

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES RECOGNISED FOR FACILITATING A BUSINESS-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

Highlights

- **Survey score improves from 74.2 to 76.4 in 2015**
 - **New award category, Pro-Enterprise Partner Award to recognise the contributions of the private sector**
 - **MPA is the top-ranked agency for the fourth year**
 - **IRAS bags most number of awards**
1. In the 2015 Pro-Enterprise Ranking (PER) survey, most businesses felt that government agencies continued to regularly reviewed regulations, and were transparent in administering the regulations. The overall Pro-Enterprise Index (PEI) of the 28 agencies surveyed increased from 74.2 in 2014 to 76.4 in 2015.
 2. There are a total of five awards this year. The new Pro-Enterprise Partner Award was added to recognise private sector contributors with the highest number of accepted suggestions in the year. The other four award categories are the Pro-Enterprise Awards, Most Improved Agency Awards, Best Pro-Enterprise Suggestion Award, and the Pro-Enterprise Initiative Awards. A total of 28 awards were given out to businesses, individuals and public agencies.
 3. The annual PER survey is commissioned by the Pro-Enterprise Panel (PEP) to assess the pro-enterprise performance of government regulatory agencies. This year's survey includes two new agencies, the National Parks Board (NParks) and Council for Estate Agencies (CEA). Agencies that did well in the survey were recognised at the 2015 Pro-Enterprise Panel – Singapore Business Federation (PEP-SBF) Awards. The event recognises the collaborative efforts of government agencies and businesses to enhance Singapore's pro-enterprise environment.
 4. Guest-of-Honour at the PEP-SBF event, Parliamentary Secretary for Trade & Industry and Education, Ms Low Yen Ling, said "To be relevant, rules need to be regularly reviewed and adapted. We have engaged businesses and considered their feedback and suggestions to ensure that government regulations enable our businesses to grow and be competitive." She emphasised the need for continued partnership between the public and private sectors in ensuring that government regulations continue to support capable and productive companies.

Recognising private sector's contributions

5. Mr Lawrence Leow, Honorary Treasurer of the SBF and Chairman of the SME Committee, said, "Good business regulations enable the private sector to thrive and they enable businesses, particularly SMEs and start-ups, to start, grow and become more competitive. To sustain our competitive edge, we must continue to work together – the public agencies developing and enhancing pro-enterprise policies, and our businesses sharing ideas on how government rules can be formulated and implemented better."
6. Private sector businesses were recognised for collaborating with public agencies. Six individuals and trade associations received the PEP Best Suggestion Award and the Pro-Enterprise Partner Award for providing feedback and suggestions on regulations improvements which would benefit the larger business community.
7. Mr Peter Moore, Director, Project Management, Powerhouse of Evonik Oil Additives Asia Pacific received an award for Best Pro-Enterprise Suggestion. He said "It is not always easy to find the right person in the government to raise feedback to; that is why we were doubly satisfied when we were not only able to raise our concerns to the government but also see constructive responses and meaningful action taken to assist us."
8. Ms Lim Rui Shan, Executive Director of Restaurant Association of Singapore (RAS) received the Pro-Enterprise Partner Award. She said "RAS is honoured to be recognised as a partner of the Pro-Enterprise Panel and will continue to reinforce our collaborations to build an even better business environment for all."

MPA is the top-ranked agency for the fourth year

9. The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) has been ranked the top agency for four consecutive PER Surveys. Mr Andrew Tan, Chief Executive of MPA, said, "We hope to inspire other agencies to engage their stakeholders and work with them to create a more competitive and pro-business environment for Singapore. If we can all put our hearts and minds into this, I am confident Singapore can continue to grow and attract investments, creating good jobs for Singaporeans. It cannot just be MPA or a few leading agencies."

IRAS receives the most number of awards

10. The Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS) received four awards, the most number of awards among public sector agencies. These awards recognise IRAS' active partnership with businesses to roll out notable initiatives such as extending the validity period for the Major Exporter Scheme and allowing Goods & Services Tax (GST) claims on the re-import of goods belonging to local and GST-registered overseas businesses as well as making significant improvements in its ranking for the 2015 PER Survey (3rd in 2015, up from 17th in 2014).
11. Mr Tan Tee How, Commissioner and CEO of IRAS, said "IRAS will continue to simplify tax rules and processes to enhance voluntary compliance and minimise businesses' compliance costs."

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SINGAPORE BUSINESS FEDERATION
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Annex A

Background of Awards to be given out at the PEP-SBF Awards 2015

A) PEP-SBF Pro-Enterprise Agency Awards 2015

The PEP-SBF Pro-Enterprise Agency Awards are based on the results of the annual Pro-Enterprise Ranking (PER) Survey, which has been conducted annually since 2004.

