

# Asian Productivity Organization

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## PROJECT NOTIFICATION

7 October 2011

1. **Project Code:** 11-IN-11-GE-WSP-B (This project notification replaces the previous one with the same project code issued on 24 March 2011.)
2. **Project Title:** Workshop on Development of a Benchmarking Index for SMEs in the Service Sector focusing on the Retail and Food and Beverage Industries
3. **Duration:** 19–23 December 2011 (five days)
4. **Venue:** Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
5. **Implementing Organization:**  
Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC)  
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6. **Number of Overseas Participants:** Up to 18 qualified participants from the target countries: the Republic of China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Thailand. However, other member countries with special interest in the subject are also encouraged to apply.
7. **Number of Local Participants:** Up to six qualified participants.
8. **Closing Date for Nominations:** 9 November 2011

All nominations along with the **completed biodata** forms and medical certificates of the nominees should reach the APO Secretariat by the above date. Selection of participants will be completed immediately after this date. Member countries are requested to inform the APO Secretariat as soon as possible if they do not intend to participate so that the place can be made available to other interested countries.

9. **Objectives** To provide an interactive platform to discuss the performance measurement indicators and challenges of SMEs in the retail and food and beverage (F&B) service subsectors; kick-start regional initiatives to develop an effective forum to perform benchmarking at the enterprise and sector levels; and share best practices of SMEs in the retail and F&B service subsector.

## 10. **Background**

Benchmarking is a systematic, continuous process of searching for, learning, adapting, and implementing best practices. The search can occur both inside a specific industry or elsewhere. It involves not only understanding how the partner organization achieved better results but also adapting good ideas and practices to suit one's own organization. Benchmarking helps explain the processes behind excellent performance. When the lessons learned from a benchmarking exercise are applied appropriately, they facilitate improved performance in critical functions within an organization or in key areas of the business environment.

Initially, this workshop was aimed at sharing the experience of the Malaysian Benchmarking Index, which is a strategy of the Malaysian government to allow SMEs to compare their performance with counterparts within the country and worldwide. However, several member countries with special interest in benchmarking including the host country suggested that the workshop should focus on the retail and F&B service subsectors. Research on service-sector productivity focusing on retail and F&B service SMEs was conducted in 2010, and the resulting paper is to be released before this workshop. The workshop will be the first forum to disseminate the results of the research, including case studies and challenges in approaching measurement of productivity and competitiveness. In addition, this workshop will discuss and identify a set of key performance indicators and set criteria for best practices, benchmarking data, and information collection to establish a performance benchmarking platform for SMEs in the service sector, particularly retail and F&B.

It is intended for the workshop to generate a set of consolidated objectives and the scope of a new initiative for developing cross-country benchmarking indexes for retail and F&B SMEs to be covered in a future study meeting scheduled for early 2012.

## 11. **Scope and Methodology**

### **Scope**

- 1) Sharing the research results from 10-RP-52-GE-RES-B Research on Service-sector Productivity with Focus on SMEs on performance measurement in the retail and F&B subsectors, as well as the challenges faced during the preparation of the research paper;
- 2) Discussion of the consolidated objectives and scope of a new initiative for developing cross-country benchmarking for SMEs in the service sector;
- 3) Initiating discussion and identification of key performance indicators and criteria for best practice information collection from SMEs to develop service-sector SME performance benchmarking; and
- 4) Planning timelines for the service-sector SME performance benchmarking project to be continued in 2012.

## **Methodology**

Interactive presentations, country paper presentations, group work, and observational site visit(s).

### **12. Requirements of Candidates**

- (a) Age: Preferably between 30 and 45 years.
- (b) Education: Preferably university degree or equivalent qualification.
- (c) Present Position: NPO managers/consultants and owners of retail and F&B enterprises directly involved in benchmarking activities in their organizations.
- (d) Experience: At least five to 10 years of experience in a relevant field.
- (e) Language: Proficiency in written and spoken English is essential.  
Proficiency
- (f) Health: Physically and mentally fit to attend an intensive program entailing strenuous travel and several plant/field visits.

### **13. Financial Arrangements**

#### **(a) To be borne by the APO**

- i)* Round-trip economy-class international airfare by the most direct route between the international airport nearest to the participant's place of work and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, for all participants. As far as practicable, all participants are strongly encouraged to purchase and use discounted tickets (following IATA PEX or other applicable discount fares). Please note that arrangements for the purchase of air tickets should be in accordance with the "Guide on Purchases of Air Tickets for APO Project Participants" dated 7 July 2006, which will be sent to the selected participants and is available from APO Liaison Officers in member countries.
- ii)* All assignment costs of overseas resource persons.

