



ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANIZATION

PROJECT NOTIFICATION

13 June 2013

1. **Project Code** 13-IN-12-GE-OSM-B
2. **Title** Multicountry Observational Study Mission on SME Best Practices in Service Excellence
3. **Timing and Duration** 2–6 September 2013 (five days)
4. **Venue** Taipei, Republic of China
5. **Implementing Organization**
China Productivity Center (CPC)
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6. **Number of Overseas Participants** Up to 18 qualified participants from India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. However, other member countries with special interest in this project may nominate candidates upon consultation with the APO Secretariat.
7. **Number of Local Participants** Up to six qualified participants
8. **Closing Date for Nominations** 19 July 2013
9. **Objectives**

To observe and share the best practices implemented by SMEs in the service sector in the host country which can be applicable to achieve service excellence in other Asian countries. The participants are expected to tap the knowledge and experience gained during the mission and apply the best practices to improve their service delivery to customers.

10. Background

The service sector plays a vital role in a country's economic growth. This has become especially evident recently in the Asia-Pacific region. Thus, the promotion of productivity and business excellence in the sector is crucial to revitalize national economies. The main focus of effort as a country strives to develop is increasing GDP and per capita GDP. An advanced economy with a good quality of life typically have its service industry accounting for more than 70% of GDP.

This requires joint efforts by the government and private sector to raise service quality, and create an experience of hospitality for customers.

In 2003, the service sector in the Republic of China (ROC) exceeded 70% of GDP for the first time. The ROC's largest, most authoritative media group, Commonwealth, received the first Service Excellence Award. With a foundation of strict, objective evaluation, the Service Excellence Award heralded the formal launch of an effort in the ROC to attach more importance to increasing "soft power," that is, increasing the quality of life, in addition to "hard power," that is, economic strength and wealth. This is the 11th year of the awards. The award is divided into the chain restaurant, hospital, telecom company, premium leisure hotel, auto repair, business hotel, fast food chain, international airline, low-priced clothing chain, travel agency, convenience store, home life, real estate agent, banking, department store/shopping mall, theme park, and online store categories. Mystery shoppers who have received rigorous training and are internationally certified visit each candidate business, which is why the award is trusted by the public. Every year "angel" and "devil" examples are used to provide references for operators when creating service excellence, launching another wave of silent reform in the ROC's service sector.

In 2011, a similar project was organized in Japan where participants gained valuable knowledge and experience of the best practices of service excellence of various SMEs. As part of the APO's strategic direction to strengthen SMEs in member countries, this study mission is being organized again to provide participants with the opportunity to learn from and examine best practices of advanced SMEs in the ROC to encourage greater competitiveness of service-related businesses and make other Asian SMEs more customer oriented.

At the end of this observational study mission, the participants are expected to prepare action plans based on what they learned. The plans will be shared with NPOs and heads of participants' organizations. Participants will be requested to submit progress reports on action plan implementation six months after completion of the project to the APO.

11. Scope and Methodology

The tentative modules to be covered are:

- a) Introduction of the status of service excellence in the ROC;
- b) Management philosophy and strategies of top SME managers to achieve service excellence; and
- c) Sharing information on quality improvement activities in participating countries including promotional activities and other areas of interest.

The study mission will consist of interactive sessions, lectures, group discussions, observational site visits, and presentation of action plans.

12. Qualifications of Participants

The participants are expected to possess the following qualifications:

- a) Age Preferably between 35 and 45 years.
- b) Education University degree or equivalent qualification from a recognized university/institution.
- c) Present Position Top managers of service-related SMEs or NPO consultants who are

dealing with SMEs in the service sector.

- d) Experience At least five years of experience in the service sector.
- e) Language All proceedings of the project are conducted in English, and participants are frequently required to make oral and written presentations. They must therefore be proficient in spoken and written English. Those who are not proficient in English will not be accepted.
- f) Health Physically and mentally fit to attend an intensive project requiring participants to complete a number of individual and group activities and strenuous fieldwork. It is therefore recommended that member countries do not nominate candidates likely to suffer from physical and mental stress.
- g) Attendance Participants must attend all five days of the project to qualify for the certificate of attendance.

13. Financial Arrangements

a) To be borne by the APO

- 1) All assignment costs of overseas resource persons.
- 2) Round-trip economy-class international airfare by the most direct route between the international airport nearest to the participant's place of work and Taipei. As far as practicable, all participants should purchase discount tickets. Please note that the arrangements for the purchase of air tickets should follow the "Guide on Purchases of Air Tickets for APO Participants," which will be sent to the selected participants. It is also available on the APO website and from APO Liaison Officers in member countries.

b) To be borne by participants or participating countries

For participants from profit-making organizations, except for SMEs, from APO member countries other than Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Lao PDR, Mongolia, and Nepal:

- 1) Round-trip international airfare between the member country and the ROC; and
- 2) Participating Country Expenses at US\$50.00 per participant, payable to the APO in convertible currency.

