



## PROJECT NOTIFICATION

Ref. No.: 22-CL-02-GE-OSM-A-PN2200058-001

<b>Date of Issue</b>	25 July 2022
<b>Project Code</b>	22-CL-02-GE-OSM-A
<b>Title</b>	Multicountry Observational Study Mission on Enhancing Service SMEs' Competitiveness through Digitalization
<b>Timing and Duration</b>	7–8 September 2022 (two days)
<b>Hosting Country(ies)</b>	Malaysia
<b>Modality</b>	Digital Multicountry
<b>Implementing Organization(s)</b>	Malaysia Productivity Corporation and APO Secretariat
<b>Participating Country(ies)</b>	All Member Countries
<b>Overseas Participants</b>	57
<b>Local Participants</b>	12
<b>Qualifications of Participants</b>	Government officials in charge of service-sector productivity policy, consultants, or trainers from NPOs and firms providing consultancy and training for the service sector, and representatives of industrial associations or enterprises in the service sector
<b>Nomination of Participants</b>	All nominations must be submitted through National Productivity Organizations of member countries
<b>Closing Date for Nominations</b>	26 August 2022

## **1. Objectives**

- a. Promote digitalization for SMEs in the service sector.
- b. Examine digitalization strategies to enhance service-sector SME competitiveness.
- c. Share best practices of digital tools and frameworks for service-sector SMEs.

## **2. Background**

Digitalization of SMEs is a critical step in building inclusive, productive economies and societies. While there has been an upward trend in the adoption of digital technologies by SMEs, the gaps between larger and smaller firms is wide (OECD, 2021). Promoting the digitalization of SMEs is therefore essential to improve productivity, innovation, and inclusion.

Digital tools bring many significant benefits for firms, including those in the service sector. The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the importance of SME digitalization since these technologies are essential for business continuity. Under the pandemic, restaurant and tourism providers in the Asia-Pacific have been pushed to adopt digital platforms and tools to tackle disruption. They reduce transaction costs, provide better access to information, and facilitate faster communications between staff, vendors, and other stakeholders. Digital tools also help SMEs integrate more easily into global markets by reducing transport costs and improving access to finance, training, and recruitment using online channels. Overall, digitalization is a key driver of productivity growth for SMEs.

This study mission will examine digitization strategies and best practices to enhance service-sector SME competitiveness by observing business process digitalization, digitalization technologies, and digital tools, frameworks, and policies for service-sector SMEs.

## **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:

- Key trends in the digital transformation of SMEs in the service sector
- Measuring SME digital readiness
- Digital tools and practices for service-sector SMEs

Day 2:

- The service sector and the platform economy
- Digital security and privacy for SMEs
- Key policies to support SME digitalization in the service sector

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**

The APO will meet the assignment costs for overseas resource persons, honorarium for up to two local resource persons, and video production costs for a virtual site visit(s) of up to USD2,000.00, either broadcast live or recorded as applicable.

## 5. Implementation Procedures

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

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

Dr. AKP Mochtan  
Secretary-General