



PROJECT NOTIFICATION

Ref. No.: 21-CP-03-GE-WSP-A-PN2100055-001

Date of Issue	14 July 2021
Project Code	21-CP-03-GE-WSP-A
Title	Workshop on Blockchain Solutions for SME Productivity Enhancement
Timing and Duration	25–27 August 2021 (three days)
Hosting Country(ies)	Republic of Korea
Modality	Digital Multicountry
Implementing Organization(s)	Korea Productivity Center and APO Secretariat
Participating Country(ies)	All Member Countries
Overseas Participants	19
Local Participants	12
Qualifications of Participants	Policymakers, government officials, and representatives of government organizations and enterprises, especially SMEs and startups, working on improving productivity and fostering innovation through digital transformation
Nomination of Participants	All nominations must be submitted through National Productivity Organizations of member countries
Closing Date for Nominations	12 August 2021

1. Objectives

- a. Share case studies on the adoption of blockchain technology for productivity enhancement.
- b. Explore potential applications of blockchain technologies and solutions for SMEs.
- c. Examine the future of blockchains in improving firm-level operational efficiency and effectiveness.

2. Background

Blockchains are regarded as the next generation of disruptive technologies after the internet. They have many applications and hold vast promise for every business, society, and individual. This groundbreaking digital revolution is expected to transform entire value chains by leveraging state-of-the-art decentralized digital ledger technologies. Blockchains are also positioned as great enablers for improving the productivity of SMEs.

Among APO member countries, Japan and India, according to Statista, were regarded as leaders in blockchain technology development worldwide in 2018. Other APO members have also made notable progress. As of 13 October 2017, interbank payments were permitted in Singapore using the blockchain concept through a partnership between the Monetary Authority of Singapore and a consortium of financial institutions. In the ROK, a new government initiative introduced the country's own cryptocurrency, the S-coin, in 2018, and the passage of legislation in March 2020 to ensure the transparency of its trading was one of the world's first comprehensive cryptocurrency laws. One of the country's largest technology companies, Kakao, has also continued to invest in blockchain initiatives.

In April 2021, six blockchain associations across ASEAN and Australia virtually signed a Memorandum of Understanding to create the ASEAN Blockchain Consortium. The associations are from Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, the Labuan territory in Malaysia, Thailand, and Australia. This collaboration aims to raise awareness and adoption of blockchains and digital assets and engage with regulators. In 2017, the Central Bank of Malaysia published an initial research paper on central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) and their use. The Bank of Thailand published a joint report with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority in January 2020, concluding that CBDCs have significant potential to prevent risks and reduce costs compared with traditional banking intermediaries.

Blockchain technology has been adopted across the banking, financial service, and insurance industries but also in traditional areas such as shipping and logistics. All countries, however, must address the challenges and anticipate the wide-ranging implications of blockchains, and prioritizing targets, resources, and policy measures is critical. It is thus necessary to establish a holistic understanding of blockchain solutions and develop strategies in response to the opportunities and challenges.

In preparation for a wider application of this innovative technology in the new business normal, the APO organized a Conference on Blockchain Solutions for Productivity in February 2021, which attracted more than 100 participants. This workshop will build on the earlier conference to present case studies on the adoption of blockchain technologies for productivity enhancement while exploring potential applications and solutions for SMEs and future methods for those technologies that improve firm-level operational efficiency and effectiveness. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, these topics will be increasingly relevant in the new business normal.

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: Understanding Blockchain Technology

- Blockchain concepts and methodologies
- Blockchain data management
- Blockchain storage and retrieval management

Day 2: Blockchain Technology

- Blockchains and smart contracts for SMEs
- Blockchains as a service (BaaS) for SMEs
- Blockchain security for SMEs

Day 3: Blockchain Applications

- Blockchains and insurance, payments, and cryptocurrencies
- Blockchains and energy
- Blockchains and healthcare

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 of overseas resource persons and honorarium for up to two local resource persons.
- b. The host country will meet the costs 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.



Dr. AKP Mochtan
Secretary-General