For all participants

- 1) Participants' insurance premiums: All participants should be fully insured against accident and illness (including hospitalization and death) for a principal sum equivalent to US\$10,000.00 for the entire duration of the project and travel, and must submit to the APO Secretariat a copy of the comprehensive travel insurance certificate before participation.

Such insurance should be valid in the host country. This insurance requirement is in addition to existing government insurance coverage in some member countries. If any participant is unable to insure himself/herself as stipulated above, he/she should secure

this insurance in the host country at the commencement of the project and pay the premium himself/herself, if necessary, from the per diem allowance provided. Neither the APO nor the implementing organization will be responsible for any eventuality arising from accident or illness.

- 2) All expenses related to visa fees and airport taxes.
- 3) Any expenses incurred by participants for stopovers on the way to and from the project venue as well as for extra stay at the project venue before and/or after the official project period because of early arrival or late departure, for example, due to either limited available flights or any other reason.

c) To be borne by the host country

- 1) Per diem allowances and hotel accommodation for up to 18 overseas participants for up to six days at the rate to be specified later.
- 2) All local implementation costs.

14. Actions by Member Countries

- a) Each participating country is requested to nominate three or more candidates in the order of preference. Please ensure that candidates nominated meet the qualifications specified under section 12 above.
- b) No form of self-nomination will be accepted. All nominations must be endorsed and submitted by an APO Director, Alternative Director, Liaison Officer, or their designated officer.
- c) Please note that nomination of a candidate does not necessarily guarantee that he/she will be selected. Selection is at the discretion of the APO Secretariat. A basic criterion for selection is the homogeneity of the participants in terms of qualifications and work experience. Nonselection therefore does not mean that the candidates concerned are not competent enough. Sometimes candidates are not selected because they are overqualified for a project.
- d) Each nomination should be accompanied by the documents listed below. A nomination lacking any of these documents may not be considered:
 - 1) Two copies of the candidate's biodata on the APO biodata form together with a passport-sized photograph. The biodata form can be downloaded from the APO website (www.apo-tokyo.org). We encourage submitting the biodata form to the APO Secretariat in electronic form as an attachment to a cover e-mail message from the APO Director, Alternate Director, or Liaison Officer. The nomination documents should be sent to the Industry Department, APO Secretariat (e-mail: ind@apo-tokyo.org, fax: +81-3-5840-5324).
 - 2) The APO Medical and Insurance Declaration/Certification Form. Every candidate must complete and submit a copy of the APO Medical and Insurance Declaration/Certification Form with his/her biodata at the time of nomination. Please note that self-declaration is

sufficient for candidates without any of health conditions or illnesses listed on the reverse side of the medical form. However, for all others, medical certification by a licensed physician on the reverse side of the medical form is required.

- e) Member countries are encouraged to submit the necessary documents electronically as mentioned above. In that case, there is no need to send a hard copy by postal mail. However, if the documents are submitted by fax, member countries are requested to mail the originals of the documents to the APO Secretariat as well. If a digital photograph of a nominee is not attached to the electronic biodata form, a hard-copy photograph should be sent to the APO Secretariat by postal mail. Please give the candidate's name and the project code on the reverse side of the photograph.
- f) Member countries are requested to adhere to the nomination deadline given on page 1. The APO Secretariat may not consider late nominations as they have in the past resulted in considerable difficulties to the implementing organization in its preparatory work for the project.
- g) Under normal circumstances, candidates who are selected will be informed of their acceptance at least four weeks prior to the start of the project.
- h) If some candidates fail to qualify or be unable to participate after selection, or if some member countries fail to nominate any candidate, their slots may be filled by alternates from the same or another member country on a merit basis.
- i) If a selected participant becomes unable to attend, he/she should inform the APO Liaison Officer/NPO in his/her country immediately and give the reason for withdrawal. The NPO concerned is requested to transmit that information to the APO Secretariat and the host country promptly.
- j) NPOs are requested to inform the selected participants that they are not to bring family members or to engage in any private business activities during the entire duration of the project.
- k) Each selected candidate is required to arrive at the venue one day before the start of the official project. Also, he/she is expected to return home upon completion of the official project because he/she is visiting the host country for the specific purpose of attending this APO project.

15. Project Preparation

The participants are required to prepare a paper prior to departure for the project venue. In preparing the paper, they are expected to follow the "Guidelines for the Preparation of Country Papers." which will be attached to a circular letter later.

16. Postproject Actions

All participants are required to prepare action plans and share the plans with their NPOs. The APO will also request participants to submit progress reports six months after completion of the project.

17. Guide for Participants

Other conditions for participation are given in the APO Guide for Participants, which is available from APO Liaison Officers/NPOs in member countries and on the APO website (http://www.apo-tokyo.org/project/files/participant_guidebook.pdf).



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Secretary-General