



PROJECT NOTIFICATION

PN Issue Date	22 November 2019
Project Code	20-IN-01-GE-OSM-C
Title	Individual-country Observational Study Missions
Timing and Duration	Up to one week (five working days) per mission
Venue	Member countries
Implementing Organization(s)	NPOs in host member countries
Number of Participants	Minimum six and maximum 12 per mission
Closing Date for Nominations	First phase: 31 March 2020 Second phase: 30 June 2020 The acceptance of a mission depends upon the schedule of the host country, and therefore it is recommended that applications reach the APO Secretariat as early as possible.

1. Objectives

To strengthen member countries' ability to improve productivity by providing opportunities to policymakers/stakeholders to study recent developments and best practices in advanced areas and establish networks by visiting world-leading institutions in other members.

2. Background

Under the Individual-country Observational Study Mission (I-OSM) Program, a member country may send a mission(s) to one or more other member countries to study and observe recent developments and best practices in a particular area of interest relevant to its needs for productivity promotion. This program addresses individual member country needs in the pursuit of productivity enhancement.

To strengthen the I-OSM Program and promote productivity partnerships among member economies, all NPOs are now encouraged to host one or more missions aligned with the APO's strategic thrust areas and allocation of resources. NPOs dispatching missions must play a focal role in following up with mission groups and are requested to submit the details of follow-up actions to the APO.

3. Scope and Methodology

Scope

Smart initiatives in the industry, service, agriculture, and public sectors and on productivity-related issues contributing to the mission of enabling member economies to be more productive and competitive.

Methodology

Orientation sessions, visits to private enterprises and government agencies, interactive discussions, report preparation, and postmission evaluation.

4. Composition of Missions

- a. Each I-OSM should consist of a minimum of six and a maximum of 12 members. They can be drawn from among policymakers, NPO staff, or top management in the industry, service, agriculture, and public sectors or trade associations and should have more or less homogeneous backgrounds and experience in the selected subject area.
- b. To the extent possible, each study mission should comprise members drawn from several organizations so that the benefits may be widely shared within the country.
- c. Mission members should preferably be between 25 and 55 years of age.
- d. A mission leader must be appointed, and the NPO concerned must notify the APO in advance of the name of the mission leader to facilitate project implementation.
- e. Mission members must be physically and mentally fit to attend an intensive program, which entails strenuous travel and several plant/field visits. It is therefore recommended that member countries refrain from nominating candidates suffering from or likely to suffer from physical and mental stress or who have any serious health conditions.

5. Financial Arrangements

To be met by participants or participating countries

- a. Round-trip international travel fare between the member country and I-OSM venue(s).

- b. Per diem allowances for all mission members and accommodations for additional members (if there are more than 10) during the official period of the mission.
- c. For participants from profit-making organizations, except for SMEs, and those from APO member countries other than Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Lao PDR, Mongolia, and Nepal: Participating Country Expenses (PCEs) at USD50.00 per participant from a profit-making organization will be payable to the APO in convertible currency. In the case of self-financed participants who meet all costs, including hotel accommodation and daily subsistence, and those from nonprofit organizations, the payment of PCEs to the APO will not be applicable.
- d. The participants' travel insurance premium against illness or injury, personal risk, and life covering the countries to be visited for the entire duration of the project and travel.
- e. In the case of a cancellation by the requesting NPO after the issuance of Letters of Acceptance (LA) to mission members, the concerned NPO is requested to meet all the costs associated with the cancellation.
- f. Any other expenses not met by the APO and host country(ies).

To be met/provided by the host country(ies)

- a. Logistic support for organizing the mission.

To be met by the APO

- a. Single-room accommodation expenses for a maximum of 10 mission members for up to six days.
- b. Transportation expenses between the airport and the hotel and for site visits in the host country.
- c. Interpretation expenses, if applicable, in the host country. (The APO does not bear the costs incurred by interpreters, i.e., accommodation, transportation, per diem allowance, etc.)

6. Actions by Member Countries

Appointment of focal NPO staff before and after the mission

The dispatching NPO must appoint one of its staff members to act as the focal contact point with the APO and host NPO, who will be responsible for collecting necessary documents and information and making arrangements prior to mission commencement and following up with mission members to receive the final report and impact evaluation report upon mission completion. Focal NPO staff must brief mission members on the APO's rules and policies and expectations of the I-OSM well before submitting applications.

Preliminary application

Member countries that intend to send I-OSMs in 2020 must send requests to the APO in writing **by 31 March 2020** (for missions planned between 1 January to 31 July 2020) or **by 30 June 2020** (for missions planned between 1 August to 31 December 2020). Acceptance depends upon the schedule of the host country, and the timing of the I-OSM may not be as initially requested. Therefore, it is recommended that applications reach the APO Secretariat as early as possible. Please note that some host countries may stop accepting missions early in the year.

