links to information sources on all web pages, preferably to host government sites and legal sources;</li> <li>• other requested changes as required to enhance usability and accuracy of the website. (Requests involving significant changes or substantial costs will be reviewed for possible implementation in future phases of the project.)</li> </ul>	<p>The website was maintained throughout the contract and links were regularly checked to ensure full functional.</p> <p>Each page did have the published dates of the data, however, the feedback on this update was that it created confusion as to the accuracy and up-to-date nature of the information. Through negotiation between the AASC and the program overseer, these dates were removed from the public view. The dates remain on the administrator view of the webpages.</p>

<p>6. An e-mail form will be designed that enables users to notify the web manager when information is out of date. Links to the form will be included on main pages.</p>	<p>Along with the front end redesign, the email form and PDF mechanisms were updated to make them more prominent and functional.</p>
<p>7. Ongoing monitoring will be instituted for major regulatory changes (e.g. conclusion of a new FTA and the launch of new policy initiatives) to facilitate ad-hoc updating of the website over the life of the contract. Information will be included on the website explaining how the information is compiled.</p>	<p>Ongoing monitoring for regulatory changes has been delivered throughout this contract with updates to FTAs.</p>
<p>8. Each web page will show when the information was last updated (month and year).</p>	<p>As addressed in section 5.</p>
<p>9. Where possible each web page will display links of information sources, preferably legal sources or host government sites.</p>	<p>Where verifiable, links have been utilised within the data and regularly monitored to ensure they continued to be valid.</p>
<p>10. The PDF print option will be redesigned to clarify how users can print all the information relating to a particular economy and sector.</p>	<p>The PDF mechanism was redesigned several times to ensure that information was easily available in PDF format. Due to technological challenges within the website structure, this was closely monitored and updated.</p>
<p>11. A comprehensive communication strategy will be designed and implemented to promote the tool to industry (particularly SMEs) and increase its online profile. This include presentations at APEC Leaders' Week in 2015 and at APEC Sub-fora, including the APEC GOS and the SME Working Group. Email, (online) advertising, an updated brochure and other communication tools will be deployed to spread the message through the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC), services industry bodies, relevant government agencies, APEC Study Centre's, trade commissions in the region and relevant international organisations such as the WTO and the OECD. To increase the online profile of the database, the AASC will seek to link the database to other relevant websites (e.g. the OECD STRI Database and the WTO website).</p>	<p>A communications strategy was designed and delivered to the project overseer. As a result of the uncertainty of the future of the database, the AASC did not implement the communication strategy as guided by the project overseer. Despite this decision, the database was substantially marketed through the channels as listed in Outcome 4.</p> <p>In addition to this, the online forum was redesigned and implemented in 2015.</p>

The online forum will be redesigned and promoted to industry to help fulfill its potential as an experience- sharing tool. Case studies and success stories may be generated from user surveys and featured on the STAR Database website and in promotional materials.

12. Detailed website diagnostics will be gathered to monitor business uptake and overall success of the STAR database project. Indicators will include hits, bounce rates, time per visit, information viewed (at the economy and sector-level), geographical distribution of visitors, most common page views, most common PDFs downloaded and referrals to and from the website via links. The diagnostics will be delivered every six months with the APEC monitoring and completion reports.

Detailed website diagnostics were provided in milestone reports. See attachment 2 for overarching statistics from 2012-2016 designed to give a detailed snapshot of usage. It should be noted that in 2015, when the website was redesigned and marketed heavily throughout ABAC, GOS and the Regulatory Services Workshops, usage substantially increased.

