



ENGINEERS
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Impediments remain on export of international professional engineering services

Engineers Australia has reaffirmed that major impediments to the international provision of professional services continue to restrict such services that account for a significant proportion of Australia's exports.

The most commonly traded engineering services are consultancy work typically consisting of design, planning, procurement, field services and project management.

At the Services Summit at Parliament House in Canberra today, Leanne Hardwicke, Director, International and National Policy for Engineers Australia, said that while advanced communications allow many consulting services to be delivered on-line, it is on-the-ground involvement as well that is the key to success for most activities.

"The actual presence of Australian engineering expertise on-site in other countries remains as the main form of service delivery and brings with it restrictions.

"Some of the major impediments to Australia's competitiveness still include mutual recognition of qualifications, as well as nationality and residency requirements, and restrictions on access to foreign government contracts," Leanne Hardwicke said.

Engineers Australia advocates that there are significant economy wide benefits deriving from services trade and investment liberalisation for both developing and developed nations.

"Barriers preventing services and service providers interacting with local firms have the potential to significantly slow down technology sharing between countries and service sectors like engineering.

"With the removal of barriers, the best technologies are selected through market mechanisms, not by trade policy incentives that introduce distortions into the economy," Leanne Hardwicke said.

Engineers Australia has recommended a more proactive involvement by the Federal Government for the international professional services sector by improving statistical data, better information and assistance to exporters and support for mutual recognition agreements as part of Free Trade Agreements.

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Engineers Australia is the common name of the Institution of Engineers, Australia with a membership of over 86,000