



PROJECT NOTIFICATION

Ref. No.: 22-CL-18-GE-DLN-A-PN2200038-003

Date of Issue	26 April 2022
Project Code	22-CL-18-GE-DLN-A
Title	APO e-Course on Digital Transformation for SMEs
Launch Date	1 July 2022
Hosting Country(ies)	APO Secretariat
Modality	Digital Learning
Implementing Organization(s)	APO Secretariat
Participating Country(ies)	Open
Overseas Participants	Not Applicable
Local Participants	Not Applicable
Qualifications of Participants	Open
Nomination of Participants	Not Applicable
Closing Date for Nominations	Not applicable

1. Objectives

- a. Understand the “why, what, and how” of digital transformation by outlining its purpose, business benefits, and cost-effective implementation approaches enabling large-scale adoption by SMEs.
- b. Identify and apply key strategies, tools, frameworks, and factors that support sustainable, scalable, and economically viable digitalization of SMEs.
- c. Introduce a human-centric view of digital transformation that includes cultural considerations within organizations which are often missed but needed for driving successful change management initiatives.
- d. Facilitate the initiation and sustainability of digitization in SMEs to enhance productivity.

2. Background

Digital transformation may be viewed as continuous improvement of business capabilities. There are many opportunities for SMEs to derive economic benefit from digital transformation. The Internet of Things, big data analytics, artificial intelligence, blockchains, 3D printing, etc. enable SMEs to create better products and services, innovate business models, reduce time to market, and build more integrated, flexible, and responsive supply chains. Digitalization lowers transaction costs, provides easier access to information, and creates a level playing field where SMEs have more opportunities to compete against larger firms with more resources. Digitalization also provides SMEs greater access to global markets, and newer cloud-based business models allow them to reach customers from anywhere, anytime. Financing and access to global talent through digitalization are two additional opportunities for SMEs.

SMEs account for about 97% of developing Asian economies and 69% of national labor forces. However, according to the ADB report *Asia Small and Medium-sized Enterprise Monitor (2020)* the GDP contribution of SMEs is only 41%. They could therefore contribute more socioeconomic value through digitalization. However, SMEs encounter challenges due to a lack of awareness, capital, and digital skills. SMEs need digitalization to both survive and thrive. History suggests that crises such as the current pandemic bring out the best from startups and SMEs. SMEs in the grocery, healthcare, beverage, and IT support sectors have had success through digitalization during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This e-course aims to equip SMEs with the necessary digital toolkit comprising skillsets, mindsets, and strategy toolsets along with relevant frameworks and best practices necessary to succeed in the digital transformation journey in the new normal. The course will introduce key digital transformation technologies and discuss case studies in the SME sector which illustrate the power of digitalization. It will also explain how digital technologies are relevant, useful, scalable, and economically viable. The course will take a human-centric view, allowing easy adoption of digital technologies in the context of SME operations.

3. Modality of Implementation

- a. The course is offered through the APO e-learning platform: <https://www.apo-elearning.org>
- b. Participants should register on this portal and create their own accounts.
- c. Certificates of completion will be provided for those who satisfactorily complete all the modules of the course, including quizzes and a final examination.

4. Scope and Methodology

The course will comprise five modules:

Introduction

Module 1:
Introduction to digital transformation

Module 2:
Digital transformation strategies, policies, and frameworks

Module 3:
Digital transformation technology toolkit

Module 4:
Human-centric digitalization

Module 5:
SME digital transformation case studies and best practices

Self-assessment quizzes and a final examination

Methodology

Module study, additional study material for participants, quizzes for self-assessment, and a final examination.

5. Requirements

- a. Have necessary devices and software comprising a computer/smartphone, updated browser, microphone, and speaker or headphones.
- b. Access to internet connections.
- c. Completion of all the modules, quizzes, and final examination.
- d. The APO e-certificate will be given to participants who score a minimum of 70% on the final examination.

6. Financial Arrangements

The APO will meet the assignment costs for resource persons to develop the course modules including quizzes and a final examination.

7. Actions by APO Members

- a. Promote the course nationwide.
- b. Provide the link to the APO e-learning platform on NPOs' websites and social network services.

8. Actions by APO Secretariat

- a. Identify and assign the resource person(s) to develop the course.
- b. Announce course commencement on the APO website and social network services.



Dr. AKP Mochtan
Secretary-General