



ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANIZATION

PROJECT NOTIFICATION

24 September 2013

1. **Project Code** 13-IN-93-GE-OSM-B
2. **Title** Multicountry Observational Study Mission on Resilient SME Networks in the Asia-Pacific
3. **Timing and Duration** 16–20 December 2013 (five days)
4. **Venue** Taipei, Republic of China
5. **Implementing Organization**
China Productivity Center (CPC)
Address: 2nd Fl., No. 79, Section 1 Xintai 5th Road
Xizhi Dist., New Taipei City 221, Republic of China
Telephone: (886) 2-2698-5886
Facsimile: (886) 2-2698-2976
E-mail: 1391@cpc.org.tw
Website: www.cpc.org.tw
6. **Number of Overseas Participants** Up to 18 qualified participants from India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. However, other member countries with special interest in this project may nominate candidates upon consultation with the APO Secretariat.
7. **Number of Local Participants** Up to six qualified participants
8. **Closing Date for Nominations** 31 October 2013
9. **Objectives**

To observe and share best practices of SMEs in recovering their supply chains and business activities after being hit by external changes such as natural disasters or a global financial meltdown. The experiences and recovery processes of the host country will be examples. The participants are expected to pass on the knowledge and experience acquired during the mission to relevant agencies in their countries.

10. Background

With globalization, firms in many industries are seeking to expand their supply chains to take full advantage of global resources, while penetrating untouched foreign markets. Global supply chains, however, are becoming more vulnerable to disaster risks, especially in the Asia-Pacific region. In 2011 alone, damage and losses caused by natural disasters in the region exceeded

US\$250 billion, accounting for more than two-thirds of disaster losses worldwide. As the Great East Japan Earthquake and the floods in Thailand last year showed, natural disasters can cause huge domestic losses by damaging production assets and public infrastructure, inhibiting the development of small businesses and reducing the number of jobs.

In addition to direct losses, firms were affected indirectly due to various supply disruptions, which spread to other countries or regions. Growing complexity combined with wider geographic coverage has increased the invisibility of supply chains. That is, exchanges of information between various entities within the supply chain have become more limited, making it difficult to predict the impacts of natural disasters. Most vulnerable are SMEs. Typically, they lack insurance and do not carry out risk assessments or have business continuity plans. This makes it difficult to recover from disasters and heightens supply chain disruption.

If the countries of Asia and the Pacific are to become more resilient to these regular, overlapping shocks, they will need to address them in a more comprehensive, systemic manner. Outreach aimed at SMEs, usually comparatively weak in their ability to collect information, is necessary.

The ROC paved the way by formally proposing a multiyear project dedicated to improving the ability of SMEs in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) region to handle natural disasters in May 2011. Officially known as the Multi-Year Project on Improving Natural Disaster Resilience of APEC SMEs, the project began operating at the end of that year and is being implemented by the SME Crisis Management Center (SCMC) under the Small and Medium Enterprise Administration.

The SCMC was established in 2009 to assist SMEs as they struggled to cope with the effects of the global economic recession that began in 2008. Within the past two years, however, two major natural disasters, the earthquake and tsunami in Japan and months of flooding in Thailand which began in July 2011, have struck the APEC region. As a result, the SCMC has shifted most of its attention to helping SMEs plan for natural disasters in the future.

As part of APO efforts to support SMEs in member countries, this study mission is being organized to provide participants with the opportunity to learn and examine best practices of SMEs, which are generally very vulnerable to sudden changes in external factors, to sustain operations after being hit by external changes.

11. Scope and Methodology

The preliminary modules to be covered are:

- a. Best practices for revitalizing and restoring SME networks after external changes in the host country and region;
- b. Management philosophy; and
- c. Effective SME networks to overcome damage from external changes.

The study mission will consist of interactive sessions, lectures, group discussions, observational site visits, and presentation of action plans.

The preliminary program of the observational study mission is given below:

Date/Time	Activity
Mon., 16 December 2013	Opening session Presentation of resource papers
Tues., 17 December	Field visits to relevant SMEs
Wed., 18 December	Field visits to relevant SMEs
Thur., 19 December	Field visits to relevant SMEs Group discussion
Fri., 20 December	Preparation of action plans Action plan presentation Closing session

12. Qualifications of Candidates

The participants are expected to possess the following qualifications:

Present Position	Top managers of SMEs or NPO consultants who are dealing with SMEs.
Experience	At least three years of experience in the position described in a related field.
Education	University degree or equivalent qualification from a recognized university/institution.
Language	All proceedings of the project are conducted in English, and participants are frequently required to make oral and written presentations. They must therefore be proficient in spoken and written English. Those who are not proficient in English will not be accepted.
Health	Physically and mentally fit to attend an intensive project requiring participants to complete a number of individual and group activities and strenuous fieldwork. It is therefore recommended that member countries do not nominate candidates likely to suffer from physical and mental stress.
Age	Preferably between 35 and 50 years.
APO Certificate	Participants must attend all five days of the project to qualify for the certificate of attendance.