<p>13. This will be complemented by two online user surveys (one in 2014 and one after the launch of the new STAR database) which will test satisfaction with the information received, how the user arrived on the site, which additional sectors they would like to see covered, whether language is a barrier, and seek other suggestions for improvement. Additionally, the surveys will be used to better understand how the database is being used to improve services trade access. A success indicator will be how many businesses who visited the database have used its information to assist with accessing markets for their services. Respondents will be asked to submit their contact details to participate in future follow-up evaluations. These could generate case studies and 'success stories' which could be featured on the STAR Database website and in promotional materials.</p>	<p>The decision was made, in conjunction with the project overseer, that the online surveys would not be implemented. Part of the reason for this decision was the uncertainty surrounding the future of the database. Another contributing factor was the technical evolution of websites over the project lifetime and the trend away from online user surveys as an effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&amp;E) tool.</p>
<p>14. The AASC will include summaries of (M&amp;E) outcomes (website diagnostic trends, user survey outcomes and direct feedback from users) in the APEC monitoring and a completion reports it prepares for the project overseer.</p>	<p>Please see summary in M&amp;E section below.</p>

### Summary of lessons learnt throughout the project.

The positive lessons learnt throughout this project focused upon the inherent public value of the data compiled within the database.

Large corporates such as Telstra and Microsoft utilised the database for researching regulatory barriers through their legal experts (evidenced through their presentations at the DFAT services workshops on good policy and regulatory practices within the services sectors) and the OECD utilised the data for the STRI. The database was championed through services leaders within the APEC community and its value was substantial to public institutions that are interested in cross border trade within the services sectors. One challenge faced throughout the project was the translation of data from 'APEC language' to 'business language'. For instance, the APEC community uses the language of 'economy' as opposed to 'country' and talks in terms of 'modes of delivery' which did not prove effective in communicating to industry and business.

Another significant challenge has been the technological evolution that occurred between phase one and phase four of this project. It was a challenge to keep the website technologically up to date and within the budget set for this project.

### Evaluation of impact.

The APEC STAR Database underwent a number of phases and was expanded to be a comprehensive digital database of barriers to services trade across APEC economies.

As evidenced by the website analytics attached, the database was utilised beyond the active development phase. As such, the database was successful in creating a central knowledge bank of reliable information.

However, the APEC STAR database was not as successful in attracting use by the business community. Since the beginning of this project there have been significant changes in the way information can be garnered, particularly by and for SMEs. Business continues to seek data in different ways, through the multitude of technological channels that now exist, and to which they can get immediate, real time responses.

Despite this, the APEC STAR Database remained an authoritative academic, policy oriented, repository of information that held significant inherent public value.

#### Overview of monitoring and evaluation statistics.

Attached is an overview of user statistics for the 2012-2016 period. Concentrating on the M&E statistics of phase four the APEC STAR Database has had:

- Over 73,000 page views with 48,000 of these views occurring in 2015 when the database was expanded, redesigned and heavily marketed through APEC and other fora.
- The Database has had 12,344 new users throughout the 2014 - 2016 period.
- The majority of users looked at between 3 and 10 pages on the website.
- The average user spent between 3 and 10 minutes per session.

The top ten user economies in order are: Australia; United States; Philippines; Indonesia; Singapore; Hong Kong, China; Brazil; China; Japan; United Kingdom.

#### Describe any follow-on activity or activities you see resulting from this completed Activity and any funding sources envisaged for them.

Throughout the final phase of this project, the focus shifted toward the long term sustainability of the APEC STAR Database. Australia as the project sponsor, focused efforts upon finding a new home for the database.

At the GOS 1 2017 meeting, Australia made the recommendation to archive the database and this recommendation was adopted by the meeting. The database will remain published for the next five years along with a disclaimer that the information is current as of 2016.

This strategy will keep available the option of finding another sponsor for the management of the APEC STAR database. If this does not happen, the database will remain an excellent repository of accessible information into 2021.