The PER Survey is a survey of businesses' perception of the pro-enterprise orientation of government regulatory agencies. The PER survey, which involved more than 4,000 respondents, assessed 28 government regulatory agencies on 5 specific areas, including "Review of Rules Regulations", "Transparency", "Compliance Cost", "Customer Responsiveness" and "Pro-Enterprise Orientation".

Awards are given to the top ten ranked agencies. Three agencies are recognised as showing the greatest improvement in the PER Survey 2015.

Ranking	Agency
1	Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA)
2	Singapore Land Authority (SLA)
3	Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS)
4	Central Provident Fund Board (CPF Board)
5	Energy Market Authority (EMA)
6	Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS)
7	Singapore Customs (Customs)
8	Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA)
9	International Enterprise Singapore (IE Singapore)
10	National Environment Agency (NEA)

B) PEP-SBF Most Improved Agency Awards 2015

Agency
Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up from 17th position in 2014 to 3rd position in 2015.
Energy Market Authority (EMA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up from 13th position in 2014 to 5th position in 2015.
Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up from 14th position in 2014 to 6th position in 2015.

C) PEP Best Suggestion Awards

The PEP Best Suggestion Award recognises private sector individuals and businesses which have contributed feedback/suggestions to the PEP and which have been accepted/ implemented by the agencies. This year, three individuals will receive the award. The three government agencies which have accepted and implemented these suggestions are also recognised and awarded the PEP Best Suggestion (Supporting Agency) Award.

Details of the winning suggestions are:

Suggestion: Renewal of Major Exporter Scheme	
<u>Suggestor:</u> Mr Alex Ng Alstron Singapore Pte Ltd	<u>Supporting Agency:</u> Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore
<p>Since January 2013, Major Exporter Scheme (MES) applicants need to verify their past GST reporting using the Assisted Self-Help Kit (ASK), which needs to be certified by qualified tax professionals. The aim was to assist MES applicants in detecting GST errors and taking corrective actions.</p> <p>Mr Ng suggested that IRAS review the requirement so as to lower the compliance cost for businesses.</p>	<p>Arising from the suggestion, IRAS has extended the validity period for MES renewal applications to 5 years up from the previous 3 years. This change will reduce the compliance cost by 40% for more than 1,700 businesses across various industries.</p>

Suggestion: Use of Plastics in Building Construction	
<u>Suggestor:</u> Evonik Oil Additives Asia Pacific Pte Ltd	<u>Supporting Agency:</u> Singapore Civil Defence Force

<p>SCDF had prohibited the use of plastic flooring materials under the Fire Code, as they emit toxic fumes and excessive smoke when exposed to fires, which poses a fire hazard to building occupants and fire fighters.</p> <p>The suggestor highlighted that the rule reduced businesses' flexibility in their choice of construction materials. He suggested that SCDF review the rule, by considering the fuel value of combustible plastic flooring material in relation to the fuel value of other furniture content.</p>	<p>The suggestion was taken into consideration in a review initiated by SCDF on the use of plastics, which eventually led to a set of fire safety requirements issued in October 2014 to facilitate the use of plastics in building construction.</p> <p>The review has benefitted businesses by providing them with greater flexibility in the choice of construction materials without compromising fire safety.</p>
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**Suggestion:
Allowing Work Permit Holders in the Construction, Process and Marine sectors to take on driving as a secondary job function**

<p><u>Suggestor:</u> Mr Gan Pay Chee Glimex Marketing Pte Ltd</p>	<p><u>Supporting Agency:</u> Ministry of Manpower</p>
<p>Work permit holders (WPHs) in the process, construction and marine sectors were not allowed to drive for work unless they were specifically hired as drivers.</p> <p>Mr Gan suggested that MOM relax the rule to allow more productive deployment of workers.</p>	<p>MOM took the suggestion into consideration in the review of this policy. Since 1 Jun 2015, MOM has allowed WPHs in the Process, Construction, and Marine sectors to drive, as an incidental activity to their primary job as a Process, Construction, or Marine worker. This has enabled more optimal deployment of the foreign workforce and improved labour productivity.</p>

D) Public Sector Pro-Enterprise Initiative Awards

The Public Sector Pro-Enterprise Initiative Awards recognise public sector officers/ teams who have been proactive in initiating pro-enterprise changes that have improved service delivery and reduced business compliance costs.

There are three levels of awards (Gold, Silver and Bronze).