Requests should indicate the following on the Preliminary I-OSM Application Form (Attachment 1, preliminary status):

- a. Title of the I-OSM, suggested host country(ies) (due to difficulties in coordinating programs, the number of countries to be visited by one mission cannot exceed two), focal NPO staff for contact, and timing and duration; and
- b. Objective(s) of the I-OSM, background, expected output and outcomes, follow-up activities after completion of the mission, details of the mission, number of mission members and their profiles, and proposed itinerary, daily schedule, and name of the city(ies) with as many specific details as possible.

The requesting country must use the application form attached to this PN. Other forms of application (e.g., versions of I-OSM applications from previous years) will not be accepted.

Upon receipt of requests, the APO will liaise with the proposed host country(ies) on the possibility of organizing the I-OSM, adhering as closely as possible to the original request. If a country has several requests for I-OSMs, their priority should be specified. The Secretariat will then inform the applying country of the outcome of the request. The APO will communicate the necessary information through the focal NPO staff, and therefore the requesting NPO has full responsibility for coordinating with the mission group throughout all phases of organizing an I-OSM. Similarly, all formal communication from the requesting country should be through the requesting NPO, not from individual mission members.

It must be emphasized that the acceptance of a request is subject to the convenience of the proposed host country(ies) and the status of completion of follow-up actions of I-OSMs in previous years from the requesting country. Please also note that previous last-minute withdrawals/cancellations of proposed mission members and late submission of necessary documents from a requesting country may negatively affect the acceptance of an application.

Final application

After being notified by the APO of the possibility of acceptance by the proposed host country(ies), the requesting NPO should then proceed to make a formal application to the APO by submitting the Final I-OSM Application Form. The following documents and details must be sent with the application:

- a. Completed I-OSM Final Application Form (Attachment 1, final status). Provision of information on a piecemeal basis will not be accepted as this causes a great deal of inconvenience to the APO and host country(ies).
- b. Completed APO biodata forms (attached) for I-OSM members. Handwritten biodata forms will not be accepted.
- c. Name of the mission leader, names of APO-financed/self-financed mission members, and names of mission members who must pay PCEs (if any).
- d. Medical certificates indicating the physical and mental fitness of each member to attend the I-OSM for the entire period as stated in section 4e above.

To provide adequate lead time for preparation, **the documents above must reach the APO at least three months prior to the implementation of the I-OSM.** Without receiving all the documents above, LA will not be issued by the APO Secretariat.

The NPO of the host country(ies) is expected to meet the expenses as indicated in section 5 "To be met by the APO" initially, which will be reimbursed later by the APO upon submission of invoices issued by third parties along with supporting documents written in English. This arrangement has been made for smoother management of overseas payments by the APO, and NPOs are requested to cooperate in this. Invoices to the APO should be issued in the local currency, and the APO will reimburse the USD equivalent amount based on the APO exchange rate in the month of payment.

If a selected I-OSM cannot take place as scheduled, the NPOs concerned are requested to inform the APO and NPO of the host country(ies) promptly of the reason for requesting postponement/cancellation. **Member countries are reminded that last-minute postponement/cancellation results in unnecessary expense and waste of resources by the host countries and therefore must be avoided.**

7. Acceptance of the Mission

- a. LA for the group will be issued by the APO to the sending country only upon receipt of the full details of all mission members.
- b. If mission members require visas to enter the host country(ies), **the visas must be obtained at least two weeks before the I-OSM commencement date.** The APO and host country(ies) must be notified immediately when all mission members have received confirmation of visa approvals.
- c. A request for a change in mission members after LA are issued is to be avoided. Under no circumstances will such a request be accepted if it fails to reach the Secretariat at least six weeks prior to the commencement date of the I-OSM.
- d. The sending country must obtain the prior consent of the APO and the host country(ies) if it wants to change mission members from those previously specified, as recipient organizations may have finalized the physical arrangements and may be unable to accommodate such changes.

