Information Technology Management Policy

The Policy was approved by the CESD Board Members on August 19, 2022

Introduction

The application of information and communication technology (ICT) can widen the development chances of Azeri Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

Although this factor seems so crucial for future development, still a large majority of CSOs cannot fully implement some activities concerning the development of ICT (site, internal communication, information sharing, etc.) that can make them more sustainable.

CSOs with available web portals/sites experience financial insufficiency to regularly renew and update their sites. As a result of this insufficient capacity, many people confront serious problems and thus become excluded to get new necessary information (social, economic, and regional) that regards Civil Society.

The use of electronic resources and services within the framework of any project, and providing access to electronic resources is regulated by the IT management policy.

These kinds of issues make CSOs' efforts to influence public opinion more vulnerable by lowering their chances to use advocacy and media tools. The current level of Access to Public Information in Azerbaijan also creates a very undesirable situation for local and foreign researchers who aim to achieve information about Azerbaijani Civil Society Organizations.

We, the Center for Economic and Social Development which aims to promote research and analysis into the domestic economy, the use of new internet communication technologies is a particularly significant issue.
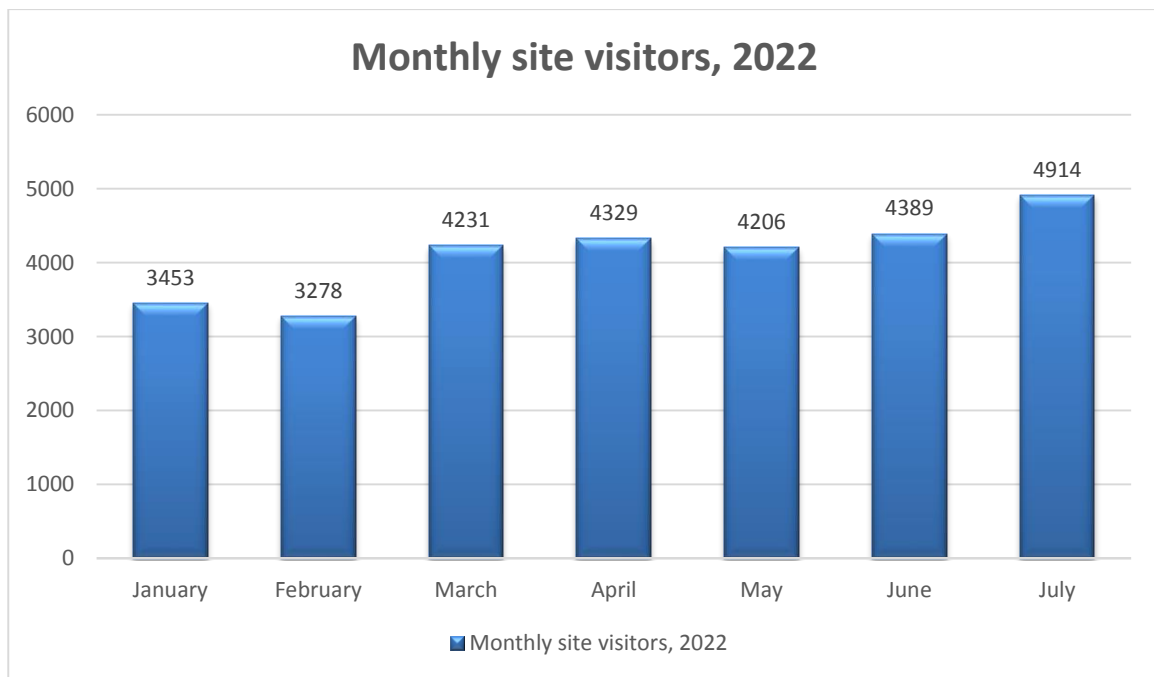
CESD website has become one of the trusted information sources since the website includes daily economic comments, analysis,news, reports and etc.

Background Information

CESD (Center for Economic and Social Development- **www.cesd.az**) website was launched in 2007. In the last 15 years, the website was renewed and redesigned many times and now it supports the modern requirements of the WEB world.

From its inception period, the site has conveyed much information about the Center, its staff, structure, and implemented projects. The website is offered in three languages (Azerbaijani, English, and Russian).

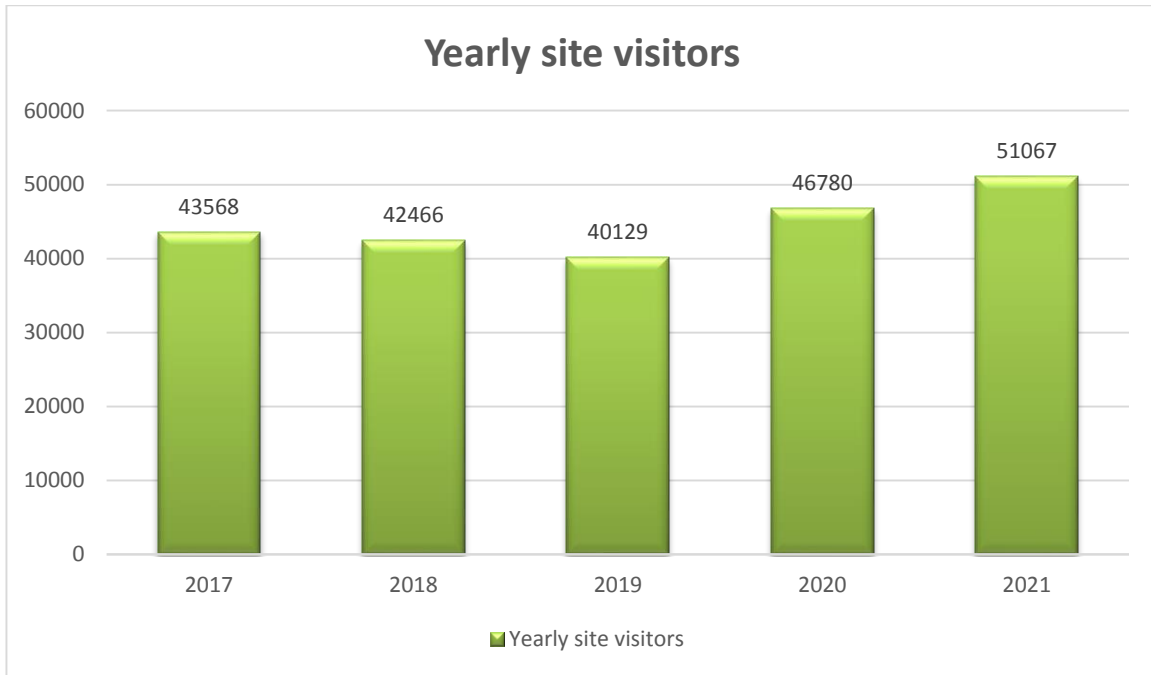**Graph 1. Number of monthly site visitors, 2022**

