



News release

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Toronto, Vancouver and Singapore come out tops in PwC’s *Building Better Cities* survey

In conjunction with the APEC 2015 CEO Summit, 28 cities across APEC were studied and ranked according to 39 indicators that measured liveability, sustainability and competitiveness

MANILA, The Philippines, 17 November 2015 – Toronto, Vancouver and Singapore emerged as the top three cities in APEC in which to live and do business, according to a new study launched today at the APEC 2015 CEO Summit. The PwC study gives city leaders a view of where they are now, and it hopes to inspire cities within APEC to collaborate and seek advice to solve tenacious problems.

The study – *Building Better Cities* – focuses on the role urban centres play in the context of APEC’s economic and social growth, and also looks at the cities’ growing influence outside their borders through three lenses: how they fare in basic city development, what differentiates them and the hindrances they face to growth.

“Our goal for this study is to spur dialogue among city leaders who are tackling challenges ranging from technological developments that make large investments outdated, to overstretched municipal budgets,” said Bob Moritz, chairman and senior partner of the US firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers. “This dialogue is critical because cities of APEC member countries will likely form ties to other cities, and in some cases even to other national economies.”

City	Overall	Culture & Social Health	Connectivity	Health & Welfare	Environmental Sustainability	Economics
Toronto	1	1	8	3	2	8
Vancouver	2	4	9	4	1	9
Singapore	3	9	1	5	9	2
Tokyo	4	5	3	1	12	3
Seattle	5	6	12	8	3	6
Auckland	6	3	15	7	4	11
Seoul	7	7	6	10	5	17
Melbourne	8	2	13	6	6	14
Los Angeles	9	7	16	9	7	5
Osaka	10	9	4	2	19	9

Fig. 1: Top 10 city rankings

The study also looks at the rates of middle-class population growth, gross domestic product growth and the status of mobile broadband access to give fast growing cities an opportunity to accurately describe their progress and future growth potential.

Cities are now competing to attract an increasingly mobile, global workforce. Talent collects where the right live-work mix is found. And establishing a unique identity is crucial. Even a top ranking city might lose out on expertise and investment capital if it is not known for a specific asset. It is becoming increasingly important for cities to build up their ‘brand’ to stay competitive.

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“Brand cannot just be a slogan or a logo; it must be built on growth and must ring true for all involved,” notes Mr Moritz. “It is imperative that solving metropolitan issues is treated as part of the national agenda, where national and urban governments work together.”

Guillermo M Luz, COO of APEC 2015 CEO Summit and Co-Chairman of National Competitiveness Council, Philippines emphasises the need for city-to-city collaboration as well. “This study provides a set of metrics and a diagnostic tool for Mayors and urban planners to see how they can improve their communities to build better cities. We hope Mayors use this information to see how they can evolve their cities into more liveable, sustainable, and competitive places.”

Ayala Corp. Chairman and CEO Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, who serves as Co-Chairman of Sustainable Development Working Group for the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC), adds: “In doing this study with PwC, I wanted to be sure we looked beyond economic clout and considered liveability and sustainability. I hope this first-ever APEC cities study triggers sustained action. I hope it helps build the momentum towards designing, building, and redeveloping competitive cities in APEC through research and action-oriented programmes. When people think of where to live, work, invest, and visit, they don't think countries, they think cities. Density and diversity make cities more imaginative, so long as that density and diversity are well-managed. That's why public-and-public collaboration is needed to keep cities competitive.”

The study grouped the 39 indicators according to five categories of urban excellence.

Culture & Social Health

A liveable city should fulfil people and enable them to contribute in return to the city's growth and development. It should do this by providing proper access to education, economic opportunity, arts and cultural venues, vibrant nightlife scenes, safe and clean neighbourhoods while at the same time having a transparent government and inclusive and tolerant society. Toronto topped this category, followed by Melbourne and Auckland, with Surabaya, Bandar Seri Begawan and Port Moresby as the cities with the most scope for improvement. The study found a strong link between an educated population and open government and a more tolerant society. Encouragingly, it was also found that many cities in this study are making efforts to promote economic mobility through education.

Connectivity

Part of any great city's allure is its interconnectedness. As expected, the highest ranking cities in our Connectivity category – notably Singapore, Hong Kong, and Tokyo – are making impressive strides across all our Connectivity indicators. Moving people around a city seamlessly isn't just about convenient commutes, nor is sharing knowledge only about city travel apps – connectivity has far-reaching implications in a city's social and economic well-being. The top cities in this category have benefitted from decades of hard and soft infrastructure advancements and planning; they have been smart and digital well before the terms 'smart cities' or 'e-gov' were even coined.

