



PROJECT NOTIFICATION

Ref. No.: 21-CL-02-GE-OSM-A-PN2100073-001

Date of Issue	09 September 2021
Project Code	21-CL-02-GE-OSM-A
Title	Multicountry Observational Study Mission on Service Quality and Productivity for the Retail Industry
Timing and Duration	27–29 October 2021 (three days)
Hosting Country(ies)	Republic of China
Modality	Digital Multicountry
Implementing Organization(s)	China Productivity Center and APO Secretariat
Participating Country(ies)	All Member Countries
Overseas Participants	19
Local Participants	12
Qualifications of Participants	Policymakers and government officials, representatives of public organizations, and staff of SMEs and startups working to improve productivity in the retail industry
Nomination of Participants	All nominations must be submitted through National Productivity Organizations of member countries
Closing Date for Nominations	8 October 2021

1. Objectives

- a. Introduce recent innovations to improve customer service, quality, and productivity in the retail sector.
- b. Learn about the best practices of customer service and productivity in consumer retail enterprises.
- c. Apply best-in-class practices in the context of local markets across APO member countries.

2. Background

Competition in the retail market is becoming more severe as customers' expectations of service levels increase. Differentiated, customer-centered marketing strategies are being adopted by retailers to gain a competitive edge and attract customers with varied needs. Greater customer loyalty, retention, and profits can be generated through improved relationships with consumers. Enhancing service quality and productivity in the retail industry is therefore imperative.

The Asia-Pacific region, which accounts for more than 50% of the world's population, is the largest retail market. According to Bain & Company (2020), from 2014 to 2019, the compound annual growth rate for Asia-Pacific retail sales was more than quadruple that of the rest of the world. The retail industry in this region is expected to maintain its momentum due to strong overall economic growth, rapidly changing consumer trends, greater purchasing power, and increasing populations. Another reason why the Asia-Pacific will remain the retail industry's growth engine is its advanced digital maturity.

The ROC, the host of this study mission, provides an excellent example. Retail sales in the ROC jumped 3.56% year-on-year in January 2021, following a 1.69% increase in the previous month. That was the fastest growth in retail sales since August 2020, mainly attributed to motor vehicles, motorcycles and parts, construction materials, e-commerce, and household appliances. Service-sector employment accounted for 59.6% of jobs in the ROC in 2019. Considering the key role of service-sector productivity in determining a nation's overall ability to compete, in addition to its contributions to employment, income, international trade, and production costs, it is timely for APO member countries to give priority to boosting service-sector productivity.

The ROC's retail culture is widely recognized as setting the gold standard for customer service quality, productivity, and innovation. Other APO members will be able to learn about the ROC's best practices in terms of levels of customer service, productivity, and service innovation under various initiatives during this study mission.

3. Scope, Methodology, and Certificate of Attendance

The duration of each day's sessions will be around three hours comprising presentations by experts, group discussions, and other relevant learning methods. The indicative topics of the presentations are:

Day 1:

- Integrating service quality and productivity strategies
- Learning from customer feedback and data-driven strategies

Day 2:

- Tools to analyze and address service quality problems and returns on quality
- The omnichannel approach: Online and offline coordination

Day 3:

- Buy online and pick-up in store (BOPIS)/buy online and pick-up at curbside (BOPAC) case studies
- Defining, measuring, and improving service productivity

The detailed program and list of speakers will be provided two weeks prior to the sessions with announcement of the names of the selected participants.

The participants are required to attend all sessions. This full participation is a prerequisite for receiving the APO certificate of attendance.

4. Financial Arrangements

- a. The APO will meet the assignment costs for overseas resource persons.
- b. The host country will meet the assignment costs of local resource persons and for a virtual site visit(s), either broadcast live or recorded as applicable.

5. Implementation Procedures

Please refer to the implementation procedures for APO digital multicountry projects circulated with this document.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr. AKP Mochtan', with a long, sweeping flourish extending upwards and to the right.

Dr. AKP Mochtan
Secretary-General