Source: Yahoo Counter

Graph 1 above shows the statistics of visitors to the site for 2022. As can be seen from the graph, there is an increasing trend in recent months.

Chart 2 below shows the number of visitors to the site from 2017 to 2021. In the statistics of the last 4 years, the last 2 years come to the fore.

Graph 2. Number of yearly site visitors

Yearly site visitors

Year	Visitors
2017	43568
2018	42466
2019	40129
2020	46780
2021	51067

Source: Yahoo Counter, 2022

Current Situation

Now CESD uses support for the database and access system development, and for the improvement of the website to regularly provide updated and more comprehensive information on socio-economic activities within and beyond the Center, as well as to serve as a necessary source of information for the scholars, within or interested with Azerbaijan and the region. Apart from socio-economic data and research, it is also provided information on public institutes and involves more partners, especially those who are interested in research and programs in Azerbaijan and the region. By improving its website, the CESD is able to provide necessary domestic and regional social and economic updates in English, Russianand Azerbaijani.

Moreover, we did our best to show how we are accountable, transparent, and open by disclosing all information about the projects we implement documents. CESD IT management tries to conform all its activities in a way thatsupports the mission and strategy of the organization. For more transparency and accountability purposes CESD website contains the following project-related information:

a) Information on the projects implemented by CESD.

b) More information about the projects: scope, objectives, newsletters, press releases, reports.

c) Trainings organized within projects, necessary electronic texts, materials, and publications.

d) New activities, and financial disclosure. And other important news.

Local NGOs can benefit from the resources (publications, articles, economic news, and comments, etc.) posted on the CESD website. A daily updated site with a bunch of information also serves as a very effective tool for decision-makers, especially government bodies. As a leading economic think tank in Azerbaijan, CESD, every year produces policy papers with the suggestion to government bodiesto improve their current activities in the socio-economic sphere. As a result of these activities, CESD recommendations were several times approved by the government.

The Center also attracts interns to research and other activities during their academic breaks and is planning to further develop this practice. Every spring and autumn we are offering internship opportunities. Building a more developed communication system among volunteers, interns, and staff members plays a very significant toward building a more sustainable organization. At the same time, CESD is trying to serve as an Economic school for young people by being part of their development by training them on how to write economic articles and so on. All these activities were carried out within the CESD website.

Apart from the improvement of the Center's website (**www.cesd.az**), we are thinking of launching complementary websites (concerning the State Budget, and Civil Society strengthening) which can be a crucial source not only for government and civil society institutes but also for mass media and improve the public awareness, dialog, andparticipation in policymaking and implementation.

ICT on Academic Research

The researchers are expected to rely substantially on ICT for computation, data analysis, and report preparation since more and more research issues are being taken on by interdisciplinary teams, frequently dispersed across institutions or nations. Data visualization, qualitative and quantitative analysis, publication in peer-reviewed journals, and the use of ICT in research can all take many forms. The Institute will try to make use of its ICT resources to foster a favorable research environment. The Institute may go through a variety of activities to assist research using ICT, but is not limited to the followings;

- Tools for data management, analysis, and acquisition, including qualitative and quantitative data. By using the proper tools to check for plagiarism, you can be sure that the study is credible.

- Plan training and capacity-building programs to assist researchers in utilizing cutting-edge research techniques. ICT Ecosystem for Research should be the name of this project.

- To work in conjunction with regional and local partners to enhance research and e-infrastructure capabilities.

- By offering centralized and organized access to online databases, journals, and resources via the Internet, you may boost the usage of ICT (e.g., MOOCs, INFLIBNET, NKN, NPTEL, WHONET, etc.).

- Improved administrative support methods for managing research grants and other funding sources should be made available to researchers.

- Establish a single archive for the Institute's research papers and other outputs.

- In order to expand readership and awareness, institute journals should be published online.

- Take part in regional, national, and international conversations on ICT-based collaborative research.

__Further development opportunities__

➢ To increase the capacity of the website by uploading more training materials; economic news, comments, and analysis

➢ Web Forum

➢ Media Part of the site. Videos, Audio podcasts from the past events

➢ To build the alternative blog only for economic comments by the Center

➢ Online economic writing competitions

➢ To train young economists on how to write blog

➢ Uploading interesting talks to the site on business, technology, entrepreneurship, politics, and economics that concern Civil Society (for example TED Talks www.ted.com). To translate talks into the Azerbaijani

➢ To disseminate information about the center's research, monitoring results in different social networks (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Yahoo groups, Student and professional Networks)

➢ To build a more effective internal communication system among interns, staff members, board members, and volunteers (file sharing system, business email, database etc.)