8. Program and Itinerary

- a. Upon receipt of the mission details, the host country(ies) will prepare the program and forward the program itinerary to reach the APO at least six weeks before the I-OSM commencement date. Plants/offices/facilities selected for visits should, to the extent possible, be in a similar field of business as represented by mission members.
- b. The APO will send the program details including the itinerary prepared by the host country(ies) six weeks before the commencement date of the I-OSM to the sending country for review. The sending country may suggest changes in the program but these must be made known to the APO no later than four weeks prior to the start of the I-OSM, or otherwise the program and itinerary will be regarded as finalized. Requests to revise the finalized program after the mission's arrival in the host country(ies) will not be accepted. The above timetable is contingent upon the receipt of documents specified in section 6 "Final application" above.
- c. The timing of the project and program is to be strictly adhered to by all parties concerned. The sending country must under no circumstances postpone or cancel the I-OSM without prior agreement in writing from the APO. In the past, postponement or cancellation in the advanced stage of preparations caused a great deal of embarrassment on the part of the host countries and is to be avoided at all costs in the future. In case of a cancellation by the requesting NPO after the issuance of LA to mission members, the concerned NPO is requested to meet all the costs associated with the cancellation. In such cases, the LA should be returned to the APO Secretariat. Please also note that last-minute withdrawal/cancellation of an I-OSM by the requesting country may negatively affect the acceptance of its future applications.
- d. Mission members are instructed to arrive at the venue one day before the start of the official project. Also, the members are expected to return home no later than the day after completion of the official project since they are visiting the host country(ies) for the sole purpose of attending the APO I-OSM. Neither the host country(ies) nor the APO will be responsible for any eventuality arising from early arrival and/or late departure.

9. Predeparture Preparations

a. Orientation by NPO/focal NPO staff

It is strongly recommended that the NPO of the sending member country organize a predeparture meeting to brief mission members on the role and activities of the APO (e.g., by screening the APO video), scope of the project, and the expected outcomes of the I-OSM. This will equip mission members with knowledge of APO and NPO activities as well as adequately prepare them for a more productive mission.

b. Insurance coverage

All mission members must be fully covered by travel insurance against accident, illness, and hospitalization for a principal sum of at least USD10,000.00 for the entire duration of the I-OSM. Such insurance coverage must be valid in the host country(ies). If for some reason any mission member is unable to secure the insurance coverage in advance, he/she is required to obtain it in the host country(ies) at his/her own expense at the start of the I-OSM. Neither the APO nor the implementing organization(s) in the host countries 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.

c. Hotel reservations

The implementing organization(s) in the host country(ies) will make appropriate hotel reservations in close consultation with the APO Secretariat. All mission members will be accommodated in the same hotel to facilitate local travel arrangements. Mission members may, however, suggest to the APO well in advance the type of hotel and details of the rooms desired. If mission members prefer to make their own arrangements, they may do so but they must be accommodated at the same hotel and must obtain agreement from the APO in advance.

10. Implementation

a. Arrival at the venue(s)

Members of I-OSMs should make group flight reservations as far as practicable and inform both the APO and implementing organization(s) of their flight numbers and arrival times and dates at least two months in advance. Any members who are unable to accompany the group during the travel must make their own arrangements to join the group.

b. Group movement

Mission members are required to move as a group during the I-OSM, and the implementing organization(s) will not be responsible for meeting personal requests. No mission members can withdraw from the I-OSM during its implementation without the written approval of the APO.

11. Evaluation Form, Final Report, and Impact Evaluation Report

Evaluation form

The evaluation form should be completed by the mission group during the closing session or immediately after the completion of the I-OSM and should be submitted to the APO (Attachment 3).

Final report

Within one month after the completion of the I-OSM, mission members are required to prepare a final report on the project following the APO guidelines (Attachment 4), particularly on the extent to which the objectives of the I-OSM were met. The report should be submitted to the APO through the NPO of the sending country. The submission of this report will be taken into consideration when the APO makes decisions on future individual-country programs for the NPO concerned.

Impact evaluation report

To inform the APO of the impact of the program, the NPOs concerned are requested to submit an impact evaluation report six months after the implementation of the I-OSM using the format to be provided by the Secretariat (Attachment 5).

12. Other Conditions

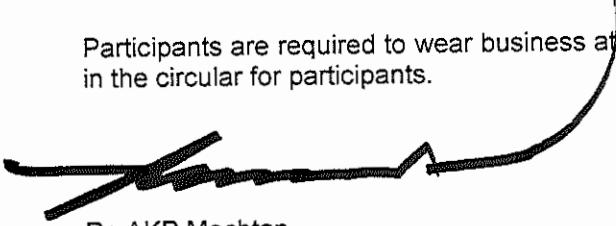
Other conditions for participation are given in the "APO Guide for Participants," which is available on the APO website and from APO Liaison Officers or NPOs of sending countries.

13. Host Countries

Member countries may each host one or more I-OSMs during 2020. NPOs are encouraged to express their intentions to host missions as soon as possible for effective planning. When such offers to host I-OSMs are received by the APO Secretariat, all other member countries will be informed.

14. Dress Code

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



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Secretary-General