

Asian Productivity Organization

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PROJECT NOTIFICATION

30 March 2012

1. **Project Code:** 11-RP-18-GE-STM-B
2. **Title:** Study Meeting on Innovation in the Service Sector—Specific Subsector (Retail and Food Services)
3. **Duration & Timing:** Three days, 24–26 July 2012
4. **Venue:** Singapore
5. **Implementing Organization:** SPRING Singapore
1 Fusionopolis Walk, #01-02 South Tower, Solaris
Singapore 138628
Republic of Singapore
Phone: 65-6278-6666
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6. **Number of Overseas Participants:** Up to 18 participants from the Republic of China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, and Thailand
7. **Number of Local Participants:** Up to six qualified local participants
8. **Closing Date for Nominations:** 31 May 2012
9. **Objectives:**
 - 1) To learn innovative practices undertaken in the specified service sector and evolve strategies to promote policies and practices for enhancing innovation to promote good business performance in the service sector of APO member countries; and
 - 2) To identify a set of comparable indicators for cross-country assessment of productivity performance of SMEs in retail and food services in APO member economies.
10. **Background:**

The service sector is increasingly playing a bigger role in the economies of both developed and developing countries in terms of contributions to value added and employment. However, it is often pointed out that the service sector tends to have low productivity and faces the dilemma of balancing the trade-off between providing excellent services and improving

efficiency and productivity. To tackle this issue, it is crucial that the sector progressively adopt advanced technologies and innovations to achieve higher productivity.

To monitor the progress of business performance in the service sector, especially among SMEs, it is important to develop relevant benchmarking tools. Benchmarking is a continuous process of self-assessment and initiating actions to close gaps, surpass the best performers, and retain a competitive edge. To pursue continuous improvement, it is essential that SMEs not only have a relevant basis for comparison but also learn from the achievements and results obtained from the benchmarking exercise, as well as sharing useful reference data and information to compare their performance.

11. Scope and Methodology:

Scope

- a) Emerging trends and developments in the retail and food service sectors
- b) Concepts and approaches to innovation in the retail and food service sectors
- c) Benchmarking key productivity indicators for monitoring productivity performance for the retail and food service subsector
- d) Approaches and methodologies for benchmarking and assessment of productivity performance

Methodology

Preassignment, lectures, presentations, and discussion.

12. Qualifications of Participants:

- (a) Age: Preferably between 30 and 45 years.
- (b) Education: University degree or above in economics, econometrics, or business management.
- (c) Present Position:
 - 1) Managers or officers from SME agencies and business associations directly involved in monitoring the performance of SMEs (retail and food services);
 - 2) Managers of private enterprises (retail and food services) involved in benchmarking activities in their organizations; or
 - 3) NPO managers/consultants engaged in benchmarking activities and familiar with productivity statistics and measurement for the retail and food service sectors.
- (d) Experience: At least five to 10 years of relevant work experience in the subject areas. Those with knowledge of and direct experience in retail and food service enterprises are preferred.
- (e) Language Proficiency: Proficiency in written and spoken English is essential.
- (f) Health: Physically and mentally fit to attend an intensive three-day study meeting entailing strenuous travel and site visit(s), as well as undertake subsequent research work (selected countries only).
- (g) Other: The ability to handle quantitative statistics and business data is an asset.

13. Financial Arrangements:

- a) To be borne by the APO
 - i) All assignment costs of overseas resource persons.
 - ii) Round-trip economy-class international airfare for all overseas participants between the nearest international airport from the place of work and Singapore by the most direct route. All participants are encouraged to purchase discounted economy-class tickets (IATA PEX, ZONE PEX, or other applicable discount schemes). It should be noted that no additional per diem allowances will be provided due to early arrival, delayed departure, rerouting of tickets, or any other reason whatsoever.

- b) To be borne by the host country (Singapore)
 - i) Expenses for hotel accommodations for 18 overseas participants for four days;
 - ii) Per diem allowances for 18 overseas participants at the rate to be prescribed later for up to four days; and
 - iii) All other local implementation costs.

- c) To be borne by the participants or participating countries
 - i) All participants should be fully insured against accident and illness (including hospitalization and death) for the principal sum of US\$10,000 for the entire duration of the project and travel and must submit to the APO before participation a copy of the comprehensive travel insurance certificate valid in Singapore. The cost of such insurance will be borne by the participant or participating 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. *Neither the APO nor the implementing organization will be responsible for any eventuality arising from accident or illness.*
 - ii) Any expenses incurred by participants for stopovers on the way to and from the project venue or for extra stay at the project venue before and/or after the official project period due to early arrival, late departure, or any other reason whatsoever.
 - iii) Any expenses related to visa fees and airport taxes.

14. Actions by Member Countries:

- a) Nomination of candidates
 - i) Member countries are requested to nominate candidates in accordance with item 12 above. The key criterion for selection is whether their qualifications and work experience match the nature of the project. Nonselection of candidates is not a reflection on their competence.
 - ii) Member countries are also requested to inform the Secretariat as soon as possible if they do not wish to participate in the meeting, so that vacancies thus created can be allocated to other member countries.
 - iii) Nominations, accompanied by the candidate's biodata on the APO standard form in duplicate along with a passport-sized photograph and the Medical and Insurance Declaration/Certification Form, should reach the Secretariat **no later than 31 May 2012**. The biodata form is available on the APO

website. Downloading information is also available from www.apo-tokyo.org. If a digital photograph is not submitted electronically, a hard-copy photograph should be sent to the APO Secretariat by postal mail, with the candidate's name and project code clearly marked on the back. NPOs are encouraged to submit their nominations in electronic form.

- iv) 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 the health conditions or illnesses enumerated on the reverse side of the medical form. However, for all others, medical certification by a recognized physician on the reverse side of the medical form is required.
- v) Accepted participants should be advised not to bring family members or engage in any private business activity during the entire duration of the project. Further, they should be requested to inform the APO promptly of their inability to participate and the reason for last-minute withdrawal.

b) Preassignment

Participants officially accepted by the APO are required to work on preassignments and submit the work by the designated deadline. The preassignments will consist of two parts: 1) presentation of examples of innovative practices in participants' organizations; and 2) checking the availability of data and information on SME benchmarking indexes. Guidelines for the preassignments will be provided to the selected participants.



Ryuichiro Yamazaki
Secretary-General