### Funds Acquittal

		<b>Funded</b>	<b>Expended</b>
	<b>Research and Data Compilation</b>		Labour Costs
1.1	Project Manager		
1.2	Research and compile data for 99 updated reports (21 economies for Transportation & Logistics, Telecommunications, Mining & Energy, and Professional; 15 economies for Computer and Related - \$500 per report)		
1.3	Research and compile data for 51 updated reports (21 economies for Financial; 15 economies for Distribution, 15 economies for Education - \$500 per report)	\$27,540.00	\$27,540.00
1.4	Research and compile data for 6 new reports (6 economies for Computer and Related - \$1,250 per report)		
1.5	Research and compile data for 12 new reports (6 economies for Education and Distribution - \$1,250 per report)	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
1.6	Ad-hoc Monitoring and Updating	\$7,460.00	\$7,460.00
	<b>Database Maintenance and Management</b>		Labour Costs
2.1	Data population, migration and management	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
2.2	Industry Consultation	\$5,500.00	\$5,500.00
2.3	Consultation/liaison with project partners, APEC and other stakeholders	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00
	<b>Communication and Marketing</b>		Labour Costs
3.1	Communication strategy	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
3.2	Advertising and online publications	\$4,000.00	\$0.00
3.3	Media and communications	\$6,000.00	\$0.00
	<b>Website Hosting and Maintenance</b>		Hosting
4.1	Data Hosting until 31 December 2015	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
4.2	Data Allowance costs	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
4.3	Website Functionality Update	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$104,500.00</b>	<b>\$94,500.00</b>

**Attachment 1: Participating Ministries and Organisations from Sector Specific Services Symposiums**

**Facilitating Regulatory Best Practices in Transport and Logistics Services in the APEC Region, 15-16 July 2014, Hong Kong, China**

<b>Economy</b>	<b>Organization</b>
AUSTRALIA	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade The Australian APEC Study Centre, RMIT University Victoria University
CHILE	The Civil Aeronautical Board (JAC)
CHINA	Ministry of Transport The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Consulate General Republic of Indonesia Ministry of Commerce
HONG KONG, CHINA	Hong Kong Customs (HKC) Hong Kong Air Freight Forwarders Association (HAFFA)
INDONESIA	Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs, The Republic of Indonesia Directorate General of Sea Traffic and Transportation Ministry of Trade, Republic of Indonesia
MEXICO	Ministry of Economy Secretariat of Economy
PAPUA NEW GUINEA	Department of the Prime Minister
PERU	Ministry of Transport and Communications
PHILIPPINES	Ministry of Transportation and Communications Department of Transportation and Communications Civil Aeronautics Board
SINGAPORE	The National University of Singapore (NUS)
THAILAND	Department of Land and Transport Ministry of Transport
VIET NAM	Directorate for Roads of Viet nam Viet Nam Trade Promotion Agency (Vietrade), Ministry of Industry and Trade Ministry of Industry and Trade Ministry of Transport
MULTILATERAL	The APEC Transportation Working Group (TPTWG)

**Towards good practice policies and regulations to facilitate trade and investment in telecommunications and ICT services, 9-10 December 2014, Manila, Philippines**

<b>Economy</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
AUSTRALIA	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade The Australian APEC Study Centre, RMIT University EJS Consulting Services Telstra
CHILE	The Undersecretariat of Telecommunications
CHINA	Ministry of Industry and Information Technology Ministry of Commerce of China DHgate.com, China Ministry of Industry and Information Technology
CHINESE TAIPEI	Foundation of Women's Rights Promotion and Development Executive Yuan National Communications Commission
HONG KONG, CHINA	Office of the Chief Government information Officer
INDONESIA	Ministry of Trade Indonesia The World Bank Ministry of Communication and Information Technology
MEXICO	Secretaria de Economia Federal Telecommunications Institute
PAPUA NEW GUINEA	National Information & Communications Technology Authority Department of Communication and Information
PERU	OSIPTEL
PHILIPPINES	Board of Investments Information and Communications Technology Office DOST - Information and Communications Technology Office APEC GOS Asian Development Bank Business Process Outsourcing Association of the Philippines (BPAP) Electronic Commerce Steering Group APEC (ECSG)
SINGAPORE	Technology Research Project Corporate (TRPC) Pacnet Microsoft
THAILAND	NBTC
VIET NAM	Viet Nam Trade Promotion Agency Ministry of Information and Communication Viet Nam Telecommunications Authority