Award	Agency & Initiative
<p>Gold</p>	<p><u>Energy Market Authority (EMA) - Facilitating innovative business models in the energy industry</u></p> <p>To keep pace with the evolution of Singapore’s energy industry and changing business needs, EMA carried out a review of the regulatory framework to facilitate new business models such as solar leasing and entry of independent electricity retailers.</p> <p>The review included streamlining rules and regulations to reduce compliance costs for solar businesses and consumers without compromising safety standards. Examples include reducing the search cost for business owners by launching a one-stop solar portal to facilitate information sharing for those interested in installing solar systems, reducing the grid connection process from 27 to 7 days, and simplifying payment procedures to make it easier for businesses to be paid for selling excess solar electricity back to the grid. EMA also introduced standardised contracting to help businesses lower their transaction cost when trading electricity. These initiatives have lowered the barriers to entry for new businesses, and reduced red tape and compliance cost.</p>
<p>Silver</p>	<p><u>Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) - Using fire rated freezer containers in food factory units</u></p> <p>SCDF noticed that there were indiscriminate placement of containers and unauthorised use and storage at parking lots and common spaces in front of food factory units. This affects the fire safety standards at food factory units as it could impede fire-fighting operations during emergency, blocking the means of escape and pose fire hazards to occupants and patrons.</p> <p>SCDF worked with stakeholders such as Singapore Food Manufacturers Association (SFMA), HDB/JTC and AVA to address the issue by giving food factory units tenants some flexibility to convert their parking spaces to cold rooms/storage space. This demonstrated a win-win solution which balances fire safety with providing businesses the operational flexibility to maximise space</p>

	<p>utilisation.</p>
Silver	<p><u>Singapore Customs - Assisting Air Express Companies to manage non-compliance from late shipments</u></p> <p>Permits for the import of goods need to be produced to Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) for clearance at the checkpoints. Due to the time sensitive nature of express shipments, air express companies (AECs) submit their permit applications to Singapore Customs prior to the arrival of the shipments. However, some shipments could arrive late. These late shipments would be treated as import without permit offence cases when they are subsequently produced at the checkpoints for clearance.</p> <p>Customs collaborated with ICA and the AECs to introduce reports to reconcile the late shipments against the original permits declared. This initiative has resulted in substantial cost savings for the AECs as they no longer need to pay the composition sums imposed for non-compliance, and expend resources to follow up on the numerous non-compliant cases.</p>
Bronze	<p><u>Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) - Streamline inspection procedures for chilled pork</u></p> <p>AVA's original inspection process was to inspect every consignment of chilled pork brought in by various importers. This meant that importers had to hold the consignments while pending AVA's inspection even though these could be from the same production batch and source establishment in Australia.</p> <p>As of May 2015, AVA streamlined the process by selecting only one imported consignment from the same batch of chilled pork production and Australian establishment for inspection each day. Inspection is waived for other similar consignments from the same establishment and production batch unless required. This has been welcomed by the chilled pork importers, as the consignments not selected for inspection can be processed immediately upon arrival and released for sale earlier. Consumers also benefit from fresher chilled pork.</p>

<p>Bronze</p>	<p><u>Building & Construction Authority (BCA) - Programme series for new entrants on building control requirements</u></p> <p>There was previously no structured training for the new entrants (such as fresh graduates) on the submission processes and requirements pertaining to the Building Control Act and Regulations under BCA. As new entrants are often tasked by Qualified Persons to propose design and make submissions to the agencies, lack of knowledge of agencies' submission processes and requirements led to mistakes and repeat submissions.</p> <p>BCA has since implemented the Programme Series on Building Control Requirements and Processes for new entrants. Through this, BCA helps to raise the sector's productivity by ensuring that submissions to BCA have fewer errors and would be granted approvals earlier.</p>
<p>Bronze</p>	<p><u>Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS) - Allowing GST claim on re-import of goods belonging to local and GST-registered overseas businesses</u></p> <p>Businesses previously could only obtain a refund for a portion of the GST incurred on the re-import of their customers' goods that have been sent abroad for value-added activities.</p> <p>To maintain the international competitiveness of our GST-registered businesses that engage in cross-border outsourcing arrangements, IRAS amended the GST Act to allow these businesses to recover the full import GST incurred from 1 January 2015 onwards.</p>

E) Pro-Enterprise Partner Awards 2015

The Pro-Enterprise Partner Awards recognises private sector individuals with the highest number of accepted suggestions within the qualifying period.

Singapore Vehicles Trade Association (SVTA)

SVTA has contributed suggestions relating to the motor vehicle industry and worked closely with LTA on the changes.

Some of the suggestions which have led to changes include:

- Removing the requirement for emission test reports and simplifying parallel import process. This has resulted in time and cost savings for parallel car importers.
- Reducing the minimum operating requirements for export processing zones. The barriers to entry are now reduced and businesses benefit from lower compliance cost.

Restaurant Association of Singapore (RAS)

RAS suggested that the clauses and service/management charges in rental contracts can be more transparent to tenants. MTI worked with the SBF SME Committee on a Business Leasing Guide which provides guidance on best practices and educates tenants on leasing practices. SBF launched the guide in January 2015.

Singapore Retailers Association (SRA)

SRA suggested making available more detailed data on retail rents to improve transparency in the retail space market. MTI worked with URA and SPRING on the proposed enhancements in consultation with SRA and SBF. URA has published the more detailed data since January 2015.