



ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANIZATION

PROJECT NOTIFICATION

16 January 2017

1. **Project Code** 17-IN-43-GE-OSM-B
2. **Title** Multicountry Observational Study Mission on Innovation and Competitiveness in SMEs
3. **Timing and Duration** 19–23 June 2017 (five days)
4. **Venue** Seoul, Republic of Korea
5. **Implementing Organization** Korea Productivity Center (KPC)
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6. **Number of Overseas Participants** Up to 18 qualified participants from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, IR Iran, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. 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** 24 April 2017
9. **Objectives**
 - a. To learn about the incentives and institutional factors that drive SMEs in the ROK to innovate and stay competitive;
 - b. To observe good practices, policy programs, and applicable technologies that encourage innovation in the private sector in the ROK; and
 - c. To provide a platform for experience sharing and network building.

10. Background

SMEs are the pillar of APO member economies, accounting for more than 95% of all enterprises and more than 60% of national labor forces. They also contribute to industrialization and international trade, despite the accompanying challenges from globalization and the Internet which demand them to be more responsive, reliable, and versatile. To survive in the era of global competition, SMEs have been looking for new ways to enhance their productivity in addition to the conventional wisdom of continuous improvement, and innovation has been a major focus that helps them to upgrade and stay competitive.

Innovation refers to any new development in an organization. For SMEs, it includes creating or reengineering new products and services, implementing new processes, developing new market opportunities, and incorporating new management systems. Building an innovation-enabling mechanism and leveraging resources for innovation are thus of significant importance for SMEs to spur their innovative capacity and create new opportunities and niches. The ROK, being on top of the list in the 2016 Bloomberg Innovation Index, has been a role model in encouraging R&D and nurturing industrial capacity. This study mission intends to provide participants an opportunity to observe closely how Korean SMEs keep reinventing themselves, how they are assisted by institutional factors and external resources, and how advanced technologies contribute to their innovative development.

With SME development and innovation being strategic directions identified in its Roadmap to Achieve Vision 2020, the APO has long promoted innovation-led competitiveness enhancement in SMEs among its member countries, including holding workshops, training courses, and study missions in the ROK; facilitating bilateral capacity building between NPOs; and providing training by assigning experts to member countries. This study mission will continue those efforts and leverage the experiences of SMEs and public organizations in the ROK to demonstrate good practices and conducive ecosystems there that foster innovation by SMEs.

11. Scope and Methodology

Scope

Good practices and strategies of innovation in SMEs, policies and institutional factors assisting SMEs in innovation development, and comparison of different practices among member countries.

Methodology

Interactive lectures, site visits, presentations, and discussions.

The tentative program of the study mission is outlined below:

Date/Time	Activity
Sun., 18 June 2017	Arrival of participants in Seoul
Mon., 19 June 2017	Opening session Presentation of resource papers
Tues., 20 June 2017	Presentation of country papers and resource papers Observational visits to SMEs and relevant organizations

Wed., 21 June 2017	Presentation of country papers Observational visits to SMEs and relevant organizations
Thurs., 22 June 2017	Presentation of resource papers Group discussion and exercise
Fri., 23 June 2017	Presentation of group discussion and analysis Program evaluation and closing session
Sat., 24 June 2017	Departure of participants

12. Qualifications of Candidates

The participants are expected to possess the following qualifications:

Present Position	Policymakers in charge of SME development and innovation, executives of SMEs, academics, and association representatives promoting SME development.
Experience	At least five years of experience in the position described above.
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 active contributions during the study mission. 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 study mission requiring participants to complete a number of individual and group activities, be involved in discussions, and attend site visits. It is therefore recommended that member countries not nominate candidates likely to suffer from physical and mental stress.
Age	Candidates who fit the above profile are typically between 30 and 50 years of age.
APO Certificate	Participants are required to attend the entire program to receive the APO certificate of attendance.

13. Financial Arrangements

To be borne by participants or participating countries

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

- a. Round-trip international airfare between the member country and Seoul.
- b. Participating country expenses of USD50.00 per participant, payable to the APO in convertible currency.

For all participants

- a. Participants' insurance premiums: All participants should be fully insured against accident and illness (including hospitalization and death) for a principal sum equivalent to USD10,000.00 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.
- b. All expenses related to visa fees and airport taxes.
- c. Any expenses incurred by participants for stopovers on the way to and from the project venue as well as for extra stay at the 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.
- d. Any cancellation charges for airfare and hotel accommodations arising from withdrawals after letters of acceptance have been issued by the APO.

To be borne by the host country

- a. Per diem allowances and hotel accommodation for up to 18 overseas participants for up to six days at the rate to be specified later.
- b. Transportation costs for hotel and airport transfers and site visit venues.
- c. All local implementation costs.

To be borne by the APO

- a. All assignment costs of overseas resource persons.
- b. Round-trip economy-class international airfare by the most direct route between the international airport nearest to the participants' place of work and Seoul for participants from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Lao PDR, Mongolia, and Nepal and for participants from SMEs and nonprofit-making organizations from other APO 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.
- c. The APO may select more than 18 overseas participants in anticipation of last-minute withdrawals or no-shows. If more than 18 overseas participants attend, per diem allowances and hotel accommodation costs will be borne by the APO for up to two additional overseas participants at the rate to be prescribed for up to six days.

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 participant should be instructed 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 study mission.
- l. NPOs should inform participants that they must attend the entire duration of the project to qualify for the certificate of attendance.
- m. NPOs should assist the APO and/or host country in collecting amounts corresponding to cancellation charges arising from participant withdrawal, as provided for under item 13.

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 short country paper on the policies of innovation promotion for SMEs in their home countries. The paper should be submitted to the APO Secretariat prior to departure for the project venue. The guidelines for the preparation of country papers will be provided later.

17. Postproject Actions

All participants are required to prepare action plans during the study mission and share the plans with their NPOs. The APO may request participants to submit progress reports six months after completion of the study mission.

18. Evaluation of Participants

If the conduct/attendance/performance of a participant is not satisfactory, it will be reported to the APO 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 (www.apo-tokyo.org).



Santhi Kanoktanaporn
Secretary-General