**APEC Symposium ‘Good Policy and Regulatory Practices for Facilitating Trade and Investment in Mining and Energy Services’, 16 - 18 June 2015, Perth, Australia**

<b>Economy</b>	<b>Organization</b>
AUSTRALIA	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade The Australian APEC Study Centre, RMIT University EJS Consulting Services EJS Consulting Services International Mining for Development Centre CSA Global KPMG
CHILE	Chilean Copper Commission Ministry of Energy General Directorate of International Economic Affairs
CHINA	Ministry of Land and Resources Chinese Academy of Land and Resources Economics
INDONESIA	Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources Investment Coordinating Board
MEXICO	Fideicomiso De Fomento Minero Ministry of the Economy
PAPUA NEW GUINEA	Mineral Resources Authority Department of Petroleum and Energy
PERU	OSINERGMIN
PHILIPPINES	Mines and Geosciences Bureau Professional Regulations Commission GE Philippines Mines and Geosciences Bureau Region XII
THAILAND	Ministry of Commerce Department of Primary Industry and Mines Ministry of Energy
VIET NAM	Ministry of Industry and Trade General Department of Geology and Minerals of Viet Nam
MULTILATERAL	APEC Mining Task Force APEC Energy Working Group International Trade Centre

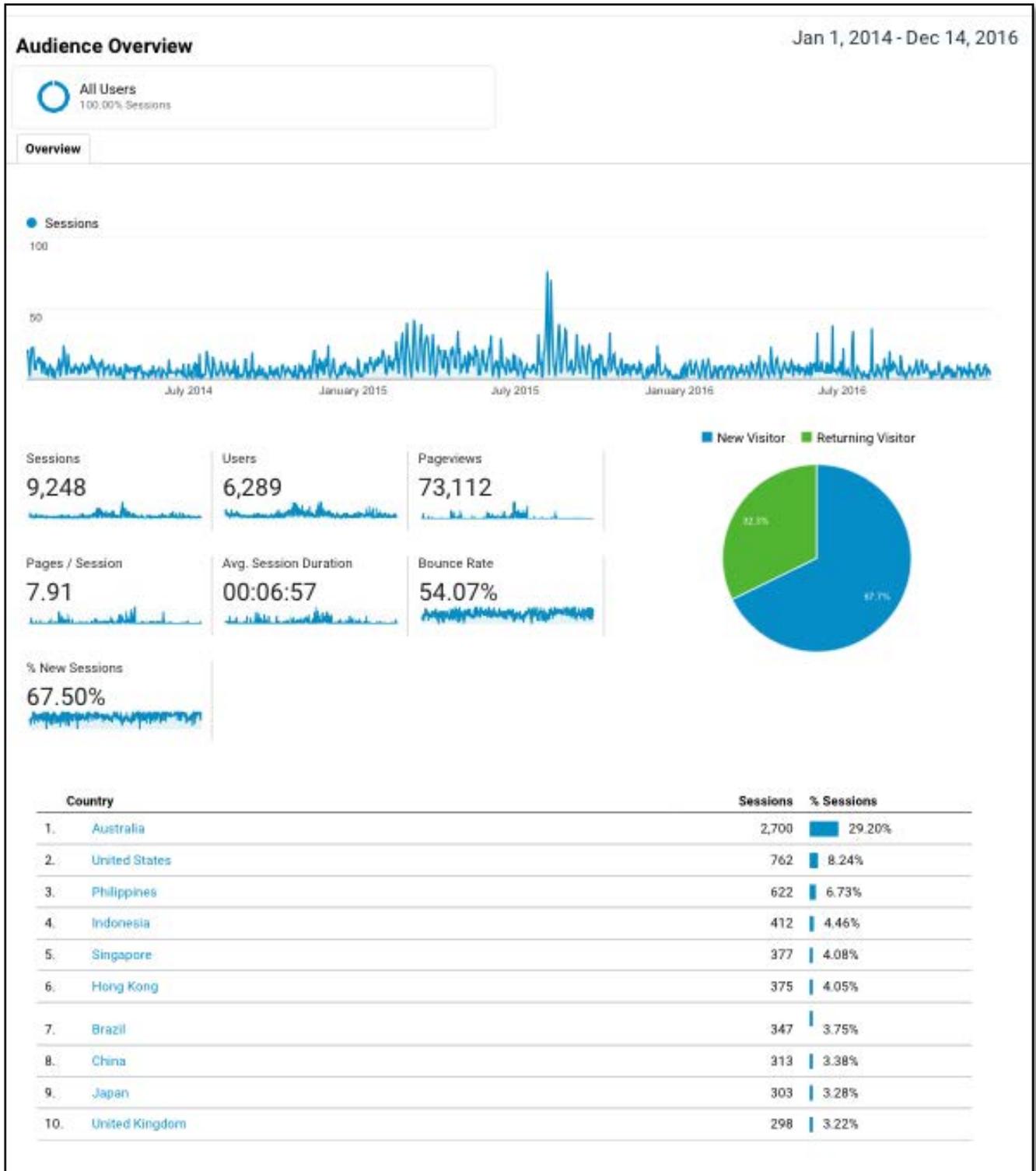
**APEC Symposium ‘Good Policy and Regulatory Practices for Facilitating Trade and Investment in Architectural and Engineering Services’, 8 - 9 December 2015, Singapore**

