



PROJECT NOTIFICATION

Ref. No.: 22-CL-17-GE-WSP-A-PN2200022-001

Date of Issue	03 March 2022
Project Code	22-CL-17-GE-WSP-A
Title	Workshop on Foresight for SMEs
Timing and Duration	20–22 April 2022 (three days)
Hosting Country(ies)	Vietnam
Modality	Digital Multicountry
Implementing Organization(s)	Directorate for Standards, Metrology and Quality and APO Secretariat
Participating Country(ies)	All Member Countries
Overseas Participants	38
Local Participants	12
Qualifications of Participants	Senior representatives of industrial associations, policymakers, managers, consultants, and trainers working on productivity enhancement, strategy formulation, business process innovation, and enterprise development planning
Nomination of Participants	All nominations must be submitted through National Productivity Organizations of member countries
Closing Date for Nominations	4 April 2022

1. Objectives

- a. Familiarize participants with the concepts and fundamentals of strategic foresight.
- b. Explain the use of foresight tools and methodology to improve the productivity of SMEs.
- c. Discuss approaches to address barriers and challenges faced by SMEs by embedding foresight at the core of business strategy.

2. Background

In the current business environment, which is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA), enterprises need to strategize not only to remain competitive and profitable but be resilient to overcome potential predictable and unpredictable threats. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is one such unanticipated occurrence, which besides having serious implications for public health has significantly impacted businesses in almost all sectors. As reported in the *APO Productivity Databook 2020*, the negative impact of the pandemic on economies was greater than that of the global financial crisis, challenging businesses, creating unemployment, hurting the financial sector, and jeopardizing asset markets. With the pandemic continuing, there is a need to shift the focus to business continuity, forecasting emerging trends, and being future ready.

To deal with VUCA conditions, enterprises need tools and methodologies to respond to future possibilities. The traditional way is to linearly extrapolate current trends without considering all factors, which could lead to incorrect decisions. Considering volatility and uncertainties, a paradigm shift is required to strengthen enterprises' response, from forecasting/planning to looking at a range of scenarios under potential uncertainties.

Foresight techniques are designed to address these issues, enabling effective policymaking and strategy formulation within organizations to mitigate potential adverse effects. Those techniques include horizon scanning, problem framing, scenario planning, visualizing barriers, and other future-thinking techniques.

The APO has recognized foresight as a tool to address emerging trends, disruptive global changes, and an uncertain future. Various capacity-building initiatives on strategic foresight for public-sector organizations, including a self-learning e-course, training of trainers, workshops, and publication of a trainers' manual, have been undertaken. This workshop aims to expand the concept of strategic foresight to SMEs and enhance the capability of participants in guiding businesses to become agile and identify new challenges and opportunities generated by events like the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Scope, Methodology, and Certificate of Attendance

The duration of each day's sessions will be around three hours comprising presentations by experts, group discussions, and other relevant learning methods. The indicative topics of the presentations are:

Day 1:

- Sustaining productivity growth in SMEs through strategic foresight
- Concepts and fundamentals of strategic foresight

Day 2:

- Foresight methods and approaches
- Implementation framework for foresight in SMEs

Day 3:

- Embedding foresight in business strategy
- Case studies and evidence to showcase best practices
- Group work on consultancy scenarios to solve strategic issues faced by SMEs

The detailed program and list of speakers will be provided two weeks prior to the sessions with announcement of the names of the selected participants.

The participants are required to attend all sessions. This full participation is a prerequisite for receiving the APO certificate of attendance.

4. Financial Arrangements

- a. The APO will meet the assignment costs of overseas resource persons and honorarium for up to two local resource persons.
- b. The host country will meet the costs for a virtual site visit(s), either broadcast live or recorded as applicable.

5. Implementation Procedures

Please refer to the implementation procedures for the APO digital multicountry projects circulated with this document.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AKP Mochtan', with a long, sweeping flourish extending upwards and to the right.

Dr. AKP Mochtan
Secretary-General