13. Financial Arrangements

a) To be borne by participants or participating countries

For participants from profit-making organizations, except for SMEs, from APO member countries other than Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Lao PDR, Mongolia, and Nepal

- 1) Round-trip international airfare between the member country and Taipei; and
- 2) Participating Country Expenses at US\$50 per participant, payable to the APO in convertible currency.

For participants

- 1) Participants' insurance premiums: All participants should be fully insured against accident and illness (including hospitalization and death) for a principal sum equivalent to US\$10,000.00 for the entire duration of the project and travel and must submit to the

APO Secretariat a copy of the comprehensive travel insurance certificate before participation. Such insurance should be valid in the host country. This insurance requirement is in addition to existing government insurance coverage in some member countries. If any participant is unable to insure himself/herself as stipulated above, he/she should secure this insurance in the host country at the commencement of the project and pay the premium himself/herself, if necessary, from the per diem allowance provided. Neither the APO nor the implementing organizations will be responsible for any eventuality arising from accident or illness.

- 2) All expenses related to visa fees and airport taxes.
- 3) 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 because of early arrival or late departure, for example, due to either limited available flights or any other reason.

b) To be borne by the host country

- 1) Per diem allowances and hotel accommodation for up to 18 overseas participants for up to six days at the rate to be specified later.
- 2) All local implementation costs.

c) To be borne by the APO

- 1) All assignment costs of overseas resource persons.
- 2) Round-trip economy-class international airfare by the most direct route between the international airport nearest to the participant's place of work and Taipei, ROC, for participants from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Lao PDR, Mongolia, and Nepal and for participants from nonprofit organizations and SMEs from other member countries. As far as practicable, all participants should purchase discount tickets. Please note that the arrangements for the purchase of air tickets should follow the "Guide on Purchases of Air Tickets for APO Participants," which will be sent to the selected participants. It is also available on the APO website and from APO Liaison Officers in member countries.

14. Actions by Member Countries

- a) Each participating country is requested to nominate three or more candidates in the order of preference. Please ensure that candidates nominated meet the qualifications specified under section 12 above.
- b) No form of self-nomination will be accepted. All nominations must be endorsed and submitted by an APO Director, Alternative Director, Liaison Officer, or their designated officer.
- c) Please note that nomination of a candidate does not necessarily guarantee that he/she 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 enough. Sometimes candidates are not selected because they are overqualified for a project.
- d) Each nomination should be accompanied by the necessary documents. A nomination lacking any of these documents may not be considered: two copies of the candidate's biodata on the APO biodata form together with a passport-sized photograph. The biodata form can be downloaded from the APO website (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. The nomination documents should be sent to the Industry Department, APO Secretariat (e-mail: ind@apo-tokyo.org, fax: 81-3-5840-5324).

- e) The 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 self-declaration is sufficient for candidates without any of health conditions or illnesses listed on the reverse side of the medical form. However, for all others, medical certification by a licensed physician on the reverse side of the medical form is required.
- f) Necessary documents are to be submitted electronically. 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 mail the originals of the documents to the APO Secretariat 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 give the candidate's name and the project code on the reverse side of the photograph.
- g) Member countries are requested to adhere to the nomination deadline given on page 1. The APO Secretariat 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.
- h) For member countries where nominations are required to be approved by higher government authorities and require a longer time, the APO Liaison Officers/NPOs are urged to send the names of nominees on or before the deadline, indicating that government approval will follow.
- i) If a selected participant becomes unable to attend, he/she should inform the APO Liaison Officer/NPO in his/her country immediately and give the reason for withdrawal. The NPO concerned is requested to transmit that information to the APO Secretariat and the host country promptly.
- j) NPOs are requested to inform the selected participants that they are not to bring family members or to engage in any private business activities during the entire duration of the project.
- k) Each selected candidate should be requested 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 observational study mission.
- l) NPOs should inform participants that they must attend all five days of the project to qualify for the certificate of attendance.

15. 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.

16. Project Preparation

The participants are required to prepare a country paper prior to departure for the project venue. They are expected to follow the “Guidelines for the Preparation of Country Papers.” which will be attached to a circular letter later.

17. Postproject Actions

All participants are required to prepare action plans and share the plans with their NPOs. The APO will also request participants to submit progress reports six months after completion of the project.

18. Evaluation of Participants

If the conduct/attendance/performance of a participant is not satisfactory, this will be reported to the director concerned.

19. 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 website (http://www.apo-tokyo.org/project/files/participant_guidebook.pdf).



Mari Amano
Secretary-General