<b>Economy</b>	<b>Organization</b>
AUSTRALIA	The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade The Australian APEC Study Centre, RMIT University EJS Consulting Services Engineers Australia Cox Architects and Planners Pty Ltd University of Adelaide
CHILE	General Directorate of International Economic Affairs Architects Association of Chile
CHINA	Ministry of Commerce Public Construction Commission, Executive Yuan
INDONESIA	Persatuan Insinyur Indonesia PII (Institute of Engineers) Ministry of Trade Indonesian Institute of Architects
JAPAN	Chiba University of Commerce, Women in Engineering Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers
MALAYSIA	Board of Architects, Malaysia APEC Architects-Secretariat and Public Works Department, Malaysia
PAPUA NEW GUINEA	Institution of Engineers Department of Works and Implementation
PERU	Ministry of Housing, Construction and Sanitation
PHILIPPINES	United Architects of the Philippines Council of Engineering Consultants of the Philippines Philippine Institute of Architecture Professional Regulation Commission TAF Architectural Consultancy
SINGAPORE	CPG Corporation Institution of Engineers Architecture and Urban Design Excellence, Singapore Urban Redevelopment Authority Beca Carter Hollings & Ferner (S.E. Asia) Pte Ltd, Singapore
THAILAND	Ministry of Commerce Council of Engineers
VIET NAM	Ministry of Industry and Trade Ministry of Construction
MULTILATERAL	Professional Engineers Registration Board

**APEC Symposium ‘Good Policy and Regulatory Practices for Facilitating Trade and Investment in Services  
- Toward the APEC Services Roadmap’, 24-25 May 2016, Grand Hyatt Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**

<b>Economy</b>	<b>Organization</b>
AUSTRALIA	The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade The Australian APEC Study Centre, RMIT University EJS Consulting Services University of Adelaide
CHILE	Direcon
CHINA	Ministry of Commerce
INDONESIA	The Ministry of Trade
PAPUA NEW GUINEA	Independent Consumer and Competition Commission Macroeconomic Policy Division
PERU	Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism Ministry of Foreign Trade
PHILIPPINES	Philippine Institute of Development Studies National Economic and Development Authority
THAILAND	The Ministry of Commerce
VIET NAM	Ministry of Industry and Trade

