



A·P·O news

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANIZATION

UNDP and APO to increase ICT capability in SMEs

In this age of intensifying globalization and rapid trade deregulation, SMEs are in a particularly vulnerable situation, primarily because of their lack of resources, know-how, and manpower. They constitute an important sector in most Asia-Pacific countries as the biggest employers and an essential seed for economic progress. For this reason, enhancing SMEs' competitiveness and viability is a matter of urgency for most governments in the region.

As in other economic sectors, information and communication technology (ICT) is seen as an indispensable tool for SMEs as it will enable them to increase productivity, improve product quality, gain knowledge and information, engage in export business, and extend their business outreach. The efficient and effective utilization of ICT can result in breakthrough improvements in all corporate activities of SMEs.




Brainstorming on ICT in SMEs

Recognizing the importance of ICT to SMEs, the APO has been organizing a number of projects specifically designed to enhance their capabilities in this area. The latest initiative was collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to organize two regional workshops on SMEs and ICT, to be followed by small national capacity-building projects in the nine selected participating countries: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. The first workshop on "ICT as Productivity Tools for SMEs" was held in Malaysia, 22–26 November 2004. The second workshop on "Improved Usage of Internet Technology for SMEs" is scheduled for 20–24 December 2004, in Thailand.

By mutual agreement, the APO will coordinate the organizing of the workshops with the NPOs of the participating countries, while the UNDP will be responsible for the international portion of the project, covering such activities as participation of the national participants in the workshops and fielding of technical experts. The host countries will bear the local implementation costs.

Seventeen participants from the nine targeted countries attended the workshop in Malaysia. They heard presentations by experts on ICT, competitive advantage, and globalization; knowledge-based entrepreneurship for competitiveness; measuring ICT contributions to productivity; application of ICT for advanced product quality planning perspectives; strategies for leveraging ICT for productivity improvement; and integrated ICT approach to productivity enhancement. The participants also visited the Multimedia Development Corporation where they were briefed on a technopreneur development program and a village for firsthand observation of using the Internet to penetrate the global market.

At the end of the workshop, participants identified the following constraints faced by SMEs in utilizing ICT: 1) ignorance of the benefits of ICT; 2) lack of funds; 3) lack of technical capability; 4) limited infrastructure; 5) traditional way of doing business; 6) inadequate governmental support, including legal framework; and 7) absence of role models. 

Volume 34 Number 12
December 2004

"You can close more business in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get people interested in you."

Dale Carnegie

INSIDE

- 2.... p-Guru
- 4.... New APO publication
- 4.... Common Sense Talk
- 5.... Regulating GMOs
- 6.... Making a display for productivity
- 6.... p-TIPS
- 7.... p-Experts
- 8.... Photo contest winners
- 8.... Calling all cartoonists

Published by

Asian Productivity Organization
Hirakawa-cho Dai-ichi Seimei Bldg. 2F
1-2-10 Hirakawa-cho, Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 102-0093, Japan
Tel: (81-3) 5226-3920
Fax: (81-3) 5226-3950
e-Mail: apo@apo-tokyo.org
Web site: www.apo-tokyo.org



Printed on Recycled Paper