



ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANIZATION

## PROJECT NOTIFICATION

16 December 2013

1. **Project Code** 13-RP-17-GE-RES-B
2. **Title** Research on Benchmarking Indexes for SMEs  
(Food Manufacturing Sector)
3. **Timing and Duration** December 2013–November 2014 (one year)  
The Coordination Meeting will be held on 24–26 June 2014  
(three days) in Singapore
4. **Venue** Participating member countries
5. **Number of Participating Countries** Six targeted member countries  
Republic of China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia,  
Singapore, and Thailand
6. **Closing Date for Nominations** 14 March 2014
7. **Objectives**
  - a. To develop a database on the productivity performance of SMEs in the food-manufacturing sector in selected APO member economies for benchmarking performance and best practices; and
  - b. To publish a research report containing cross-country analysis of productivity performance and best practices of SMEs in the food-manufacturing sector.

### 8. Background

SMEs are playing an increasingly important role in Asian economies in terms of contributions to GDP and employment. Hence, they are the core engine for productivity and economic growth. The APO recognizes the importance of monitoring the progress of SME performance, particularly in the rapidly growing service sector in the region and sharing the best practices of high-performing businesses in member economies.

Benchmarking is a continuous process of self-assessment and initiating actions to close gaps, surpass the best performers, and retain a competitive edge. To pursue continuous improvement, it is essential that SMEs not only have a relevant basis for comparison but also learn from the achievements and results obtained from the benchmarking exercise. For this, SMEs need access to useful reference data and information to compare their performance with that of others in efforts to achieve higher productivity.

The APO conducted benchmarking research on SMEs in the Retail and Food Service Subsectors in the previous year. As a continuing effort, and because the food business is a growing sector in Asia, it is also important to study and benchmark food-manufacturing businesses, which support food services by providing “central kitchens,” take-away food products, and one-stop food services with food suppliers and manufacturers to create new value-added products and services for the region.

## 9. Scope and Methodology

### Scope:

- a. Coordination meeting: The coordination meeting will discuss the methodology for collecting data, information, and best practice examples for the sector, considering specific details of the business in each country and finalize the methodology for the research.
- b. Collection of data: The coordination meeting will also discuss the list of indicators as well as feasibility of data collection in participating member countries.

### Methodology:

- a. Primary data collection through the use of questionnaires and secondary information gathering by national experts under the close supervision and direction of the chief expert via e-mail communications and other online means; and
- b. Compilation and processing of data and information as well as quantitative and qualitative analyses, followed by generation of a research publication/report by the chief expert.

## 10. Qualifications of National Experts

To ensure continuity and maximize efficient knowledge accumulation for the research, national experts of the benchmarking research project in 2012 will be given priority for this project. NPOs are expected to nominate the same experts, subject to their availability.

Target member economies that did not send any national experts are requested to nominate national experts in line with the required qualifications indicated below.

Present Position	Managers or officers from SME agencies and business associations directly involved in monitoring the performance of SMEs (food-manufacturing and food-processing sector); Managers of private enterprises (food-manufacturing and food-processing sector) involved in benchmarking activities in their organizations; or NPO managers/consultants engaged in benchmarking activities and familiar with productivity statistics and measurement for the food-manufacturing and food-processing sector.
Experience	At least five to 10 years of relevant work experience in the subject areas. Those with knowledge of and direct experience in food-manufacturing enterprises are preferred.
Education	University degree or above in economics, econometrics, or business management.

Language	Proficiency in written and spoken English is essential.
Health	Physically and mentally fit to commit him/herself to a one-year period of research.
Age	Preferably between 30 and 45 years.
Other	The ability to handle quantitative statistics and business data is an asset.

### **11. Qualifications of Chief Expert**

Mr. George Wong, Managing Director & Principal Consultant, Hoclink Systems & Services Pte Ltd will be assigned as the chief expert for the research project as he also served as the chief expert for the 2012 research.

### **12. Financial Arrangements**

#### **To be borne by the experts or participating countries**

Local implementation costs not covered by the APO

#### **To be borne by the APO**

- a. Honoraria for the chief and national experts to be paid upon completion of the final research report;
- b. All assignment costs for the chief and national experts including daily subsistence allowances, miscellaneous expenses, and round-trip business-class international airfare by the most direct route between the international airport nearest to the experts' place of work and Singapore for attending the coordination meeting for the research; and
- c. Travel insurance coverage against accident and illness for the entire duration of the coordination meeting and travel.

### **13. Actions by Member Countries**

- a. Member countries included in the research are requested to submit appropriate nominations by 14 March 2014, in line with the provisions in section 10.
- 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. Actions by the APO Secretariat**

- a. Under normal circumstances, candidates who are selected will be informed of their acceptance at least four weeks prior to the start of the project.

- b. If some candidates fail to qualify or be unable to participate after selection, or if some member countries fail to nominate any candidate, their slots may be filled by alternates from the same or another member country on a merit basis.

**15. Work by National Experts**

The detailed guidelines for the assignments will be provided by the chief expert.



Mari Amano  
Secretary-General