## Attachment 2: Google Analytics Results



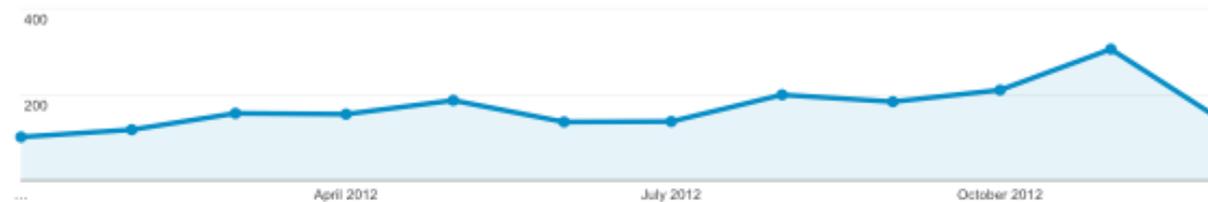
## Audience Overview

Jan 1, 2012 - Dec 31, 2012

All Users  
100.00% Sessions

### Overview

#### Sessions



#### Sessions

2,030

#### Users

1,306

#### Pageviews

8,878

#### Pages / Session

4.37

#### Avg. Session Duration

00:03:57

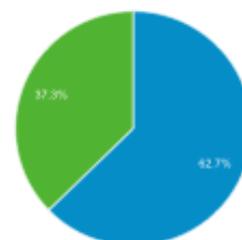
#### Bounce Rate

55.57%

#### % New Sessions

62.61%

New Visitor Returning Visitor



## Audience Overview

Jan 1, 2013 - Dec 31, 2013

All Users  
100.00% Sessions

### Overview

#### Sessions



#### Sessions

3,047

#### Users

2,041

#### Pageviews

18,226

#### Pages / Session

5.98

#### Avg. Session Duration

00:05:27

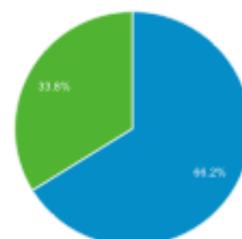
#### Bounce Rate

48.05%

#### % New Sessions

65.93%

New Visitor Returning Visitor



## Audience Overview

Jan 1, 2014 - Dec 31, 2014

All Users  
100.00% Sessions

### Overview

#### Sessions



#### Sessions

2,444

#### Users

1,648

#### Pageviews

15,753

#### Pages / Session

6.45

#### Avg. Session Duration

00:05:20

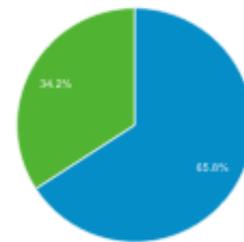
#### Bounce Rate

50.53%

#### % New Sessions

65.55%

New Visitor Returning Visitor



## Audience Overview

Jan 1, 2015 - Dec 31, 2015

All Users  
100.00% Sessions

### Overview

#### Sessions



#### Sessions

4,455

#### Users

2,824

#### Pageviews

48,202

#### Pages / Session

10.82

#### Avg. Session Duration

00:09:57

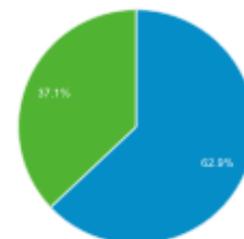
#### Bounce Rate

50.46%

#### % New Sessions

62.67%

New Visitor Returning Visitor



## Audience Overview

Jan 1, 2016 - Dec 13, 2016

All Users  
100.00% Sessions

### Overview

#### Sessions



#### Sessions

2,346

#### Pages / Session

3.90

#### % New Sessions

78.73%

#### Users

1,872

#### Avg. Session Duration

00:02:55

#### Pageviews

9,145

#### Bounce Rate

64.62%

■ New Visitor ■ Returning Visitor

