PROJECT NOTIFICATION

26 May 2015

1.	**Project Code**	15-RP-10-GE-RES-B
2.	**Title**	Research on Measuring Productivity in Higher Education
3.	**Duration & Timing**	November 2015–October 2016 (12 months) Coordination meeting: 24–26 November 2015 (three days) in Bangkok, Thailand
4.	**Venue**	APO Secretariat
5.	**Number of Participating Countries**	Eight national experts from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. However, other member countries with special interest in this project may nominate candidates upon consultation with the APO Secretariat.
6.	**Closing Date for Nomination of National Experts**	7 August 2015

7. Objectives

This research aims to look into the concepts of productivity and its application to higher education, agree on the key productivity indicators in assessing the productivity level of academic institutions, and recommend proposals that will enhance the productivity outcome of the higher education sector in general.

8. Background

In the knowledge economy, great attention is being paid to the competitiveness and quality standard of higher education because expanding economic sectors and industries rely greatly on workers with higher educational and skill levels. In seeking ways to achieve more with less, improving productivity has become one of the core initiatives in improving the competitiveness of the higher education sector. The business community believes that the sector needs to be relevant to industry and create multiplier effects in the national economy through its human capital contribution. This is because the formation of human capital not only leads to higher worker productivity but also contributes to economic development through its positive effects when graduates are absorbed and move into higher productivity sectors and occupations in the economy.

In 2013, the APO implemented a workshop that examined the productivity measurement and performance of higher education institutions in the region. The meeting of university administrators and faculty members in that workshop paved the way for a discussion on what constitutes productivity, including key productivity indicators (KPIs), in higher education. Hence, one of the recommendations in the workshop was to undertake a study that would clearly define productivity and KPIs of a specific higher education institution. This research therefore will attempt to do that by looking into how productivity is measured in higher education, agree on appropriate methodology for measuring productivity in this sector including KPIs, and make proposals for enhancing the productivity level of the higher education sector. The output of this study will hopefully provide decision makers with more information on which programs, policies, and resources are cost-effective as a result of understanding the significance of productivity in the higher education sector in general.

9. Scope and Methodology

Scope:
1) Coordination Meeting: A coordination meeting of experts will be held 24–26 November 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand. The tentative topics to be covered in the meeting are:

   a. What is productivity and how is this concept being applied to higher education?

   b. What are the KPIs of higher education? What are the limitations and complexities in measuring them?

   c. How can the measurement of productivity in higher education be improved?

   d. How can the measurement of productivity levels in higher education affect education policy reform in the long run?

2) Conducting in-country research: Each national expert will gather primary and secondary data based on the agreed methodology and framework of the research. The expert will be responsible for analyzing such data and prepare a report for review and acceptance by the chief expert. The study will collect the needed inputs from higher education institutions/universities that are either public or private.

Methodology:
The chief expert will draft the overall research framework and methodology for presentation and discussion during the coordination meeting. The report outline and format including contents will also be discussed in this meeting. Upon agreement, the national experts will adopt the agreed framework and methodology to conduct in-country research. The research will employ one chief expert who will lead the team of national experts in performing the study.

The tasks of the chief expert will include:
a. Developing the research framework proposal containing the background, direction, and methodology for performing the research;

b. Preparing and presenting the background materials on the subject of the research during the coordination meeting, including giving lectures to enhance the ability of national experts in understanding productivity concepts and tools for higher education;

c. Providing overall coordination and advisory services to national experts in conducting the research in their countries;

d. Reviewing the initial drafts of national expert reports to ensure uniformity in the quality and format of the country reports; and

e. Preparing the integrated analysis and overall conclusion of the research based on the individual national reports and ensuring that the final manuscript is completed and submitted to the APO Secretariat by the deadline of 31 October 2016.

The tasks of national experts will include:

a. Undertaking the research at the national level following the agreed methodology and guidelines;

b. Collecting and analyzing the required data for analysis and writing up the findings following the agreed methodology and guidelines; and

c. Submitting the report to the chief expert within the agreed timeframe.

10. Qualifications of National Experts

The nominated national experts must come either from universities (public or private), or the Ministry of Education, or research institutes that undertake higher education productivity studies. Preference may be given to university administrators and faculty members, Ministry of Education and institute researchers who have sufficient background in and knowledge of school administration in addition to a basic understanding of productivity concepts, techniques, and tools. The national experts must meet the following requirements to achieve the desired outcome:

a. Excellent writing skills and have published articles, books, or substantive reports on the subject of productivity;

b. Sufficient English proficiency to communicate with the APO Secretariat and the chief expert on matters relating to the research and to write a report in English; and

c. A strong commitment to undertaking and completing the research within the timeframe.

11. Qualifications of the Chief Expert

The APO will appoint a chief expert for this project to guide the group of national experts in undertaking the research. The APO-appointed chief expert must have:

a. Extensive knowledge of productivity concepts and tools including measurement of productivity in higher education;

b. Excellent writing skills and have published articles, books, or reports concerning productivity with special focus on productivity courses from the viewpoint of academic institutions in English at the international level since the final integrated report will be written in English; and

c. Strong commitment to undertaking and completing the research project within the given timeframe and producing the consolidated analysis of all national reports.

12. Financial Arrangements

To be borne by the APO

a. Honoraria for the chief expert and national experts upon completion of the research;

b. All assignment costs for the chief expert and national experts including daily subsistence allowances, miscellaneous expenses, and round-trip international airfare by the most

direct route between the international airport nearest to the experts' place of work and Bangkok for attending the coordination meeting for the research;

c. Travel insurance coverage against accident and illness for all experts for the entire duration of the coordination meeting and travel; and

d. Other local implementation costs not covered by the host country.

To be borne by experts or participating countries

a. Any expenses incurred by the experts for extra stay at the venue before and/or after the official project period due to early arrival, late departure, or any other reason must be borne by the experts for attending the coordination meeting; and

b. All local implementation costs incurred by the national experts when conducting the research and related activities at the national level.

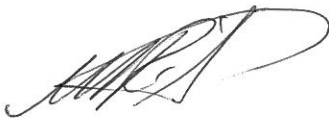**To be borne by the host country of the coordination meeting (Thailand)**

a. Local implementation costs for the meeting package, room rental, and required equipment.

13. Actions by Member Countries

a. For the selection of national experts, the member countries to be included in the research are requested to submit appropriate nominations (preferably more than two for consideration) by 7 August 2015.

b. Each nomination should be accompanied by the candidate's biodata on the standard APO form in duplicate along with a passport-sized photograph. In addition to the standard APO form, nominees should also prepare a list of publications, research, and/or consulting projects they have undertaken in this field. A nomination lacking any of these documents will not be considered.

c. The selection of national experts will be based strictly upon their professional qualifications and experience, academic background, and commitment to this research.

14. Preparatory Work by National Experts

The selected national experts will be required to gather data and conduct preliminary research on some statistics and data pertaining to higher education institutions/universities. Detailed guidelines will be provided later. The preliminary findings will be presented at the coordination meeting in Bangkok and will form the basis for further deliberations and development of the research with the guidance of the chief expert.

Mari Amano
Secretary-General