

# APEC Harmonisation of Standards Project Workshop

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SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA – 4 & 5 NOVEMBER 2015

## Call for Nominations – Participants and Speakers

**In today's increasingly globalised world, cross border data and information flows are critical for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) across many industry sectors ranging from manufacturing to services.**

In recognition of the importance of data for enabling SMEs to grow and prosper, Australia is leading an APEC SME Project on Harmonisation of Standards (APEC HOST) in Sydney, Australia on 4 to 5 November 2015.

Financial assistance to cover the costs of airfares, accommodation and a per diem allowance will be provided for up to two representatives from selected eligible APEC economies to attend.

**Read on to find out how to apply.**



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## Background

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In today's increasingly globalised world, cross border data and information flows are critical for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) across many industry sectors ranging from manufacturing to services. Improved movement of data across APEC member economies will allow for the free flow of business information, goods and services – benefiting SMEs. However, there is an increasing recognition within the APEC region that more needs to be done to support SME trade and promote opportunities for SMEs to access global value chains.

SMEs face an array of barriers when trying to sell products or services overseas including: lack of standards knowledge, low adoption rates for international standards, market access requirements, localisation requirements, security, data privacy and protection, intellectual property rights and costs of infringement amongst others.

In recognition of the importance of data for enabling SMEs to grow and prosper, Australia is leading an APEC SME Project on **Harmonisation of Standards (APEC HOST)**. The project will help identify and address the issues and challenges faced by SMEs in dealing with cross border data and information flows. It will also provide opportunities for closer collaboration amongst APEC economies. What is unique about this project is that it is the first effort by the APEC SME Working Group to consider cross border data and information flows and SME trade. National Standards Bodies (NSBs) now have an opportunity to engage with SME representatives to discuss key issues and recommend solutions.

As part of the HOST project, Standards Australia has conducted a stakeholder survey and is preparing an issues paper ahead of the 22nd APEC Small and Medium Enterprises Ministerial Meeting, which will be held at Iloilo, the Philippines on 25 September 2015.

## Objectives of the workshop

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Standards Australia and The Treasury, Australian Government, are organising a two day APEC HOST project workshop, from 4 to 5 November 2015 in Sydney, Australia.

The workshop objectives are to:

1. Share information and discuss the recent **APEC HOST** survey findings on standards related to the movement of data across borders;
2. Discuss questions from the **Issues Paper**;
3. Discuss views and experiences on how NSBs can best support SMEs in APEC economies to facilitate the movement of data and trade across borders; and
4. Develop recommendations for APEC economies.

The workshop also aims to facilitate networking of SME representatives, NSBs, industry associations and professional organisations across the APEC region. Although many opportunities and challenges vary across APEC economies, sharing different perspectives will provide a baseline for contributing to APEC SMEWG Digital Economy Action Plan. Moreover, workshop participants will discuss how NSBs, SMEs and other stakeholders can further collaborate on promoting data driven innovation and a standards related trade agenda.

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## Workshop questions for consideration

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- What are the key issues and challenges facing SMEs in relation to the movement of cross border data that could be addressed by voluntary consensus based international standards?
- What are the major barriers for SMEs that do not have the necessary resources to identify, understand and meet domestic and international regulations on the movement of data from one APEC member economy to another?
- What impact is the lack of standards development participation, technical convergence and regulatory coherence within APEC having on data driven innovation for SMEs?
- What are key outcomes that APEC could aim for in the medium to long-term to promote the seamless movement of data?

## Who Should Attend?

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The workshop is by invitation. A range of participants will be invited to attend the workshop, including SME representatives, NSBs, industry associations, research organisations, governments, regulators and APEC officials. The workshop will be held at Standards Australia's offices in Sydney, Australia (details to be provided).

## Funding for Speakers and Participants

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Australia will provide travel assistance for representatives from selected eligible APEC economies (up to two persons; **one NSB representative** and **one SME representative**) will receive financial assistance to cover the costs of airfares, accommodation and a per diem allowance for attending the two day workshop which will be held in Sydney, Australia on 4-5 November 2015. The following eleven APEC member economies are considered "travel-eligible": Chile; China; Indonesia; Malaysia; Mexico; Papua New Guinea; The Philippines; Peru; Russia; Thailand and Viet Nam. Funding will also be available for speakers/presenters. Other economies may nominate self-funded participants.

## Involvement and Next Steps

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The workshop has been designed to ensure that APEC NSBs can play a leading role working with their SME representative and other stakeholders to better understand the opportunities presented by the work taking place within ISO/IEC JTC 1 and related fora.

We ask that each NSB representative identify a relevant SME peak body, association or stakeholder(s) that would like to present at the 2 day workshop and/or provide a case study ahead of the workshop. We are keen to canvas as many APEC member economies to ensure the project represents a broad cross section of government, industry and consumer related interests with a focus on SMEs. In addition, each NSB is asked nominate an appropriate staff member who will be the main contact for their organisation in this project and participate in the workshop. Please nominate your NSB and SME contacts to Standards Australia by no later than **Wednesday, 30 September 2015**.

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## Further Information

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For additional information on the APEC HOST project, two day workshop and how interested parties can get involved please contact:

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Work shop registrations should be completed and sent to:

[ApecHost@standards.org.au](mailto:ApecHost@standards.org.au)