



APO *news*

Dawn of a new DON Program

The Development of NPOs (DON) Program is a key thrust area of the APO. As part of the Secretariat restructuring plan, from January the DON Program has two components, DON Strategy and DON Implementation. DON Strategy, the responsibility of the Secretariat Research and Planning Department, involves identifying new topics and challenges and planning accordingly to meet the needs of member countries. DON Implementation is a downstream activity and is handled by the Industry Department.

A detailed need-assessment survey of NPOs is presently underway as part of DON Strategy. The results will be used in a future strategic capacity-building program for NPOs. As part of the survey, two coordination meetings were convened in Cambodia, 26–27 April, and in Fiji, 8–9 August. Fifteen member countries are at present participating in this survey. For expediency, they have been grouped into two clusters and are guided by two chief experts each to facilitate communications and guidance. The coordination meetings were held to finalize the common methodology for collecting baseline data on NPOs and member countries. Ideas and suggestions both from national experts and chief experts as well as the Secretariat were advanced, and a consensus was reached on a common approach and methodology for the survey, as well as on the format for the report.



Developing research methodology at Fiji coordination meeting

The survey is an upstream project, and the findings will be used to formulate an APO DON Strategy and a concrete roadmap for the long-term development of NPOs. “The APO through the DON Strategy initiative is facilitating NPOs in assessing their total preparedness to meet the challenges of the rapidly changing socioeconomic and competitive market environment. The survey is somewhat similar to a strategic training need survey in industry,” Chief Expert S.A. Khader, India, commented. According to Chief Expert Mah Lok Abdullah, Malaysia, “The present DON Program with its two-tiered approach is a very principled and focused initiative of the APO. I believe that this will assist NPOs and its member countries in identifying clearly and specifically the relevant problems, enhancing existing competencies, and acquiring new competencies in member countries.”

“All eight national experts of cluster A are on the verge of making their final draft reports,” stated Khader. The final draft will highlight the specific programs that are needed for each NPO and country. Despite having started their work three months after cluster A, cluster B experts have been working hard, collecting and analyzing data. Chief Expert Choo Tuck Low from Singapore reported, “Based on feedback from the national experts of cluster B, we are optimistic that the individual NPO’s survey findings will be ready in time for the second coordination meeting.”

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“If I had my life to live over, I would perhaps have more actual troubles but I’d have fewer imaginary ones.”

Don Herold

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The second coordination meetings for finalizing reports will be held 12–15 November in Bangladesh for cluster A countries, and 17–20 December in India for cluster B. Soon after the meeting in India, the four chief experts and the Secretariat will convene to compare and compile the outcomes of the survey for the 15 member countries and use it to formulate future DON Implementation activities. Mah Lok Abdullah stressed the importance of a

commitment to sustaining the project, saying that, “This survey should not be an end, but a beginning of the capacity-building activities. NPOs’ and stakeholders’ commitment is very important in ensuring that the planned programs of the APO are effective and impactful.” The results of the need-assessment survey will be presented at the Forum on Development of NPOs scheduled to be held in Iran early next year. 🌐