



PROJECT NOTIFICATION

26 February 2018

- 1. Project Code** 18-IN-43-GE-OSM-B
- 2. Title** Multicounty Observational Study Mission on Innovation and Competitiveness in SMEs
- 3. Timing and Duration** 10–14 September 2018 (five days)
- 4. Venue** Taipei, Republic of China
- 5. Implementing Organization** China Productivity Center (CPC)
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New Taipei City 221, Republic of China
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e-Mail: 2844@cpc.org.tw
- 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

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** 10 July 2018
- 9. Objectives**
 - a. To learn how to develop national strategy plans for an innovative, creative culture in SMEs for sustaining business performance and competitiveness in the era of Industry 4.0;
 - b. To observe excellent practices and applicable technologies that encourage innovation in SMEs; and
 - c. To share best practices and innovation initiatives of successful SMEs.

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 Internet penetration that require them to be more responsive, reliable, and versatile. SMEs have been looking for new ways to enhance their productivity in addition to the conventional methods for continuous improvement, and innovation has been identified as one way to help them upgrade and stay competitive.

Innovation translates an idea or invention into a product or service for which people will pay, or something that results from this process. For SMEs, it includes creating or reengineering new products and services, implementing new processes, developing new market opportunities, and incorporating new management systems. Devising innovation-enabling mechanisms and leveraging resources for innovation are thus important for SMEs to spur their innovative capacity and create new opportunities and niches.

The era of Industry 4.0, increasing technological complexity required for new products, shorter product life cycles, and unceasing competition have forced SMEs to move beyond the change philosophy of continuous improvement to enhance their competitiveness. SMEs often confront barriers to innovation, e.g., resource constraints, which hinder their capacity to invent and commercialize new products, services, or processes. Realizing the importance of innovation to the success of SMEs, the APO has organized many e-learning courses and face-to-face projects over the past decade to help them innovate their products, strategies, services, processes, and policies.

This observational study mission will help SMEs to learn about and share the latest trends in and information on innovation to achieve product success, capture market share, develop innovative, creative cultures, and ensure long-term sustainability through enhanced competitiveness in local and global markets.

11. Scope and Methodology

Scope

Methods for SMEs to increase levels of innovation and competitiveness by developing more creative cultures.

Methodology

Interactive lectures, site visits, country paper presentations, group discussion, and preparation of action plans.

The tentative program of the project is given below:

Date/Time	Activity
Sun., 9 Sept. 2018	Arrival of participants in Taipei
Mon., 10 Sept.	Opening session; program overview; and resource speaker presentations on the SMEs Policy & ROC Economy, Industry 4.0 and SME's innovation and Competitiveness, and Key attributes and Practices of Innovation & Competitiveness.
Tues., 11 Sept.	Country paper presentations; and resource speaker presentations on Innovative and competitive SMEs, ROC's success story of Innovation and Competitiveness in SME.

Wed., 12 Sept.	Site visits (Manufacturing and service industry)
Thurs., 13 Sept.	Group discussion; and resource speaker presentations on best practices of Innovation in SMEs, and how to make an innovative and competitive culture in SMEs.
Fri., 14 Sept.	Action plan preparation; wrap-up and closing session
Sat., 15 Sept.	Departure of participants

12. Qualifications of Candidates

The participants are expected to possess the following qualifications:

Present Position	Government officials in charge of SME development policies, representatives of industrial associations, and NPO consultants involved in supporting and training SMEs.
Experience	At least five years of experience in the position described above.
Education	University degree or equivalent qualification from a recognized 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 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.

13. Financial Arrangements

a. Airfare

The APO will bear the cost of round-trip economy-class international airfare between the international airport nearest to the participants' place of work and Taipei, ROC, from organizations in any of these categories:

- a. SMEs;
- b. Nonprofit organizations; and
- c. Any organization from the APO list of LDCs.*

**As of 7 July 2006, the APO list of LDCs comprised Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Lao PDR, Mongolia, and Nepal.*

The APO will only reimburse discount air tickets for the most direct route. Participants should note that the arrangements for the purchase of air tickets should follow the "Guide on Purchases of Air Tickets for APO Participants (updated on 28 November 2017)," which

will be sent to the selected participants and is also available on the APO website and from APO Liaison Officers in member countries.

b. Participating Country Expenses (PCEs)

PCEs payable to the APO do not apply to organizations in any of these categories:

- a. SMEs;
- b. Nonprofit organizations; and
- c. Any organization from the APO list of LDCs.*

**As of 7 July 2006, the APO list of LDCs comprised Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Lao PDR, Mongolia, and Nepal.*

c. Insurance Coverage

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 organization will be responsible for any eventuality arising from accident, illness, acts of war, force majeure, or any unexpected events beyond human control such as those related to natural disasters.

d. Cost Sharing

Subject to the conditions stated in the Financial Arrangements section, the following table shows the cost-sharing arrangements between the APO, host country, and participants or participating countries.

Cost item	Cost to be borne by		
	Participants or participating countries	Host country	APO
Round-trip economy-class international airfare (refer to paragraph 13a for conditions)	Conditions apply	No	Conditions apply
Participating Country Expenses (PCEs) (refer to paragraph 13b)	USD50 per participant	No	No
Hotel accommodation in Taipei	No	Yes (6 days)	No
Per diem allowance in Taipei	No	Yes (6 days)	No
Transportation costs to and from hotel and airport in Taipei	No	Yes	No
Insurance coverage in the ROC (refer to paragraph 13c)	Yes	No	No
Any expenses related to visa fees and airport taxes	Yes	No	No
All expenses incurred by participants for any reason including but not limited to:	Yes	No	No

Cost item	Cost to be borne by		
	Participants or participating countries	Host country	APO
a. Stopovers b. Extension of stay c. Early arrival or late departure d. Flight cancellation			
Any cancellation charges for expenses such as airfare and accommodations incurred by the APO or host country after issuance of Letters of Acceptance	Yes	No	No
Assignment costs of international resource persons	NA	No	Yes
Assignment costs of local resource persons	NA	Yes	No
All local implementation costs including but not limited to: a. Meeting rooms b. Documentation c. Preparatory costs	NA	Yes	No

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 selection committee 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: tgoto@apo-tokyo.org, 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, 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 project.
- l. NPOs should inform participants that they must attend all five days of the project.
- m. NPOs should assist the APO and/or host country in collecting amounts corresponding to cancellation charges arising from withdrawal or no show of a participant.

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

Participants are required to prepare a short paper prior to departure for the project venue. In preparing the paper, they are expected to follow the “Guidelines for the Preparation of Country Papers” to be provided 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, these 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).

20. Dress Code

Participants are required to wear business attire during the project. Other instructions will be provided in the circular for participants.



Santhi Kanoktanaporn
Secretary-General