#### **(b) To be borne by the host country—Malaysia**

- i)* Hotel accommodations and appropriate per diem allowances for 18 overseas participants for up to six days.
- ii)* Other local implementing costs in Malaysia.

#### **(c) To be borne by participants or participating countries**

- i)* Participants must be fully insured against accident and illness (including hospitalization) for a principal sum of US\$10,000.00 for the entire duration of the project and travel and must submit to the APO a copy of the comprehensive travel insurance certificate before participation. Such insurance must be valid in the countries to be visited. If a participant is unable to arrange for insurance coverage in the host

country at the start of the project, he/she must pay the premium himself/herself out of the per diem allowances provided. Neither the APO nor the implementing organization will be responsible for any eventuality arising from accident or illness.

- ii)* Any expenses incurred by participants for stopovers on the way to and from the project venue as well as for extra stay at the project venue before and/or after the official project period on account of early arrival or late departure, for example, due to either limited available flights or any other reason whatsoever.
- iii)* Any expenses related to visa fees and airport taxes.

#### **14. Actions by Participating Countries**

(a) Each member country is requested to nominate two or more candidates for selection. Please ensure that candidates nominated meet the qualifications mentioned in item 12.

(b) We will not accept any form of self-nomination. All nominations must be endorsed and submitted by an APO Director, Alternate Director, Liaison Officer, or their designated officer.

(c) Please note that nomination does not necessarily guarantee that a candidate will be selected. Selection is at the discretion of the APO Secretariat. A basic criterion for selection is the homogeneity of the participants in terms of qualifications and work experience. Nonselection therefore does not mean that the candidates concerned are not competent. Sometimes candidates are not selected because they are overqualified.

(d) Each nomination should be accompanied by the documents listed below. A nomination lacking any of these documents may not be considered:

- i)* Two copies of the candidate's biodata on the APO biodata form together with passport-sized photograph. The biodata form can be downloaded from the APO website. Downloading information is also available from [www.apo-tokyo.org](http://www.apo-tokyo.org). We encourage submitting the biodata form to the APO Secretariat in electronic form as an attachment to a cover e-mail message from the APO Director, Alternate Director, or Liaison Officer.

- ii)* APO Medical and Insurance Declaration/Certification Form. Every candidate must complete and submit a copy of the APO Medical and Insurance Declaration/Certification Form with his/her biodata at the time of nomination. Please note that for this particular project self-declaration is sufficient for candidates without any of the health conditions or illnesses enumerated on the reverse side of the medical form. However, for all others, medical certification by a recognized physician on the reverse side of the medical form is required.

(e) Member countries are encouraged to submit the necessary documents electronically as mentioned in (d)-*i*). In that case, there is no need to send a hard copy by postal mail. However, if the documents are submitted by fax, member countries are requested to send the originals of the documents to the APO Secretariat by postal mail as well. If a digital photograph of a nominee is not attached to the electronic biodata form, a hard-copy photograph should be sent to the APO Secretariat by postal mail. Please specify the candidate's name and the project code on the reverse side of the photograph.

(f) Member countries are requested to abide by the nomination deadline specified in Section 8 on the first page. The APO may not consider late nominations as they have in the past resulted in considerable difficulties to the implementing organization in its preparatory work for the project.

(g) Under normal circumstances, candidates who are selected after the initial screening will be informed of their acceptance at least four weeks prior to commencement of the project.

(h) Member countries are requested to inform candidates that, once selected, they are not to bring family members or to engage in any private business activities during the entire duration of the project. Further, if they should become unable to take part, the NPOs concerned are requested to inform the APO Secretariat and the host country promptly of their reason for withdrawal.

(i) Each selected candidate is required to arrive at the venue one day before the start of the official project. Also, he/she is expected to return home upon completion of the official project because he/she is visiting the host country for the specific purpose of attending this APO workshop.

## **15. Guide for Participants**

Other conditions for participation are given in the *APO Guide for Participants*, which is available from APO Liaison Officers/NPOs in member countries and on the APO homepage ([http://www.apo-tokyo.org/05part\\_guide.htm](http://www.apo-tokyo.org/05part_guide.htm)).



Ryuichiro Yamazaki  
Secretary-General