Meanwhile, cities ranking with lower scores are playing catch-up. But there is good news: solutions available to the lowest ranked cities – Port Moresby, Cebu and Surabaya – are more advanced and less expensive than solutions carried out by Singapore two decades ago.

Health & Welfare

APEC cities are struggling to keep pace with their population's health care demands, and it's not a new or exclusive problem. Topping the list for excellence in this category were Tokyo, Osaka and Toronto, while Cebu, Manila and Port Moresby are still working hard to resolve these issues. Mature cities have had to struggle through legacy issues (of health care being moved from private to charitable to public to private), while newer cities are struggling to keep pace with fast-paced medical innovation, expensive specialisation, and ageing populations. The sharing economy may offer solutions, though it may take a while for cities to step up the necessary technology.

Within the Health & Welfare category, crime is the most basic marker of well-being in a city. Interestingly, the study did not find an ironclad link between crime and the GINI Index, nor crime and literacy rates, although it is usually expected that income equality and education are large factors that aid in the creation of a less crime-ridden society. Only when the data was parsed for population and the subsets of indicators could one see a correlation between lower crime and stronger education: the biggest cities that showed the lowest incidents of crime also had the highest literacy rates for their population group (Tokyo and Seoul).

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Environmental Sustainability

Vancouver, Toronto and Seattle led the way in this category, while Manila, Ho Chi Minh City, and Lima showed most room for improvement. APEC economies are particularly vulnerable to the ill effects of badly-managed waste. While the amount of waste produced is staggering and is set to increase, the good news is that cities, by nature of population densities, are often powerful laboratories for solving waste issues. A noteworthy example is Seoul which recycles 89% of its municipal waste through its series of laws, programmes, and regulations that span the full cycle of waste. Most significantly, the city charges for anything its citizens don't recycle.

Disaster management is becoming an ever critical imperative for the sustainability of many of the cities studied. Monsoons, earthquakes, typhoons, tsunamis, and hurricanes all rake the region. Factors accelerating the Asian economy, including rapid urbanisation, may make the region even more vulnerable to disasters' negative impact. As such, APEC CEOs cite potential disruptions from natural disasters as a key reason they would hold back on investments in the region.

Economics

Collectively, urban centres already generate some 70% of APEC's total GDP. With increasingly rapid urbanisation, this is only set to increase. Unsurprisingly, financial powerhouses Hong Kong, Singapore and Tokyo fared best in this category, with Bandar Seri Begawan, Novosibirsk, and Port Moresby coming in last.

While the cities on the study's list are at vastly disparate levels of maturity, they all would have similar challenges and considerations when it comes to fulfilling economic potential. The study proposes that managing cities like businesses could prove beneficial – especially when it comes to infrastructure – where longer-term sustainability and feasibility should be considered from the onset of projects. Typical problems faced by cities include whether infrastructure plans can survive multiple mayoral administrations and whether the projects possess the highest levels of engineering integrity in an era of more frequent and severe climate change-related weather events.

The study also found a strong correlation between how cities performed in the openness to trade indicator with how they performed in the Economics category and in the overall rankings. For example, both Shanghai and Beijing suffered in their overall ranking in Economics due to relatively poor scores in openness to trade.

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Notes to editors:

1. About APEC

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is a regional economic forum established in 1989 to leverage the growing interdependence of the Asia-Pacific region. [APEC's 21 members](#) aim to create greater prosperity for the people of the region by promoting balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative and secure growth and by accelerating regional economic integration.

The APEC CEO Summit is the Asia-Pacific's premier business event, drawing thousands of economic and business leaders from around the region and beyond. This year's Summit will be held from November 16-18 in Manila, Philippines. To view the notional program, click [here](#).

2. Survey Methodology

Building Better Cities draws on the methodology devised for PwC's *Cities of Opportunity* study, and aims to shine a light on urban success in APEC cities by measuring their livability, sustainability, and competitiveness. The study is based on publicly available information supported by extensive research. Data was collected during the second and third quarters of 2015 using three main sources: global multilateral development organisations (such as the World Bank and the United Nations), national statistics organisations and municipal administrations, and commercial data providers. These rankings aim to facilitate observations on APEC cities in a clear and simple manner, and are not an expression of opinion or criticism.

For more information on the methodology, please read the full report at www.pwc.com/apec.

3. About PwC

At PwC, our purpose is to build trust in society and solve important problems. We're a network of firms in 157 countries with more than 208,000 people who are committed to delivering quality in assurance, advisory and tax services. Find out more and tell us what matters to you by visiting us at www.pwc.com.

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